

CHRISTIAN EICHHORN'S

EBERRON NEWSPAPERS

KORRANBERG CHRONICLE

PART 1: HEADLINE QUESTS

W A R !
B R E L A N D R A I D E D
B Y D R O A A M ' S M E N
M A N Y W O U N D E D

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Eberron Newspapers

Korranberg Chronicle Part 1: Headline Quests



This supplement offers the framework for four quests, leading the characters into the Mournland, the Mror Holds, the Demon Wastes, and the Talenta Plains. The text describes important plot points and nonplayer characters. It is by no means a step-by-step instruction, however. Before running the quests, read them entirely and flesh out the story with details the players might enjoy. To run these quests, you ideally need a copy of the *Player's Handbook* (PH), *Dungeon Master's Guide* (DMG), *Monster Manual* (MM), and *Eberron: Rising from the Last War* (RFTLW).

The quests offer balancing suggestions when necessary and can be tackled with parties of different levels. To facilitate on-the-fly balancing, which considers party size and every character's level, a metric called PowL (Power Level) is introduced. To calculate the PowL of a group, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters. For example, a group consisting of one 3rd and two 4th-level characters has a PowL of 33. This number is called on to calculate the CR or number of enemies.

This collection is based on newspaper articles in the Korranberg Chronicle, the most widespread paper in Khorvaire. No matter where the characters are, they can get their hands on the latest issue to stay informed or sniff out business opportunities. Since the quests take the characters to all corners of Khorvaire, reaching the starting point of a particular adventure could be its own quest. Prolonged travel is not tackled in this supplement; it is advised to skip ahead by assuming the characters use the lightning rail, an airship, or teleportation.

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Deadly Airship Crash

House Lyrandar Elemental Airship Downed Near Vathirond



Catastrophe Struck Without Warning

Witnesses described the scene as pandemonium.

In the early morning hours, an unscheduled airship entered the Vathriond airspace.

Presumably to alert the populace to some kind of malfunction, the ship fired several red flares before its elemental ring flickered erratically and finally exploded, breaking the ship in half.

The momentum carried the two halves into the Mourmland, preventing visual confirmation of the crash at the time of writing. According to official calculations, the shipwreck must be located not far behind the mist.

A rescue party consisting of upright Vathriondians set out immediately to search for survivors. However, not many of the first responders returned from their mission. Those who survived reported that they did not find the crash site. Instead, they encountered unspeakable monstrosities, mayhaps flocking to the crash site, alerted by the noise.

Cause Yet to Be Ascertained

Lyrandar technicians and artificers are on their way to the site to determine the cause of the reported explosion and subsequent destruction of the airship.

Rumors about sabotage and neglect of maintenance erode trust in Lyrandar's ability to guarantee safe air travel.

Would-be looters, interested in the debris left behind, are warned by authorities to stay clear. The debris could be dangerous, is House Lyrandar property, and must be examined by experts.

Official Statement

House Lyrandar published the following statement:

"House Lyrandar is deeply saddened by the recent events. We value the safety and well-being of our passengers above all else and pledge to increase our efforts to ensure that no such thing will happen ever again.

House Lyrandar will spare no expense to save the lives of survivors and to reclaim the remains of those who have tragically died during the incident. Therefore, we offer free transportation and a sizeable reward to anybody willing to participate in an expedition into the Mourmland.

Time is of the essence. Interested parties should make their way to the nearest airship port or lightning rail station as soon as possible. More information will be given on site."

Quest Background

The crashed and still-unidentified airship bore the name *Cloud Dancer*. A struggle between a dwarven smuggler and two half-elf agents caused the accident, using symbiotic weapons (see *necrotic denier* under Monsters & Items below) onboard the *Cloud Dancer*. All three died during the crash, but the symbiotic weapons remain. The smuggling dwarf was called Ujgror Sternfern. His mission was to bring a crate of experimental armaments, created in a secret Cannith laboratory, to the Mror Holds. The two Houses of Shadow, Phiarlan and Thuranni, caught wind of the operation and sent agents to claim the valuable freight. Ujgror used one of the symbiotic weapons to defend himself against the enemy, destabilized the airship's elemental ring, and brought everything tumbling to the ground.

Now, mutated beasts swarm around the wreck, trying to consume the few survivors, who seek shelter inside an intact part of the airship. Additionally, the Lord of Blades has sent a detachment of warforged towards the crash site. Their orders are to kill possible survivors and retrieve anything of worth.

Part I: Gathering in Vathirond

Arrival

Making use of House Lyrandar's offer of free transportation, the characters arrive in Vathirond in a timely manner. Vathirond is a town that bears still-bleeding wounds from the Last War. Several lines of trenches and fortifications enclose the settlement; the ground is riddled with deep craters, charred bones, and rusted weapons. Nature is slow to reclaim the poisoned land.

Piles of rubble and burned-out ruins dominate the townscape. Frequent incursions from the Mournland hamper the townsfolk's efforts to repair and restore the city. After losing many thousand citizens during the war, several of Vathirond's districts are depopulated. Those without the will to rebuild lead a miserable existence in the abandoned areas. Only a few people wander through the dirty streets, roaming about as if shell-shocked, or hastily as if there's danger all around.

After disembarking, an official called Jain greets the characters and asks if they plan to join the expedition. If they agree, Jain takes the characters to a warehouse that House Lyrandar chose as the headquarters for the operation. In the run-down building, they assemble assistants and equipment.

The Warehouse

The characters meet the following persons of interest in the warehouse.

Severin Lyrandar. Severin (lawful neutral male half-elf **priest**) was sent by House Lyrandar to oversee the expedition. He is a taciturn man who briefly explains what is expected of the characters: they are to join the expedition for a reward of 1,000 gp each. They must protect the workers carrying supplies, medication, stretchers, and other necessities. Once the crash site is secured, the characters—and everybody else for that matter—are forbidden to take anything from the wreckage. Severin advises the characters to get an early rest, since the expedition heads out in the early morning of the next day.

Severin's primary task is to reclaim the Khyber dragonshard, which he doesn't disclose. Other tasks, like rescuing survivors, are subordinate to that and must be abandoned, if necessary, in favor of bringing the dragonshard out of the Mournland.



Khyber dragonshards are integral parts for creating and stabilising an airship's elemental ring. The adapted dragonshards are tremendously valuable and House Lyrandar wants to prevent them from falling into others' hands.

Karnan. Karnan (neutral female half-elf **spy**) is an agent of House Phiarlan, tasked with finding and retrieving the symbiotic weapons, as well as determining the prior agent's fate. She uses an amulet of disguise, which functions as a *hat of disguise*, to appear like a female human.

If asked, she states she is a Mournland scholar and deeply interested in the land's growing effects. She doesn't know Ormin's secret identity or mission.

Ormin. Ormin (neutral male half-elf **spy**) is an agent of House Thuranni, tasked with finding and retrieving the symbiotic weapons, as well as determining the prior agent's fate. Additionally, if possible, Ormin must dispose of anyone privy to the symbiotic weapons.

Ormin's cover is that he is a simple mercenary looking for a good payday. He doesn't know Karnan's secret identity or mission. As his motivation to help Ormin names the reward in gold.

Dain and Wrought. Two **warforged soldiers** (RFTLW) called Dain and Wrought are among the volunteers. Both fought in the Last War on opposite sides and feel drawn to the Mournland. After travelling together for a few months following the ceasefire, they yearn to return to their field of battle. Both are five years old, and they haven't seen much of the world.

Roleplay. The mood is somber and an eerie silence hangs above the warehouse. The spies sit alone and hone their blades, the warforged sit together and check each other's plating; a few commoners take care of the pack animals. Everyone is distracted and on edge, anxious to brave the Mournland.

Locations in Vathirond

Vathirond offers only a few opportunities for shopping and relaxation for its size. Most people struggle to make ends meet and have no time for merrymaking or coin for trumpery. Consult the Locations table if the characters explore Vathirond.

