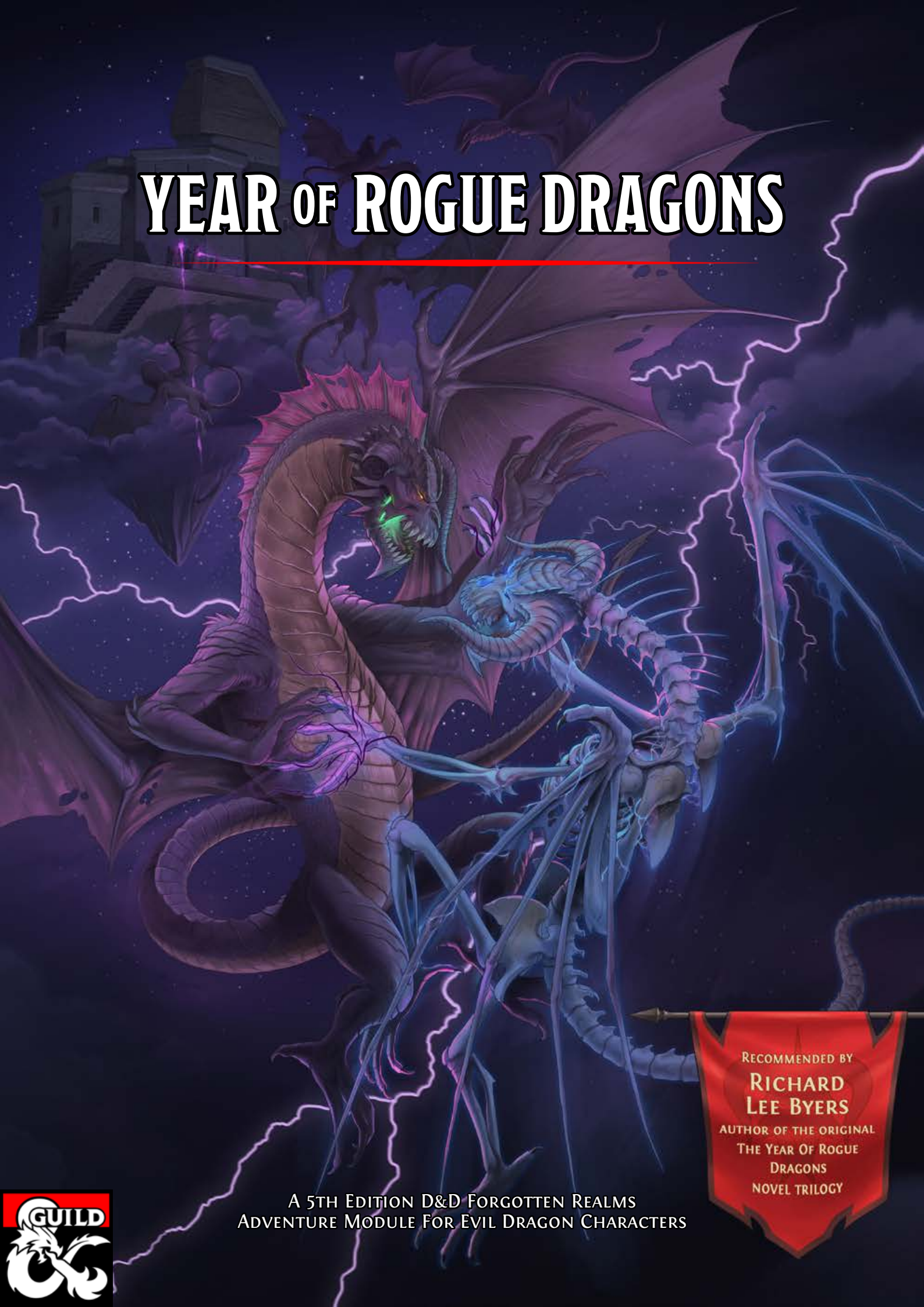


YEAR OF ROGUE DRAGONS



RECOMMENDED BY

**RICHARD
LEE BYERS**

AUTHOR OF THE ORIGINAL
THE YEAR OF ROGUE
DRAGONS
NOVEL TRILOGY

A 5TH EDITION D&D FORGOTTEN REALMS
ADVENTURE MODULE FOR EVIL DRAGON CHARACTERS



CREDITS AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

Author: Gabor Dan
Illustrator: Tamas Baranya
Cartographer: Dungeon Mapster, Tamas Baranya, Creative Coworking
Editor: Tamas Marton

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INTRODUCTION

Year of Rogue Dragons is an adventure designed for four players who take the roles of newly hatched evil chromatic dragons. The story will introduce a specific section of the Forgotten Realms along with its prominent individuals, organizations and a segment of its history. The adventure will draw the players into a conflict between three local factions, and a mystery, which they must solve and use to their advantage in order to eliminate every menace that threatens their life from the onset.

Feel free to continue playing this setting once the adventure is over. There are numerous D&D resources and novels available for the Forgotten Realms and specifically dragons that will help you expand and continue the story.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Living in constant feud, a general trait of all black dragons, Embrurshaile, the eldest of her clutch has slaughtered almost all of her younger siblings who could grow old enough to challenge her, except for one male called Iyrauroth. The younger male retreated from the hate of her elder sister to the deepest forgotten dungeon in the marshes of Thar. The dungeon complex was created by ancient dragons who left it millennia ago. It was later populated and abandoned by the ogre kingdom of Vorbyx. For years Iyrauroth lived the life of a refugee in his own territory of birth and did not dare to expose himself more than necessary, because he knew if Embrurshaile caught news of his presence, she would not rest until he was dead. Carved

on the walls of this long forgotten tomb in draconic language, Iyrauroth found a rare blood ritual that empowered him to create half-dragon spawns from sentient beings. It was a painful and time consuming ritual but it allowed him to use the few transformed creatures he could create to hunt and raid for him. The tactic worked for a couple of decades, but Embrurshaile soon tracked the careless half-dragons back to the lair and in a frantic fight chased off Iyrauroth, who could barely make it out of the dungeon alive. The young black fled south with resignation in his vile black heart, plotting revenge but too afraid to actually act up on his vengeful feelings.

Embrurshaile possessed all of Thar, the Galena mountains and the northern shores of the Moonsea as her hunting grounds, but this was not enough for her. Even though she had already awakened the sorcerous powers of her bloodline in herself, she wanted more, powers unimaginable, a magical potential that could serve her every whim with just the effort of a thought. And she was impatient to do so. She found the description of the ritual his brother used and explored deeper for more of the ancient knowledge in that forgotten dragon-built dungeon, which predated even the first orcs and ogres of the region. Eventually she found what she was looking for in the form of an arcane draconic formula that could make creatures react to and absorb the magical forces of the Weave. The adult black female devised a plan to unleash the ritual that would transform all creatures within miles into Weave-absorbing monsters that she could devour to absorb the magical energies they contained. In her

secret lair she started to experiment and after a few successful attempts she prepared everything to begin the final ritual, including a captured blue dragon wyrmling she planned to use as a sacrificial arcane focus. She could have cast the spell as intended if she didn't underestimate the consequences of her greed for a larger area of effect than required by the ancient regulations. The spell went off but it was far from correct. Embrurshaile unleashed a wave of arcane energy that caused all living creatures within its close vicinity to absorb much more from the Weave than their body could handle. With a massive blast, the black dragon's lair burst and spewed the pieces of Embrurshaile's body out into the marshlands. Iyrauroth felt the ripple of the Weave, which transmitted images of his sister's death to him. He immediately gathered his numerous spawns and returned to his homeland to claim what belonged to him. After over a century of terrorizing Thar and devouring whatever he could, Iyrauroth secluded himself to slumber and to grow.

Centuries later, the Wyrmsmoke Cell of the Cult of the Dragon learned about the gruesome demise of Embrurshaile and the magical experimentation that caused it, and ordered their allied black dragonborn, orc, and ogre tribes to collect the bones of the dead dragon. It took the tribes years of exploring and great lengths of magical investigation by the wizards of the cult, but eventually they have collected every single piece of Embrurshaile's skeleton, which they reinstalled and exhibited in the enormous courtyard of Wyrmsmoke Keep. The remains were only enough for mere reanimation but the cultists wanted to create a true dracolich from it. They have studied a copy of the Testament of Yhorlanglarorl, a tome written by Myrmeen Lhal, Lady Lord of Arabel, based on conversations with the ancient copper dragon loremaster Yhorlanglarorl. The original book is kept by the Harpers but they gave a copy to Yhorlanglarorl, who hid it in a spell-warped lair in Thar. The book confirmed to the cult members that while Embrurshaile's body was destroyed, her soul was trapped by the absorptive effects of the ritual she conducted. What they are missing is the location where the ritual took place, the place where

they would surely find the soul of the black female, which they could reunite with its body to create the dracolich.

Embrurshaile was no fool and she hid her lair well, deep within the mountains. At the moment of her fatal arcane accident, the goddess of chromatic dragons, Tiamat took notice and sealed the lair using an agent of hers, the half-red dragon gynosphinx Mohmitath. Tiamat ordered the gynosphinx to protect the lair and let pass only those who knew what it hides in its depths. Mohmitath has been doing Tiamat's bidding ever since and yet no one has come who had the right answer to her question.



Absent of suitably aged dragons to convert in the region, the Cult decided to wake Iyrauroth after centuries of slumber only a few years ago to introduce him to the teachings of Sammaster and to offer him the benefits of lichdom. The haughty black refused and the cultists have come to regret their course of actions ever since because the black pains them more than what they bargained for.

In 1373 DR, in the Year of Rogue Dragons, exactly at the moment when this adventure starts, Sammaster, the Chosen of Mystra, the lich leader and prophet of the Cult of the Dragon has gone mad and melded its phylactery with the Dracorage Mythal, enfusing the ancient artifact with its life essence, awakening the Dracorage and taking control of its powers. With this arcane rearrangement, the mythal has been dismantled from its focus, the King-Killer Star, and its effects have been made permanent. By unleashing the curse, the lich intends to blackmail all of dragonkind to join his mad vision of dead dragons ruling over Faerûn. He intends to offer them through his long reaching cult its own version of salvation from the endlessly tormenting and continuously intensifying Dracorage that burns the minds of all dragons, by turning every supplicant into a

dracolich. Some dragons will leave Faerûn to other planes of existence to escape the curse, most metallic dragons gather in a secluded valley and choose to weather the rage in a self-induced magical slumber, while others will bend their mighty knee and join the lich in an undead existence of eternity. Whatever choice they make, for now it seems that no dragon can evade the inevitable rage.



THE RAGE OF DRAGONS

The ancient elves, as did all races back then, lived as slaves under the rule of the dragons during the Age of the Dragons. In the northernmost part of Faerûn they built the mighty Dracorage Mythal, a source of focused arcane power that caused all dragons to go into a senseless and uncontrollable rage when its focus, the King-Killer Star, a bright red comet appeared over Faerûn.

The Dracorage, occurring and lasting seemingly random times and over random regions, has caused all metallic and chromatic dragons for millennia to fear this event, which makes them lose control of their own actions. Cities and kingdoms have fallen prey to the wrath of the dragons as a result of the curse every time it has resurfaced, and no cure has ever been found. After countless millennia of exposure to its effects, the dragons of Faerûn consider it part of their draconic nature.

The Dracorage manifests as an attitude shift that causes dragons to lose their intellect and have their basic, primitive instincts surface. Their attitude toward non-dragons alters to the worse as the curse eats their mind away and turns them into nothing more than rampaging beasts hungry for the flesh of other races.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Year of Rogue Dragons has three main chapters, which all have different goals and place in the story as a whole.

Chapter 1. introduces the players to the setting and the life of wyrmling dragons. They will experience the Dracorage and meet Mohmitath, the red half-dragon gynosphinx guarding the entrance to the lower levels of their lair, who will also explain their origin (chosen by the players from several options). Soon they will be introduced to their direct environment as they fly out to feed. This chapter aims to introduce the surrounding lands and creatures inhabiting Thar through some seemingly random encounters. Later on, the characters meet the three major factions of the story: their main nemesis, the ancient black dragon named Iyrauroth, the local cell of the Cult of the Dragon called the Wyrmsmoke Cell, and the local political power, the Zhentarim. During these encounters the players can learn the attitude and motivations of each faction and they also get to interact with them .

Chapter 2. has three subsections in which each faction contacts the players with their own agenda. The motives and goals of each faction will be revealed as they each present three different quests to the players, which they might take, refuse, or use against them. Some of these quests are related to the conflict between these three factions, some of them only serve the given faction's agenda. One of the main goals of this chapter is to deepen the relationship of the players with the factions. The other goal is to allow the players to collect every piece of information needed to lead them to a solution that rids them of Iyrauroth and the Wyrmsmoke Cell, all in one single daring and grandiose final event.

Chapter 3. is the climax of the adventure where the players recover the Heart of Embrurshaile from her ancient lair, before they head to Wyrmsmoke Keep, where the cult will raise Embrurshaile as a dracolich to chase away or kill Iyrauroth. Once the ritual is over and while the two ancient siblings

clash, the players will have a chance to get their hands on the Abate Dracorage spell with which they have been extorted by the cult, and they will also have access to the phylactery of the dracolich, which they can destroy along with the wounded undead dragon.



FACTIONS INVOLVED

LYRAUROTH, „THE WYRM OF THE PEAKS”

This ancient black dragon considers himself the progenitor of a new race of half-dragons but he is never satisfied with the machinations and efforts of his offsprings. A scheming psychopath, lyrauroth revels in inflicting as much suffering as possible wherever his mighty wings take him. He enjoys terrorizing lesser creatures and sometimes, especially when encountering more capable victims, he decides to torture them with fear and use them as agents of terror for years before killing them in a gruesome way for others to witness.

lyrauroth was hiding in fear of her elder sister Embrurshaile, a true megalomaniac of a dragon, for centuries and returned to Thar and the Galena Mountains with his half-dragon children only when he felt a powerful ripple in the Weave, heralding the death of his vile sister. Returning to his old territory in 451 DR, he vanquished the ogre capital of Tharniir and in 572 DR he took off and massacred the orc tribe of Olog the Overking of Vastar.

After these events, lyrauroth lay in slumber for centuries under Thar in the ancient draconic catacombs, only to be awakened by the Wyrmsmoke Cell of the Cult of the Dragon a couple of years before this adventure starts, with promises of eternal life as a dracolich. The ancient black dragon disparag-

ingly refused the opportunity and the riches offered, and for the past years he has been terrorizing the area and its denizens with his surviving half-dragon spawns. Numerous caravans crossing to the cities of Glister, Melvaunt, and Phlan have fallen prey to the Wyrm of the Peaks, who has provoked the ire of both the Zhentarim and the Wyrmsmoke Cell of the Cult of the Dragon. The Zhents accuse the cult of aggravating the situation and focusing the wrath of the dragon on them. A war is brewing between these powerful forces and no one knows when and how it will affect the region.

CULT OF THE DRAGON, THE WYRMSMOKE CELL

The Cult of the Dragons is a sect of power-hungry wizards and evildoers, who follow the prophecies of Sammaster, a lich necromancer who has foretold that the world is going to be ruled by undead dragons. The Wearers of Purple, as their arcanist leaders call themselves, use every and any method to turn all adult or older dragons into dracoliches in order to fulfill this mad prophecy. This small but powerful Cult of the Dragon cell resides in a long abandoned flying cloud giant citadel floating over the western side of the Galena Mountains between Glister and Hulburg, known as the Wyrmsmoke Keep. The cell is ruled by a council of six powerful individuals, most of them permanently nested in the surrounding cities of Mulmaster, Melvaunt, and Thentia. The cult representative merchant lords of the cell benefit from the shortages of supply created by the assaults of the cult on mostly Zhentilar merchant ships and caravans in the area. To carry out these raids, the cell uses local tribes of black dragonborn, progenies of lyrauroth, and individual orc and ogre tribes.

These merchant lords include Kaela Ulsant of Mulmaster, a calculating mistress of Bane from Vaasa, Crenshyl Khodoil of Thentia, a swordmaster of high renown, Delphaeryn Leiyraghon of Melvaunt, a Vaasan necromancer who leads the local Wearer of Purples and her consort, Theldar Hammerfist, a half-orc champion with a functional skeletal right hand. The leaders of the forces kept in

the keep are Dalgar, “Blood of Iyrauroth”, a highly intelligent black half-dragon orc assassin, and his right hand, Orinskar of Thar, an exceptionally aggressive ogre barbarian brute.

ZHENTARIM

The Zhentarim, also known as the Black Network, is a widespread mercenary company and a leading mercantile organization of malevolent, self-serving, and ruthless individuals who do not differentiate with their methods. Lately, the Zhentarim has been taken over from its formerly wizard leaders by a chosen of Bane, the high priest Fzoul Chembryl, who has tightened the structure of hierarchy and rules with an iron fist. Zhentarim agents appear in almost every city on the continent of Faerûn, but they are most active in the Moonsea region where the organization has its center of power in Zhentil Keep, dominating most major cities and the surrounding lands.

The Zhentarim local power figure in the eastern region of the Moonsea is Selfaril Uoumdolphin, the High Blade of Mulmaster. Selfaril is a skilled fighter, a pragmatic man and a brilliant politician, who took his title with the support of the Zhentarim, killing the previous High Blade, the leader of the council of Blades of Mulmaster. He is not too fond of the church of Bane, but doesn't oppose them openly. He married one of the tharchions, a regional civil ruler of Thay, Tharchioness Dmitra Flass of Eltabbar, a powerful illusionist and a candidate for the Zulkir of Illusion of Thay. The marriage opened Thayan resources for the High Blade which he utilizes to maximum effect, balancing carefully between the two empires. Selfaril's right hand, advisor and protector is Thurndan Tallwand, an archmage delegated to his side by the Zhentarim to ensure his safety and success in the region and to oversee and report his activities to the Banite clergy.

Selfaril Uoumdolphin considers Iyrauroth and the Wyrmsmoke Cell as major threats to Zhentilar economic progress in the northern region, but feels fairly safe from them by having the sea separate them from his

armies. He also suspects that the cult has spies in the cities aligned with the Zhentarim, but doesn't know how deeply rooted they are in the cities assigned to him. Selfaril seeks to eliminate both enemies if possible by pitting the two against each other, and he intends to act soon and to do it swiftly.



THAR AND ITS ENVIRONS

Thar, also known as the Great Gray Land, is a rocky, broken moor stretching for hundreds of miles with a harsh climate north of the Moonsea, at the feet of the Galena Mountains. It is inhabited by wild tribes of orcs and ogre who are constantly at war with one another. The Glister Road is the only real path through the cold, foggy swamps and hills of the land.

Thar's orc and ogre tribes were once united centuries ago into one kingdom under their legendary ruler Vorbyx, the First King of Thar, whom both ogre and orc claim as their kin. The remains of their nomadic settlements dot the landscape and attract predators of all kind. One can also find the ruins of abandoned ancient ogre strongholds, dating back to the times when these humanoids were organized into a functional kingdom under Vorbyx. The most effective, newly unified force on this barren and harsh land are the dragonborn, orc, and ogre tribes allied with the Wyrmsmoke Cell. These tribes rarely clash with each other, but rather plunder those tribes who were left out of or refused this alliance with the Wearers of Purple.

The Galena Mountain Range is a cruel and cold place that blocks passage from the east to the lands of Thar. The jagged mountains give home to mostly flying creatures such as manticore, harpies, and wyvern, which fly out to hunt the marshlands or the sea at the southern tip of the range, where they can find food other than their own kin.

The city of Hulburg was destroyed in 1347 DR by an army of orcs in alliance with the Zhentarim. With only a few survivors left, it is nothing more than a ghost town in ruins.

The former capital city of the short-lived human kingdom of Thar, Glister, in its current state is a frontier town of shambling muddy ruins populated by an outpost of Zhentarim forces, there to exploit the remaining mining potential of its ore deposits. The town was built on a massive layer of permafrost, which started to move as the heat of the smithies melted its layers.

Melvaunt, the City of Swords, is a large human citystate led by a handful of ever-scheming merchant families, who have led many wars against other cities in the region but are more interested in their own mercantile success than the city's wellbeing. The city is famous for its metalsmiths and slave trade, and has always opposed the Zhentarim rule.

Thentia is a crude, smaller city in alliance with Melvaunt against the other neighbouring cities of the Moonsea that are allied with the Zhentarim. The city features a huge white marble church of Selune, whose priests are always ready to aid the oppressed. The other power of the city is its arcane guild, which is small, but consists of a dozen or so powerful wizards, mostly fugitives from other parts of Faerûn.



PLAYING AS DRAGONS

As a DM you must create an atmosphere that evokes and simulates the life and motives of chromatic dragons. Dragons are powerful creatures driven by greed and a desire for fame, thinking of themselves as superior to other creatures. They are scheming, they indulge in elaborate plans to further their cause, and they have all the time they need to accomplish their goals.

Dragons are solitary creatures, but in this adventure we utilize the effects of the Rage of Dragons, which creates the urge for dragons to band together as in many localized cases of the Flight of Dragons earlier in the history of the Forgotten Realms. It is fair to assume that dragons would fight over treasure and form a structure of dominance amidst their ranks. Let them do so. They are evil dragons after all.

Try to emphasise these characteristics to your players before starting the adventure and try to guide them accordingly when they make decisions. For the sake of the players' positive experience, try to keep them together as a party and try to set their motivations so that they find a mutual cause rather than tearing each other to shreds. They might have rarely played evil characters and probably never played as dragons before, so a little help will surely be welcome before they get the hang of it.

