Levels 5-7

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THE LOST KING

by Eric Steiger

Draneken Castle recently withstood a massive invasion by the Barbarians of Beloran Gorge. During the course of the fight, the court wizard, the self-titled Keland the Magnificent, sent His Majesty King Ivol Lareth II into hiding. Shortly afterward, however, Keland died. In fact, he died before telling anyone what he did with King Lareth.

Now, the King's unaccomplished son is ruling over Draneken and King Lareth's trail grows colder. With all of their options exhausted, you are the kingdom's last hope. If you can bring home King Lareth, the wealth and gratitude of an entire kingdom is yours.

Keland, for all of his boasting, was still a rather shrewd character as he made finding King Lareth difficult. Your search begins in Keland's chambers in Draneken Castle. Only a fool enters a wizard's chambers without an invitation.

The Lost King

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Levels 5-7

$2.99

THE LOST KING

by Eric Steiger

Requires the use of the Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast®

HOW TO USE THIS PRODUCT

This adventure is designed to be easily dropped into your existing *Third-Edition D&D* campaign. It can be run in a just a single session and makes for an excellent evening's gaming. To prepare yourself to run the adventure, you should read it completely at least once to familiarize yourself with the material. You may wish to photocopy the map in the center of the book for ease of use as well. The text on the back of the book can be read to your players to introduce them to the adventure. After that, you're ready to begin. Good luck!

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

This module requires the use of the *Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition,* published by Wizards of the Coast.® You won't be able to run this adventure without it.

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AEG

GAME MASTER BACKGROUND

The Lost King is an adventure designed for a group of four to six characters of levels five to seven.

During the invasion, Keland polymorphed King Lareth into a griffon and then cast *dimension door* to get him out of the castle. Keland figured that King Lareth would be safe in this form as few creatures pose a serious threat to a griffon. Now, Lareth is happily living as a griffon on the summit of Godsword Peak, the tallest mountain in the range. Keland told nobody exactly what he turned King Lareth into and this should be a complete surprise for the PCs. He did however, make sure that he could always track Lareth using his *ring of remembrance*.

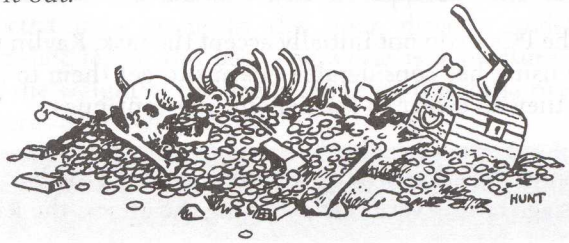
As for Keland, he was less of a wizard than he proclaimed. Lazy and greedy, he spent more time building up his reputation as a wizard than in actual study. For all of this, though, he had a natural talent for magic and his skill earned him an important position as the King's Court Wizard. He was especially fond of *polymorph*. Keland was also a coward, and while he is hailed as a hero for dying in the line of duty, the truth is that he was killed in the process of attempting to teleport out of the castle.

Now, Lareth's son, Mellan, nominally rules Draneken. Mellan is a dullard. He is unqualified to rule, self — absorbed, and enjoys the perks of his office to the degree of ignoring responsibility. The task of ruling Draneken has fallen to Lareth's trusted seneschal, Kaylin Lorinthen. A brilliant, beautiful, and competent elven administrator, Kaylin keeps Draneken functioning in Lareth's absence.

Kaylin is keenly aware of her value to the kingdom. She is unwilling to risk her own life in a hopeless search for the king. Neither can she afford to send men from the castle guard to search for Lareth. The threat of war with the Barbarians still looms and Mellan's inability to rule is sure to bring about another siege. Keland's paranoia makes matters even worse. His chambers are trapped and very dangerous. Kaylin refuses to risk anyone in an attempt to search the wizard's tower.

Therefore, she is looking to hire mercenaries that are competent, professional, and expendable. Kaylin feels the adventurers can spring whatever traps lie in wait in Keland's quarters. This done, she can search the chambers for any clues as to King Lareth's whereabouts.

Note: The absence of a map from this adventure is intentional. There is no need for one. Draneken is a simple country and other than the general layout (castle in the center, mountains in the north), the GM is encouraged to flesh it out.



THE ADVENTURE

You can draw the characters into the adventure in various ways. If the characters are known in this area, it is likely that Kaylin has heard of them and summoned them to the castle. They will of course, be handsomely rewarded. If the characters are new to the area, then Kaylin has sent out missives to all of the nearby towns, cities, and manors requesting the bravest heroes in all the land, and promising the gratitude of an entire kingdom.