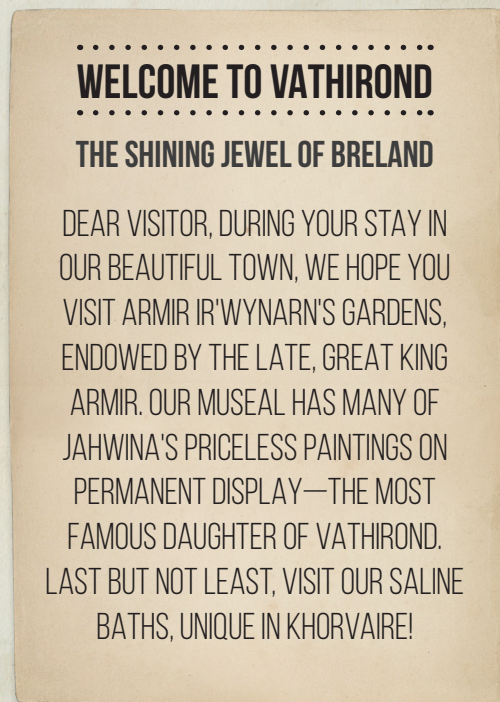


Fig. 1. Pre-war Pamphlet, Displayed in the Lightning Rail Station

LOCATIONS

d8	Name	Owner	Goods and Services
1	Last Flame	Belliam Johb	Good tavern with strong ale and a bard
2	Tar Pit	Zastra	Shady tavern with watered-down ale and underworld contacts
3	Feet-Up Inn	Quipper	Good inn with clean sheets and a solid breakfast
4	Old Marril's	Marril Morth	Dirty inn with lots of rats and filled chamber pots
5	Garry's Goods	Garry Schneider	General store with items from the Adventuring Gear table worth 50 gp or less
6	Sword and Shield	Hargar Harr	Smithy stocked with items from the Armor and Weapons table worth 100 gp or less
7	Temperance's Furnace	Temperance	Blacksmith and mechanic; extremely talented and shy
8	Arcane Trove	Melvin the Magnificent	Merchant who sells 10 random magic items from Magic Item Table B

Part 2: The Expedition

Departure

The expedition sets out early the next day. Before they set out, Severin hands each of the characters a *potion of healing*. The expedition consists of Severin, Karnan, Ormin, Dain, Wrought, and twenty **commoners**. Read or paraphrase the following when the expedition leaves town:

Between Vathirond and the Mournland lies a blasted landscape. The old road is covered in mud and debris, but it gives a modicum of support to the swaying pack animals. A gray mist looms in the distance which conceals the sunrise and bathes the world in an oily shadow.

Roleplay. With the apathy of the previous day gone, everybody is excited and hungers for action. The warforged, Dain and Wrought, come up to the characters to talk. They tell the characters about the slaughter they witnessed during the war and ask if the characters fought as well. The warforged are not interested in the characters' allegiances, only if they served. If the characters are sloppy or horse around, Severin severely reprimands them.

Into the Mournland

When the expedition arrives at the mist, Severin checks the pack animals one last time and pushes on. Read or paraphrase the following when the expedition arrives:

The mist finally clears, after what felt like an eternity. A decaying swamp of corpses and black, crooked trees stretches from here to the horizon. The corpses look as if they have just laid down to rest, aside from those missing limbs or heads.

Roleplay. To achieve her mission, Karnan uses the opportunity to sow mistrust. She approaches the characters to talk about their mission. What could have destabilized the airship's elemental ring? Why aren't they allowed to collect debris? Was the airship carrying some secret cargo? Does Severin have a secret mission? Will one of the others betray the expedition? By raising these questions, Karnan attempts to endear herself to the characters so they stand with her in case there's a problem with her mission.

Meanwhile, the warforged stray from the expedition, searching for familiar faces among the corpses, ignoring Severin's orders to stay close.

Potential Attack. In the Mournland, zombies are a constant threat. To increase the runtime of the adventure, consider an attack by corpse golems, using the statistics of an **ogre zombie**. Corpse golems assemble themselves from several dozen corpses, which form a torso, legs, arms and so on. The characters encounter a number of **ogre zombies** equal to 5% of their PowL (Power Level), rounded down, with a maximum of 5 enemies. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters. The corpse golems mindlessly attack the closest living being, including warforged.

Part 3: The Crash Site

Rescue Operation

Unless there were delays, the expedition reaches the crash site in the early evening, after 8 hours of travel. Read or paraphrase the following when the expedition reaches its destination:

The wreckage left a sizeable crater in the black mud, flinging corpses and souvenirs from the Last War about. The soft ground lessened the impact, leaving both halves of the airship almost intact.

Attack of the Mourn Beasts. When the expedition arrives, the **mourn beasts** (see below) emerge from the front half of the airship and attack. The characters see the enemy coming from 200 feet away. The characters encounter a number of **mourn beasts** equal to 15% of their PowL (Power Level), rounded down, with a maximum of 12 enemies. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters. The mourn beasts surround a single target, staying in close proximity to each other to use their Recycling reaction as often as possible.

Severin's Orders. The aft of the airship is buried deep in the mud, only small portions stick out. Severin gives orders to secure the perimeter and to start excavating the aft, where he hopes to find the dragonshard in the engine room.

The Survivors. The airship has broken in two; the halves lie 300 feet apart. A total of fifteen commoners seek shelter in the barricaded stern. Unless the characters search the front half of the airship, the survivors remain undiscovered. The other helpers who arrived with the expedition only move to help the survivors once Severin secures the dragonshard.

The Spies. While pretending to secure the perimeter, Karnan and Ormin begin looking through the corpses to find clues about their missing colleagues. Make a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check for the spies to find the last working symbiotic weapon in the debris. If both succeed on their check, they both attempt to take it into their possession, finally realizing who they are. Karnan screams for help against a vile assassin, while Ormin attempts to kill her. If only one finds the weapon, they attune to it and hide it on their person.

Interlude

It takes 8 hours before the workers unearth the part of the airship where the dragonshard is installed—the engine room. Meanwhile the characters have time to explore the area and interact with the nonplayer characters.

Include one of the following encounters while the workers dig:

ENCOUNTERS

d4 Encounter

- 1 An acid storm forces the expedition to take shelter in the crashed craft.
- 2 Karnan or Ormin find the *necrotic denier* and accidentally fire off a shot.
- 3 A herd of five **purple worms** pass by the wreck, causing a minor earthquake and a panic. The monsters surface shortly but do not attack the expedition.
- 4 A warforged survivor called Zero Cool digs themselves out of the mud and is happy to see the rescue party.

Khyber Dragonshard Unearthed. After the workers find the dragonshard, Severin calls for a lead chest, secures the shard, and gives orders to continue the dig at the other half of the wreck.

The Lord of Blades

The Lord of Blades is a warforged residing in the Mournland. The enigmatic leader controls one of the two last operating Creation Forges and incessantly produces new underlings. Its goals and machinations are shrouded in mystery.

Arrival of the Warforged

The warforged sent out by the Lord of Blades arrive shortly after Severin uncovers the dragonshard. They have the statistics of **warforged soldiers** (RFTLW). Since warforged are among the expedition, and possibly among the characters, the servants of the Lord of Blades first attempt to persuade them to join their side. They attempt two DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) checks for Dain and Wrought each. On a success, Dain or Wrought remain neutral in the coming struggle.

Monsters. The characters encounter a number of **warforged soldiers** equal to 5% of their PowL (Power Level), rounded down, with a maximum of 5 enemies. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters. The warforged soldiers fight in a line or square formation, making optimal use of their Protection reaction. Each warforged soldier carries three javelins, which they can exchange with allies within 5 feet of them as a bonus action.

Developments. When the fighting starts, Severin takes off with the dragonshard, back to Vathirond. If either Karnan or Ormin found the symbiotic weapon, they flee as well. Otherwise, they stay and fight, hoping to recover the weapon later.

Conclusion

After fending off the warforged, no more enemies attack. The characters can flee or help the survivors return to Vathirond. The characters only receive the full reward of 1,000 gp each if Severin—or the characters themselves—return with the dragonshard and hand it over to House Lyrandar. Otherwise, they only receive 250 gp each.

If the characters take the symbiotic weapon into their possession, all interested parties will send agents after them.

Monsters & Items

Necrotic Denier

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This 2-inch-bone is sharpened on one side and has several small holes on the other end. To attune to this symbiotic item, you ram it into the palm of your hand.

As an action, you can make a ranged attack against a creature within 120 feet of you that you can see. The attack bonus equals your Charisma modifier plus any amount of hit points you expend, with a maximum of 5 hit points per attack. Several purple, coiling rays shoot from the weapon toward the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d12 necrotic damage.