CHARACTER CREATION

Each color of chromatic dragons has a distinctive feel to them, and each individual dragon also has a different attitude, temperament, and personality, whichever color they are. Try to encourage your players to create these unique distinguishing features for their dragon characters. Read the 5th edition *Monster Manual's* entry on dragons carefully for a detailed description of each color type.

The stat block for each color of dragon in the 5th edition *Monster Manual* differs in value and they grow in power from white, to black, to green, to blue, to red. There's no easy way to balance out a party of mixed dragon types. Here are a few ways to get over this problem.

My players don't mind that the dragon types are of different power levels.

This is one of the two easier solutions. Some of your players might have slightly lower ability scores or damage output, but that doesn't necessarily ruin the game. The more powerful players might protect the lesser

dragons and it also opens up fun role-playing opportunities.

My players want equally powerful characters and they don't mind playing the same color.

Actually this is the easiest and most effective solution. You and your players choose a color and everyone plays the same type of dragon. This would also result in a stronger "family" style role-playing motivation, which is not negligible considering a handful of vicious creatures that need to be kept together by the DM. You can keep each character's stats unique by allowing your players to reallocate 6 points of ability scores from the original set, allowing only 2 points to be added to a single ability score to prevent overpowered stats.

My players mind the power difference and they want to be of different color.

Well, this one is quite hard to solve and requires some D&D math. You will have to equalize the powers of five different dragon types. You will find the biggest difference in HD and ability scores, while natural armor and breath weapon damage is at a fairly similar level. The rest, like attack and damage are similar, with inequalities based on the differences in ability scores. It's not the best idea to go down this path. At the end of the balancing act you would just create the same stat block for all dragons and call them different colors. On the other hand, you could try adding levels to lower HD dragons, but adding 5 levels to a white dragon to equal the HD of a red dragon without levels would make it more powerful than the original red is, and it would be also not realistic to have them hatch that way.

LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

Players will acquire 3 levels of any chosen class during the adventure. They start without a level and gain an extra level at the end of Chapter 1, one additional level during Chapter 2., and the third level at the middle of Chapter 3., before the final scene. Let your players know about this before they choose

their dragon type, abilities, and classes for level progression. Before acquiring the 1st level, encourage and help your players role-play the route to their particular class of choice.

During the level progression, change their stats based on these simple rules which follow the rules set in the "Monsters with Classes" section of the 5th edition Dungeon Master's Guide, found on page 283.

Level 1: Add any class abilities, skill and saving throw proficiencies, but don't add the HP for the class. Add d8 + Con modifier of HP.

Level 2 and 3: Add any class abilities but don't add the HP for the class. Add d8 + Con modifier of HP.

Even at 3rd level their proficiency bonus remains at +2 for all types of dragons regardless of their HD because proficiency bonuses for monsters are calculated from their CR instead of their actual HD.



AGE CATEGORY ADVANCEMENT

Due to the mystical events in Chapter 3., the dragon characters will also advance from "wyrmling" to "young" age category. This changes all their HD from d8 to d10, due to their change in size from Medium to Large. At this point your players will have to reroll their HPs for their existing HDs with d10s and add their Con modifiers for each HD. If a player rolls less than their original HP total (based on the starting d8s), then keep the original HP value. After this has been done, add +9 HD (d10s) for white, black, and green dragons, add +8 HD (d10s) for blue dragons, and add +7 HD (d10s) for red dragons. Add Con modifiers for all extra HDs as well, and recalculate the new hit point total. Add +1 proficiency bonus. The total proficien-

cy bonus at this HD level, with the additional three class levels included, should be +3 for white and black, and +4 for green, blue and red dragons.

Add +4 to their Str and Con, and +2 to their Int and Cha ability scores, and +1 to their natural armor bonus.

Speed types don't change, but their values (if applicable for the color) change to these new values: base speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft. (40 ft. in case of blue dragons only), fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

Recalculate skills and saving throws based on their new ability scores and proficiency bonus.

Senses change to Blindsight 30 ft., Darkvision 120 ft.

Languages now also include Common.

White dragons also gain the Ice Walk special ability.

Change their base bite damage from 1d10 to 2d10, and add two claw attacks with a base damage of 2d6 plus Strength modifier.

Breath weapon areas double, the DCs (based on CR and not HD) are 8 + proficiency bonus + Con modifier. Breath weapon damages change as follows:

- White: 10d8
- Black: 11d8
- Green: 12d6
- Blue: 10d10
- Red: 16d6



EFFECTS OF THE DRACORAGE

The rage slowly seeps into the minds of true dragons and causes them to lose control of their conscious behaviour. Those that succumb completely seek to destroy and pillage every other lifeform and wander aimlessly to satisfy their newfound urges. In their frenzied state they abandon their cunning ways, their tactics, their lairs, and even their hoards.

Once per day, every creature with the “dragon” creature type must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. The Legendary Resistance of adult and ancient dragons does not provide protection against the epic powers of the Dracorage Mythal. Failed saves have the following effects on the characters:

- Each failed saving throw lowers the character's Wisdom ability score by 1 point.
- After the first failed saving throw, every time the character takes damage, they must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw with a DC equal to the damage taken, or become subject to the Barbarian class ability Rage, using the first level Barbarian Rage ability to calculate the effects of the class ability (+2 damage bonus). The character rages for 1 minute after every time the effect starts and it can not be stopped by the character on purpose. There are no limitations on the number of daily occurrences of this effect.
- After losing a total of 5 points from their Wisdom ability score, the character develops a form of indefinite madness with the flaw: “I despise all non-dragons and will not tolerate them in any way.”. As a result, besides the effects it should have in terms of role-playing, all social interaction skill checks with non-dragons are made with disadvantage.
- Once the Wisdom ability score of the character falls below 3, the character develops a new form of indefinite madness with the flaw: “I long to kill all non-dragons.”, effectively anticipating the outcome of any such social encounter.

- When the Wisdom ability score of the character reaches 1, the character rages aimlessly, wandering off to seek non-draconic creatures to destroy.

The Dracorage effect will create a continuous pressure on your players, setting the pace and atmosphere of Chapter 1. Arrange the timing of the first three plot-related encounters so that they suffer a bit from the curse in order for them to later value the temporary remedy that the Cult of the Dragon offers them in form of the Abate Dracorage spell. The Dracorage and its effect on the players can also create great role-playing opportunities.



CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

There could be several ways to explain how and why the chromatic dragon eggs were left with Mohmitath, the half-dragon gynosphinx protector of Embrurshaile's lair. Below you can find some ideas, but also feel free as always, to make up your own one.

HEIRS OF EMBRURSHAILE

Playing a group of black dragons would create a special situation where the players are immune to the breath weapon of the main villain, Iyrauroth, and he is also immune to their breath weapon attacks. These black dragon eggs could be originating from the nest of Embrurshaile, saved by Mohmitath, which gives an extra twist to the story as they are the rightful heirs to the territory once ruled by their mother and now claimed by their uncle.

VENGEFUL BROOD OF KAIOSTREPHISTYLLION

It is possible that Kaiostrephistyllion, a blue dragon from Ulgarth has learned that Embrurshaile has stolen one of her children as a wyrmling to use her as part of her vile ritual. The blue dragon might have brought a clutch of eggs to the wastes of Thar as part of her revenge, hoping her children would take over the realm of the black dragon whose relative once violated her bloodline over a millennia ago.

DIVINE PREPARATION

Mohmitath is an agent of Tiamat, who could have gifted the eggs to the gynosphinx in order to keep him protected. The eggs lay dormant for centuries but the Dracorage has hatched them. Maybe this was the plan of the Dragon Queen from the very beginning as she foresaw their success in their quest against her hated enemies.

TREASURE OF THE UNKNOWING SAGE

A venerable information-hungry loremaster wizard from Halruaa researched Mohmitath and the structure she protects. Thinking he knew every answer a mere sphinx could ask him, he challenged the beast to gain access to a place whose purpose he didn't know anything about. This turned out to be his doom. In his Bag of Holding he carried the eggs that Mohmitath added to his treasure hoard.

FUTURE LOST

A group of younger dragons, a couple, or a single dragon from far could have carried the eggs as their biggest treasure, and left them with Mohmitath for safekeeping as they trusted an agent of Tiamat to protect them, while they planned to fight Iyrauroth. They never returned to collect their future descendants and the black still crunches on their bones.

CHAPTER 1

HUNGER AND RAGE

This chapter contains several encounters for the players to experience the region and its inhabitants. It also introduces them to the three factions that play major roles in the adventure.

THE HATCHING

The adventure starts when the Dracorage reaches the minds of the dragon characters, forcing them to violently writhe with rage. Mohmitath watches the eggs hatch with an expressionless face, knowing and also partially feeling that something terrible has happened. She is immune to the curse since half-dragons keep their original creature type.

You feel a burning sensation in your body, a body you were not even aware of a moment ago. A million sharp dots of pain course through your physical form, a form you sense even with closed eyes, having fangs and wings and a tail, a form enclosed in a bubble of hard material. You suddenly open your eyes and start to struggle to shake off the pain. As you realize that you are awake and alive, you feel a wracking shock in your brain and you react unconsciously by kicking and clawing the walls of your prison. A couple of hits is all it takes and it cracks to release you into a vast chamber made out of stone, which you instinctively recognize. General knowledge of things become more and more clear with every second as ancestral memories start to fill your conscious intellect. You spread your wings and emit a sound that is both an agonizing shriek and an angry roar. The pain starts to fade away as

you crawl your way out of your egg. Around you, other dragons are being born the same way. A large figure, vaguely similar to your kin sits in a relaxed position supported by its hind legs and watches you all emerge. Her head is of a beast with fangs, her form is framed by two huge leathery red wings, her paws and muscular chest are furry, but on its sides it has scales of a red dragon. The creature greets you in a slow and confident, expressionless tone. Her demeanor speaks of wisdom and calculating cruelty. “You are welcome here until you abide my rules. The rules entrusted on me by the Dragon Queen, The Embodiment Of All Evil.”



LAIR OF THE KEEPER

Mohmitath doesn't waste time with formalities and is completely without sympathy or empathy towards the players. She tells them briefly that she tolerates their presence until they abide the rules, tells them about the cave that they can use as their lair, about Thar, and the gateway she protects to which she can only give access to those who know what it hides.

She coldly answers any other questions they might have and then returns to her lair, moving through the illusory wall section and the secret door blocking the passage (see area 1 below), revealing it to the players. The players are left to do whatever they want in the entrance hall of the cave system and can converse with Mohmitath anytime they wish by calling her forth from her lair. She will always be reclusive and give short answers that are to the point.

The pain the characters felt while hatching was due to the Dracorage. Have them roll Wisdom saving throws against its effect and keep in mind that this must be repeated once per day from now on.

If asked about their condition, Mohmitath tells them about the past rages and Flights of Dragons, but she, or any other dragon, knows nothing about its causes and origin, Sammaster's machinations, or the mythal. She also notes that the King-Killer Star is absent from the skies and that the rage always happened when the red comet was visible.

This huge cavern was the lair of Embrur-shaile, but it is now inhabited by Mohmitath as the keeper of the gateway, which leads to the lower levels. The lair is positioned midway on the western side of the Galena Mountains, about 30 miles north of the town of Glistar.

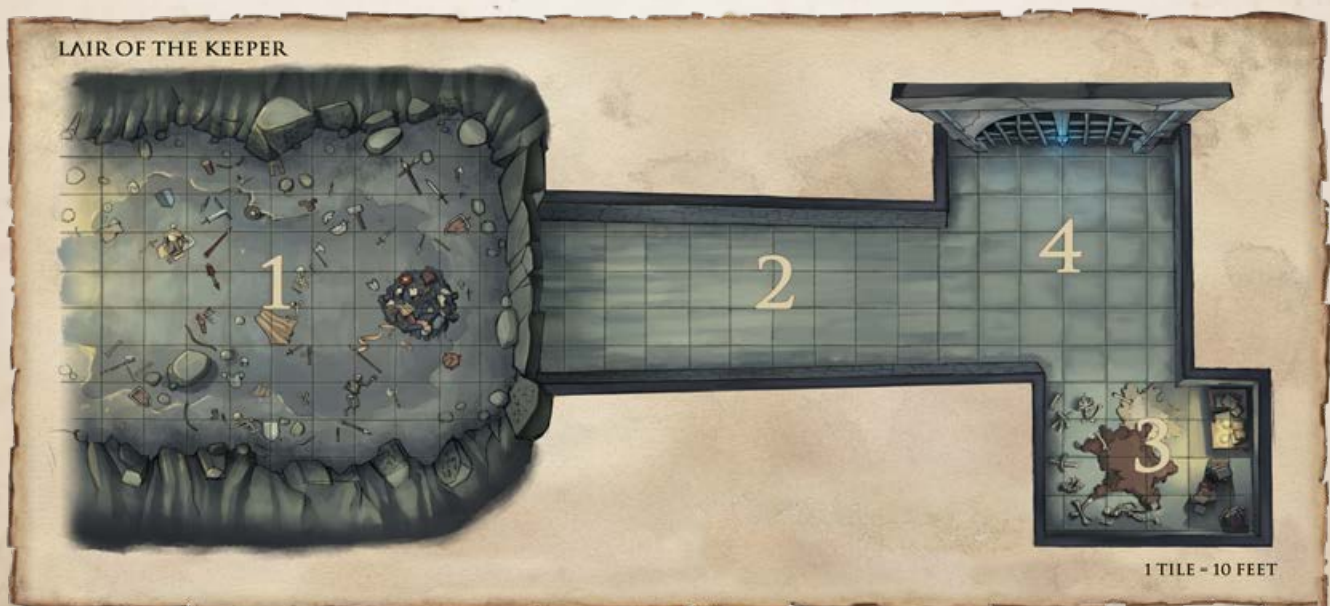
The hidden entrance is in a 20-foot wide crevice with a 30-foot horizontal wall blocking view of the mouth of the entry cave. It is overgrown by bushes and creeping plants, and is only noticeable when carefully searched for. The entrance cannot be seen even from a close distance due to the thick vegetation and the vaguely noticeable slit in the mountainside.

The caverns have the following features:

- Unless noted otherwise, rooms and hallways are 30 feet high.
- Rooms are naturally dark without any lightsource.

1. Entry Hall

This entire hall is under the effects of a permanent Hallucinatory Terrain spell, making it appear as nothing more than a natural featureless cave, effectively hiding the secret door before it can be even located by normal means. Anyone carefully investigating the



cave can make a DC 21 Intelligence (Investigation) check to see through the illusion.

The walls of the cave are decorated with engravings of scenes depicting Embrurshaile's wars against various creatures. The cavern floor is littered with bones and leftover clothes, broken pieces of armor and weaponry that have been rotting there for centuries.

The natural back wall of the cave is a huge sliding secret door, which can be located with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check if searched for after negating or bypassing the illusion hiding it. It can be unhinged (on both sides) by stepping on two switches 10 feet apart and can be pushed (or pulled) to the very end of the downward sloping passage behind it, sliding on two embedded rails on the side walls of the passage.

2. Sloping Passage

A wide and tall, slightly downward sloping passage leads deeper into the mountain. It feels more damp and cold than the entry hall. The floor is scratched by the movement of the secret panel being pushed over it many times over the ages.

3. Mohmitath's Lair

This side cavern is littered with bones and smells of fur and beastly mustiness. **Mohmitath** spends most of her time here, meditating or reading her books piled on an old oak table in the back of the cave.

Books. Mohmitath's books are mostly on subjects covering the ancient history of Faerûn, arcane topics concerning the school of divination, and some ancient tomes bound in a variety of abishai skin on the laws and traits of the lower planes and other infernal religious content. Anyone using these books to research these topics can make their skill check with an advantage.

4. Secured Gateway

A huge iron gate blocks passage at the eastern end of the enormous hall. Its surface is plain and corroded, riddled with centuries old deep scratches, overgrown with lichen

and mold. It looks weathered and it seems that it has already been put back in place after some powerful force forced it out of its frame a long time ago.

When asked about the gate, or when the players approach it, Mohmitath tells the players the following:

"These gates are sealed by the will of the Dragon Queen! Only those can pass who know the answer to a single question of mine. I have protected it for centuries. Many have come to seek entry, old and wise, young and brave, but none of them had the right answer. Those of wisdom walked away, yet those who tried to force their way past me all perished during their foolish attempts. Now... which one will you be?"

If the players ask for the question they get the following response from the gynosphinx:

"Those who seek must know what they are looking for. So answer me this correctly and you shall be granted entry: What lies beyond these gates?"

Even Mohmitath doesn't know the answer to her question. She casts Legend Lore every time someone comes to her with an answer. A generic use of the spell reveals that Tiamat has closed the gate and set the gynosphinx as its guardian, but doesn't reveal the true secret of the place. If Mohmitath learns the truth about what lies beyond the gates, then the spell reveals the complete story of Embrurshaile and her experiment, also proving the truthfulness of the answer. In such a case, Mohmitath can open the gates by uttering a single word that she learns through the Legend Lore spell. Mohmitath viciously attacks anyone trying to force their way through the gate, or those who rob her time senselessly. She is especially fond of using her Lair Action to take annoying visitors to the Plane of Fire, where she watches them burn to death.

Gate. The gate is a huge (30 by 30 feet) fortified iron gate, magically sealed with an arcane lock (adding +10 to its break and lock pick DC) and has AC 19, 120 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and immunity to

acid, cold, fire, electricity, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant and thunder damage. It has damage resistance to piercing and slashing damage. It can be picked with a successful DC 30 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, and it can be forced open with a DC 35 Strength (Athletics) check. The gate blocks all dimensional or ethereal travel in a 200-foot radius except for the one initiated by Mohmitath's lair powers.



MISCELLANEOUS ENCOUNTERS

The players will eventually leave their lair to hunt for food and to inspect the surrounding lands. The following encounters can take place in any order. When they first exit the cave read them the following paragraph.

The climb on the wall blocking the exit from the cave system is not a difficult one. Once you reach the thick vegetation at a height of about 30 feet, you wriggle through the seemingly impenetrable layer of canopy, only to emerge into a blindingly bright environment. Before you lies a sunlit, bare rocky mountain side that slopes into an endless marsh full of bogs, with some hills dotting its confluent grey and black surface and barely any trees that rise from the marsh. Behind you, you see the rocky slope of a steep icy mountain wall that rises into the clouds. Harsh, cold winds blow under your wings as you take to the air.

Let the players explore a bit uninterrupted and let them hunt and feed on wildlife such as giant frogs, scorpions, spiders, lizards and snakes, raccoons, birds, or even monsters like owlbears, otyughs, or even the occasional small bands of tribal orcs, ogre, troll, or the humans that inhabit the surrounding area. Although most of the common creatures the

players might encounter in the region are not a threat to flying creatures, it adds to the flavor of the land if you introduce them as part of the local fauna.

You can also use the following random encounter table. Roll once every day on a d20, if the result is 16 or higher, there is an encounter.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 01-05 | A scouting party of 2d6 wounded orcs are returning home after a clash with another tribe. Each orc has 5 hit points of wounds. |
| 06-10 | A family of 2d4 giant goats is feeding on the scarce vegetation. |
| 11-15 | A group of 1d6 ice mephits escaped from a malfunctioning summoning circle located in an icy cave that used to be the sanctuary of a priestess of Auril. The magical portal continuously releases new ice mephits that are freezing up the bog around the mouth of the cave. |
| 16-20 | The dead remains of 1d4 orcs lie on the ground, their bodies covered in wounds made either by natural, or crafted weapons (your choice). |
| 21-25 | A 1d4 swarm of insects flies towards the players. They are hungry for blood. |
| 26-30 | A family of 3 brown bears are drinking at a small pond. |
| 31-35 | 1d6 giant spiders are feeding on a few giant toads. |
| 36-40 | A group of 2d4 orc ghouls are running on all fours. One of them still carries a potion of healing and 23 gp in its belt pouch. |
| 41-45 | A band of six harpies try to lure any lifeform they can to themselves with their song, from the depths of a large cave where they sit atop high rocks. Once anyone enters, the harpies shut a wooden portcullis (AC 17, HP 30) behind them to entrap their victims. |

46-50 1d4 giant boars are sleeping under a large bush.

51-55 2 male giant elks are fighting for dominance.

56-60 A group of 2d4+1 ogres are carrying some food back to their village. One of them is a shaman (cleric of Vaprak) of 1st level. It has 67 hit points and the following spells memorized (spell save DC 10): cantrips: guidance, resistance, sacred flame; 1st-level: bane, shield of faith.

61-65 A flock of 1d4 perytons fly near the players. They are hungry and reckless.

66-70 Three Zhentarim veterans are making their way to the next settlement. They try to hide, and when confronted defend themselves the best they can. They use cover to avoid breath weapons and use their heavy crossbows. They have 3d100 gp shared amongst them.

71-75 A northern giant reptile (use the giant crocodile monster entry) moves slowly through some boggy terrain.

76-80 A hill giant is fighting two trolls over the remains of a few giant elk.

81-85 A chimera flies up to protect its lair. In its lair there is 42 gp in a boot along with a half eaten leg, a book titled *The Interstellar Traveler*, and a beautifully carved ivory walking stick with an obsidian in its pommel worth 120 gp.

86-90 A lone, drunk, and aggressive stone giant is wandering aimlessly. It has disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks.

91-95 A wyvern spots the players and swoops down to attack. It has succumbed to the Dracorage and starts raging when damaged.