King Ivol Lareth II rules Draneken Castle that lies in the center of the small kingdom. The Draneken army recently repelled an invasion by the Barbarians of Beloran Gorge (in the east). Most people are at a loss to explain why the barbarians attacked, as Draneken lacks resources and its land is sparse and fallow in many regions. There are only three meager towns in the kingdom, with no large cities.

A Gather Information or Bardic Knowledge check gleans certain useful pieces of information. If a PC wants to learn something, ask what DC they wish to attempt at. If they succeed, give them all the information up the level they attempted. If they fail, however, they have exhausted their resources and learn nothing else.

DC 10: King Lareth went missing during the barbarian invasion.

DC 15: He hasn't returned yet, and his idiot son is ruling the kingdom.

DC 20: His court wizard also vanished during the invasion.

DC 25: The court wizard was entrusted with keeping King Lareth safe.

DRANEKEN CASTLE

Keland's quarters are the only detailed area of Draneken Castle. The rest of the castle is restricted and if the PCs wander, the guards escort them back to the audience chamber, where they must answer to an annoyed Kaylin.

Upon entering the castle, a servant leads PCs to the main audience chamber, where Kaylin intercept them before they can reach the throne of "King" Mellan.

"Thank the Heavens, you've come. Very few know what I am about to tell, and I would prefer it to stay that way. Even if you choose not to take on the task for which I have summoned you here, I need your word that you will speak of this to nobody. I do hope you will help us. The entire kingdom is in jeopardy!"

If the PCs to do not initially accept the task, Kaylin is not above using her considerable charms to get them to agree. Once they all swear to keep silent, she continues:

"A month ago, barbarians invaded our fair kingdom and laid siege to this very castle. During the attack, the King's trusted wizard, Keland the Magnificent, magically sent King Lareth into hiding. However, before he told anybody just what he did with our beloved king, Keland died defending the castle. While Keland's loyalty was beyond reproach, he was rather eccentric, and we now have no idea where King Lareth might be. This is where you come in. If you find and return our rightful king, the gratitude of an entire nation will be yours."

Kaylin is happy to answer any questions the PCs have about the assignment. She offers whatever money the PCs require to take the job; while Draneken isn't a rich kingdom, they are desperate to see their king returned. Kaylin suggests that the PCs begin their search in Keland's chambers, which are still sealed and have not been disturbed since the wizard's death. If the PCs ask why she has not yet searched the room, she dodges the question, reiterating Keland's eccentricity.

MELLAN

Mellan is an idiot. His sole purpose for this adventure is to make things difficult for both Kaylin and the PCs. If they dawdle too long in the castle, use Mellan as incentive to keep them moving. He makes stupid comments on their attire, attempts to grab at any interesting objects on their persons, and makes passes at female characters. A few sharp words from Kaylin usually quiets him and shames him into leaving, however.

KELAND'S QUARTERS

Once the PCs have all the information they need, the guards escort them to Keland's chambers. The door is wooden and nondescript. It is also locked. There is no known key and the PCs must pick the lock to open the door. A successful Pick Locks check (DC 25) opens the lock or a successful Str check (Break DC 23) forces it open.

Upon entering, the PCs see a horrendously opulent bedchamber. The place is garishly and tastelessly decorated with expensive art, furniture, and other accouterments. There is a large, overstuffed four-poster bed in the center of the room. Keland was paid well for his services, and was not frugal with his money. However, what the PCs do not find is any magical or arcane tools or instruments.

On a successful Listen check (DC 20), the PCs hear the sound of running water behind the wall opposite the entrance. A more detailed search of the wall (Search check DC 25) reveals a hidden seam in the brickwork indicating a hidden door. However, the hidden door doesn't budge, regardless of the amount of force applied. The door is connected to a stone in the floor, directly under the bottom-left leg of the bed. The stone is a pressure-plate, and if the weight of the bed is removed, the stone rises and the secret door swings open.

The secret door leads into Keland's laboratory, which is far less impressive than his bedchamber. There is a research table, a small fountain and a small bookshelf, all of which

have a thin layer of dust. The only thing that looks like it has been touched recently is a small jewelry box lying in an alcove on the wall. The box is not locked, but the ring inside is trapped with a *cloudkill* trap (Search DC 20). If the trap is sprung, *cloudkill* (9th – level) fills the room. Cutting the thread neutralizes the trap. The ring is the *ring of remembrance (see below)*, attuned to King Lareth. There is nothing more of interest in the laboratory.

Read the following to whichever PC puts on the ring.

As you slide the ring onto your finger, you feel a tug at the back of your mind. The sensation is not unpleasant, but it is quite insistent. It is definitely pulling you... north. For whatever reason, the ring seems determined that you should go north, and that there is somebody there that you need to find.