Dispeller. If a creature or item within 10 feet of you is the target of a spell, or was summoned by a spell of 3rd level or lower, the spell ends and you take 1d12 necrotic damage. On a 1, the weapon is destroyed.

Symbiotic Nature. The necrotic denier can't be removed from you while you're attuned to it, and you can't voluntarily end your attunement to it. If you're targeted by a spell that ends a curse, your attunement to the necrotic denier ends, and it detaches from you.

Mourn Beast

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The mourn beast has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the mourn beast's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. If at least one of the mourn beast's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated, the attack deals an additional 7 (2d6) necrotic damage to the target.

REACTIONS

Recycling. When a mourn beast dies within 5 feet of another mourn beast, the latter can use its reaction to consume the dead mourn beast and heal 2d6 hit points.

Mourn Beasts

Mourn beasts are disgusting piles of flesh with legs and teeth randomly strewn about their body. A herd of mourn beasts has a psychic connection, which they use to coordinate their attacks, mauling their prey to death.

Fiend Inursion?

Grotesque Invasion Fleet Growing in the Demon Wastes



Desolate Remains in Ruins

A small expedition force of scouts and settlers recently entered the Demon Wastes to assess the reconstruction of Desolate. Desolate, for those not informed about history, is a former colony that the fiends of the Demon Wastes destroyed several times in recent centuries. However, making their way deeper into the wastes, the scouts encountered a monstrosity that could threaten all of Khorvaire. In light of the recent developments, all resettlement plans have been abandoned.

Gigantic Worm Spawns Flesh Ships

The first reports, acquired by the Korranberg Chronicle, speak of a gargantuan worm from whose mouth spawn floating balls of flesh. Scholars argue that these could be used to circumvent the Demon Waste's wards, bringing a large number of demons, fiends, and worse directly into the Eldeen Reaches or Aundair.

To prevent such tragedy, Aundair's best and brightest mages began remote sensing the area where the worm was sighted. The worm's erratic movements complicate the endeavor, but the mages work day and night. They have confirmed the existence of a large portal inside the worm itself.

Meanwhile, Aundair's queen ushered in a decree to organize and outfit a team of volunteers to enter the Demon Wastes and destroy the worm. House Lyrandar already contributed an airship to the cause, which is on its way to Fairhaven. From there, the coup de main will head out into the unknown.

Horrors of the Demon Wastes

Ash deserts, rivers of lava, and obsidian spires. The Demon Wastes are an inhospitable place where corrupted, nightmarish beings reign supreme and breed unhindered. Their purpose and origins are shrouded in mystery. Those who travel into the wastes to learn more rarely return. Thankfully, the unfaltering mountain orcs protect us from these monsters. For now.

Unbelievably enough, rumors suggest that among the demonic brutes live mortal beings like me and you. They must eat the flesh of their people, or worse, the flesh of monsters, for nothing will grow in the corrupted wastes.

Only the bravest, greediest, or most insane would travel to these ruined lands in search of adventure or treasure. Why you might ask yourself, would someone even entertain the idea? Endless fields of dragonsbards, and the fortune they bring, of course.



Quest Background

In the Demon Wastes, an abhorrent worm spawns a string of flesh from a portal in its guts. The worm forms the flesh into a balloon with its mandibles, and inflates it. Many fiends have assembled and watch the wonder in awe. When the abomination has spun enough balloons, the fiends hope they can escape the Demon Wastes and eat the inhabitants of Khorvaire.

TRYOUTS

d6

- 1 More than half of the characters must make it through an obstacle course, including a trapped corridor, requiring a successful DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.
- 2 More than half of the characters must complete a gruesome endurance run, requiring a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check.
- 3 More than half of the characters must successfully complete a first-aid-course, requiring a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check.
- 4 More than half of the characters must pass the written exam, requiring a successful DC 14 Intelligence (History or Nature) check.
- 5 More than half of the characters must prove their resistance to poisons by consuming a sample and succeeding on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
- 6 The characters must best five training dummies (**animated armors**) in mock combat.

Already two flesh balloons are ready and hover in the worm's vicinity. Various demons crawl over them and install supports and balconies on which they can travel comfortably. The flesh balloons are constructs, have limited intelligence, and are barely sentient. They can circumvent the ancient wards and want nothing more than to destroy and sow chaos. Left to their own devices, they will carry whatever demonspawn attaches to them into civilized lands.

Part 1: Gathering in Fairhaven

Arrival

When the characters arrive in Fairhaven, they witness a town ready for war. Armed forces patrol the streets, large ballistas are being constructed, and posters hang on every other wall, warning the citizens of the demonic hordes in the Demon Wastes. They depict fiends eating children and brave knights fighting against them. The queen and her advisors have the situation under control and use the opportunity to centralize power.

All visitors carrying weapons are assumed to help in the war effort. Arriving at the airport dock, lighting rail station, or city gates, servants and valets greet the characters with jubilation and drinks. Visitors quickly learn that the queen organises tryouts at court to find the most skilled mercenaries for an important mission.

Tryouts

To assess the fitness of potential crew members, they must participate in the tryouts. The characters must succeed on more than half of the challenges listed in the Tryout table to qualify.

Aside from the characters, the following people join the mission:

Hallow D'Deneith. Hallow (neutral good female human **knight**) has the Mark of Sentinel prominently displayed over her right eyebrow. She sees it as an honor and duty to join the squad flying into the Demon Wastes. Her powers and conviction permitting, she does everything to make the mission a success; her armor is clean, her azure cloak spotless. As a good leader should, she never shows fear or hesitates. If Hallow learns of Kin's race, a conflict occurs that the characters can prevent with a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Kin. Kin (neutral female tiefling **mage**) is a native to the plane the portal inside the worm connects to and she wishes to return home. She wears a scarf wrapped about her face at all times, and covers her vermillion skin to hide her race; she has three small, black horns. The trials and tribulations of Khorvaire are of no interest to Kin, but she does care about the friends she makes. If she makes it to the portal alive, Kin jumps into the billowing disc.

Fairhaven

The capital of Aundair offers a cornucopia of possibilities. Every shop and attraction the characters can imagine is available. All citizens of Fairhaven use magic for the most mundane tasks like tying their shoes or scratching their backs. If the characters want to avoid standing out, they have to act likewise.

Part 2: Flight of the Harbinger

The Plan

After the tryouts end, an honor guard accompanies the chosen to the *Harbinger*, a specially equipped Lyrandar airship. Captain Rutherford welcomes the team, and wants to head out as soon as possible. First, he lays out the crown's plans. Once aboard the airship, the expedition will fly to the Demon Wastes, where they must locate the worm. Using ropes, the attackers will descend onto the worm and plant explosives stored onboard the *Harbinger*. If successful, the characters should open an entrance into the worm near the portal, and can destroy or dispel it as they see fit. If unsuccessful, the characters must enter the worm through its mouth.

Departure

Read or paraphrase the following when the Harbinger departs:

Slowly but surely, Fairhaven grows smaller as the airship ascends. The neatly arranged streets, parks, and floating buildings look out of place, even more so from up here. Captain Rutherford's voice booms across the ship, as he screams: "Set course straight north, into the Demon Wastes!"

Roleplay. After Fairhaven vanishes from view, Hallow approaches the characters. She wants to discuss the characters' abilities and motivations. If the characters agree, she takes them to where Kin is hiding from view. The tiefling doesn't want anybody to find out about her race and naturally avoids people. However, Hallow considers her a vital part of the venture and wants to include her in the planning no matter what.

Airborne Trouble

The flight of the *Harbinger* is uneventful until the ship reaches the Demon Wastes. Read or paraphrase the following to announce that the ship has entered dangerous airspace:

The ground of this wasteland looks black, the only color being patches of red matter with ragged edges—a foul rash on a withered corpse. A rancid smell hangs in the air, carried by warm winds.

Monsters. Closing in on the worm brings the characters close to swarms of invisible demons that roam the air on the hunt for carrion. The characters, including Hallow and Kin, are attacked by a number of **quasits** equal to 10% of their PowL (Power Level), rounded down, with a maximum of 14 enemies. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters.