96-100 Two frost giants have ventured down from the icy peaks of the mountains. They both have one level of exhaustion and only 118 hit points.

The following set encounters can be used anytime, in any of the chapters during the adventure. They don't contain any major plot references, but provide a general sense of the threats of the region and introduce some of its inhabitants in more detail. These encounters will bring a bit of randomness and an occasional break from the main course of actions of the adventure if you add them between main adventure plots and missions.



WINGS AND STINGS

Use this encounter anytime the players fly over the moors of Thar or the Galena Mountain, where they will encounter two **wyverns** out to hunt. Wyvern, also of the dragon type, are subject to the Dracorage, which makes them more beastlike (depending on how many days have passed since the Dracorage started) than usual for these cunning predators. Make sure you roll Wisdom saving throws for them every time they take damage to see if they start raging. Also factor in the high speed (fly 80 feet) and Large size of the wyverns when running this encounter.

Wyvern's nest. The wyverns' nest is far from their current location, but a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that the yellow resin on both of their legs suggests that they frequent an area on foot, which is covered with oxidized iron rich mud. These yellow muddy areas can be found in a 10 mile area around the town of Glister, and are clearly visible from a great height. With a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check the players can spot the rocky formation where the wyverns built their nest.

They keep the rotting, mostly eaten remains of three orcs in their nest. One of the orcs, a priestess of Luthic, has two bone plates in her belongings, both inscribed with the spell cure wounds on it, which can be used as a scroll. They also have an overall treasure of 7 semi-precious gemstones, each worth 15 gp, three daggers, three studded leather armors, and a set of bone pipes.

GIANT OF A PROBLEM

Use this encounter anytime the players are within their lair. With a great thump, a careless and sick ettin falls into the crevice of the cave while descending the mountain. It tears through the vegetation and lands on its back, taking 10 points of damage from the fall. It stands up, roaring angrily at its misfortune, and with its darkvision it soon spots the dragons only to attack them without hesitation. The ettin is infected with the disease called sewer plague and has one level of exhaustion. Anyone touching it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or contract the disease. The ettin has no treasure besides the weapons it uses.

VORTEX OF MADNESS

Thar is riddled with strange spots of arcane anomalies where random magical effects manifest. In this encounter the players tumble into a region where suddenly strong winds emerge out of nowhere and quickly form many thin cones of tornados that zig-zag around the players. Have all the players roll a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw to see if they can maneuver between the cones without touching any of them. Anyone who fails this saving throw suffers 2d6 damage from the flying debris hitting them, and also feels a mind crunching sensation that acts as a confusion spell with the duration of 10 rounds if the character fails a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. A player that rolls an effect that results in not moving or not taking any action that round starts to fall and is automatically hit by the tornado vortex that round, taking the damage and making a save again against the confusion effect. A player falls 100 ft. per round, taking the appropriate damage for the fall depending on how

high it was. To calculate a random height at which the player was travelling, roll 3d10 and multiply the result by 10 feet.



LOST PIRATES

Ten pirates (use the spy monster entry), the crew of the Cheeky Mermaid, a pirate ship currently anchored near the shores of the Moonsea at Thentia, wander the moors of Thar hopelessly, looking for the treasure of their captain whom they have killed out of greed a couple of days ago. According to their knowledge, their captain had hidden a treasure chest full of loot he didn't share with his crew, at the foot of the Galena Mountain. The pirates have been following an inaccurate treasure map for days now and are very frustrated with their venture. When they see the dragons they decide to abandon their plan and try to follow the players back to their lair to rob them. Make group checks for their Dexterity (Stealth) skill against the player's Wisdom (Perception) skill to see if the pirates remain unnoticed. They continue to follow the players even if they are spotted (and if they can keep track of them) as they trust their numbers and desperately hope to return to their ship with some sort of treasure.

The map they carry has a few distinguishable landmarks marked on it. There is a trail drawn on it that leads in zigzags from the last landmark, with the distances written in elvish. The pirates have tried to recalculate the elvish measurement system into their own metrics, but the numerator they used was a wrong number and this caused their troubles. The right calculation can be solved with a DC 14 Intelligence ability check, which can lead the players to the area where the treasure was buried next to an enormous rock. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) skill check reveals the exact location of the hidden treasure chest that can be dug out in a few minutes.

Treasure chest. The chest is of old oak wood. When opened it sprays some contaminated water in every direction, spreading the disease called Cackle Fever on any humanoid within 5 feet of the chest. The trap, which doesn't effect the dragon characters, can be spotted with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) skill check. On the inside of the lid there's a sentence painted with red paint, saying "May this be your last laugh!". The chest contains 4 potions of healing, 2 potions of growth, 2 potions of resistance (necrotic), a wand of magic detection, a zaphire worth 75 gp, a ruby worth 120 gp, and 732 gp.



FUMES OF DEATH

The players spot three dead wild ox while flying over the marshes. They lie in the muddy shallow waters, their blue tongues hang out their mouths, and they show no signs of any violent causes of death. These ox died due to an air vent that leaks poisonous gases from below ground. These air vents also erupt from time to time. When the players fly closer, roll 1d6 to determine how many rounds are left until the next eruption. If they are still near the carcasses at the time of the eruption, they are subject to the poisonous gases.

The gas deals 1d10 poison damage to anyone within a 30 foot radius if they fail a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. Anyone failing this save also acquires the poisoned condition. The effects of the gas keep damaging the subjects every round for 1d10 poison damage, even if they leave the area. Each poisoned character can try to end the effect every round by succeeding on the initial saving throw. The ongoing damage and the poisoned effect lasts for 1 minute.

ANNOYING ADVENTURERS

The players spot a band of four noisy adventurers passing through the swamps of Thar. They are not making their presence a secret and are loudly mocking each other, drinking liquor, and laughing confidently. They left Melvaunt two days ago to find a notorious troll chieftain that captured the wife of a wealthy merchant while traveling from Thentia to Melvaunt. The troll is impossible to track in the marshes, but the reward was so high, 3000 gp, that the group tried nevertheless. Their only chance of finding the troll and thus the woman, is the group's mage and his locate creature spell, which might lead them to the wife of the merchant if they get within 1000 feet of her. They will search for another three days before turning back to Melvaunt. Every day they have a 10% chance of getting close enough to catch the troll. If they do, then play out the fight between the party and the troll with its two displacer beasts. The party spends their nights with one of them guarding the others who sleep and changing shifts every 2 hours. The mage always casts an alarm spell before going to sleep.

Adventurers always mean treasure and dragons know this instinctively. Let your players decide if they want to confront the party or not. The adventurers will protect themselves and will try to chase off or kill the players until two of their party members fall dead, in which case the other half of the party tries to escape. The adventuring party is composed of the following individuals.

- Fraopris Gertybald, male human **mage** who carries a wand of magic missiles, a scroll of fireball, a scroll of dispel magic, a potion of healing, 262 gp, and has the following change in game statistics: Instead of shield he has memorized alarm, and instead of ice storm, he has memorized locate creature.
- Daestina Wynraeil, female human **veteran**, who carries a +1 longsword (attack +6, damage d8+4), a potion of climbing, a potion of healing, a silver hair comb (50 gp), and 175 gp.

- Kramdren Stoneflagon, male dwarf **vet-eran**, who carries a silvered battle axe, two potions of healing, 45 gp, and has the following change in game statistics: dwarven racial traits.
- Xazro the Limp, male human **assassin**, who carries two potions of invisibility, and 412 gp.

SOULS OF THE UNFORGIVEN

An orc cleric of Shargaas, the orc deity of darkness, night, stealth, thieves, and the undead, has taken up the responsibility of cleansing his tribe from the weak. He started by beheading the firstborn son of the chieftain of his tribe, who led a warband that failed to defeat the ogres that were threatening their tribe. The chieftain did not approve the actions of the cleric and his three acolytes, and had them slowly tortured to death over several weeks by the whole tribe, which they, from their point of view, tried to protect.

The anger and anguish of the cleric found its way to Shargaas as he cursed the tribe with revenge and the promise of death. The night he died his soul emerged as a **wraith** that immediately killed the acolytes and as the morning sun rose over the tribe's huts there was no single living creature in the camp. Ever since then, the wraith and seven **spectre** minions haunt the rotting remains of the tribal territory.

This encounter happens only at night. Describe to the players the remains of the orcish tribal village, which is composed of rotting tents, torn totem poles, and some long dead remains of three dozen orcs and some ogre who later came to investigate. The incorporeal undead, who partially resemble their orcish selves, fly out to devour the life essence of any creature that comes near their domain.

The orc village barely had any wealth and what was left was looted during daylight hours, so it has no treasure to offer.

ANGRY COCKATRICES

A little hut stands under a lonely, sagging, blackened tree in the shallow swamps on a piece of dry land. The door hangs loose and its windows are mostly broken. A family of six **cockatrices** has made their nest in this abandoned shelter. If the players investigate, they attack viciously, protecting their territory.

The house was the hideout of a notorious werewolf raider who was tracked down and defeated by the Zhentarim a few years ago. His rotting skeleton litters the floor, picked white by the insects long ago. His bag of holding is a featureless greyish brown sack that lies on the floor with other debris, such as a shovel, two chairs, a dirty blanket, a broken hooded lantern, some pottery, and a dagger, which are all covered with the excrement of the cockatrices. Explain the scene to the players and reveal the bag only if they cast detect magic. The Zhentarim had no wizards to reveal the bag, so now the players might have a chance to do so.

Treasure. The bag of holding contains a dozen silver utensils (4 gp each), a golden chalice inlaid with platinum (190 gp), 15 small diamonds in a velvet sack (30 gp each), a silver dagger with a sizeable emerald in its pommel (350 gp), and a little locked iron box that holds 56 pp issued in Impiltur.



PLOT RELATED ENCOUNTERS

After, and in between miscellaneous encounters, you should add the following encounters which foreshadow the upcoming events of the adventure.

These encounters are important parts of the adventure as the rest of the story is built on the relations set forth through them.

THE BLACK SPAWNS

As the players fly through the realm, out hunting or on the return to their lair, they spot four black-skinned ogre with black draconic features, carrying the large body of an unconscious bulette on a lengthy rod over their shoulders. These ogre are black **half-dragon ogre bolt launchers**, spawns of Iyrauroth, carrying the still living bulette back to their master's lair only to be transformed into a half-dragon spawn.

If they spot the players, they try to eliminate them if they have the chance, as they expect some sort of reward for killing other dragons for the Wurm of the Peaks. If they have no chance to capture, or kill all or some of the players, they try to avoid them and will rush to bring news of dragon intruders to their master. In either case Iyrauroth comes to investigate, using his Ring of Invisibility, either because his spawns did not return, or because he is brought news of dragons in his territory.

This encounter should happen before "The Unseen Menace" encounter. You can add some other encounters in between to reflect the time it takes Iyrauroth to learn about the players.



THE UNSEEN MENACE

Iyrauroth's ogre spawn might have returned to him with news about the players, or they might have gone missing, prompting the wurm to explore what happened to them only to find the marks of dragons on the carcasses of his minions. In either case Iyrauroth starts to insistently patrol a large area for days, using his Ring of Invisibility, and waits patiently until he eventually finds the players flying out over the moors or the mountainside. He can spot them from a great distance thanks to his legendary perception. The Wurm of the Peaks doesn't tolerate any other dragon within his domain, an attitude that runs in his family. Once he has found the players, he keeps following them from a distance and waits until they reveal their lair. He is relieved to see that the trespassing dragons are only wyrmlings and he plans on using them for his own cause as long as he can. Iyrauroth relies on his well-proven method of terrorizing subjects until they are subjugated into submission.

Iyrauroth never knew about Embrurshaille's secret lair. He enters the caves stealthily and invisibly, then appears, making the best use of his Frightful Presence ability. Read the following to the players when this scene happens:

Out of nowhere comes a rumbling roar and the sounds of enormous wings spreading and flapping, pushing a massive blast of cold air in your direction. You turn your head to the entrance of the cave and where there was nothing a moment ago, now rises the gigantic form of a vicious black dragon roaring thunderously, acid splashing from its huge jaw. A dreadful chill runs down your spine as you feel cornered and overpowered by the deadly beast. Fear makes you unable to look away as the giant black starts to address you in a deep raspy voice. "I am your doom, Iyrauroth, Wurm of these Peaks! Whose offspring are you maggots?"

The ancient wurm, also affected by the Dracorage, is very short tempered compared even to his normal temperament. He doesn't care much for answers, except if they tell him his sister's name, in which case his en-

joyment over the possibility to exact revenge on his sister's long lost offsprings makes him want to subjugate and eventually kill the players even more. He also does not explore the seemingly featureless cave and because of his carelessness he doesn't even have the chance to discover the illusion hiding the secret door to the passage.

Mohmitath remains silent and does not emerge from the passage. She is unaffected by Iyrauroth's entry to the cave as it is not part of her mission, nor it is her responsibility to protect the players. If the players reveal the passage and lead Iyrauroth to Mohmitath, the gynosphinx remains calm and asks the question of the gate from the ancient wyrm, but does not reveal the nature of the place to him except for the fact that Tiamat has placed her here. Iyrauroth understands and feels the powers the gynosphinx has over the place, he is also cautious with a servant of Tiamat, and does not dare to attack her or force entry through the gate. He leaves grudgingly and orders the players to follow him to fulfill his first assignment for them. Iyrauroth is no fool. He intends to use the players to find out the secrets of the place and plunder it if possible. If he discovers Mohmitath and the gate, he will continuously interrogate the players on this topic and tries to keep track of what they find out about it later, in order to use it to his own benefit.

Once the players agree to do his bidding, he continues with the following threats:

"You worms shall do my bidding and make sure that I find you useful, or else will I eat you alive! You will leave my spawns alone and serve me as I please. I will return to you when I have found use for you, and when I do, you'd better be around! I don't intend to search the moors for you wriggling maggots again. Don't test my patience!" With a threatening roar the ancient black dragon disappears as if he was never there. You can

hear him climb out of your cave and taking to the air with heavy strokes of his wings.

It would please Iyrauroth if any of the players refuse, or raise their tone, as he would have the chance to flaunt his might even more. He doesn't hesitate to slap the character in question with his tail to punish them. Don't forget to check for the rage effect of the Dracorage to kick in for any wounded character if they have already lost at least 1 point of Wisdom due to the Dracorage. A raging character can't stop attacking the ancient wyrm until the effects wear off, which will lead to the character being knocked unconscious by the attacks of the ancient dragon. Iyrauroth continues to beat the players until they are all completely in line with his demands, but will not kill them.







THE PURPLE CARAVAN

A large caravan of three wagons is on its way from Melvaunt on the Glistar Road, but its final destination is not the rundown mining town, but a rarely traversed path many miles south of it, leading higher up the mountain to its peaks where the flying citadel of Wyrmsmoke Keep can be found. When the caravan left Melvaunt, its human crew acted as local merchants and hired guards. In truth they are all members of the Wyrmsmoke Cell, the local cell of the Cult of the Dragon, on their way to deliver resources such as food, water, timber, metalware, and weapons to the keep. The caravan soon expanded as it met more orcish and dragonborn tribal warriors serving the cult, who joined them to provide further protection along the route. The caravan crew consists of 4 **initiate cult wizards**, 1 human **thug**, 6 human **bandits**, 10 **orcs** and 8 **dragonborn barbarians**.

The players can spot the caravan from a great distance and it's easy to tell that it is accompanied by two dozen armed figures.

Give them some time to figure out what to do (if anything) with the caravan and the loaded wagons, which might give them a tingling sensation of a promise of possible treasure at hand. After some time, whether the players are in the middle of an action with the caravan or not, roars of monstrous beasts can be heard from the distance, as two **Zhentarim skymages** on the back of their **manticores** swoop down on their pursued targets.

The skymages were following the traces of the Zhentarim contraband weapons and were spying on the mages and the thug leading this caravan on behalf of Selfaril Uoumdolphin, the High Blade of Mulmaster. They were ordered to set an example for the cult-

ists if they find proof of their illegal activities and their leeching on Zhentarim resources.

Each Zhentarim skymage arrives with one **air elemental** already conjured. They send their elementals to destroy the initiates first, then move them onto the rest of the guards. They keep concentrating on their conjure elemental spell until something else threatens them, in which case they let go of the spell to have the elementals rampage freely and cast the rest of their offensive spells from high above. In the meantime, they command their manticores to shoot their tail spikes to kill as many of the cultists as they can.

The cultist thug and the bandits separate themselves from the fray and keep shooting at the Zhentarim Skymages with their crossbows, while the apprentices, the orcs and dragonborn fight the elementals first, then focus their attacks on the skymages.

Play out the scene, make it cinematic, and if you and your players feel good about it, play out the fight between the two parties round by round. You can also give your players some of the stat blocks of either side and let them join in with the rolls and keeping track of how the confrontation unfolds. If your players don't enjoy playing NPCs even for a short fight, or if you don't want to spend too much time on this scene, then feel free to decide who wins and just describe the outcome of the battle to your players.

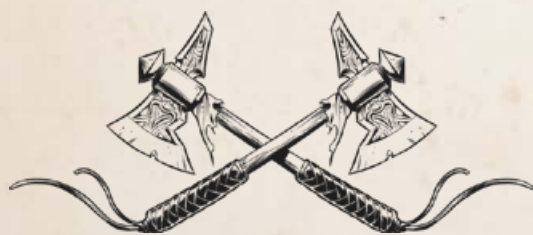
If the skymages succeed in their mission, they land to inspect the cargo and take the weapons and the painting with them. In this case roll for both skymages to see if they find the hidden cache of gold.

If the cultists defeat the Zhentarim they take their belongings and continue on their path. If the players choose to follow them, ask them roll a group check of Dexterity (Stealth) against a passive Perception of 11 of the cultist caravan. If they fail, the caravan stops and the mages and the dragonborn come to investigate. If they succeed, they can follow the cultists to a plateau where they stop to unload their cargo. Soon two Wearers of Purple arrive from the clouds above, flying down in order to cast levitate

spells on large bundles of cargo, with which they slowly disappear into the clouds. If the players pursue, they can catch a glimpse of the immense floating Wyrmsmoke Keep. Let them decide how to handle this. You can find a detailed description of the keep in Chapter 3.

The opposing factions react to the players' approach depending on who they have sided with. Both the Zhentarim and the cultists fight them if attacked.

Wagon cargo. The most valuable item carried by the caravan is a large painting, titled "The creation of solitude", depicting Embrur-shaile as she defeats a green dragon in the skies above the Galena Mountains. It's worth 500 gp for the right buyer. A hidden compartment in one of the wagons can be found with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check, hiding a leather bag containing 452 gp, the profit from the latest trade deals, which was sent by Delphaeryn Leiyraghon from Melvaunt to Dalgar in Wyrmsmoke Keep. Most of the metalwork and the weapons, as well as the crates they are carried in, are marked with the now broken wax seals of the Zhentarim. The metalwork consists mostly of pots, plates, some cauldrons, 4 manacles, buckets, and similar mundane metal equipment. The weapons cache is made up of 24 heavy steel shields, 37 long swords, 18 battle axes, 14 short swords, 23 heavy crossbows and 380 bolts.



CHAPTER 2 FORCED ALLIANCES

This chapter sets the events of the adventure in motion through nine different quests initiated by the three main factions. During these quests the players will get more involved with the factions and will learn how to solve the problems this mostly unintended involvement creates. The quests are designed to be played in a mixed order, using the consecutive quests from each faction after the other. This will ensure that the players build up their knowledge on the matters at hand gradually, and by the end they will know how to play their cards in order to eliminate the threats at their throats. Make sure you play the Zhentarim quest “Leave no one behind” as one of the last quests, because it leads directly to Chapter 3. Any quests after that one will be purely optional. The suggested quest order is the following:

1. Delegation in purple
2. The eye from the deep
3. A Talon of Justice
4. Ritual of blood
5. The last pieces of the puzzle
6. The necromancer’s villa
7. End of promises
8. Leave no one behind
9. The wyrm must die

The characters should be level 1 when starting Chapter 2.



CULT OF THE DRAGON QUESTS

The Wyrmsmoke Cell learned about the players after the caravan incident, or they are simply aware that a group of wyrmling dragons are flying over Thar lately. The dracolich ritual works only on adult or ancient dragons, but the cult wants to nurture the opportunity and lure younger dragons to themselves with promises of eternal life and dominance over the world. They are also prepared to use them through blackmail, especially since Sammaster has released the Dracorage on Faerûn again. The new outbreak of the curse has given the cult the opportunity to provide temporary salvation to the exact problems they have created. And such a remedy comes at a price. The players will eventually feel the vulnerability this situation imposes on them and should break free if they don’t want to live the rest of their lives as pets of some scheming cultists.

DELEGATION IN PURPLE

The Wyrmsmoke Cell has decided that it is time to win the confidence of the players and give them an offer they probably won’t refuse. A delegation comes to the players’ lair, its location revealed to them through divination magic and careful tracking. The delegates are led by a confident and charming **Wearer of Purple** named Emos Razkol, who is accompanied by three **initiate cult wizards** trembling with fear. This composition is on purpose as the cult wants to show respect through a charming diplomat, but also wants to play on the ego of dragons by

sending three young members who honestly fear them.