THE SEARCH FOR KING LARETH

Kaylin is happy to provide the PCs with any reasonable supplies they need (taking it out of their pay, of course), such as provisions or a map of the area. The ring guides the PCs north, to the Aelier Mountains and Godsword Peak. Kaylin strongly suggests they take climbing supplies. The mountains are only three days from the castle, but there are several possible incidents that can occur during that time (these are all independent encounters, and can be run in any order):

1. LEFTOVER BARBARIANS

A small group of the invading barbarian tribe has chosen to remain in Draneken, trying their hand at highway robbery. However, the road upon which they have decided to ply their trade is almost entirely free from traffic. In fact, after nearly a month, they haven't found a single soul to pillage, and are about to give up. Hence, they are excited when the PCs happen by.

There are **6 bandits (hp 13 each)** hiding behind foliage on the side of the road, and due to their excitement, are less subtle than they could be (Spot check DC 15). Spotted or not, they order the PCs to surrender and hand over their valuables.

The men confronting you are a pretty sad lot. On the edge of starvation, they appear worn down by the life of a highwayman without a highway. Nevertheless, ferocity born of desperation gleams in their eyes, and eagerness to use the large axes in their hands is apparent. One of them approaches you.

"Drop your weapons and nobody gets hurt. We wants your money, your valuables..."

Another of the ragged crew steps up to him and whispers in his ear. He grins.

"Oh yeah. Your food, too. Better have lots of food on ya."

Bandits: CR 1; M (humanoid); HD 1d12+1; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 Scale Mail); Atks Greataxe +5 melee (1d12+2), longbow +3 ranged (1d8+2); AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Wil +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 8; Skills: Climb +3, Jump +3, Listen +5. Feats: Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Each bandit is wearing scale mail and is armed with a greataxe, longbow, and 20 arrows. Each one has 15 CP on them.

2. CRUSHED FARMHOUSE

Occasionally, the Rocs that live in the Aelier Mountains like to carry off a cow or horse from one of the farms in northern Draneken. The farmers, knowing better than to try to dissuade a hungry Roc, usually just sigh and make the best of it.

Off to the side of the road, you notice one of the scattered farmsteads that have dotted your road. However, this one is distinctly different. Even from this distance, you can tell that the main house has collapsed on itself. The house is a mess of thatch and wooden beams, and the once-tall chimney is a jumble of scattered bricks and stone. You hear a woman's voice screaming for help.

Earlier in the day, a Roc attempted to snatch a cow from the pasture adjacent to the house. Not noticing the humans huddling in its shadow, the great bird picked off one of the cattle and tried to perch upon the roof of the farmhouse. Naturally, the wood and thatch roof could not support the creature's weight, and when it collapsed, the bird flew off to the mountains with its prize, leaving the poor farmers trapped under the fallen house.

There are three people on the farmstead: Alcyon, his wife Elanor, and their son, Edwyn. beams from the roof trap both Alcyon and Edwyn, and Elanor is in a state of panic. A Strength check (DC 25) is required to free them. If the PCs help them, they are eternally grateful, and happily offer the PCs food and shelter.

3. FLIGHT FROM THE DRAGON

Tarcoloss, a **red dragon (hp 306)**, has returned. A generation ago, Tarcoloss came to the Aelier Mountains, earning the title Mountainmelter from the survivors of the resident dwarves because of the way he drove them out. However, shortly afterwards, Tarcoloss left for greener pastures. Recently, it seems, he has returned to claim his old stomping grounds, and the nearby village of Northwick is paying the price.

In the distance, you can see the mountains. The ring guides you unwaveringly towards them. Ahead of you on the road, you see a ragged procession of refugees, obviously fleeing. While they have nothing save the clothes on their backs, they seem far more worried about whatever is behind them than anything else. As you reach

the head of the group, they begin clamoring and warning you to run for your lives. On the horizon, you see a monstrous silhouette winging its way towards you at an alarming rate. It's a dragon!

It should be obvious to the PCs that Tarcoloss moves a lot faster than they do. It should also be equally obvious that they cannot stand against him. Their only recourse is retreat into the hills. The villagers inform the PCs that there is a cave nearby, barely a mile east, where the children like to play.

This is an excellent role-playing opportunity, as the PCs must shepherd the villagers to safety. Tarcoloss, having eaten his fill and destroyed the village, is content merely to terrorize the villagers, and uses his breath weapon from the air, not bothering to land. Once the PCs have taken the villagers to the cave, read the following aloud:

You have managed to evade the dragon, for now. He cannot reach you in this cave, and you hope that he will soon get bored and leave. The villagers are out of breath, clinging to each other out of fear, exhaustion, and desperation, but they are grateful. As they huddle around you, recuperating, you can see several glowing red eyes in the darkness beyond, accompanied by grinning mouths of dull ivory teeth. You are not alone! As if to illustrate the direness of the situation, you also hear a great roar from outside. The dragon hasn't left quite yet.