Tactics. The quasits use their Invisibility to infiltrate the ship and surround the characters. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 18 or higher notices the threat and is not surprised by the attack. The quasits open combat by using Scare and then surround one target, which they attack with their claws.

Roleplay. If Kin loses more than half of her hit points, her disguise is destroyed and her tiefling race is revealed to those present.

Part 3: The Worm

The worm is 1,600 feet long and has a diameter of 50 feet. 1,200 feet in stands a portal to an abyssal demiplane, fixed in place by slimy muscles. From the portal, a heap of flesh slowly emerges, forming a balloon at the worm's mouth. Two finished balls of flesh, with a diameter of 300 feet, hover in the worm's vicinity. They follow the worm's path by blowing air from oversized mouths at their base. Read or paraphrase the following when the worm comes into view:

The gigantic, beige worm slowly makes its way through the gray sand. It spins a fleshy heap of meat, eyes, and mouths into a sack using its oversized mandibles. Two finished, floating balls follow in its wake. Their eyes dart around and their mouths open and close periodically to keep them on course.

Breaking Through

Following the plan, the airship remains above the worm at a height of 100 feet while the attackers rappel down onto the slimy flesh. They carry all the explosives stored on the *Harbinger* with them. A section of the worm—a 15-foot-cube—has 100 hit points and a damage threshold of 25. The characters must attempt a DC 18 Wisdom (Nature) check to place the charges correctly. On a success, the characters destroy a section, which allows them to enter the worm. On a failed check, the worm takes 50 fire damage, leaving the section in tact. The characters must either use the rest of the explosives to break through, consuming the explosives they need to destroy the portal, or take the long way through the worm's mouth.

If the characters instead attack the worm with conventional methods or spells to preserve explosives, they are attacked by a number **chasme** equal to 2% of their PowL (Power Level), rounded down, with a maximum of 5 enemies. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters.

Going the Long Way

Entering the worm through its mouth exposes the characters to attacks from the workers swarming on the flesh ball's surface. To make it inside the worm safely, the characters must fight a number of **spined devils** equal to 5% of their PowL (Power Level), rounded down, with a maximum of 8 enemies. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters.

Destroying the Portal

Read or paraphrase the following when the portal comes into view:

A churning sphere of blue energy hangs in the center of the worm's innards. Squishy tissue holds it in place, while a constant stream of fleshy goo sloshes out and flows away.

Destroying the Portal. The portal has 50 hit points and is immune to poison and psychic damage and damage from nonmagical attacks. If the characters have explosives left, placing and detonating them collapses the portal. Alternatively, a *dispel magic* spell dispels the portal which is the equivalent of a 9th level spell.

Monsters. When the characters come within 30 feet of the portal, or deal damage to it, a demon with a CR equal to 8% of the group's PowL (Power Level), rounded down, exits the portal and attacks the characters. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters.

Kin's Escape. If Kin is with the group, her aim is to escape through the portal. Depending on how the characters treated Kin, she supports them against the emerging demon. If the characters kill the demon, or the fight against the demon looks like it will be lost, Kin flees through the portal into the abyssal demiplane.

Conclusion

With the portal destroyed, only the worm and the two flesh balls remain as a threat. However, the characters stop the imminent invasion. Dealing with the remaining forces can be left for another adventure or a cinematic scene of Aundair's forces finishing the job.

Gold Rush in Fleor

Prospectors Find Eberon Dragonshards in Secluded Dale



Treasures Buried in Ice

The northern edges of the Hoarfrost Mountains have become the destination of the daring, destitute, and desperate. Some have returned with enough wealth to retire for life, others will never return at all.

The story began with a dwarven prospector called Brassear, who many thought to be a lunatic. Brassear traveled the mountain ranges, tasting stones and sniffing the wind. He lost most of his eyesight to the bright mountain snow and had to rely on his other senses to find what he was seeking: invaluable dragonshards.

After decades spent searching in solitude, Brassear returned to Lake Home only a few weeks ago. His backpack, made from strange pelts, filled with genuine dragonshards.

Now, ships from Flamekeep, Thaliost, and Stormhome head towards Port Dolor, bringing in equipment and seekers of fortune. A fever took hold of them, which can only be alleviated by the cold mountain breeze!

Birth of a Town: Port Dolor

Amazing, simply amazing! I am standing here in Port Dolor, a town that did not exist a few weeks ago. Houses made of wood, hide, and stone surround me, built by humans, gnomes, dwarves, halflings, and more. A true gallimaufry of styles and materials!

An uninterrupted stream of ships enters Port Dolor's harbor, bringing in new people and materials, leaving with incredible amounts of invaluable dragonshards. What happened here, in such a short timespan, is truly unique.

The Burgomaster Brassear was so kind to speak a few words with me from his office in The Happy Liver, the best alehouse in town, or so I am told:

SVONJE: I am so happy that you found time for me! Let us get right to it. How does it feel to be Burgomaster of the fastest-growing town in Khorvaire?

BRASSEAR: Like the plague on me arse! Every damn boy and girl who falls off the boat buggers me about shards and calls me "burgomaster." Just let me drink in peace!

SVONJE: What incredible insights! What sets you apart from all the others who failed to find anything worthwhile in the Hoarfrost Mountains?

BRASSEAR: A diehard dedication to proving the smegheads wrong who called me a good-for-nothing nutcase! Who is laughing now, Terry? Are you taking this down properly?

SVONJE: Naturally Burgomaster Brassear! Any final thoughts you care to share?

BRASSEAR: Well, my door is always open for anyone with a dry throat or someone in search of a warm bed for the night.

Background

With the article's release, many new adventurers flock into town and prepare to travel into the dale. Rival factions in Port Dolor and the dale, which was named Brassear's Crevice in the explorer's honor, vie for control over the shard trade. This adventure is a "sandbox" with many different possibilities and events.

Port Dolor

Factions

Port Dolor is lawless territory. Justice is delivered quickly and bloodily, and is more often than not a matter of opinion. Two factions vie for control of the town to enforce their will and eventually levy a tax on the outgoing dragonshards.

Bayside Butchers. The Bayside Butchers are a collection of dockworkers, fishermen, butchers, sailors, and other manual laborers. Their rival gang, the Seal Clubbers, call them the BBs. Each member is armed with a jagged knife, often crusted with blood; the blade is their weapon of choice and calling card. The Bayside Butchers have the port under their control and welcome newcomers with a special greeting:

"Welcome to our little part of the town! You better behave yourself or we knock some sense into you. If you take down one of the Seal Clubbers, we offer a nice bounty. Have fun then!"

The Bayside Butcher's leader is known as the Red Lady (neutral evil female human **gladiator**). Their alignment tends more towards the chaotic spectrum.

Seal Clubbers. The Seal Clubbers hold the other half of Port Dolor, which houses most of the town's entertainment and nightlife like alehouses, inns, gambling dens, and clubs. They all wear a hat made from a seal's head, including ear flaps. When the characters enter their part of town, read or paraphrase the following:

"Look what the cat dragged in! Fresh blood, hopefully not in bed with the dirty BBs. We are the law in these parts here, so don't do any funny business. If you want to earn some gold, we offer a little something something for the BBs' knives!"

The Seal Clubber's leader is known as Ace in the Hole Jack (neutral evil male human assassin). Their alignment tends more towards the lawful spectrum.

Locations

Consult the Port Dolor Locations table if the characters explore the town.

All establishments either belong to the Bayside Butchers or the Seal Clubbers. Their **thugs** guard the respective entrances and don't allow people inside who oppose the faction—or pay a handsome bribe.

Since the settlers built all permanent structures in Port Dolor only a few weeks ago, the town buildings look clean and well maintained. However, no planner oversaw the construction work. Therefore, the network of streets is random and confusing.

PORT DOLOR LOCATIONS

d8	Name	Owner	Goods and Services
1	The Lusty Lobster	Lady Gambit	Only brothel in the harbor area
2	Conner's Flophouse	Terry Conner	Cheapest B&B in town (beds and bugs)
3	Higgs's	Armin Higgs & Tiber Higgs	Shady bar with underworld contacts
4	Explorer's Farrago	Esmeralda lo	General store with items from the Adventuring Gear table worth 50 gp or less
5	The Den	Cutter	Gambling den, cheaters get cut
6	Miner's Mattress	Kes	Run by halfling with the Mark of Hospitality
7	Gain's Lightning Dispatch	Gain Futtersnork Sivis	House Sivis message station
8	Happy Liver	Gorker	Brassear's pub of choice

Events

If the characters plan to stay in Port Dolor, the following events occur.