Read the players the following text when the delegation arrives:

You hear the sound of soft chimes and coins jingling from outside your cave, growing a bit louder with every moment as if it was coming closer to the entrance pit. After a few moments you make sure that somebody has come to your lair and is now standing outside, waiting. A couple of more seconds pass and you hear the accentuated tone of a middle aged man calling to you from outside in Draconic. "Be praised oh mighty dragons, proud children of Tiamat the almighty, devourers of worlds and bringer of death. We bring you gold, gems, and magic as gifts and humbly ask for not more, but to let us tell you who we are and why we, such inferior creatures, have come to disturb the peace of such magnificent beings as yourself."

If the players investigate read the following:

As you emerge from your lair you see four humans standing on the rocks of the mountainside. Their leader, bowing long and deep before you as he sees you, is a clean-shaved male dressed in a purple robe with a heavily embroidered sleeve bearing a bones-and-skulls motif. Several feet behind him are three younger humans in featureless winter clothing and cloaks, one female and two males, looking nervous and fearful. You can smell their stench of human sweat even from where you stand.

Emos Razkol speaks humbly and with caution, playing on the ego of the dragons, and introduces themselves as delegates of the Cult of the Dragon. He explains that members of their cult, as its name also says, have recognized the absolute power held by dragons and have dedicated their life serving them in order to reinstate the Age of Dragons, the world dominance of dragonkind. He also boasts about their extensive network, their numbers, and resources, and the arcane powers their leaders, the Wearers of Purple hold. He puts these facts in a context that ensures the listener that their efforts are only in support of dragonkind. He doesn't

speak about the prophecy as of yet, as he knows that it won't be in his lifetime before these wyrmling dragons could be offered lichdom. He does tell about Sammaster and the Wyrmsmoke Keep if asked about them.



After the introduction he presents the gifts they have brought to please the players. He orders his apprentices to bring forth a chest, which they open with shaky hands and pale faces, presenting each gift. The chest contains 1000 gp, a selection of small gems worth 1000 gp, an alchemy jug, a brooch of shielding, a cloak of protection, and a pearl of power. Once he feels secure and that he has the players' attention, he tells them about the curse, which he says was brought on dragonkind by the "wretched elves" who wanted to break free from the rule of dragons to end the Age of Dragons. He states that unfortunately there is no permanent cure, but quickly adds that the cult has researched a spell that suppresses the effects of the curse for several days and also provides protection from its effects.

He presents four potions of Abate Dracorage spell which he gives to the players.

Allow the players, if they haven't asked for it so far, to roll for a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) skill check in order to evaluate the motivations of the delegates. Success indicates that Emos Razkol is honest about what he is saying, but he is hiding partial details. It is also crystal clear that the initiates are all scared to the bone.

If the players drink the potions they immediately feel their blood pressure lowering, their heartbeat slowing down, their minds elevated, as if a weight has been lifted from their body and soul, temporarily freeing them from the effects of the curse. Emos Razkol has intentionally brought potions that last only three days. The spell com-

pletely eliminates the madness effect of the rage, the raging effect when the player is damaged, eliminates the need for the daily Wisdom saving throws, but does not cure the Wisdom damage. When the spell's duration expires, the daily Wisdom saving throws become necessary again.

Once the potions have been consumed read the players the following:

Emos Razkol smiles as he watches you experience the effects of the potions, then bows slowly and theatrically as his smile turns into an evil smirk. "Mightiest of all living, the magnificence of creation itself, oh proud dragons! You must understand that such an arcane solution requires much effort and a lot of resources from part of the Cult of the Dragon. We would like to humbly ask you to be judicious with your short-lived servants, who are nothing more than than the ants in the mud under your feet, and help us in return of our heartily promised support in such difficult times." He looks up from his bowing posture, still leaning forward, never dropping the smile and continues, while his apprentices slowly take a step back.

"Our request is more of a begging for assistance and yet another offer of wealth, then anything else. There are two Zhentarim ships out on the Moonsea, near Thentia, bound for Mulmaster. They carry valuable goods. With your powerful strike we could send them to the bottom of the sea, but not before you plunder them to your own pleasure and sole benefit. We would not dare to think of asking for a share of the treasures, of your treasure, we only want them..." He straightens his posture before



finishing. "...dead." He stops for a moment, measuring your reaction, and continues. "These spells will only last a mere three days, but I will be back before the spells end, and bring more, longer lasting potions if..." He pauses again dramatically. "If I was not upheld by some Zhentarim from those ships." He smiles widely and bows slowly again. "I am honored that you have listened to this modest message from the Cult of the Dragon, and please enjoy our gifts, with which we will keep pampering you as a sign of our utmost appreciation and admiration. I wish you a good day masters, and see you soon." He finishes his speech and slowly retreats with a smile along with his apprentices, all bowing until they are out of view on the mountainside.

The cultists try to flee if attacked. Emos Razkol casts dimension door and takes one initiate with him, the rest simply run. Emos Razkol does not know how to create the potions as this secret was shared by the leaders of the cult only with Delphaeryn Leiyraghon, who creates them when she is in Wyrmsmoke Keep.

In case the players kill Emos Razkol and his apprentices a new delegation arrives in three days led by another Wearer of Purple, but this time they don't bring any gifts. They tell the players in a less charming, more of a negotiating tone that it is to their best interest to consume the potions and that their demands should be met in return.

DARK SAILS

The two Zhentarim ships are anchored on open sea near Thentia and are filling up their hold with the last sacks of salt, which they will deliver to Mulmaster, along with wood and metalware. The cultists, and specifically Kaela Ulsant, the Banite priestess cultist integrated within Mulmaster's Zhentarim clergy, wants to see these shipments gone, so she could supply the city from her own stock.

The crews of both ships will immediately open fire with crossbows and ballistae at dragons flying within range (480 ft.). Each ship has an armed crew of 20 sailors (use the

bandit monster entry), a first mate (use the thug monster entry), and a captain (use the bandit captain monster entry armed with an additional heavy crossbow) as well as two ballistae, which can be fired every round when operated by three sailors, every other round when operated by a crew of two, or every three rounds when operated by a single person.

Ship. AC 15, HP 300 (damage threshold 15), damage immunities: poison, psychic.

Ballista. Ranged weapon attack +6, damage 3d10, range 120/480, AC 15, HP 50, damage immunities: poison, psychic.

Treasure. The ships don't have much treasure. The players can collect a total of 350 gp in artwork, coins, and cheap jewelry from both ships by carefully searching every room and pocket. This does not include the cargo, which could be sold for a total of 2300 gp if one was to know where there's demand for these goods and who to sell them to.



A TALON OF JUSTICE

Emos Razkol (or a substitute **Wearer of Purple** if he is dead) returns to the players on the third day as promised. He comes alone this time, bringing the longer lasting potions containing the Abate Dracorage spell, which he hands over to the players with a long and meaningful smile. If the players let him speak read them the following:

“Powerful and superior masters! I have brought you these remedies to keep you from harm’s way. The Wearing of Purple do everything in their power to ensure your maximum protection. Unfortunately, I also have grave news of a dreadful threat residing in Thentia, which is aimed at your sacred hearts. There is a person who seeks to destroy you merely for being what you are!” He acts out his disgust and pity in an exaggerated way. “This is a self proclaimed

warrior of justice, a justice he and his order have created. A paladin of the vicious sect, the Talons of Justice, as they call themselves. They are merciless slayers of dragons who seek to eliminate your kind from the face of Faerûn, but more likely, rob you of your precious hoard.” He pauses for a moment before continuing. “He is to be found at the White Moon Inn, his name is Innerdain Justdark, as I have learned. I suppose it is best to strike first, in defense, than wait for him to show up in an unexpected moment to cause unwanted damage. Your enemies are also our enemies, but we can’t act safely in Thentia. Your silent flight and deadly precision could guarantee the swift end of this bloodthirsty fanatic. The potions I have brought you will last five days. My sisters and brothers at the keep did their best this time. I will return to you within this time, but only if this menace has been dealt with. We can’t risk him exposing the source of your salvation, now can we?” He bows slowly, this time his all-smiles charm gone, instead he shows a straight, calculating face as he waits for your answer.

Emos Razkol, once delivering his offer and requests, leaves as quickly as possible.

PREVENTIVE STRIKE

The White Moon Inn is a small building located on the main square of Thentia, facing the domed white marble temple of Selune. The main floor features a tavern area, a kitchen, some service and storage rooms, and a small stable capable of housing up to four horses. The top floor has four rooms, all of them with a street view, facing the temple and a corridor running behind them where the rooms’ doors open.

Innerdain Justdark, is a silver half-dragon human paladin of Bahamut, member of the Talons of Justice, on a mission to find clues on the source of the Dracorage and to search the north of the Moonsea for any sign of the Cult of the Dragon, whom his order suspects to be behind its occurrence. He is a tall but thin, yet muscular human with a hint of silvery blue in his eyes and his long blond hair. The skin on his back, his shoulders and his arms is covered with a thin layer of silvery scales.

The Talons of Justice is an organization of primarily silver dragon paladins who are sworn protectors of “lesser races”. The order has recently dedicated all of its efforts to end the Dracorage and has released every single one of its members to oppose the Cult of the Dragon and to search every corner of Faerûn to find clues on the cause and source of the curse.

Innerdain Justdark is on the trail of the Cult of the Dragon, and based on a few clues he has gathered from local orcs, he suspects that they have a base somewhere in the Galena Mountains. He has spent over a month searching both sides of the mountain, but has yet been unable to locate the cult’s base of operations. He has seen Iyrauroth one time as the ancient wyrm flew over Thar. He knows who he is, and he does not intend to confront the beast alone.

The paladin is out of his room all day, looking for signs of the cult in the lands surrounding Thentia. He returns every day almost at night, has a modest dinner in his room and goes to sleep until the first light of the morning sun appears. He then prays for a few minutes, has a very quick breakfast in his room, dons his armor, and leaves again. He is well acquainted with the local Selunite priests and the wizard’s guild who support his investigation. Otherwise he keeps his racial heritage, his identity, and his mission a secret, and avoids questions with very polite and courtly, but evasive excuses.

If attacked he will try to defend himself and try to gather as much information from the players as possible by constantly questioning and challenging their connection to the cult. He remains defensive until he sees that he won’t last against the players, in which case he tries to escape them,

only to seek them out later in hopes of finding out more. If he can’t escape, he tries to scare the players away by damaging them enough to flee. If this doesn’t work either and if he is cornered, he will fight to the death.

Any loud commotion within the city walls draws the attention of 1d6+1 city guards, who arrive in 1d4 minutes to investigate. If overpowered, they don’t hesitate to alert the wizards of the guild, who send 1d4+1 mages to oppose any threat within another 2d4 minutes. As a last resort, the guild sends one of its archmages to the aid of the city’s defenders.

Innerdain Justdark has a magical chalk and a small portable blackboard, the size of a normal book. When the players find the blackboard the following message is written on it.



“The Justice-maker guides me. I have found proof of the cult’s activities in the region. I will report back with more details soon. Innerdain Justdark”.

Whatever he writes with this chalk on this blackboard appears to his superior in command, Jaerlethket, a silver dragon paladin high-knight of the Talons of Justice, who answers within a few hours in a similar fashion. The paladin sings every message as a proof of identity so players will have to succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to produce a convincing fake signature for each message sent. A few days of practicing the signature allows the player to make this check with an advantage.

After the first failed check there is a single chance to convince the silver dragon that the tablet was stolen and reclaimed by the paladin, but to achieve this the players must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma (Deception) skill check (can be made as a group check) and the DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check for the signature. The players might find this piece of item useful, as it would allow them to communicate false or truthful information to the order, including asking aid and backup in the name of Innerdain Justdark. If the players have their hands on the chalk and the blackboard, you can hint options for utilization by having Jaerlethket ask questions that suggest a course of action he would take to aid Innerdain Justdark.

The paladin also has some notes and maps among his belongings. Some of these handwritten documents have details on Embrurshaile's relationship to his brother. Give the players Handout #1 if they search the paladin's notes.

Innerdain Justdark has a war horse summoned with his find steed spell.



THE LAST PIECES OF THE PUZZLE

Emos Razkol (or a substitute **Wearer of Purple** if he is dead) visits the player in exactly five days after his last visit. He looks more confident and this time he is not overacting his, by now probably obvious intentions.

Read the players the following:

You hear the voice of Emos Razkol from outside, calling to you in a friendly and confident tone. As you emerge through the vines of your cave entrance he bows and greets you. "Greetings mighty dragons, trusted allies of the Cult of the Dragon! I come to you with more of the same protective concoctions and to plead for aid in matters

most important." He hands the potions to you before continuing. "Our sacred duties were obstructed by Iyrauroth's minions, who keep one of our magistrate as prisoner. We have offered treasure and magic to the mad wyrm, but with age he has lost his mind and does not recognize a true ally when he sees one. The Cult of the Dragon has sent me to ask you to rescue Master Torlys from the clutches of some servants of the Wyrms of the Peaks. They keep him locked up in an ancient watchtower. I can show you to the location and I will also accompany you to provide aid with my arcane skills, the best I can. Fortunately, the wyrm himself visits only rarely. So... will you help those who keep helping you?"

A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) skill check reveals that it is very important for Emos Razkol and his cult to rescue the kidnapped wizard. If the players agree the Wearer of Purple urges them to leave immediately. The tower is about 30 miles from the players' lair, at the foot of Galena Mountain. It takes a bit more than 2 hours to get there by flying, or about 4 hours on foot through the rocky slopes of the foothills. Emos Razkol happily rides on dragonback if this option is offered to him and he seems more than capable of doing so.

TOWER OF THE HORNED WATCHERS

The ancient tower was built two millennia ago during the reign of the minotaur kingdom of Grong-Haap. It lies mostly in ruins now, and is inhabited by the spawns of Iyrauroth, who have been ordered by the wyrm to keep the Wearer of Purple alive and torture him for information. Stump, the half-dragon ogre spawn is doing a lousy job as he keeps beating the wizard to unconsciousness too often before he can get any useful information out of him. Torlys was leading a group of orc scouts to track the final pieces of the bones needed to have the complete skeleton of Embrurshaile at the disposal of the cult. He found them near a small lake west of Glister Road, but was attacked by Iyrauroth's spawn who took him to their tower and alerted the wyrm. Torlys was able to magically notify his fellow cultists about his findings before being



TOWER OF THE HORNE



taken. The bones were left where they were found and the spawns have not recognized their importance, nor have they informed Iyrauroth about it. Emos Razkol doesn't feel much sympathy for his fellow cult member, though he saves him if he can. His primary objective is to bring the bones back to Wyrmsmoke Keep and have the players retrieve it, not to direct the attention and the anger of the wyrm towards the cult. Read the following description of the tower to the players when they first see it:

Before you stands a huge, three-storey structure built out of large polished black stone blocks, each the size of a human. The main gate of the tower forms the open mouth of a bull, its long horns both broken, its eyes serving as the windows of the first floor. The second floor has partially collapsed, on the top of what's left as a roof sit three large, black, both scaled and at the same time furry monstrosities, their heads resembling those of lions, their tails spiked.

Emos Razkol casts invisibility as soon as he sees the tower and tries to keep his identity hidden. He does come forth with spells when he sees it could finish the enemy, but keeps staying out of sight as much as he can.

As soon as the **half-dragon manticores** notice the approaching players, one of them flies away (fly speed of 50 feet) to alert Iyrauroth, the rest attack the players, while Emos Razkol urges them to breach the tower as soon as possible.

The tower has the following features on the inside.

- Rooms are 20 feet high.
- Rooms are naturally dark without any lightsource.

1. Stump's Lair

The main floor features four crumbling, ruined, almost unrecognisable stone statues of heroic minotaurs. The floor and the walls were once covered with beautifully detailed colorful mosaics, but now only patches of little mosaic pieces remain here and there. The south wall of the room is covered with crude carvings depicting dragons, giants and zigzags of incomprehensive scribbling. A wide ladder carved into the wall, obviously designed to suit giant sized inhabitants, leads to the floors above. There's dirt and mess everywhere, leftover food and unrecognizable stains cover everything, accompanied by a choking, acidic stench.

The main floor is the home to Iyrauroth's largest spawn, the half-dragon hill giant called **Stump**. Stump will come to explore if he hears the manticores take flight. He starts by throwing rocks at the players (he has 12 throwing rocks readied), fights in melee if opportunity presents itself, but will retreat to defend his prized prisoner if he takes damage from breath weapons or ranged attacks.

Gate. The huge gates of the tower were made out of thick iron, but by now they are nothing more than thin plates of rusty red corroded metal, which are kept closed with a wooden bar bolted in place from the inside. It has AC 13, HP 20, and a break DC 18 to crush the bolted bar. It cannot be picked as there is no lock mechanism on it.

Treasure. Stump has a personal stash he calls his hoard, which is basically every copper piece Iyrauroth neglected to count among his treasure. The pile contains 7452 cp, a rock naturally shaped like a skull, and an adamantite dagger Stump uses to carve his dreams on the south wall of the room.

2. Glance of the Minotaur

This room has two eye shaped windows, which form the eyes of the minotaur head covering the outside of the tower. The windows have two shutter plates made of thick stone over them lowered from the inside, both of them stuck beyond repair. The floor is littered with rusty greataxes and countless blackened bones and skulls, all of them remains of the long-dead minotaurs who served in this tower in ancient times.

Three **minotaur skeletons** animate immediately if anyone enters this room and charge the intruders. Once killed they remain inanimate for 1 minute before reassembling again and continuing their assault. The minotaur skeletons don't leave this room. Stump uses them as practice dummies and to vent his frustration.

3. Prison of the Tortured Wizard

In the middle of this half-collapsed room lies the broken form of the cult wizard, Torlys, a **Wearer of Purple**. Stump has placed a 300 pound stone over his legs, both broken in several places, to keep the wizard in one place. His arms, stretched to the sides, are similarly pressed under heaps of stone and debris. Torlys is unconscious and needs to be healed to at least 1 HP before he can speak. Once Stump is eliminated, or if the opportunity presents itself, Emos Razkol rushes to the broken wizard, pours a potion of healing in his mouth and starts questioning

him frantically if he has found what he was looking for. Torlys, half awake and suffering from great pain, nods and mumbles that he can take Emos Razkol to the place where the bones are, but first he wants to return to Wyrmsmoke Keep through a teleportation circle spell. Even if the players have other plans, as Torlys starts casting the spell, **Iyrauroth** returns (if one of the manticores was able to alert him) and bursts into the main floor of the tower raging and roaring furiously.

You can track Iyrauroth's advancement according to the following parameters, but it is best to balance it so that he reaches the players one round before the wizard finishes. The intent of this encounter is not to have Iyrauroth fight the players, but for them to feel trapped inside the tower and to force them to take the only route out, which leads to Wyrmsmoke Keep.

- It takes Iyrauroth one round to crush the gate if it was not destroyed earlier.
- His gargantuan size requires him to squeeze through the 10 by 20-foot wide space that connects the floors, taking him one round to pass every level, though he can fit his head through easily to breathe acid on anyone on the next level.
- It takes him about three rounds to slay the minotaur skeletons, but play out the fight for a more exciting scene if you wish.
- If Emos Razkol is alive, he can cast a Wall of Force shaped in a hemispherical 10-foot radius dome, which would encompass the players, Torlys and himself as well. This will ultimately save everyone from the rage of Iyrauroth and allow Torlys to cast his Teleportation Circle spell. In this case have the players roll saves against Iyrauroth's Frightful Presence ability before stepping through the portal.



lyrauroth curses at the players when he sees them. Read the following entry when this happens:

"You are dead meat! I will eat your hearts and drink your blood! How dare you interfere with my plans and slaughter my offspring? I see you have fallen to the fake promises of these parasites, who live off of our dragonkind. You are my slaves and no one else can command you but me! Stop where you are, so I can bite your heads off one by one!"

4. Nest of the Black Manticore

The nest of the three **half-dragon manticores** is made of wood, plants, and the bones and skin of devoured creatures.

Treasure. A careful search and a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) skill check recovers a pearl (100 gp), 3 pieces of tourmaline (100 gp each), an Amulet of Striding and Springing (functions as a Boots of Striding and Springing) and a Ring of Warmth from the body of a long dead adventurer killed by the manticores.

INTO THE CULT'S NEST

Stepping through the Teleportation Circle brings the players and the two Wearers of Purple to the main courtyard of Wyrmsmoke Keep, where they immediately face the form of the gargantuan-size skeleton of Embrur-shaile. Read the players the following:

As you exit the shimmering portal created by Torlys, you find yourselves on an enormous, foggy courtyard, easily the size of a town square. You are surrounded by the walls, doors, and windows of a huge keep, obviously not built by or for humans, but rather giants, and the larger type from amongst those as well. In the middle of the courtyard

stands an enormous box-shaped wooden frame, which supports the complete skeleton of a gargantuan black dragon using chains and ropes. The blackened bones and the skull seems to be ancient, obviously pieced together from small fragments. They wobble as the wind blows them, and the mass of the dragon is almost completely engulfed at its top by the fog. You see several humans and humanoids who turn their attention to you as you arrive. Some are packing crates, a few others are riding wyverns equipped with saddles, and others are coming closer to you with awe in their eyes. Large ogre zombies march by with loaded crates and stare at you blankly as they pass. Through the light fog you can notice three Wearers of Purple form a group, discreetly discussing matters and glancing your way. A massive ogre, large even for his own kind, steps through the fog, pushing some of the staring initiates aside aggressively as he approaches you.