A small family of **5 Bugbears (hp 23, 20, 16, 14, 12)**, who are quite happy to see so much prey come right to them, populates the cave. The PCs have three goals here: to kill the bugbears, protect the villagers, and make sure nobody leaves the cave. Assuming the characters defeat the bugbears, Tarcoloss will leave in 1d10+10 minutes.

Dragon, Adult Red: CR 14; H (dragon, fire); HD 22d12+110; hp 306; Init +0; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 29 (–2 size, +21 natural); Atks Bite +31 melee (2d8+11), 2 claws +28 melee (2d6 +5), 2 wings +27 melee (1d8+5); SA Crush (2d8+16), breath weapon (cone of fire, 12d10 DC 25), fear (DC 24), spell resistance 21; SQ Fire subtype; *locate object* 6/day, *suggestion* 3/day, *eyebite* 1/day, *discern location*; AL CE; SV Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +17; Str 33, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 16; Skills: Jump +22, Listen +22, Spot +22, Search +22, Spellcraft +22. Feats: Hover, Wingover, Power Attack, Cleave (claw), Weapon Focus (claw).

Bugbear: CR 2; M (humanoid, goblinoid); HD 3d8+3; hp 23, 20, 16, 14, 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +2 Leather, +1 Small Shield); Atks Morningstar +4 melee (1d8+2); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9. Skills: Climb +2, Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3. Feats: Alertness.

GODSWORD PEAK

The ring eventually guides the PCs to the base of Godsword Peak, the tallest mountain in the Aelier range. From this point on, if they are not already, the PCs are have to walk. The mountain is very difficult terrain, and anybody who doesn't have the Climb skill should be at a disadvantage (GM's discretion). Periodically have the PCs make Climb checks of increasing difficulty. Do not penalize them for bad die rolls; the idea is to remind them that they are climbing a very difficult mountain face. The mountain has a good deal of activity, and the following encounters are to make things interesting. They can be resolved in any order (on either the way up or down the mountain) and only the last one (King Lareth) is required.

1. MEENAE AND THE GIANTS.

Meenae is a tressum *(refer to the New Monster entry at the end of this adventure for further details)* with a problem. A band of giants has moved into a cavern near her home and she fears for her life, and that of her child, Zeegi. She is deathly afraid of them, and must leave if they do not. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of good nesting places on the mountain.

As you laboriously scale a rock face of this mountain, you hear a rustling in the air off to the side. Carefully turning your heads to see cause of the disturbance, you find yourselves facing a small cat, hovering in midair on its colorful feathered wings, and observing you intently. Suddenly, you feel your grip on the cliff face loosening...

Each PC must make a Reflex Save (DC 18) to avoid falling. If they fall, Meenae will use her *telekinesis* to catch the first one and place him on the top of the ledge. If a second one falls, the PC takes 3d6 damage from the thirty foot drop. Meenae will use her *telekinesis* to lift those who fall and place them back on the ledge. Once everybody has safely reached the top, she will leave, unless some effort is made to speak to her. If the PCs find some way to communicate, she explains her predicament to them, and requests their help. If they are antagonistic, she flies off.

The **3 hill giants (hp 112, 104, 95)**, however, are not friendly, and do leave without a fight. If they are cowed into leaving, they will not come back. Meenae has nothing with which to compensate the PCs for their efforts, but if they ask, she gladly accompanies them up the mountain.

Hill Giants: CR 7; L (giant); HD 12d8+48; hp 112, 104, 95; Init –1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 20 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +9 natural, +3 Hide); Atks Huge greatclub +16/+11 melee (2d6+10), rock +8/+3 ranged (2d6+7); SA Rocks; SQ Rock – catching; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 17. Skills: Climb +19, Jump +9, Spot +4. Feats: Cleave, Power Attack.

2. DISPLACER BEASTS

A pair of **displacer beasts (hp 64, 48)** recently immigrated to Godsword Peak, hoping to find some easy prey. Unfortunately, they have had very little luck, as most of the creatures on this mountain are either capable of flight or much larger than they are.

using her magic. Finally, if the PCs are smart, they use the mountain to their advantage. Tarcaloss is on the wing, and will not risk landing unless he is sure of solid footing (which is a rarity on the mountain for a creature of his size). Thus, he is limited to his breath weapon, since hovering would sacrifice his maneuverability. The PCs