Gang War. Tensions between the Bayside Butchers and the Seal Clubbers rise. Each faction approaches the characters and attempts to recruit them to their cause. The leaders offer the characters 5,000 gp worth of dragonshards for the liquidation of their counterpart. In either case, it is not a single payment but a share in the levy the faction leaders intend to implement. This fact is not disclosed to the characters when the gangs make their offer.

Petition to Brassear. A mob of Port Dolor's citizens assemble and besiege The Happy Liver. They demand Brassear do something about the many problems that plague the town. They demand, quite loudly, that he invest in sanitation, security, and infrastructure. With the help of a few other patrons, Brassear barricades the door and windows of The Happy Liver, intending to sit this one out. The characters might earn some coin for driving off the mob, or the citizen's gratitude for persuading Brassear to hear them out.

Emerald Claw Attack. Erandis Vol, the Lich Queen, sends a raiding party towards Port Dolor. Castle Illmarrow, her domain, is not far from Port Dolor, so it is an ideal target; her reasons are manifold. Lady Vol intends to sack some of the unearthed dragonshards for experiments, convert some of the inhabitants through fear and a display of her might, and raise a few corpses along the way. The invasion force arrives on three ships, flying the emblem of the Emerald Claw. The characters must fight a number of **cult fanatics** equal to 5% of their PowL (Power Level), rounded down, with a maximum of 12 enemies. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters.

Leaving Port Dolor

If the characters want to leave town to travel to Brassear's Crevice, they can hire a guide or travel there on their own. The town is overflowing with people extolling their knowledge about the difficult terrain between Port Dolor and Brassear's Crevice. The characters learn that the dale lies about 50 miles away, as the crow flies; robber bands and monsters plague the path, however.

The Dale – Brassear's Crevice

Complications

On their way to the dale, the characters pass a sparsely wooded area in the mountains, featuring many small caves and tunnels. Unknowingly, they pass through ettercap territory. A character with a passive Wisdom (Nature) of 16 or higher notices signs of the ettercaps before the monstrosities discover the characters. Avoiding the infested area is of no problem if the characters notice the signs.

Monsters. The characters must fight a number of **ettercaps** equal to 5% of their PowL (Power Level), rounded down, with a maximum of 6 enemies. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters.

Tactics. The ettercaps lay an ambush for the characters. Compare the ettercaps' Dexterity (Stealth) check to the passive Wisdom (Perception) of the characters to determine who is surprised. The ettercaps open combat with their Web ability and surround restrained characters.

Arrival & General Features

Lay of the Land. Two factions, the Stone Eaters and Irmgrid the Green, vie for control over the valley. If the characters want to collect dragonshards in the area, they come into contact or conflict with one or both of them. Both factions have fortified camps on opposing sides of the creek.

Miner's Sickness. People who collect dragonshards for several days develop a mysterious sickness. When the characters arrive, the malady is known but not researched. For additional information, see Miner's Sickness below.

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters reach Brassear's Crevice:

After traversing the dangerous mountain pass, the view opens into a trist valley. A brook runs through the dale, surrounded by sparse, crippled vegetation and rubble. You see people digging and ranging about, and a few structures—the only hint at civilization in these untamed wilds.

Factions

Stone Eaters. Dwarves from the Mror Holds banded together to form the Stone Eaters. They follow a leader named Korgarm Thickbeard (lawful neutral male dwarf **gladiator**). They regard the treasures hidden beneath the soil as theirs by birthright. They prevent weaklings from entering the valley, unless they cede the Stone Eaters half of their findings. Upon entering Brassear's Crevice, three dwarven **veterans** and a **xorn** "greet" the characters; their captain goes by the name of Jorvarin. The group demands the characters submit to Thickbeard's rule if they want to enter. If the characters defeat the group or join Irmgrid the Green, the Stone Eaters leave them to their own devices. If the characters do neither, or agree to the tax but shortchange the Stone Eaters, they attack the characters. The Stone Eaters only knock the characters unconscious, take their equipment, and dump their bodies on the dale's outskirts.

Irmgrid the Green. Irmgrid (neutral female half-orc **mage**) is the child of a Jhorash'tar orc named Kirgoragar from the Ironroot Mountains and an unknown human. She doesn't particularly like dwarves, but also holds no grudge against them. Her only motivation is furthering her experiments.

Irmgrid employs a number of mercenaries and many "helpers." She protects her employees from the Stone Eaters, and in turn they supply her with dragonshards. Irmgrid's mercenaries (**soldiers**) patrol her half of the dale to keep the Stone Eaters out. Recently, Irmgrid began looking into the sickness afflicting the miners—and herself—but has made no progress yet.

Miner's Sickness

Cause of the Disease. Before the asteroid containing the Siberys dragonshards crashed into the dale, it passed through a necrotic radiation belt, causing each harvested dragonshard slowly poisons the person carrying it.

A character who examines one of the shards and succeeds on an Intelligence (Arcana) check makes a discovery according to the Miner's Sickness Revelation table, depending on the check's result; results of 10 or higher are cumulative.

Due to the dragonshards being spread all across the valley, the sickness affects everyone in Brassear's Crevice.

Course of the Disease. The sickness first manifests itself with a discoloration of the skin, which turns gray and brittle. After several days, pustules form on the back and legs of the afflicted, which burst and spread pus. After one week of exposure, a victim begins to cough up black blood while their organs degrade. Finally, after four weeks of exposure, and every week following, the afflicted person must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or fall to 0 hit points and begin dying.

In the valley, the characters find miners in all stages of the disease. The dead are left where they fall on the ground.

Curing the Disease. Afflicted people who have not started coughing up blood recover without the need for healing if they are no longer exposed to the dragonshards. People whose organs started to fail must be cured with *lesser restoration* or similar magic.

MINER'S SICKNESS REVELATION

Result	Discovery
1	The dragonshards have healing properties. The sickness must be caused by something else entirely.
2 - 9	Inconclusive.
10 - 15	The dragonshards radiate a necrotic aura, possibly causing the sickness. Prolonged exposure worsens the effects. Keeping the dragonshards in a metal container with 1-inch walls, or a container insulated with lead, keeps the radiation from leaking out.
16 - 20	Without a doubt the dragonshards cause the sickness. Using a <i>dispel magic</i> spell in a specific way, now known to the character, can cleanse a dragonshard.
21+	Since the dragonshards are infused with necrotic radiation, they are unique and worth more than "simple" Siberys dragonshards. With further studies and experiments, the dragonshards could be used to enhance necromantic rituals.

Collecting Shards

Using shovels and pickaxes, it is easy to find dragonshards across the entire valley. A character who spends 8 hours searching finds 1d4 dragonshards, each worth 250 gp. The characters can sell their findings to either of the factions, whereas the Stone Eaters take a 50% tax and Irmgrid the Green a 25% tax. Alternatively, the characters can take their findings to Port Dolor, or beyond, to sell them for greater profit.

Events

Use one or both of the following events while the characters stay in Brassear's Crevice.

Eradicating the Competition. Eventually, the leader of the Stone Eaters, Korgarm Thickbeard, figures out the secret behind the dragonshards by implanting them into the flesh of a handful of "volunteers." Over the course of many hours, the volunteers' bodies deform into gruesome monsters. Henceforth, Korgarm Thickbeard has monsters with the statistics of **ogre zombies** under his control. He sends the monsters out to attack and expel Irmgrid.

Necromantic Ritual. Eventually, Irmgrid the Green uncovers the secret behind the dragonshards. Using her arcane knowledge, she intends to use a portion of her dragonshards to raise an army of undead miners.

Her ploy is to leave the valley, but keep her miners within, who are immune due to their undead nature. Irmgrid succeeds, but pays a dire price: she dies herself during the ritual, but is reborn as an undead. Irmgrid becomes a **lich** without the Rejuvenation feature and a neutral evil alignment. Henceforth, she has one hundred **zombies** under her command that roam the dale and unearth dragonshards.