"Emos Razkol, your mission is far from done. Where are the remaining bones?" He looks at you for a moment, then continues as if you were not even there, turning to Torlys. "You can call yourself lucky that we have found you... alive. Did you find it?" Torlys tries to straighten himself to keep his dignity in his wounded state and nods. "I almost finished the mission when the wurm's hill giant spawn attacked me and my servants. They did not and still don't know what I was looking for. I am able to open a portal to bring the bones back as I have a sigil..." He pauses, then cuts his saying short. "I will retrieve a scroll from my room and leave immediately. No need for haulers, I will animate the dead orcs." With that he starts limping toward an enormous single door that is more of a gate compared to the wizard's size. Some apprentices rush to his side to aid him in his movement. The ogre turns to Emos Razkol and you. "Master Razkol, please show the way out to the sacred ones." He nods in your way saying goodbye and turns to harass a group of servants packing crates in the far corner. "You damn imbeciles, those were meant for the north storage! Do you really want me to throw you off the cliff?"

The ogre is **Orinskar of Thar**, the right hand of **Dalgar**, the commander of Wyrmsmoke

Keep, who watches from the shadows of a balcony, and can be spotted with a successful DC 21 Wisdom (Perception) skill check. Everyone, except for the servants and guards, know who the players are and about the visits Emos Razkol makes to them.

Emos explains to the players where they are and tells them that they can come to visit anytime they wish. He proudly shows them the skeleton of Embrurshaile, and adds briefly that the cult knows a ritual which could “reanimate” (as he describes) her, but this is impossible because they would need her soul to accomplish this feat. He then takes them to the skydock and bids them farewell. The cult doesn’t mind the dragons, but it is easier for them not to waste time watching over their movements within the keep. If the players sneak back and are found, or if they insist on staying, then Emos Razkol and another Wearer of Purple guides them in the keep and blocks their path, should they want to enter any forbidden areas, especially the ones underground.

PLOT CLUE SUMMARY

After completing the Cult of the Dragon quests, the players should have acquired the following information.

- The cult is blackmailing them with the Abate Dracorage spell, presented to them in the form of a potion, which is brewed by a cult member in Wyrmsmoke Keep
- The cult is sabotaging Zhentarim shipments for some reason, possibly for profit.
- Iyrauroth fears nothing more than his sister who chased him away.
- The Talons of Justice are seeking the hideout of the Cult of the Dragon.
- The cult has put great effort into collecting the bones of Embrurshaile, but they can’t reanimate it without her soul being reunited with her remains.
- The location of the cult’s base is at Wyrmsmoke Keep.

IYRAUROTH’S QUESTS

The ancient wyrm has a clear agenda. He wants to use the players for decades to come, until they grow old enough to impose a threat to him. His sheer might ensures him that such small dragons will either be subjugated or die. The players will eventually need to try to find a way to shake off Iyrauroth’s grasp if they don’t want to serve yet another dreadful and unavoidable master.



THE EYE FROM THE DEEP

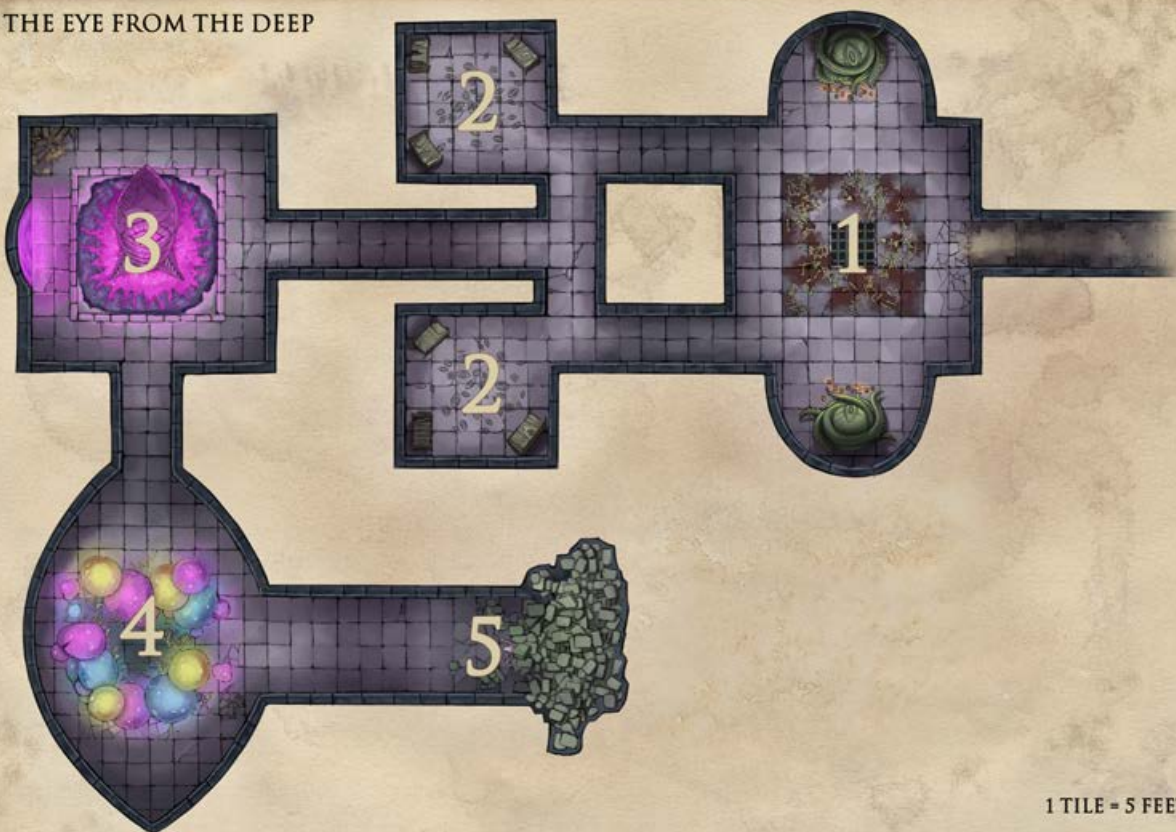
Make a Dexterity (Stealth) skill check for **Iyrauroth** against the passive perception of the players when he enters their lair invisibly. The black wyrm uses his frightful presence ability on the players when he appears.

Iyrauroth appears in your lair out of thin air and roars threateningly. “Here you are you wretched lizards! You are lucky I spare your lives. You will finish something for me that has been a thorn in my side for a while now. There is a pesky gauth, a lesser beholder, that hides in his hole, too small for me to penetrate. It has killed too many of my imbecile offspring, so I will show you to its location and you shall slay it for me and retrieve the treasure it has amassed. If you are quick about it and I am satisfied with your efforts, I might even reward you with a minor share.”

Iyrauroth knows that gauths feed on magic and he is intrigued to know what magic source keeps the aberration functioning still. His reasoning tells him that there must be something very powerful or a lot of magic items where the gauth lairs. The medium size minions he has sent seem to be no match for the gauth and he can’t explore the tunnels himself.



THE EYE FROM THE DEEP



1 TILE = 5 FEET

Iyrauroth keeps threatening the players and tries forcing them into servitude. He does not refrain from attacking those players who speak up, or resist his will, but he does not kill them. If the players accept his mission, he orders them to follow him and flies out of the cave. After a couple of minutes of flying he takes them to a small hill in the marshes and shows them a medium size tunnel that leads deep underground. He urges them to enter immediately and waits at the entrance.

The 5-foot diameter wet earth tunnel goes two miles without any junctions straight into the top layer of the Underdark. The players need to crawl for about half an hour before reaching a section where the earthen tunnel turns into a stone shaft leading upwards into a room, part of a long abandoned shrine dedicated to Ghaunadaur, built by some late drow worshippers of the Elder Eye.

The shrine of Ghaunadaur has the following features.

- Rooms and corridors are 10 feet high unless noted otherwise.

- Rooms are naturally dark.
- The floors are wet and covered with a thin layer of transparent slime that makes them extra slippery. After each move or melee attack action the player must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity ability check or fall prone.
- The whole shrine is under the effects of a hallow spell which hedges out celestials, elementals, fey, fiends and undead and also negates any frightened, charmed or possessed effect caused by such creatures. It also has the extra effect of silence bound to it, which means that no sound can emanate from within the area, and no sound can reach into it.

1. Shrine of That Which Lurks

This is a sacrificial chamber dedicated to That Which Lurks, the Elder Eye, Ghaunadaur. The players enter the room via the grate on the floor.

Two formless stone statues that resemble whirling masses of slime and tentacles with eyes too large for their heads flank this

room. At their feet is a forest of burnt incense sticks and small burnt brass saucers. The room has a shallow depression in the middle with a sunken grate at its center, which can be easily lifted. The depression in the middle of the room is covered by a thick black layer of ancient dried blood. The floor is littered with the half-eaten remains of some of Iyrauroth's servants, both humanoid and monstrous that could fit into the tunnel that lead here.

Statues. The statues are likenesses of Ghaunadaur. They activate their magic if warm blood spills on the floor within the depressed area, which is most likely to be caused by bludgeoning, force, piercing, slashing or thunder damage. In case they are active they each radiate a fear spell for 10 rounds, restarting every time the listed damage types deal damage. To resist one of the fear effects (there are two) the players must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw.



2. Priest's Chambers

These simple chambers each contain three old dirty cots, covered with smeared patches of ooze and blood. The walls are covered with stylised hand drawings of eyes of various shapes and sizes in both rooms.

3. The Elder Portal

There's a massive column erected in the middle of a pool of purple fluorescent ooze. The stone edges of the pool are engraved with mystical runes and eye patterns, which also continue on the surface of the column. The column is pulsating with purple energy that slowly fills from the bottom to the top, fed by the pool of ooze at its base, that seems to be seeping into its stone matter.

The **gauth** levitates in front of the column and feeds on its the energies, using its devour magic ray, keeping the energy of the

column at a static level right in the middle. The aberration, due to the silence effect, and because in it's intoxicated state all of its other eyes closed, does not notice the players even if they enter the room. It immediately attacks if disturbed.

Runed column. This column is divided into ten segments on top of each other. The ooze energizes a segment in 1 minute. When the gauth stops feeding on its energy, the column starts to fill up. When the column is fully energized, it projects a wide cone of green light from an eye in the top segment onto the western wall of the room. From this circular beam of light on the wall, a portal opens to the Deep Caverns, an outer plane where Ghaunadaur soon plans to move from the Demonweb Pits where it resides now. The Deep Caverns is a plane fully enclosed by stone, without a sky. The scene the players see is massive plateau of cracked rock with an enormous abyss below. On the plateau stands a colossal monolith of purple stone with a purple eye in the middle. A river of boiling violet miasma flows out from the base of the monolith, falling into the abyss where the plateau ends. The rocky formations constantly and slowly creep around, always shifting form. The portal is one-way only, from the other side, so the players can't pass through. This is where the gauth entered the complex. Nothing will show up or come through the portal for months to come. The stone column can be destroyed and that will stop the portal projection as well. It has AC 17 and HP 100.

Treasure. The gauth has amassed a little hoard that it keeps in one of the corners of the room. It consists of 1621 gp, jade (100 gp), spinel (100 gp), tourmaline (100 gp), bottle of exotic wine (250 gp), silver cloth gown (250 gp), carved wooden staff studded with electrum (250 gp), silver mask set with sardonyx (250 gp).

4. The Fetid Pool

This 20-foot deep fetid pool of otherwise harmless dark slime is surrounded by overgrown fungi on all sides. The pool seems to be full of the darkened bones and bits and pieces of humanoid creatures, remains of the

drow cultists who venerated their dark god in this shrine. They sacrificed themselves to feed **Vhle-Zotha**, an adult oblex bard who now inhabits this pool. Vhle-Zotha was sent to this shrine through the portal by Ghaunadaur himself, to collect the memories of its followers.

As the players enter the room Vhle-Zotha takes the form of a naked male drow cultist using its Sulfurous Impersonation ability. As it does so, the room starts to smell of sulfur. Vhle-Zotha's main body remains at the bottom of the pool, while its simulacrum floats on its back and keeps singing an eerie melody, and calls the players to join it and forget about their problems. It is not affected by the silence effect of the hallow spell. As it speaks it also uses its charm spells (forked at two players), any other enchantments it can, and lastly its Eat Memories attack. It slowly climbs out of the pool to follow if the players leave the room, continuing with its memory draining attack.

Treasure. The filthy pool of dark slime contains the equipment of the drow who sacrificed themselves here. The players can dive into the pool and search it blindly, in which case they must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) skill check made at a disadvantage, to locate 200 gp of precious gems plus 100 gp of gems for every 5 values higher than the base DC. At a successful DC 15 check the players also recover a completely black +1 ceremonial dagger with the unholy symbol of Ghaunadaur etched into its pommel.

5. Collapsed Tunnel

This tunnel has collapsed due to a massive explosion. Burn marks cover the entire end of the tunnel where the ceiling has collapsed. The skeleton of a long dead drow once dressed in some ceremonial garbs is half buried under the rocks.

Treasure. The dead drow cleric has a fully charged staff of healing half buried along with its body. It takes a successful DC 18 Strength ability check to free the staff.

VILE RECEPTION

When the players return to the surface, **Iyrauroth** threatens them, uses his Frightful Presence ability, and demands the whole treasure. Read the players the following:

Iyrauroth spreads his wings as he sees you crawling forth from the dirty, muddy tunnel. His shadow engulfs the whole hill and his roaring voice sounds like thunder. "What did you find? What did you bring me, you mag-gots? Did you really think I will let you fly away with my treasure? Everything you have found goes to my magnificent hoard. What you can keep... are your miserable lives."

Once the players show him whatever they confess they have found, have them make a DC 12 Charisma (Deception) group skill check in case they are lying, or a Charisma (Persuasion) group skill check if they were telling the truth, to convince Iyrauroth. On a failure they get badly beaten and he takes everything he finds on them, while on a success he only takes what was shown to him and quickly flies off with his treasure, leaving the players behind.



RITUAL OF BLOOD

Read the players the following when this quest starts:

You can hear rocks rolling down the side of the mountain as Iyrauroth rages outside your lair. "Come out you wretched vermin, climb out of your pathetic hole! I honor you with my presence so don't make me wait!"

Read the following if the players come out to talk to the Wyrms of the Peaks. **Iyrauroth** uses his Frightful Presence on the players as soon as he sees them.

"There you are, you lame mongrels. You will have the privilege of representing me as my emissaries at the tribe of the Skullsmasher ogres. Fly to their village and bring back three of their best warriors to your lair. Tell them I want them to serve me and to be reborn as my half-breed offsprings, anointed and blessed with the ancient might of Iyrauroth, The Wurm Of The Peaks. Go now, I can't stand to look at your pitiful visages any longer. Don't make me wait too long or you will taste my fury when I come for you!" With huge wing-beats Iyrauroth takes to the air and flies away.

Iyrauroth comes back in three days to check on the players. If he finds them in their lair without the ogres he beats them up, dealing just enough damage not to kill them, and takes whatever valuables he finds. He does not inspect the cave and does not find out about its secrets.



VICTIMS OF THE COVEN

The tribe of the Skullsmasher ogres is the strongest of the ogre tribes in Thar. Their village is located in the midland hills, easily found from the air or from the ground. The tribe has been forced into slavery, despair, and hopelessness by three green hags. The hags cast *geas* spells daily on members of the tribe. The commands are worded in a way that the ogres find hard to follow. The ogres try to do their best to avoid the damage from the spell, but they are not intelligent enough to follow the orders to the letter. This fills the hags with wicked delight and they revel in the suffering of the tribe. The hag coven has the following spells at their shared disposal.

1st level (4 slots): identify, ray of sickness
2nd level (3 slots): suggestion, locate object
3rd level (3 slots): bestow curse, counterspell, lightning bolt

4th level (3 slots): phantasmal killer, compulsion

5th level (2 slots): *geas*, scrying

6th level (1 slot): mass suggestion

Read the players the following when they approach the village:

The ogre village is a collection of caves and simple, ramshackle buildings made out of wood, laid out in a semicircle around a large burnt area that has several massive iron rods extruding from the center, surrounded by burnt wood and charred skulls of animals, humanoids and ogre alike. You see male and female ogre, some children, about two dozen altogether, who slowly gather at your arrival. They look anguished, dirty, starving and many of them bear festering, oozing open wounds that crawl with maggots. Six warriors, all of them in an unmistakably bad condition, come closer, shout threats, and shake their makeshift javelins.

The group of six **ogre** are bound by the hag coven to protect the village from intruders. They keep throwing their javelins at the players if they come within range, then charge with their greatclubs. All of the ogre in the tribe have one level of exhaustion and only 41 hit points due to the damage suffered from the *geas* spell. The rest of the tribe, including the chieftain, Grazzak the Vicious (**ogre** with 71 hit points), watches the battle unfold with an emotionless expression, their curse making them unconcerned about the outcome. Once the players defeat the ogre assailants, Grazzak steps forward, followed by six other weary, javelin-wielding ogres, and in a low, tired tone ask to know what the players want. Grazzak will demand that the players leave, but in the meantime he tries to raise the attention of the players to the hags in the cave entrance. A successful DC 8 Wisdom (Insight) skill check reveals that he keeps nodding towards the hags.

The three **green hags** come to the entrance of the caves when they hear the sounds of battle. The players can spot them standing in the shadows with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) skill check. The hags also make a group Wisdom (Insight) check against Grazzak's intention to betray them. Most

likely they will realise what is going on, in which case they cast suggestion on Grazzak to attack the players, who is followed to battle by the other six orges. Next, two of the hags cast geas on two of the players, the other casts mass suggestion to keep all of them at bay. During the rest of the combat, the hags try to use suggestion, compulsion, bestow curse, and phantasmal killer to get rid of the players.

If the hags can overcome the players, they will try to use them as servants with geas spells. They keep the players captive, chained to the iron poles in the middle of the village and cast the spell on them as long as they are all bound. The hags want to use the players as mounts, and command them to behave as such. They keep them chained to the poles with their mouths forced shut by makeshift muzzles. They mount them every other day either to fly out only to revel in their suffering, or to attack random creatures in the region. Later they organize a raid against a neighbouring orc tribe and destroy them with their dragon mounts and ogre warriors.

If this happens the players will have to come up with a plan to shake off the effects of the spell if they have fallen to the enchantments. They will need to escape from their chains (which is not forbidden by the spell) or succeed on their saving throws the next time the spell is being cast on them. The chains have AC 19 and HP 25, and break DC 22. The players can also convince some ogre to help them with a successful DC 20 group Charisma (Persuasion, Intimidate or Deception) skill check, but it's a very hard task because the ogre know that they are going to suffer great pain if they aid the captives.

Once the hags are defeated the ogres celebrate the players as their saviours in their own brutish, loud way, but they are still unable to shake off the effects of the geas spells previously cast on them. Each ogre has an average of ten days left of the spell's duration. The players must decide what to do with them, but if they were to leave the village, they would immediately suffer damage from the spell. If the players return to their lair, Iyrauroth will come to them with-

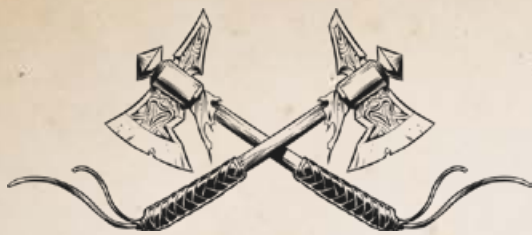
in three days and demand his new subjects to the delivered. He will keep harassing the players every three days, beating them and stealing any treasure they have amassed, until they present him with the ogres.

Once the ogre village is free of the geas spells, the players can select some of them randomly, or organize a duelling contest amongst the ogres to select the finest specimen. In any case they must be convinced about Iyrauroth's might and about the benefits of the ritual by succeeding on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) skill check. They know of the Wyrms of the Peaks and fear his name, but after the torment of the hags it is relatively hard to convince them.

After the ogres have been convinced, or otherwise persuaded to leave their village to meet Iyrauroth, the players must escort three of them back to their lair. On the way the party is attacked by a hydra. The ogre fight with the players to defeat the hydra.



The players can take the ogre into their lair, or have them camp somewhere nearby. In any case, Iyrauroth arrives in a couple of days and takes them (leaving the players behind) to an old dungeon, with one room that has a pool in the middle. He orders the ogre to stay in the pool while he draws his own blood and performs the ritual which turns them into half-dragons. The ritual takes 24 hours to complete and during this period Iyrauroth loses 4 points of Constitution, which he regains gradually over a period of four days, healing 1 point of Constitution per day. Once the ritual is complete he leaves the scene of the ritual and returns to his secret lair and remains in hiding until fully healed.



END OF PROMISES

Make a Dexterity (Stealth) skill check for **lyrauroth** against the passive perception of the players when he enters their lair invisibly. The black wyrm uses his frightful presence ability on the players when he appears.

lyrauroth appears in your lair again, followed by a thundering roar that sprays acid all over the floor in front of him. "Impen-nate underlings! You disgust me, but there is something that disgusts me even more. Those amiable warmbloods that keep robbing my time with their intellectual reasoning about their undead master and their pathetic magic. Again, they dared to ask me to meet them, to further fuel my anger with their offer about a senseless undead life. As if I didn't know that they want to control me and take what is mine. No one controls the Wyrms of the Peaks! You will go to the source of the Winterspear River above Glister and make sure they never bother me again. They will come tomorrow at sundown. I want them to suffer for their insolence." lyrauroth hisses angrily as he turns invisible and leaves your lair.

The delegation of **Wearers of Purple** have been bothering lyrauroth for a long time now and he wants to show them that he has had enough. He does not take risks and it is more convenient for him to send the players to eliminate this unwanted nuisance.