Conclusion

Many irradiated dragonshards reached Khorvaire through Port Dolor. The miner's sickness occurs in hotspots where the shards arrived for repackaging like Rekkenmark, Thaliost, Flamekeep, and Aruldusk. The sickness and corrupt dragonshards can serve as future plot points.


After either Korgarm Thickbeard or Irmgrid the Green uncover the true properties of the shards and take control over Brassear's Crevice, the shipments of dragonshard to Port Dolor stop. Since the shards were the only reason for the town's existence, it falls into obscurity and degenerates into a den of pirates.

Brassear goes on to enjoy a long life in inebriation.



Tribe Obliterated

An entire tribe of halflings found dead on the Talenta Plains



The White Fang Tribe Is No More

Bitter news from Gatherhold in the Talenta Plains. According to the reports, an entire tribe of halflings has been found dead by merchants. More than a thousand souls wiped out in the blink of an eye, or so the witnesses claim. According to the account, the halfling camp was flattened, and corpses, as well as other items, buried a foot underground. Rumors suggest that ghosts of evil eras rose to slay the living, but the shamans vehemently deny the proposition.

Lathon Halpum, decorated war hero, calls upon adventurers, experts, and the like to flock to Gatherhold. From there, an expedition shall head to the site of the catastrophe to determine the cause or culprit. After uncovering the truth, the expedition shall swiftly deal with it! Halpum even goes as far as to cover the travel costs of all volunteers, paying from his own pocket.

Ancient Tribes and Customs

If you plan to travel to the Talenta Plains, you should start your journey in Gatherhold, Vulyar, or Irontown.

The halflings have lived in the grasslands for thousands of years. They are the Talenta Plains. The beasts eat grass, the halflings eat the beasts, and finally, the halflings turn to grass again.

The only thing disturbing the peace are the creatures of the Mourmland, swarming into the plains from the west.

Every so often, the tribes meet in Gatherhold to trade. Otherwise, they are dispersed. During the Last War, the tribes found a common leader in Lathon Halpum. After the Treaty of Thronehold, the federation shattered.

Focus on the Talenta Plains

A sea of grass, as far as the eye can see. Clouds, lazily making their way across the land, pulling their shadows along behind them. The earth rumbles when a dozen colorful reptiles rush past you. The sudden blast of wind catches your hat, which is carried away into the vast expanse.

Everything here is brutal and unforgiving, but also natural with its own rugged beauty. Nowhere else can a person feel this free and liberated from the plight of modern, daily life.

The so-called dinosaurs that roam the plains are dangerous indeed. Some would rip the flesh right off your bones! Others prefer the grass but could stomp you in a fit nevertheless. The halfling nomads have domesticated some of these beasts and switch their crib for a saddle not long after entering this world! A truly unique twinning, here on Khorvaire.

Background

The White Fang tribe fell victim to an ancient machine, hidden beneath the sand of the ever-growing Blade Desert. One of the tribe members, an adventurous young halfling called Odei, discovered the ruin's entrance. He snuck in and brought death upon his people by activating the machine. After realizing what he did, Odei awaits his death in the machine's core, deep underground. Meanwhile, a blue dragon from the Endworld Mountains gorges itself on the tribe's remains.

The machine is a cosmic resource extractor. It generates a gravitational field that pulls Siberys dragons from the Ring of Siberys. After activation, three gargantuan black pillars rise from the sand and generated a deadly force for all creatures in the area. Formerly, the machine was easily visible, but the encroaching desert hides all signs beneath dunes of sand.

Part I: Arriving in Gatherhold

Arrival

The characters arrive in Gatherhold free of charge, as promised in the article. There are not many permanent structures in this town, and those that do exist are carved into the rocky outcroppings. All temporary citizens live in tents that stand on the flat grasslands surrounding the lightning rail station and an airship dock.

From where the characters arrive, they have a clear view of the close to one thousand tents currently standing in the area. One can easily distinguish the different tribes by the color and design of their tents. The tribes remain in Gatherhold in their circular tent settlements until their trade is concluded and the young have found partners after mingling with the other tribes. Currently, the Purple Dusk, Broken Arrow, and Thagomizer tribes are in Gatherhold. Almost all halflings in the Talenta Plains wear colorful leather clothing made from dinosaurs hide, which is also used for their tents. The characters can also see kites of various forms and sizes, made from dinosaur leather, floating in the air.

Rafa, the halfling tribeswoman who Lathon chose to lead the expedition, awaits the characters' arrival and guides them to Lathon's tent.

Lathon's Tent

The characters meet the following persons of interest in Lathon's Tent.

Lathon Halpum. Lathon (chaotic good male halfling **berserker**), a confident and enigmatic halfling, welcomes the characters in his tent. He has prepared some alcoholic beverages for them, knowing that it's most likely tradition to drink from where they come. The halflings of the plains can't metabolize alcohol, due to it not being produced traditionally, so they refrain from drinking, but still happily tend to their guests.

Lathon thanks the characters for their willingness to help, and promises them 1,000 gp if they can kill or destroy whatever is responsible for the tribe's destruction. To guide the characters and the other members of the expedition, Lathon introduces Rafa. Lathon ensure once again, that no ghosts or spirits are responsible for the deed, the shamans are certain of it.

Rafa the Guide. Rafa (lawful neutral female halfling **scout**) is a middle-aged, tough-as-nails tribeswoman. She likes honest and practical people and despises Porropi. She explains to the characters that they are under her care during the expedition, but that she isn't their mother or superior. If the characters would be so stupid as to ignore her counsel, they might pay with their blood. Rafa carries a map of the area, including the camp's location, with her, in case she dies during the journey.

Porropi the Charlatan. Porropi (neutral evil male human **cultist**) is a swindler who pretends to be a famous medium and "ghost caller." He carries all sorts of useless apparatuses around with him with which he claims to make important measurements. Rafa only agreed to take him along to see him fail and die. Unfortunately, after many years, Porropi has bought into his own lies and believes that he has spiritual abilities.

Ungor Jo Jo for the Journalist. Ungor (lawful neutral male gnome **commoner**) is a columnist who works for the Korranberg Chronicle. He jumped at the opportunity to explore the Talenta Plains as an embedded reporter and travelled to Gatherhold. Ungor is a jovial fellow and asks the characters to call him Jojo, like his friends do. He dreams of his own column titled "Jo Jo's Peculiar Adventures" where he reports about his journeys across Khorvaire.

Part 2: The Journey

Departure

The expedition heads out early the next day. Rafa leads the characters to dinosaur mounts with the statistics of allosauruses prepared for foreigners. They are more docile and easier to ride compared to the usual halfling mounts. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters leave Gatherhold:

Leaving Gatherhold behind, you ride over the plains at breakneck pace. On the horizon, the silhouettes of large animals are cast against the sun. The wind carries their roars far and wide, all across the plains.

Roleplay. Jo Jo comes up to the characters during the ride. He clutches his dinosaur's neck in fear of falling down. Screaming, he asks the characters if they have ever visited the Talenta Plains before. If so, he'd like to interview them during the next rest. He also inquires what part of Khorvaire the characters consider to be the most interesting, hoping to get some pointers for his next expedition.

Complications

During the journey, the expedition rides across a Talenta termite colony. The ground breaks under the heavy mounts' weight, resulting in a possible fall. Each member of the expedition must make a DC 14 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. Rafa automatically succeeds on the check. Members who fail fall 10 feet into a cave, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage. The cave is 100 feet long and 20 feet wide, with exits on the long ends. The roof collapses entirely, laying open the complete cave.

Two termites (using statistics but not lore of **thri-kreen**), scuttling in from the corridors, immediately attack the intruders. After 5 minutes has passed, the trapped members encounter a number of **thri-kreen** equal to 5% of their PowL (Power Level), rounded down, with a maximum of 5 enemies. To calculate the PowL, add the levels of all characters then multiply the total by the number of characters.

Roleplay. If Porropi survived the encounter, he approaches the characters during the next rest. He hates Rafa and wants to get rid of her.

He attempts to convince the characters that Rafa led them into the termite colony deliberately. Surely, an experienced halfling like Rafa would know about the dangers and circumvent them? Why would she want to kill them, what is it the members are not supposed to see in the desert? Maybe they should get rid of Rafa and try their own luck.