The delegation wants to make a last effort to convince lyrauroth to join their cause as a dracolich. They bring along a ruby worth 5,000 gp as a present. In truth, the ruby is a cursed magical item called the Gem of the Seven Steps to Eternal Enlightenment.

At sundown, two **Wearers of Purple** arrive with 4 **initiate cult wizards**, and 12 **black dragonborn barbarians**. The wizards are

confused for a moment when they see that lyrauroth has sent the players instead of coming in person. If talked to, they tell the players that they wish to speak to the black wyrm, but accept the players as representatives of lyrauroth. They hand over the gem and quickly depart. The players can attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) skill check to notice that the most important part of the meeting for the delegation was to hand over the ruby and to depart in haste.

The delegation does not want to confront the players and they retreat as soon as possible. The wizards try to cast invisibility and flee on foot, while the dragonborn barbarians also try to run to safety. If any of them are cornered, they fight until opportunity arises to retreat safely.

If the players keep the ruby, each of them must save versus the compelling effect of the cursed item every night. Those who fail their save will want to own the item and stare at it every night for an hour, and experience its telepathic messages. It might happen that more than one player fails the saving throw, in which case they must roleplay the fact that they are each attracted to the gem and want to own it. This might cause them to fight each other, or to plot against each other. Mohmitath can intervene before things get out of hand and even cast a remove curse spell on the item to release the captivated victims as a last resort.

If the players hand over the ruby to lyrauroth, he realises it's cursed nature in a couple of days. He gets furious and first flies to Thentia to destroy the temple of Selune in his rage and captures the temple's high priestess. He kidnaps the priestess and tortures her until she casts remove curse on him, then consumes her. He then starts a rampage across the wastes of Thar, attacking orc and ogre settlements, caravans and anyone he sees for the coming tendar.

PLOT CLUE SUMMARY

Though lyrauroth mainly makes the players do menial tasks which are inconvenient for him and exploits them in every way possi-

ble, there a few things the players can learn from completing his quests.

- It seems obvious that Iyrauroth, though resisting the Rage, is effected by it to a certain degree.
- Iyrauroth knows an ancient blood ritual which turns creatures into half-dragons.
- The Cult of the Dragon has been trying to convince Iyrauroth to become a dracolich.



ZHENTARIM QUESTS

The Zhentarim have suffered great losses due to the raids committed by both the Cult of the Dragon and Iyrauroth and they suspect, wrongly, that there is a connection between the two. Selfaril Uoumdolphin has heard about the players as a result of the caravan incident, or has been informed about the players by other scouts and suspect that they could make good local allies in the north against the cult and the Wyrms of the Peaks. Selfaril Uoumdolphin's wife, the Thayan tarchioness illusionist, Dmitra Flass has heard rumors about Embrurshaile's failed arcane experiment and she intends to find out more about it. She encourages Selfaril Uoumdolphin to send the young dragons to learn more about it, not to raise too much attention to themselves or the Zhentarim in general. They both intend to recruit the players with promises of support, information, and treasure, in order to get rid of both enemies and learn Embrurshaile's secrets.

THE NECROMANCER'S VILLA

One night the players are contacted by Dmitra Flass through a dream spell which affects all of them at the same time. Read the fol-

lowing to the players when this encounter happens:

You open your eyes and see that you are in a large, richly decorated hall. The marble walls and pillars are inlaid with silver, platinum, and gold, and brightly flickering precious gemstones adorn the ceiling to cast a million beams of scintillating colors on you. In front of you stands an intricately carved, massive ivory throne surrounded by piles of gold and jewelry that come up to the height of the seat. A bald woman sits on the throne, her head is tattooed with fine lines, which form a strange mask around her face and her eyes. Her crimson brocade gown looks as if its patterns were almost unnoticeably, slowly shifting. She smiles at you and you seem to float closer to her and the throne with every second. You perceive that you are dreaming, but you are almost paralyzed and can't help but to watch the scene unfold. "My name is Dmitra Flass. I am the ruler of a large county named Eltabbar, within the powerful magocracy of Thay, ruled by the Red Wizards." She rises from her throne, which, along with the room and its treasures, immediately fades into nothingness below you. You float upwards next to her, and the scene shifts to a night sky with the Tears of Selûne and other stars above you. Below you see Iyrauroth raging and tearing the body of a large beast to pieces as it feeds. "It seems that we share the same concerns. Perhaps we could assist each other. I can help you destroy Iyrauroth if you help me find one of my own, who has been lost. I can't investigate myself as I would draw too much attention to myself and my allies, but you could do it for me. In return, I could easily convince my husband to strike against the Wyrms of the Peaks, and I could aid him in his efforts with my arcanists. My husband is one of the most influential people in the Eastern Moonsea region, which you also call home. His name is Selfaril Uoumdolphin, the Highblade of Mulmaster, the local commander of the Zhentarim forces. The wyrms and his allies, the Cult of the Dragon have been feeding their hunger for treasure and victims on his caravans and ships for too long. Allying yourself with the cult can only lead to your eventual death, and I am sure that Iyrauroth is the cruellest of masters. So why not get rid of both

with our support? If we would have our lost brother back, we could help to set a fatal trap for Iyrauroth and the cult.”

Dmitra Flass explains to the players that a Thayan wizard under her command, named Antazer Cabrax, was on a mission to infiltrate Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's villa near Melvaunt to recover information about a magical tome believed to be lost, entitled the Testament of Yhorlanglarorl. She also raises attention to the fact that the testament has information that can be useful against Iyrauroth.

Antazer Cabrax was never heard from again and she wants him, or the information he has found to be recovered as soon as possible. She tells the players that Delphaeryn Leiyraghon is a Master Wearer of Purple, one of the leaders of the local Wyrmsmoke Cell, a necromancer from Vaasa, who has been profiteering from the raids on Zhentarim shipments by the cult.

Dmitra Flass asks the players to raid Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's villa, kill her if the opportunity arises, but most importantly find out what has happened to Antazer Cabrax and what he has learned from Delphaeryn Leiyraghon. If Antazer Cabrax is dead, they are to recover his body for further magical questioning. If the players agree, she promises to visit their dreams in three days to see what they could find out.

Should the players refuse, Dmitra Flass tries to convince them again the next evening, again through the dream spell, but this time she also offers to locate Iyrauroth's hoard once the wyrm is slain, and offers it as payment. If the players still refuse, she gives up and sends her own agents to locate Antazer Cabrax at Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's villa. They successfully learn the whereabouts of the Red Wizard and Dmitra Flass contacts the players again with the information on the Testament of Yhorlanglarorl and the lost wizard's

last known location.

Dmitra Flass wants to find the hidden copy of the Testament of Yhorlanglarorl because it contains information on Embrurshaile's experiments, which she wants to research for her own purposes. Antazer Cabrax has infiltrated the necromancer's villa several times disguised as one of the villa's guards, had meetings with the cult wizardess disguised as a tax collector, and later as a sage to learn more about what she knew. After finding proof of her having seen the book, he visited again in the disguise of Lord Dundeld Nanther, a local influential politician, and pretended to be on a secret mission to uncover the knowledge of Yhorlanglarorl.

The illusionist's bluffs worked and in return for fake political promises and a very advantageous tax exemption, Delphaeryn Leiyraghon told him about the caves where she found the book. She also told him that the book was impossible to move from the spot, but she did not mention that there is limited time to read it as it was surrounded by dangerous arcane anomalies. Antazer Cabrax left in a hurry, but the necromancer sent Theldar Hammerfist and four guards to follow and capture him if he returned from the caves to find out what he learned.

The half-orc saw the Red Wizard take his original form after leaving the house, he also witnessed as he entered the cave alongside his shield guardian, but never saw him or the construct emerge from the depths. Theldar Hammerfist rode home after a few days of waiting and informed his mistress.



DMITRA FLASS





After defeating the inhabitants of the villa, a successful Charisma (Intimidate) skill check allows the players to interrogate Theldar Hammerfist (DC 18), or the guards (DC 13) who followed the Red Wizard with the half-orc, about Antazer Cabrax. Finding the right guard, who is willing to speak to them, takes a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) or any DC 15 Charisma related skill check. The guards will not know the Red Wizard by his name, but can describe him as a bald man with tattoos on his head and a red cape and robe. They saw him from a hiding place when he entered the cave. All of these inhabitants of the house can pinpoint the location of the caves, which is near the lair of the Skullsmashers tribe of ogres, located in the hills in central Thar, close to the road to Glister.

Delphaeryn Leiyraghon, on the other hand is not willing to speak. She created a clone of herself using the spell of the same name. She is ready to die and will not give up her secrets. If dead, her soul will enter her body buried in the garden under a few inches of dirt. She recovers as much of her belongings and troops as she can and leaves the villa to return to Wyrmsmoke Keep via teleportation.

The villa has the following features.

- Rooms are 10 feet high.
- Rooms are naturally light or lit at night with lanterns unless noted otherwise.

- Doors are made out of thick wood and have AC 15, HP 15, break DC 15, unless noted otherwise.
- The villa houses 18 guards (use the guard monster entry) of which 6 are resting at any time of the day. The guards are also used as a workforce at the warehouses, stables, kitchen, and at the office.

The guards answer to Delphaeryn Leiyraghon and Theldar Hammerfist, but it's usually the half-orc who commands them directly. They fear the wizardess and try to stay out of her sight as much as possible. They are absolutely loyal as they are paid well and because they have seen too many of their unbehaving fellows turned into zombies.

Delphaeryn Leiyraghon has performed a ritual called the Shadow Unchaining on each guard she has hired. As the result of the ritual, when the humanoid subject dies, and if Delphaeryn Leiyraghon wishes so, his or her shadow is freed and transformed until the next sunrise into an undead shadow under the control of Delphaeryn Leiyraghon, who can control up to six such shadows at the same time. She utilizes this pact whenever her villa is attacked and her guards meet foes stronger than themselves.

There are no slaves at the house as slave trade has been completely taken over by the Zhentarim a few years ago and Delphaeryn Leiyraghon fears that they could implant spies in her estate.

1. Guard Post

This doorless room opens to a wide dirt road leading to Melvaunt. It has a few benches, a table with some mugs and playing cards on it, and a large iron pot filled with burning wood for heating. The south wall is decorated with a small, crude drawing of a naked woman, drawn with charred wood. A reinforced wooden door with a small peephole leads to the courtyard.

The door is always kept closed and the key is carried by a guard inside the house, who lets the other guards in after they knock on the door. The door has AC 17, HP 18, and break DC 17. There are three **guards** posted here at any time of the day, who pass time with games, and the ones on the night shift also get drunk on occasion. The guards will question anyone coming close to the house and not let anyone inside without first asking for permission from Theldar Hammerfist.

2. Communal Lavatory

Several latrines have been dug into the floor of this room and there are some urns filled with water for the guards to wash themselves.

3. Barracks

This rooms smells of sweat and the odor of unwashed bodies. Guards sleep in these rooms using simple beds with straw mattresses.

The guards' personal belongings are kept in sacks and small crates, but they keep their valuables on their persons all the time. There are always at least two **guards** resting here during the day. At night there are five guards sleeping in each room, their chain shirts, shields, swords and crossbows stored under their beds.

4. Armory

This is where all weapons and armor are kept, along with household equipment like ropes, chains, ladders, buckets, mops, rugs, and such. There are four chain mails, six

heavy steel shields, five long swords, six heavy crossbows, and 200 bolts stored in this room.

5. Messhall

Guards dine in this area of the villa. There's a long table in the middle of the room with several benches next to it, allowing all of the guards to eat at the same time. The eastern end of the room also serves as a cooking area with a large stove packed with iron pots. Some foodstuff like carrots, potatoes, and flour are stored here in large sacks.

6. Accounting Office

A simple wooden desk with two chairs stands in the middle of the room. The desk is piled with large books, an accounting of all incoming and outgoing goods, a lantern, and an ink well. Next to the table stands a 6-foot high, dirty wooden scale.

The log books show that a substantial amount of goods was moved to and from the house, even within the last months.

7. Warehouse

These rooms are filled with crates and sacks piled on top of each other. This is where all commodities are stored before being sold. Delphaeryn Leiyraghon poses as a merchant in Melvaunt and does not interfere with the city's merchant lords on the Council of Lords. She merely manipulates the market according to the cult's needs and buys those types of goods in large quantities that she knows will



DELPHAERYN LEIYRAGHON

be on demand due to the sabotage missions the cult executes against mostly Zhentarim merchants and their incoming cargo.

Merchandise. Currently there's a large amount of salt, wood, and metalware stocked. Its total value is around 3500 gp.

8. Stables

There are five draft horses, three riding horses, and Theldar Hammerfist's warhorse in the stables. Several saddles and equipment related to horses are also stored in here.

9. Saloon

This richly decorated saloon is strikingly different from the rest of the villa. A wide and low mahogany table with silver lining dominates the middle of the room, bearing an array of heavy crystal glasses and liquor bottles, surrounded by soft sofas with large purple cushions. A single silver candlestick with a black candle stands in the middle of the table, seemingly built into the tabletop. Several paintings hang on the walls, displaying images of different landscapes. The skin of a huge dire mountain lion covers the cold stone tiles of the floor.

Delphaeryn Leiyraghon and Theldar Hammerfist spend most of their private time here. This is also where they meet with merchants to conduct

THELDAR HAMMERFIST

business, and where they host other cult members on their visits. The doors, other than the westernmost entry, are kept locked at all times when the occupants are not present.

Silver candlestick. When the candle is lit, it burns normally for three minutes before lighting a built in fuse, which detonates the 20 pounds of smokepowder hidden under the top of the table. The blast rips the table apart and deals 12d6 points of fire damage in a 20 ft. radius. A successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw halves the damage. Some tiny sparks within the flame of the candle can be noticed with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) skill check when the fuse is lit. Those who succeed can roll their Dexterity saving throws to avoid the blast with an advantage. Theldar Hammerfist has set up this trap as a last resort to get rid of unwanted visitors. In such a case, he or his mistress would light the candle and stick around for a minute or two before leaving the room with a made-up excuse, promising to return soon. The trap has never been used, but they won't hesitate to use it if the need and the opportunity arises.

10. Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's Private Quarters

The door to this room is protected by a glyph of warding spell that targets anyone who triggers it with a bestow curse spell (DC 18 Wisdom saving throw to avoid) with the effect: While cursed, the target must make a Wisdom saving throw at the start of each of its turns. If it fails, it wastes its action that turn, doing nothing. The door also has an active alarm spell placed on it, which sets off a loud alarm that alerts everyone in the villa if anyone other than Delphaeryn Leiyraghon or Theldar Hammerfist enters the room.

Most walls of this room are covered with bookshelves that hold an extensive selection of books on arcane topics related mostly to necromancy, evocation, and enchantment, but there are also many books on the history and dragons of Faerûn, the ecology and biology of dragons, a collection of tales about outer planar dragons, many codices on religious topics concerning evil gods, manu-

als on various undead, alchemist and potion recipe books, and several volumes of mostly love poems.

Using these books to research these topics allows a player to make the related skills check with an advantage. A small writing desk stands between the windows looking out at the garden with a single book lying open on its surface. The small privy accessible from this room is covered with colorful ceramic tiles and is kept very clean.

Writing desk. The drawer of the desk is locked and contains 1800 gp, 120 pp, two pieces of amber (100 gp each), an amethyst (100 gp), a chrysoberyl (100 gp), a coral (100 gp), a jade (100 gp), two jets (100 gp each), a pearl (100 gp), two potions of greater healing, a packet of dust of dryness, and an oil of etherealness. Lying open on the desk is Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's spellbook bound in dark brown leather. It is a heavy tome that contains all the spells she has prepared, plus the following spells: alarm, fog cloud, illusory script, protection from evil and good, unseen servant, alter self, detect thoughts, invisibility, see invisibility, suggestion, dispel magic, fear, lightning bolt, nondetection, slow, black tentacles, dimension door, locate creature, polymorph, cloudkill, legend lore, telepathic bond, create undead, mass suggestion, magic jar, symbol, mirage arcane, clone, and dominate monster.



11. Bedroom

A large poster bed dominates this room. Its wooden frame is painted white, the four top corners are carved to resemble skulls, while it's legs form the skeletal legs of dragons. The bed is covered with blood-red sheets. A small rack stands in one of the corners.

12. Courtyard

The courtyard is covered with large stone tiles and is patrolled by three **guards** at night. There are a dozen guards on work duty here in daytime, who cross the courtyard frequently. Two carts stand next to the main gate and a larger wagon next to the stables.

Main gate. The main gate is a heavy reinforced wooden gate with AC 17, HP 34, break DC 17.

13. The Boneyard

Those who evoke Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's anger are turned into **zombies** and are ordered by the wizardess to bury themselves in this cold, soft, and wet piece of ground originally designed to hold plants. She makes the guards watch this event in order to intimidate them into line. Delphaeryn Leiyraghon casts animate dead daily to maintain control of these zombies and be able to call them forth to defend her villa.

14. Pond

This small pond is covered with ceramic tiles of a beautiful blue hue with wave patterns.

The pond houses six exotic water snakes (use the **poisonous snake** monster entry) with yellow and red skin, native to the jungles of Chult. Delphaeryn Leiyraghon enjoys watching them swim in the water and feeds them rabbits, or the occasional human sacrifice.

15. The Reeking Garden

As you enter the garden you smell the stench of a thousand rotting corpses. The sensation is so strong that it immediately makes you feel dizzy and your stomach clenches hard.

Delphaeryn Leiyraghon has planted a large plant creature called a **corpse flower** in her garden over the remains of several zombies and dead wizards. The plant creature has accepted Delphaeryn Leiyraghon as her master, even though she has the terribly reeking creature chained like a dog to restrain it. The

chain allows the creature to move up and down the garden along its eastern wall, but it can't move away from the wall for more than 5 feet nor climb it to escape. Anyone stepping into the garden, or opening any of doors or windows to the garden, immediately smells a disgusting odor. Staying within 10 feet of the western wall of the building means a safe distance from the reach and stench attack of the corpse flower, which immediately rushes at anyone entering the garden. Guards and even her consort are forbidden to go to the garden, while Delphaeryn Leiyraghon sometimes goes out to feed the plant and to inhale the smell of the special Stench of Death spores which the flower extrudes, but she makes sure she is not close enough to suffer its harmful effects. On rare occasions, Delphaeryn Leiyraghon takes her enemies to the garden for a walk, letting them get deeper in the garden to enable the corpse flower to reach them with its tentacles and spore attack, while she stays in the safe zone.

At a safe distance from the reach of the corpse flower, Delphaeryn Leiyraghon has buried her clone under a thin layer of dirt, along with a copy of her spellbook. If slain, her soul claims this body and she leaves the villa for Wyrmsmoke Keep.

16. Statue of Sammaster

The large stone statue of a middle-aged, handsome human wizard with a thin moustache, large eyes, and long straight hair, dressed in an exquisite robe, stands in this corner of the courtyard. At the foot of the statue a small bronze sign reads in the Draconic language: "Prophet of the Scaly Way".

The statue portrays the prophet and leader of the Cult of the Dragon, Sammaster himself. A detect magic reveals it to be magical.

Statue. Anyone who touches the bronze sign and says "Dead dragons shall rule the world.", can ask five questions per day from Sammaster, as if casting the spell contact other plane. The lich answers in a dry, hoarse voice which can be heard only by the person activating the magic of the statue.



LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Once the players have found out where to look for Antazer Cabrax, they can go to the location at any time. Dmitra Flass will also return to them through the dream spell in three days to see what they have found out. She wants to know the location of the book, and once she learns it, she urges them to recover it as soon as possible. In return, she promises again to help kill Iyrauroth and get rid of the Cult of the Dragon. If this doesn't work, she will promise them an immediate payment of 5,000 gp if they were to recover the contents of the book.

The copy of the Testament of Yhorlanglarorl was hidden by Yhorlanglarorl, the copper dragon loremaster himself, inside a cave that was infused with the spell-enhancing anomaly created by Embrurshaile's failed experiment. There is only one cave in the midland hills that is close to the Skullsmashers ogre tribe. Its huge gaping entrance can be easily spotted during daytime from high above. The ogres think that this place has something to do with the legendary lost weapon of the ancient ogre king Vorbyx. Every now and then, a brave specimen tries to prove him or herself to the tribe and enters the cave, which silently devours the venturesome victim. Those who emerge on rare occasions are but zombie versions of their former selves. These ogre zombies, called the Witnesses of Vorbyx by the ogres, regenerate as a result of the magically warped nature of the place and are considered holy by the tribe, who think they have met the ancient king. They are outfitted with plates of armor pieces nailed onto their bodies and are kept chained at the entrance in order to protect it for all eternity.

CAVES OF THE TESTAMENT



1 TILE = 10 FEET

The Caves of the Testament has the following features.

- Rooms and corridors are 15 feet high unless noted otherwise.
- Rooms are naturally dark.
- Any spell cast within the caves is treated as if it was cast from a spell slot one level higher. Apply the enhanced effects to the spell if available.
- Dispel magic and similar spells that diminish or end the effects of other spells can be cast only if the caster succeeds on a DC 15 Concentration check. This applies to spells that would normally have individual effects, but are used to suppress other spells (like darkness for example)
- All magic items that have charges are recharged with one charge for every minute the item spends in the caves.
- The cave system slowly extracts the life force of living creatures. Every creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution save per minute spent in the caves or gain one level of exhaustion. Those who die due to this effect are immediately raised as zombies that regenerate 10 hit points per round. Holy water suppresses the regeneration for one round.