Part 3: The White Fang Camp

Above Ground

After six days, the expedition reaches its destination in the desert. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters arrive:

Of the former camp, there is almost no hint in the desert. Where it not for the dragon scraping through the sand, one could overlook it. Skillfully, the dragon sniffs the ground, picks a corpse up with its snout, flings it high into the air, and gobbles it up on the way back down.

Ujarix'vil'on the Dragon. The young blue dragon sifts through the halflings' corpses and enjoys a hearty meal. It has come here several times during the past days, delighted by the readily available food. The characters spot it from 1 mile away. Unless they approach in a stealthy manner, the dragon spots them if they come closer than 2,000 feet. The characters must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity (Stealth) group check to avoid detection. Once the dragon becomes aware of the expedition, it speaks:

"Do not be afraid, wanderers. My belly is filled with cured halflings, for which I am deeply grateful to the salty desert sand. What is your desire? Have you come to avenge my snacks? Futile! I already found them dead, as did you."

If the characters speak with Ujarix'vil'on and treat it with respect, or praise it in any way, it continues as follows:

"I will let you in on a secret. I can smell something alive, and I know where. There is more, however. I also smell a gem and I need it, I want it so badly. I will tell you where the live one is, if you bring me the gem!"

Ujarix'vil'on smells the dragonshard and Odei in the ruins below. The dragon is too large to enter the ruin and needs the characters' help—it doesn't have a burrowing speed. If the characters agree, the dragon exposes the entrance and staircase in the middle of the camp through which the characters can reach the machine's core. Otherwise, for example if the characters kill the dragon, they must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check while searching the camp to find the entrance.

Below Ground

Following a staircase, the characters find a long corridor that ends in a large, square room. In the center of the room stands a throne-like chair with which the machine is controlled. The walls are covered in star maps, depicting the Ring of Siberys. In one corner of the room sits Odei, clutching the dragonshard in apathy.

Odei. After seeing that his actions brought doom upon his tribe, Odei withdrew and intends to die. His waterskin is almost depleted, and he hasn't eaten in days. The characters find him unresponsive. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check can extract the following information from him:

"I have the blood of my people on my hands. My damned curiosity killed them all. Who would build such an infernal machine?"

Activating the Machine. A character who sits in the chair and concentrates on the star maps activates the machine. Once activated, three pillars rise from the sand above ground, 1,600 feet apart from each other. The pillars are 300 feet high and have a 5-by-5-foot base. The characters sitting on the chair can stop the powering sequence at any time by leaving the chair.

After 1 minute, creatures inside pillars take 75 (10d10 + 20) force damage as they are pulled towards the ground by a gravitational distortion. Creatures underground are not affected. After 24 hours, a dragonshard descends from the heavens and lands gently in the chamber, entering through a small, buried hole in the ceiling. The operator can activate the machine every tenday.

Conclusion

If the characters realize what they have found, they can destroy the machine, keep it a secret, or attempt to make use of it. In any case, Ungor Jo Jofor plans to write an extensive article about the discovery, which he proclaims in amazement. Porropi tries to convince the characters to keep the knowledge hidden, harvesting the dragonshards in secrecy to become rich beyond their wildest dreams. Rafa attempts to destroy the machine.

The dragon Ujarix'vil'on expects to receive the dragonshard in Odei's possession as a reward, if it helped characters. It attacks the characters if they do not comply.



DEADLY AIRSHIP CRASH

HOUSE LYRANDAR ELEMENTAL AIRSHIP DOWNED NEAR VATHIROND

Catastrophe Struck Without Warning

By MORANIUS TULIUS TRENT

Witnesses described the scene as pandemonium. In the early morning hours, an unscheduled airship entered the Vathriond airspace. Presumably to alert the populace to some kind of malfunction, the ship fired several red flares before its elemental ring flickered erratically and finally exploded, breaking the ship in half.

The momentum carried the two halves into the Mournland, preventing visual confirmation of the crash at the time of writing. According to official calculations, the shipwreck must be located not far behind the mist.

A rescue party consisting of upright Vathriondians set out immediately to search for survivors. However, not many of the first responders returned from their mission. Those who survived reported that they did not find the crash site. Instead, they encountered unspeakable monstrosities, mayhaps flocking to the crash site, alerted by the noise.

Cause Yet to Be Ascertained

Lyrandar technicians and artificers are on their way to the site to determine the cause of the reported explosion and subsequent destruction of the airship. Rumors about sabotage and neglect of maintenance erode trust in Lyrandar's ability to guarantee safe air travel.

Would-be looters, interested in the debris left behind, are warned by authorities to stay clear. The debris could be dangerous, is House Lyrandar property, and must be examined by experts.

Official Statement

House Lyrandar published the following statement:

"House Lyrandar is deeply saddened by the recent events. We value the safety and well-being of our passengers above all else and pledge to increase our efforts to ensure that no such thing will happen ever again.

House Lyrandar will spare no expense to save the lives of survivors and to reclaim the remains of those who have tragically died during the incident. Therefore, we offer free transportation and a sizeable reward to anybody willing to participate in an expedition into the Mournland.

Time is of the essence. Interested parties should make their way to the nearest airship port or lightning rail station as soon as possible. More information will be given on site."

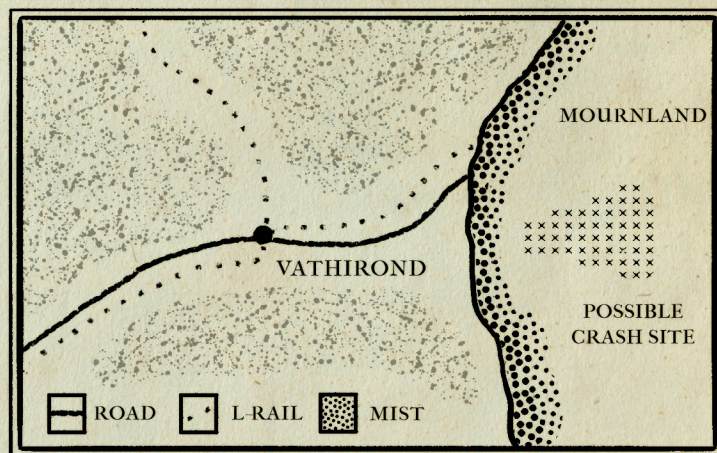


Fig. 1. MAP OF THE LOCAL AREA

FIEND INCURSION?

GROTESQUE INVASION FLEET GROWING IN THE DEMON WASTES

Desolate Remains in Ruins

By OWIN ZUKOV WOKAR

A small expedition force of scouts and settlers recently entered the Demon Wastes to assess the reconstruction of Desolate. Desolate, for those not informed about history, is a former colony that the fiends of the Demon Wastes destroyed several times in recent centuries. However, making their way deeper into the wastes, the scouts encountered a monstrosity that could threaten all of Khorvaire. In light of the recent developments, all resettlement plans have been abandoned.

Gigantic Worm Spawns Flesh Ships

The first reports, acquired by the Korranberg Chronicle, speak of a gargantuan worm from whose mouth spawn floating balls of flesh. Scholars argue that these could be used to circumvent the Demon Waste's wards, bringing a large number of demons, fiends, and worse directly into the Eldeen Reaches or Aundair.

To prevent such tragedy, Aundair's best and brightest mages began remote sensing the area where the worm was sighted. The worm's erratic movements complicate the endeavor, but the mages work day and night. They have confirmed the existence of a large portal inside the worm itself.

Meanwhile, Aundair's queen ushered in a decree to organize and outfit a team of volunteers to enter the Demon Wastes and destroy the worm. House Lyrandar already contributed an airship to the cause, which is on its way to Fairhaven. From there, the coup de main will head out into the unknown.