1. Restraining Cave

This cave is decorated with the tribal fetishes of the ogres. Carved bones on strings of sinew, crude banners made out of hides and painted with blood, skulls stuffed with feathers and iron nails driven into them decorate every inch. The walls are covered with stylized illustrations of ogre and simple letters, painted with some material which has a bright yellow color. You can smell the decay and hear the moaning of some large mindless undead from the caves beyond, rattling their chains endlessly. The air seems to vibrate and there is a noticeable drop in air pressure that you can feel in your ears as you enter.

The writings on the wall are in Giant language and warn the trespassers of the anger of Vorbyx and his punishment through his witnesses.

2. Cave of the Witnesses

This is the farthest where the ogre of the Skullsmasher tribe dare to dive into the cave system, except for those overly bold ones who are now chained to the walls. There are two rotting **Witnesses of Vorbyx** within this cave, completely blocking passage to the corridors beyond.

Treasure. At the feet of the two zombies lies

the trampled body of an unfortunate orc tribal assassin who thought he could sneak past the undead. His equipment includes 110 gp, a ceramic statuette of a harpy (25 gp), a pair of leather boots with copper buckles (25 gp), a ceramic urn (25 gp), a silver sundial (125 gp), and a potion of climbing.



3. Maze of Confusion

Anyone looking into this cave sees more passages leading to the left and right. This is an illusion similar to a hallucinatory terrain spell, which can be negated if a player carefully examines the entry to the cave and succeeds at a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) skill check. If the players see through the illusion they see the empty cave ahead.

Once the players step into the cave they are subject to an effect similar to a maze spell, which they can escape by using an action to succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence ability check. The character effectively disappears from the cave and is transferred to the pocket dimension created by the maze effect, which looks exactly like the cave system they were exploring. All players are drawn into the same maze, appearing adjacent to each other when the effect starts. They can stick together and attempt group ability checks to escape, or they can split up and make the checks individually. Every round while in the maze, a player must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw to overcome a confusion spell effect. The maze automatically releases the subjects after ten minutes. The life force extraction power of the cave system does not affect those trapped inside the maze.

4. Icy Glimpse of One's Death

A small frozen lake lies in the middle of this cavern, its surface is as clear as is the body of water that it covers. It is impossible to crack the ice, even fire doesn't melt it. Anyone within 5 feet of the frozen surface can

see shapes forming within the ice as images of their own death materialize on the reflective surface. The scene contains so many details and facts about the viewer, which only they would know, that it convinces the onlooker that this is going to be their actual death. The dread of this revelation causes them to suffer a short-term madness for 1d10 minutes unless they succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. For those who fail the save, roll randomly on the short-term madness table to see what reaction they manifest as a result of this experience. This effect affects the players only once. Don't forget to apply the life force extraction effect of the cave system every minute.

Examples of possible deaths could be the following.

- Being torn apart by two rival (evil or good) dragons.
- The player's soul being ripped out by a mighty wizard through a powerful spell.
- A party of adventurers attacking, one of them beheading or stabbing the player with a mighty magical sword.
- Being brutally hacked to pieces by a pit fiend in the Nine Hells.
- Struggling for air as the result of a withering disease that slowly kills the player
- Dying peacefully on a hoard of treasure, which is then completely looted by thieves.
- Being turned into a dracolich by a handful of Wearers of Purple.
- Getting poisoned and sacrificed by a laughing rakshasa maharaja in a jungle temple.

Boon of Ordained Fate. Once per long rest the player gains a second chance in the form of a free reroll any time they would die from a failed saving throw, ability check, or attack. This represents the fact that the players trust that they know what will cause their death and this gives them power to fight

other hazards that would be fatal.

5. Scribblings of a Madman

The floor of the cave system is completely covered with small magic runes that pulsate with a soft purplish light. Above you, on the ceiling there's shaky handwriting painted with either dark red paint or someone's blood. It says: "I have failed to divert the flow of time before my attempt to do so. I will bring to my grave all the knowledge I am yet unaware of."

Anyone stepping on the runes on the floor is subject to a fear spell effect that can be negated with a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw.

Antazer Cabrax saw that his own death was going to be caused by the life-draining effects of the cave system, and that it will happen in front of the Testament of Yhorlanglarorl. In his temporary madness and almost unbearable exhaustion, he wrote the above lines on the ceiling of this cave with his own blood, while his shield guardian carried and lifted him high.

6. The Adamantine Fortress

This cave was the home of a gargoyle champion bound by Yhorlanglarorl to protect the caves. The already maddened and exhausted wizard battled the elemental creature and at the end tossed his Daern's Instant Fortress at it to kill it. The magic item crushed the creature and expanded until it hit the ceiling and drove its adamantine body deep into it. What remains now is the badly damaged, cracked adamantine tower, lying askew amidst the rubbles of the collapsed cave, both ends buried in the rocks.

Daern's Instant Fortress. The door of the fortress is visible, but can be opened only with the command word, which can be recovered with an identify spell. The tower has 43 hit points remaining.

Treasure. The crushed body of the gargoyle champion can be found below the tower if it has been removed by shrinking it with the command word. The gargoyle champion's armor and weapon was crushed by the weight

of the tower but its Ioun Stone (Awareness) can be found in the rubble with a detect magic spell, or a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) skill check.



7. No Way Forward

You see a large magical membrane of vibrating greenish, bluish color in front of you, blocking the passage to the only corridor beyond this cave.

Yhorlanglarorl hid his testament in these caves because he knew that its spell enhancing and life extracting powers will keep unwanted visitors away. He sealed the entrance of the cave that holds the book with a magical gate that can only be passed if one walks through it backwards.

Yhorlanglarorl's good heart, and the jester inside, a trait of his kind, didn't allow him to leave this gate without a key, so he left a clue to his puzzle to be delivered by a magic mouth spell. If the players come close to the gate read them the following:

The shape of an ancient copper dragon's face materializes in front of you. The ghostly form speaks slowly in a deep, but almost playful voice. "There... is... no... way... forward." With that the image dissipates.

Start a stopwatch after reading this entry to see how many minutes the players spend at the gate trying to figure out a way through it. Roughly every minute have them roll the DC 10 Constitution saving throw against the life-draining power of the cave system.

8. The Testament of the Dragon

A huge pedestal holds an enormous open book bound in copper with draconic engravings. Above the tome and looking at the pages as if reading them, hovers the ghostly

form of a human figure in torn red robes. Its body lies on the floor below it, now withered and rotten. Next to him, facing you, stands a 10-foot high construct made out of wood and metal plates that resembles a helmet and a complete armor with a crystal in its chest that pulsates with magical energy. The red-robed ghost turns to you as you enter the cave. You can see his flesh peeling off from his bones as he speaks to you menacingly in a dying voice. "It is I, Antazer Cabrax, who has found this magnificent book and I have no intention of sharing its secrets with anyone!" He raises his hand and starts casting a spell as his construct guardian leaps forward at you.

The hazards of the cave system took **Antazer Cabrax's** life by the time he reached the book. His ambitions to research its secrets and to complete his quest for Dmitra Flass could not let his soul rest after his death. He haunts as a ghost and is obsessed with the book, eternally bound to it. Filled with envy and anger, he attacks anyone who comes close.

The **shield guardian's** last command was to kill anyone who comes near its master. The Thayan illusionist has stored a phantasmal killer spell in it, which recharges every minute due to the spell-enhancing anomaly of the place.

Shield guardian. The players can claim the shield guardian as their own if they take the control amulet from Antazer Cabrax's dead body.

Testament of Yhorlanglarorl. The book, written in Draconic, contains information on most of the famous places, events, and personalities of the Inner Sea region. The players can research any such related topic with an advantage on their skill checks. One particular chapter called the "Pride and Folly of Embrurshaile" contains the following information:

- The chapter tells the complete story of Embrurshaile, along with references to Iyrauroth. Read the players the story of Embrurshaile found in the second paragraph of the Adventure Background.
- As part of the story, the players also read about the detailed description of Embrurshaile's lair, which they learn is the lair they were actually born. Give the players Handout #2 which describes the lair.
- The testament also describes the outcome of Embrurshaile's ritual. Give the players Handout #3 which describes Embrurshaile's failed experiment and refers to the Heart of Embrurshaile.



- The ritual, described over several long pages of the book, cannot be reconstructed based on this description alone, but it is enough for someone with a high level of arcane knowledge to start researching it. This is exactly what Dmitra Flass wants. The description and the many arcane details of the ritual can be copied in writing by a single player in 10 minutes or it can be fully memorized with a successful individual or group DC 17 Intelligence ability check over the course of 5 minutes. Every extra minute spent on memorizing the ritual lowers the DC by 1, to a minimum of 12. Apply the life-draining effect of the cave system every minute.

The book is magically held in place and can't be moved from the pedestal by any means, though it can be destroyed just like any other book.

THE WYRM MUST DIE

Dmitra Flass monitors the players via spells every day and contacts them through a dream spell the day after they return from the Caves of the Testament.

Your consciousness clears from a state of slumber, and you realize you are dreaming a very vivid dream again. Dmitra Flass stands in front of the dead, smoldering, arrow-riddled carcass of Iyrauroth, encircled by a crowd of humans, most of them dressed in black armor bearing the sign of the Zhen-tarim, some of them Skymages mounted on various flying beasts, as well as a few Red Wizards in crimson robes with bald tattooed heads. She smiles at you and speaks in a soft voice. "Do you like what you see? Your salvation is at hand. We could achieve all this together." She turns briefly at the enormous corpse of the black dragon be-



fore turning back to you asking. “Did you find information on the ritual that the late Antazer should have brought back to me? My husband would immediately order his troops to meet you at the Bay of Hulburg if you did. He has a solid plan and able men to defeat Iyrauroth and the 5,000 gold pieces as promised.”

Dmitra Flass arranges the meeting between the players and the Zhentarim forces if they tell her that they have found a detailed summary of Embrurshaile’ ritual in the Testament of Yhorlanglarorl, and if they are willing to discuss the details of the military campaign against Iyrauroth. Her top priority is to get a hold of the information about the ritual, and she ends the dream spell grudgingly if the players refuse to share it with her. She doesn’t mind if the players don’t want to ally with them to destroy Iyrauroth, but notes that this would have been the only chance for them to save themselves from the tyranny of the Wyrms of the Peaks.

THE BATTLE OF THE BLACK MONARCHS

The Bay of Hulburg lies at the foothills that turn into the Galena Mountain a few miles to the north. Read the players the following as they approach the bay:

You see a large warship harbored at a crumbling dock on the shores of the bay, located a mile from the ruined town of Hulburg. Its massive black sails bear the sign of the Zhentarim, visible from a great distance. Three wagons stand on the shore, surrounded by twenty armed warriors, all dressed in black, just like in the dream you had. You can also spot a small group of three red-robed wizards, all holding their hoods against the strong wind. Three manticores circle above the wagons, their riders obviously skymages of the Zhentarim. They all turn in your direction when they spot you. Two men, one armored, the other in flowing robes, both riding warhorses, come forward in your direction to greet you.

The armored man on the warhorse is Selfaril Uoumdolphin, the High Blade of Mulmaster, leader of the region’s Zhentarim forces. The other figure is Thurndan Tallwand, his advi-

sor and protector. They greet the players and introduce themselves, while two of his men remove a large chest from one of the wagons and place it close to the players. Selfaril Uoumdolphin speaks in a confident and calm manner. His military background and single-minded approach sets the tone of the conversation, cutting to the point as soon as possible and telling the players his strategy.

“My wife will contact Iyrauroth through a spell and convince him to come to this bay before nightfall. The Wyrms of the Peaks will expect a bribe in the form of this chest full of gold, which will be offered to him in return for safe passage for our wagons. This chest and the five thousand gold pieces in it, will be yours once Iyrauroth is dead. He will come invisibly as always, but our mages are prepared to see him and to negate his invisibility from a closer range. We will lure him in at first, showing him the contents of the chest, then attack as soon as he lands, or swoops down to grab it. My men will hammer him with bolts, while our mages will try to keep him earthbound and attack it with destructive spells. Once the barrage of the deadliest area spells are over, my advisor will fly me out so I can confront him in close combat. By the grace of High Imperceptor Fzoul Chembryl...” Saying this more to his man than to you. “...we are destined to win this battle together. You must hide yourselves in the two other wagons to avoid being detected too early by the wyrm. Do you have any questions?”. As he waits for your answer, Selfaril Uoumdolphin waves a hand at the ship, which slowly starts pulling out of the harbor.



The Zhentarim troops ready themselves and wait in an orderly fashion. Before nightfall, **Iyrauroth** appears out of nowhere with a tremendous roar, circling above, using his frightful presence. He lands to inspect the chest and this is when all hell breaks loose, as the Zhentarim start their attack without

hesitation.

Selfaril Uoumdolphin's forces use the following tactics in the battle against Iyrauroth:

- The Red Wizards launch faerie fire at Iyrauroth when he comes within 60 feet. They cast see invisibility if he goes invisible and continue with faerie fires until they can make him visible again. Once the dragon is visible they switch to fireballs. When all fireballs are depleted, they fly out and use long range evocation spells that don't require a spell attack roll.
- The Zhentarim Skymages fly within 60 feet of Iyrauroth and cast faerie fire at him. They cast see invisibility if he goes invisible and continue with faerie fires until they can make him visible again. Once the dragon is visible they cast greater invisibility and web to keep the dragon from flying away, then keep bombarding him with long range evocation spells that don't require a spell attack roll.
- The Zhentarim troops fire their crossbows at Iyrauroth when they can see him. They don't risk closing in for melee until the wyrm is seriously wounded.
- Selfaril Uoumdolphin waits for the dragon to become visible and then for the barrage of area effect spells to stop. At this point Thurndan Tallwand casts fly on him and he charges Iyrauroth to draw his attention at himself. He retreats to the side of his advisor if he lost half of his hit points.
- Thurndan Tallwand casts invisibility and keeps at least 100 feet of distance from Iyrauroth at all times. He waits for the other wizards to make the dragon visible, then casts his offensive spells. He casts teleport if Selfaril Uoumdolphin is seriously wounded, taking only the two of them to safety in Mulmaster.

Use the **knight** monster entry for Selfaril Uoumdolphin.

Use the **archmage** monster entry for Thurndan Tallwand.

Use the **mage** monster entry for Red Wizards.

Use the **thug** monster entry for Zhentarim troops.



Iyrauroth uses the following tactics if attacked. Don't forget to apply the effects of the Dracorage for both Iyrauroth and the players.

- He tries to get out of range from the faerie fires and spends a round to turn invisible after every attack he makes, using his Ring of Invisibility.
- If made visible, he takes to the air and uses his frightful presence ability to affect as many enemies as possible.
- If he is invisible he keeps 100 feet of distance from the wizards and attacks them with his breath weapon to kill as many as possible in one round.
- He attacks any of the Zhentarim Skymages who are in close proximity with his melee attacks. He also uses all of his legendary actions in this case to strike with his tail every time.
- He focuses his attacks on the wizards until all of them are slain, or on Selfaril Uoumdolphin if he dares to engage him in melee combat.
- In melee he uses all of his legendary actions as tail attacks.
- If earth-bound and surrounded, he uses his wing attack legendary action.

- He tries to fly away if he drops below 120 hit points.

It is unlikely that the players and the Zhentarim can defeat Iyrauroth. The purpose of this encounter in part is to demonstrate how powerful Iyrauroth is and to direct the players toward the solutions provided in Chapter 3. For this purpose, it is important to keep the black dragon alive and have him escape even if the opposing forces would defeat him. In case Iyrauroth comes close to defeat and he can't fly away, have the Cult of the Dragon save him. A group of three Wearers of Purple come out of hiding and throw fireballs and other long ranged area effect evocation spells at the Zhentarim and the players. They make every effort to save Iyrauroth and help him escape. As a last resort, they use a teleport scroll with an associated object as the focus to teleport away to a clearing about 20 miles away, taking Iyrauroth with them. In his rage Iyrauroth devours one of the three Wearer's of Purple before the rest can escape.

When and if Iyrauroth defeats the players, he does not kill them. He has time and he is confident that the players, as mere wyrmling dragons, don't stand a chance against him. He intends to continue using them, but first he teaches them a lesson for their rebellion. He beats them badly and chases them off, threatening them that they will come to their lair and make them pay for their rebellion. He does differentiate between dragons and humans, the latter of which he considers absolutely inferior and barely more than food. He kills every last human survivor of the battle and flies out to the Moonsea to destroy their ship as well.

Treasure. The Zhentarim will not hand over the 5,000 gp if Iyrauroth is not slain, but only chased away. If Iyrauroth defeats the Zhentarim and the players, he takes the chest to his lair.

PLOT CLUE SUMMARY

After completing the Zhentarim quests, the players should have acquired the following information:

- The Zhentarim are backed up by the Red Wizards of Thay.
- Embrurshaile died in a failed magical experiment which transformed Thar into its current barren state and also created places of magical anomalies.
- Embrurshaile's lair is the same lair the players call their own. The iron gate Mohmitath guards leads to Embrurshaile's deeper lair.
- Embrurshaile's life essence probably lies dormant in the deeper levels of her lair.
- Embrurshaile could be raised as a dracolich if her life essence was reunited with her bodily remains.





CHAPTER 3 RISE OF THE DRACOLICH

The final chapter has two distinctive parts. In the first part the players recover Embrurshaile's phylactery, and in the second part they set Iyrauroth and the Cult of the Dragon at each other's throats, while they secure the Abate Dracorage spell, and optionally also destroy the dracolich and the cult by revealing their hideout to the Talons of Justice.

Of course, there are other possible outcomes as well, depending on the motivations of your players, so feel free to finish the adventure in any other way you and your players desire.

The characters should be level 2 when starting Chapter 3 and should advance to level 3 after recovering Embrurshaile's phylactery.

THE SPELLWARPED NEST

The players have learned what the gate hides in Embrurshaile's lair and Mohmitath will grant them passage if they answer her question correctly. Read the players the following when they are about to enter the gate:

Mohmitath comes forward from her cave, growling softly, and gives you a long look before speaking to you in a low tone. "So... You have come to answer my question. I will ask you only once and only the exact answer will grant you passage." She waits for a few seconds before speaking again. "What lies beyond this gate?"

An answer which contains "Embrurshaile's lair and her life essence" will be considered as a correct answer. If the players can an-

swer only half of the question by saying it is Embrurshaile's lair, but they don't mention her life essence, then Mohmitath helps by asking "And what's inside her lair?". The players can try to answer the question a few times, but Mohmitath will slowly walk back to her cave if they can't give the correct answer in a couple of tries and tells them to come back when they have the correct answer.

If Mohmitath is pressed, she gets angry and uses her lair power to bring the players to the Abyss and leave them there for a short time to learn from their mistakes. Feel free to use some demonic encounters to spice up their time in the Abyss, but when things start to turn deadly, have Mohmitath return for them to take them back.

Read the players the following entry when they answer the question correctly:

When you finish speaking, Mohmitath slowly closes her eyes and as she unhurriedly opens them again, the gate also opens. You see a long, dark passage leading deep into the heart of the mountain, its walls decorated with carved images praising Embrurshaile's greatness. A faint, color-shifting emanation looms in the passage, and it looks as if it has been raining within. You can smell the acrid scent of acid. Mohmitath lies down on her hunches and looks into the dark passage. "Go quick, the gate will close soon. I will wait for your return."

LAIR OF THE DEVOURER OF THE WEAVE 1/2



LAIR OF THE DEVOURER OF THE WEAVE

Embrurshaile's lair has the following features.

- Rooms and corridors are 30 feet high unless noted otherwise.
- Rooms and corridors are naturally dark.
- The lair draws away magical energies. Anyone casting a spell in the lair must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or the spell is lost.
- Any spell cast within the lair has its maximum duration halved. No spell prevails, including permanent spells, longer than 1 day.
- Any magic item with charges brought to the lair loses one charge per minute spent in the lair. Magic items without charges are unaffected.

1. Passage of Pain

The gate closes after 1 minute. This passage was the first line of defense in Embrurshaile's lair. Acid rains within the passage from the gate to its end at the lake through

tiny holes on the ceiling. It drains away to the lake at the end of the passage. This is a natural phenomenon inducted by Embrurshaile through alchemical means, turning the natural waters that pour into her lair into acid.

There are also three huge (30 feet by 30 feet) pressure plates randomly spread out in the passage. Each plate triggers a shower of poison darts at high speed from the ceiling and both walls. The plates activate only if the pressure on them is anything significantly less than the weight of a gargantuan dragon.

Acidic rain. The acidic rain deals 2d6 points of acid damage on the beginning of a player's turn while being in the passage.

Poison dart trap. Each trap attacks with a bonus of +12 and deals 4d4 points of piercing and 2d10 poison damage, and a player damaged by it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. Each pressure plate can be detected with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) skill check if looked for. It can be negated after a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) skill check to deduct how it functions, with a DC 15 Dexterity skill check.



2. Lake of Dismal Reflections

The collected acidic rain from the passage flows into this pool of dark acidic water, while more water also drips into it from the ceiling. The lake is 10 to 30 feet deep and is unevenly rugged on its bottom. This lake used to be nothing more than a body of acidic water before Embrurshaile's failed experiment. The experiment turned the lake into an absorber of positive feelings. If anyone sees their reflection in the small lake, they start to feel lost and empty of positive thoughts, losing motivation, confidence, and courage.

The room is haunted by the **shadow** of a huge aquatic serpent that once served Embrurshaile in this lake. It can't leave this room. The shadow's game statistics have the following changes.