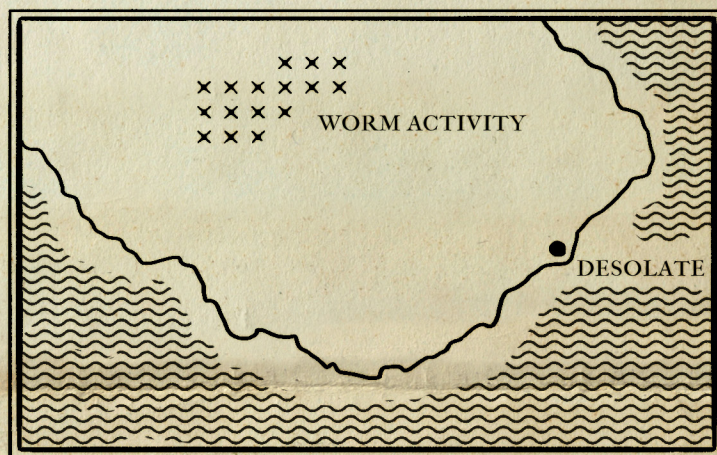


Fig. 1. LOCAL AREA

Horrors of the Demon Wastes

By KALE HUNNI BRONKOWITZ

Ash deserts, rivers of lava, and obsidian spires. The Demon Wastes are an inhospitable place where corrupted, nightmarish beings reign supreme and breed unhindered. Their purpose and origins are shrouded in mystery. Those who travel into the wastes to learn more rarely return. Thankfully, the unfaltering mountain orcs protect us from these monsters. For now.

Unbelievably enough, rumors suggest that among the demonic brutes live mortal beings like me and you. They must eat the flesh of their people, or worse, the flesh of monsters, for nothing will grow in the corrupted wastes.

Only the bravest, greediest, or most insane would travel to these ruined lands in search of adventure or treasure. Why you might ask yourself, would someone even entertain the idea? Endless fields of dragonshards, and the fortune they bring, of course.

GOLD RUSH IN MROR

PROSPECTORS FIND EBERRON DRAGONSHARDS IN SECLUDED DALE

Treasures Buried in Ice

By ALÉ KOIN BOHRER

The northern edges of the Hoarfrost Mountains have become the destination of the daring, destitute, and desperate. Some have returned with enough wealth to retire for life, others will never return at all.

The story began with a dwarven prospector called Brassear, who many thought to be a lunatic. Brassear traveled the mountain ranges, tasting stones and sniffing the wind. He lost most of his eyesight to the bright mountain snow and had to rely on his other senses to find what he was seeking: invaluable dragonshards.

After decades spent searching in solitude, Brassear returned to Lake Home only a few weeks ago. His backpack, made from strange pelts, filled with genuine dragonshards.

Now, ships from Flamekeep, Thaliost, and Stormhome head towards Port Dolor, bringing in equipment and seekers of fortune. A fever took hold of them, which can only be alleviated by the cold mountain breeze!

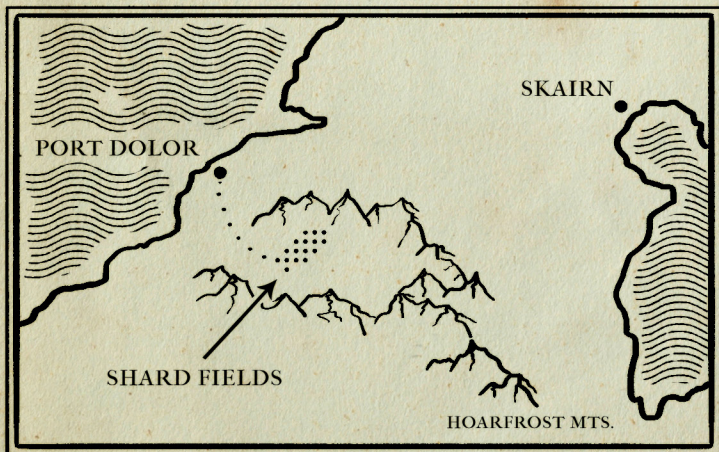


Fig. 1. PARTS OF THE MROR HOLDS

Birth of a Town: Port Dolor

By SVONJE JUN VINJA

Amazing, simply amazing! I am standing here in Port Dolor, a town that did not exist a few weeks ago. Houses made of wood, hide, and stone surround me, built by humans, gnomes, dwarves, halflings, and more. A true gallimaufry of styles and materials! An uninterrupted stream of ships enters Port Dolor's harbor, bringing in new people and materials, leaving with incredible amounts of invaluable dragonshards. What happened here, in such a short timespan, is truly unique.

The Burgomaster Brassear was so kind to speak a few words with me from his office in The Happy Liver, the best alehouse in town, or so I am told:

Svonje: I am so happy that you found time for me! Let us get right to it. How does it feel to be Burgomaster of the fastest-growing town in Khorvaire?

Brassear: Like the plague on me arse! Every damn boy and girl who falls off the boat buggers me about shards and calls me "burgomaster." Just let me drink in peace!

Svonje: What incredible insights! What sets you apart from all the others who failed to find anything worthwhile in the Hoarfrost Mountains?

Brassear: A diehard dedication to proving the smegheads wrong who called me a good-for-nothing nutcase! Who is laughing now, Terry? Are you taking this down properly?

Svonje: Naturally Burgomaster Brassear! Any final thoughts you care to share?

Brassear: Well, my door is always open for anyone with a dry throat or someone in search of a warm bed for the night.

TRIBE OBLITERATED

AN ENTIRE TRIBE OF HALFLINGS FOUND DEAD IN THE TALENTA PLAINS

The White Fang Tribe Is No More

By TILLIA GIANO ZENJI

Bitter news from Gatherhold in the Talenta Plains. According to the reports, an entire tribe of halflings has been found dead by merchants. More than a thousand souls wiped out in the blink of an eye, or so the witnesses claim. According to the account, the halfling camp was flattened, and corpses, as well as other items, buried a foot underground. Rumors suggest that ghosts of evil eras rose to slay the living, but the shamans vehemently deny the proposition.

Lathon Halpum, decorated war hero, calls upon adventurers, experts, and the like to flock to Gatherhold. From there, an expedition shall head to the site of the catastrophe to determine the cause or culprit. After uncovering the truth, the expedition shall swiftly deal with it! Halpum even goes as far as to cover the travel costs of all volunteers, paying from his own pocket.

Ancient Tribes and Customs

If you plan to travel to the Talenta Plains, you should start your journey in Gatherhold, Vulyar, or Irontown.

The halflings have lived in the grasslands for thousands of years. They are the Talenta Plains. The beasts eat grass, the halflings eat the beasts, and finally, the halflings turn to grass again. The only thing disturbing the peace are the creatures of the Mournland, swarming into the plains from the west.

Every so often, the tribes meet in Gatherhold to trade. Otherwise, they are dispersed. During the Last War, the tribes found a common leader in Lathon Halpum. After the Treaty of Thronehold, the federation shattered.

Focus on the Talenta Plains

By UNGOR JO JOFOR

A sea of grass, as far as the eye can see. Clouds, lazily making their way across the land, pulling their shadows along behind them. The earth rumbles when a dozen colorful reptiles rush past you. The sudden blast of wind catches your hat, which is carried away into the vast expanse.

Everything here is brutal and unforgiving, but also natural with its own rugged beauty. Nowhere else can a person feel this free and liberated from the plight of modern, daily life.

The so-called dinosaurs that roam the plains are dangerous indeed. Some would rip the flesh right off your bones! Others prefer the grass but could stomp you in a fit nevertheless. The halfling nomads have domesticated some of these beasts and switch their crib for a saddle not long after entering this world! A truly unique twinning, here on Khorvaire.

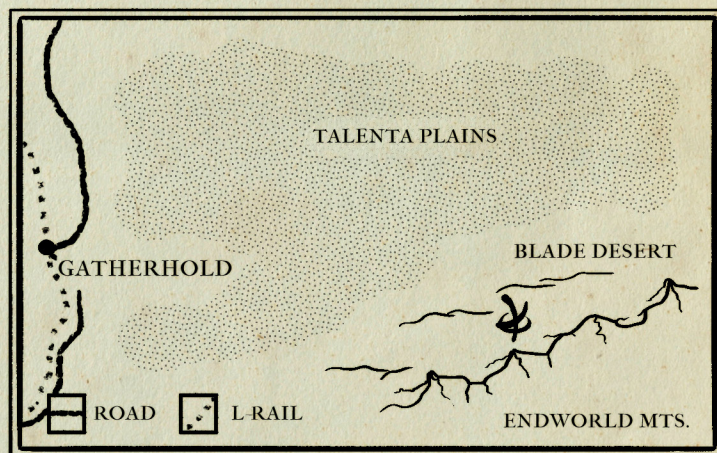


Fig. 1. TALENTA PLAINS

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PART 1: HEADLINE QUESTS

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