- It has 48 hit points.
- It's size is huge.
- It has a fly speed of 40 feet.
- It's attack bonus is +6 and it deals 3d6+2 damage.

- It regenerates 10 hit points per round, except for rounds when it takes radiant damage.
- It rejuvenates and reappears on maximum hit points 10 minutes after it was killed.

Acidic pool. The acidic pool deals 1d6 points of acid damage on the beginning of a player's turn while being submerged in it.

Dismal reflections. When seeing its reflection, on a failed DC 17 Charisma saving throw the target is overwhelmed with despair for 1 hour. During this time, the target has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws, can't attack or target any creature with harmful abilities, spells, or other magical effects.

Treasure. The bottom of the pool hides ancient treasure brought here by intruders, who died as victims of the aquatic serpent long before the failed experiment. There is a layer of mixed coins on the bottom of the lake which takes hours, if not a full day to recover. There's a total of 6,000 cp, 10,000 sp, 1,600 gp, and 150 pp. Searching the pool takes one minute, which means 1d6 acid damage for 10 rounds for those submerged.



Any submerged player must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) skill check every minute to be able to reach the bottom of the lake and remain there to search it. After reaching the bottom of the lake, the player must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) skill check to locate and collect one item from the list below. Every 5 values above the base DC, the players also finds and collects another item.

Roll 1d10 to see what the player finds, but skip items already collected. 1: Bloodstone (50 gp), 2: Chalcedony (50 gp), 3: Jasper (75 gp), 4: Onyx (100 gp), 5: Pearl (125 gp), 6: Black opal (150 gp), 7: Emerald (200 gp), 8: +1 Longsword, 9: Pipes of Haunting (0 charges), 10: Bag of beans (7 beans).

3. Underwater Tunnel

Near the bottom of the eastern side of the pool lies a wide underwater tunnel that leads directly to Embrurshaile's lair. The end of the tunnel is closed with a wall that is visible only from a distance of 30 feet. Next to the wall there is fake lever which activates the complex trap mechanism. The wall has AC 19, 80 hit points, and immunity to acid, cold, fire, electricity, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant and thunder damage. It has damage resistance to piercing and slashing damage. It can be forced open with a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check.

Lowering walls trap. When the fake lever is pulled, another wall is lowered at the western entrance of the tunnel, sealing it off in the next round at a fixed initiative count of 12. The western wall is automatically raised by a mechanism after 10 minutes. Check for suffocation and drowning if the players can't breathe underwater. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) skill check uncovers a small and thin hidden lever in one of the

cracks near the western wall, which raises both walls and allows safe passage at both ends of the tunnel.

4. Hall of Trophies

This enormous hall once held the exhibited trophies of past victims of Embrurshaile. Now the torn-off skulls of dragons of various colors lie scattered on the floor, their name plates scattered around. In the middle of the hall stands a large mass of flesh, a vaguely humanoid but at the same time draconic form made out of draconic body parts, sewn together crudely with wires. It slowly starts to move as you emerge from the acrid water-filled tunnel.

The heads were once mounted on the wall of the cave, but they fell off when the wave of raw magical energy whipped through the lair due to the failed experiment. This blast of magical energy left the guardian and living embodiment of Embrurshaile's envy, a **dragonflesh golem**, unharmed. Embrurshaile constructed this golem out of her most hated enemies, including several of her younger siblings, using a Manual of Golems. The golem attacks any corporeal creature who enters this room and pursues targets even out of the lair if necessary.

5. Laboratory and Slave Pen

This wide hallway has four slave pens connected to it, all of them closed down with thick bars. Inside you see the withered, decomposed remains of a chimera, a giant basilisk, a bulette, and an umber hulk. At the end of the hallway stands an enormous chamber full of colorful debris. Broken glasses of all forms, pieces of paper, iron pots, wooden and stone tables lie scattered and broken in heaps, once all part of a magnificent laboratory. Above all the debris a black crystal almost half of your own size levitates in mid air, shaped like a dragon's heart. It radiates vile black light that projects strangely shifting shadows onto the walls. From these shadows a transparent blue form emerges as you approach. It hisses and growls in torment as it takes shape, the form of a broken, disfigured blue dragon wyrmling which opens its jaws, crackling with electricity.

The bodies in the slave pens are the remains of creatures that Embrurshaile tried to imbue with magical auras. They all perished in the catastrophic outcome of her failed ritual. The former laboratory contains several disenchanting magic items, mostly weapons and armor that Embrurshaile used for her experiments.

The levitating stone is the Heart of Embrurshaile, crystalized into the Weave and holding Embrurshaile's soul as a result of her failed experiment. The Heart of Embrurshaile can be reunited with her remains, kept at Wyrmsmoke Keep, through a ritual known only to the wizards of the Cult of the Dragon.

The incorporeal form is **The Nameless Wyrmling**, a spellwarped wraith blue wyrmling that was created when Embrurshaile used him as the sacrificial focus for her ritual. The wyrmling she abducted was so young he was not even named by his mother, Kaiostrephistyllion. The wraith hungers for the life force of the living and attacks the players as soon as they enter the room.

6. Embrurshaile's Lair

This room was where Embrurshaile used to sleep and spend the most time when not in her laboratory. Her hoard, a bed of treasures lies scattered around the floor. It consists of 235,682 cp, 54,827 sp, 17,253 gp, 446 pp, and 9,734 gp value of various gems and jewelry. She used up all her magic items in her experiments.

THE SPHYNX'S GIFT

As the players emerge from the Embrurshaile's lair, Mohmitath uses her lair action to age the players 20 years, which makes them physically grow and advance an age category from wyrmling to young dragons. Refer to the section Changing Age Category at the beginning of this module. Read the following entry to the players when this event takes place.

You leave the passage of acidic rain behind and emerge from Embrurshaile's lair through its main gate, which Mohmitath opens for

you from the outside. She sits on her hind legs, her eyes closed as if meditating. You try to step closer to her, but it suddenly feels very hard to move at all. You feel frozen in space and perhaps in time as well. The next moment you feel your body grow warm and your form starts to expand. Your scales become less vibrant in color as they thicken on your body, your claws grow longer and larger along with your muscles that now support a much larger frame than before. You are able to move again and as you look around you notice that your vantage point is now higher. You have grown larger and stronger, possibly even older as well. Mohmitath rises to all fours from her sitting position. She doesn't look down at you anymore, her eye level is the same as yours. "Praise the Dragon Queen, Holy Mother of Dragonkind, for she has blessed you." With that she slowly turns and walks back to her cave as the huge gate closes behind you, once again sealing Embrurshaile's lair.



A DAY OF RECKONING

The players have significantly grown in power and now possess the Heart of Embrurshaile. They know that the heart, containing the ancient black dragon's soul, could be used by the Cult of the Dragon to raise Embrurshaile as a dracolich. Iyrauroth has a deeply rooted fear of his elder sister and Embrurshaile considers his brother as the only thing that could oppose her rule over the region. The players also know that the Talons of Justice would immediately strike at the Cult of the Dragon and any dracolich they control if they knew where to find them. The players have the option to inform them and if timed well, this could mean the end of Iyrauroth, the dracolich Embrurshaile and the Wyrmsmoke Cell as well. This whole chain of retributive events could also present the players with an opportunity to steal a

copy of the spell that the cult uses to blackmail them. The attack needs careful planning and a precise execution, but if played well, it could mean the end of all of their enemies. All done in one day of reckoning.

Hopefully your players will come to the above conclusion themselves, but if not then try to guide them. Some practical questions that might arise are listed below.

How to lure Iyrauroth to Wyrmsmoke Keep?

Iyrauroth does not know where the cult's hideout is, or that it is hidden in a cloud castle somewhere above the Galena Mountains. He will investigate immediately if informed about the cult's hideout. Driven by the dracorage and his pride, he would do so even if he was informed about the fact that the cult has created a dracolich, which he would want to destroy to protect his territory. He would not come though, if he knew that the dracolich was Embrurshaile. In this case, he would hide and plot for a long time to find a way to get rid of her. It is not important to lure Iyrauroth to the dracolich as soon as she rises. Their confrontation could happen anytime. The cult could also lure Iyrauroth to the keep by having the dracolich concealed in an illusion and make it fly out over Thar to raise Iyrauroth's attention. The important part for the players, besides having the dracolich kill Iyrauroth, would be to use his attack against the keep as a distraction, while they might secure a copy of the Abate Dracorage spell.



When to call in the Talons of Justice?

The small blackboard allows the players to call in a significant force, whose aim is to eradicate the Cult of the Dragon without a second thought. The players can communicate with one of their leaders through the blackboard so they can send information

about their attack plans, its timing, their tactics, basically anything if they can manage faking Innerdain Justdark's signature. Obviously it is not an easy task, so the risk of failing (even with the one-time retry option) might keep the number of messages very low. The players could also research the Talons of Justice and come to a realization that this group of powerful creatures basically have all magical means available at their disposal. This also includes teleporting to Wyrmsmoke Keep if informed about its location. It is also an obvious and logical deduction that they would jump at the opportunity as soon as possible because of the pressing threat the Dracorage imposes. Not to mention their already altered attitude due to the curse. If called, 2 adult silver dragons arrive via teleport within 2d4 rounds.

How to use the Abate Dracorage spell?

The players should have learned from Emos Razkol, who accidentally slips the information in one of his speeches, that the potions of Abate Dracorage are created in Wyrmsmoke Keep. The spell itself is kept in the secret underground library and it is known to only the highest ranking Wearers of Purple. Once the spell is found and taken, any sufficiently high level arcane spellcaster, including Mohmitath, could learn it and cast it.

Try to orchestrate everything so that the final scenes unfold as a series of cinematic events happening in the following order. The NPCs presented in the texts below might have been killed during the course of the adventure, so feel free to replace them or to alter the text accordingly.

PACT WITH THE CULT

The players arrive to Wyrmsmoke Keep with the Heart of Embrurshaile. They are greeted as allies and the whole keep starts to buzz with excitement. The players are awarded with 5000 gp in gems.

Read the players the following when this event happens:

As you land on the courtyard of Wyrmsmoke Keep, the lifeless skull of Embrurshaile



stares at you blankly. A group of guards and Orinskar immediately hasten to surround you, while the Wearers of Purple and their initiates stay back to assess your intentions from a distance. After you announce the subject of your visit, Emos Razkol and the other Wearers present come forward and greet you as “sacred creatures” and thank you for your wise consideration. They immediately start to organize the ritual and call for their head mistress via a spell. Dalgar comes forth and nods in your direction as he watches the machinations of the mages while he leans against a wall. The courtyard buzzes like a beehive, slaves bring forth buckets of paint, candles and other arcane components as ordered, guards chat in anticipation, while the Wearers issue commands to their excited initiates, who run about and prepare the scene for the awakening. You are offered fresh meat, clear water and a chest full of gems.

ARRIVAL OF THE CULT LEADER

Delphaeryn Leiyraghon and Theldar Hammerfist are notified and arrive to the keep shortly via teleportation magic. If Delphaeryn Leiyraghon was killed by the players then her clone arrives, if she was not present already.

Read the players the following if Delphaeryn Leiyraghon is still alive and is able to teleport:

Arcane sigils are being formed around the gigantic draconic skeleton with paint, incenses, candles, and gems placed at focal points. With a green flash Delphaeryn Leiyraghon and her consort appear in the courtyard so suddenly that an unsuspecting slave carrying a bucket full of fresh blood almost tumbles into them. The master of the Wearers of Purple looks at you for a long moment, then waves for the other wizards to surround her. Dalgar also joins the group and converses with the others for a while. At one moment most of them glance in your direction then back to continue their discussion. Delphaeryn Leiyraghon does not come to greet you, but rather is busy with finishing touches in the preparation for the ritual.

THE RITUAL OF THE DRACOLICH

The cultists gather to perform the ritual which reunites Embrurshaile’s body with her undead spirit.

As the ritual starts, all the initiates gather around the framed skeleton of the ancient black wyrm in a circle. Within this circle, flanking the remains of Embrurshaile, stand the Wearers of Purple. The Heart of Embrurshaile is placed under the enormous skeleton, at an equal distance from all the participants in the casting. The Wearers of Purple start chanting rhythmically, for about ten minutes before there are any visual effects. Suddenly a black glow appears over their outstretched, already shaking hands. As the initiates join in, the glow intensifies and engulfs the Wearers of Purple. They build up their communal power for another ten minutes, then shoot the accumulated energy at the black crystal. All of the spellcasters intensify their chanting and slowly, the crystal lifts from the ground and elevates into the ribcage of the skeleton. It settles there for a moment, still connected to the wizards with a thick beam of sickening black light, then the collection of bones start to softly rattle and shake. The shaking and movement of the bones intensifies and a black smoke seeps forth from the crystal. It encircles all of the bones, from the largest to the smallest and in an instant it dissipates as if soaked into them. At this point the beams of black lights cease and the wizards shake with exhaustion. Suddenly, the eyes of Embrurshaile flicker to life as small purple dots of light appear in his empty eye sockets.



With a tremendous roar it shakes itself free from the frame which has held its bones and it spreads its boney wings wide. Everyone but the Wearers of Purple and Dalgar flee to take cover, while the dracolich beats its seemingly useless wings that lack any leathery substance to press the air around it. Defying the laws of nature, the unnatural abomination takes to the air with an ear-piercing screech. A Wearer of Purple orders an ogre zombie to take the black crystal and joined by Dalgar, Orinskar and six guards, they leave to the throne chamber.

As the dracolich Embrurshaile rises, her phylactery (the now non-functional Heart of Embrurshaile) is taken underground to the arcane laboratory (room 12) by Dalgar, Orinskar, a Wearer of Purple, and a few guards.



ARRIVAL OF THE WYRM OF THE PEAKS

Once and if notified, **Iyrauroth** arrives with four **half-dragon manticores**, in a furious rage. He is shocked to recognize his sister in her dracolich form. The undead dragon attacks Iyrauroth and an epic fight unfolds above the keep. Read the players the following when this even happens:

A mighty roar echoes through the courtyards as the raging Iyrauroth, followed by four half-dragon manticores, crashes to the ground, spraying acid all around from his foaming maw. He suddenly stops as he realizes who his foe actually is. "Sissster!" He hisses in surprise, then recovers his attitude. "You should have chosen to stay dead." He would continue mocking his sister, but the dracolich launches itself at him. Iyrauroth evades its initial attack and takes to the air, pushing his half-blood manticores aside violently. The dracolich follows and a battle of living and dead blacks starts above the keep. Most of the members of the cult hide in

the buildings, but some of the mages assist Embrurshaile with spells, while Iyrauroth's minions attack anyone who interferes.

THE HIDDEN AGENDA

It's time for the players to make their move underground and find the Abate Dracorage spell and destroy the phylactery.

Once the spell is secured and the phylactery destroyed, the players can call for backup from the Talons of Justice and leave the keep for good.

As they leave, the players witness the fall of Iyrauroth. They might be chased off if attacked by Embrurshaile, who is backed up by the wizards that are still alive. After the battle with Iyrauroth, **Embrurshaile** has the following game statistics.

- It is down to 364 Hit Points.
- It has 3 Sorcery Points left.
- It has no Legendary Resistances left.
- It has 2 1st-level, 2 2nd-level, 2 3rd-level, and 1 4th level spell slots left.

As the finale unfolds, the players might escape, defeat the wounded Embrurshaile, or be saved by the Talons of Justice who destroy the dracolich and capture any survivors for interrogation.

WYRMSMOKE KEEP

Wyrmsmoke Keep was the stronghold of an ancient, reclusive family of cloud giants. It is built of stone high in the clouds, on the magically hardened cloud that supports it. The keep lay abandoned for hundreds of years before the Cult of the Dragon found it and inhabited it. The keep is quite cold, reflecting the weather conditions found at this high altitude, especially in such a cold region.

The highest ranking Wearer of Purple of the Wyrmsmoke Cell is Delphaeryn Leiyraghon, who is usually managing business from her villa near Melvaunt. She visits only once per

WYRMSMOKE KEEP



tenday, but if her villa has been raided by the players and she has been killed, her clone relocates to Wyrmsmoke Keep. She stays in one of the rooms reserved for the Wearers of Purple and orders two of her subordinates to share a room.

Wyrmsmoke Keep is left under the command of Dalgar, the half-orc assassin, by the cell's council of Wearers of Purple. He does not interfere with the will of the Wearers of Purple, and serves them loyally as captain of their forces. Dalgar rarely issues direct commands to anyone but Orinskar, his subordinate who organizes the keep's everyday life with an unquestioning attitude.

Currently there are three human Wearers of Purple (Emos Razkol, Yaristov Unkhrad and Baltimus the Beautiful) in the keep, who all

serve under their tutor, Delphaeryn Leiyraghon. All of them are well-mannered, charismatic negotiators and diplomats, trained to deal with wyrms. They are all loyal to the cult and are fanatic believers of Sammaster's prophecies.

The cult leaders are served directly by nine Initiate Cult Wizards and twenty cultist guards, who are all either fanatic believers, or bold opportunists from the Moonsea region, Vaasa, Damara, the Dragon Reach, and some even from Impiltur.

The Cult of the Dragon uses slaves (use the commoner monster entry) for manual labor, and ogre zombies for the hardest work. There are a total of eighteen slaves in the keep, who are frightened and miserably kept humans brought here from the surrounding

region. Some are survivors of raids on Zhent caravans and businesses, some have been traded, or kidnapped randomly from the streets of cities south of Thar.

Wyrmsmoke Keep has the following features.

- Rooms and corridors are 40 feet high unless noted otherwise.
- Rooms and corridors are lit by continual light spells at human height and can be covered to negate the light.
- Doors are 30-foot high reinforced wooden doors with AC 18, HP 45. They can be fastened with an iron latch from the inside at a height of 20 feet. The closed latch can be picked using thieves' tools with a successful DC 15 Dexterity and DC 15 Strength check combined, and it can be forced open with a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check.

1. Courtyard

Huge grey cobblestones cover this enormous courtyard where Embrurshaile's complete skeleton hangs on chains and ropes from a colossal wooden cubic frame in the middle.

There are 3d6 slaves, 3d4 guards, d6 initiate cult wizards and a **Wearer of Purple** present in the courtyard at any time of the day. The necromancers have animated four ogre zombies to pack heavy crates and sacks. They are commanded by the Wearers of Purple. If not given an order, they just stand where they finished their last task. **Orinskar** also spends most of his time here, shouting orders to guards and slaves alike. When not addressing his subordinates, **Dalgar** watches the courtyard from one of the battlements.

2. Throne Room

This gigantic hall rises to a height of 50 feet. It was once obviously the communal area for the cloud giant family who built the keep. The walls were decorated with enormous banners that are long gone, or hang torn. Large sections of the roof are made out of glass that lets the sunlight in, making this room well-lit during daylight hours. There

are several huge stone fireplaces by the walls that have not been in use since the giants left the keep. The eastern end of the hall features a massive throne intricately carved out of alabaster, with tiny detailing, sometimes miniature even for human standards as well. It shows the life of cloud giants living high above humanoids, forests, lakes, and the beasts living in them. In the center of the hall stands an enormous stone table and the eight huge wooden chairs next to it, made out of the polished and worked trunks of pine trees, fit for cloud giants. The 10-foot high, 20-foot wide and 80-foot long table is covered with a huge ancient lace that reaches the floor on both sides, covering a few straw mattresses like a curtain. Next to the table there's a human-sized fireplace and cooking pots, some simple rugs and a few simple wooden benches, all used by the slaves of the cult.



There are usually 2d6 slaves resting in this hall, along with 2d4 guards at any time of the day.

A 20-foot wide staircase with a step height of 3 feet for each stair leads down to the lower levels of the keep.

3. Kitchen and Pantry

A large stone oven, the size of a horse, dominates this room. Its metal plates, hinges, and shutters are corroded and the inside, which could easily fit a human, is dirty and full of ashes. A large wooden table is turned over and its inside is dotted with bolt, dagger and arrow marks. It is obviously used for target practice by someone who lives in this room. There is a large heap of furs in one of the corners with some rotting remains of food and spilled bottles of ale. The pantry has thick giant-sized stone shelves that go up to the ceiling. A dirty straw mattress is laid on one of the lower shelves with a simple blanket and a pillow on it.

Orinskar sleeps in the kitchen area while Dalgar makes his bed on a shelf in the pantry, 10 feet from the ground. They spend the evening here, but you can place them anywhere in the keep as you like. Their basic equipment, clothes, some weapons and armor are scattered around the room and at the end of the made up beds. Some iron pots with firewood provide heat in the cold rooms.

4. Art Gallery

The roof of this hall is mostly made out of thick glass which bathes this part of the keep in sunlight during daylight hours. The walls hold paintings of all sizes in wooden frames, collected from all over Faerûn, placed at a height of 20 feet. Stone blocks with a height of 10-20 feet display sculptures, ornaments and various works of art of all sizes. The cult has yet to remove the items of worth. A large shimmering magic circle dominates the middle of the hall. Within, three black shapes, part humanoid, part dragon, wriggle endlessly, scraping the invisible walls of their prison, hissing and roaring.

The creatures in the magic circle are three **black abishai**, conjured by the Wearers of Purple with a combined effort. The cultists try to pry information out of these creatures, originally servants of Tiamat, concerning the plans of Tiamat and information on dragons of the region. The necromancers also try to bind them to their will, but have not succeeded so far in doing so. Breaking the circle requires a successful DC 18 dispel magic check. If freed, the black abishai will exact revenge on their captors before flying off. They will attack anyone who is not a dragon and will keep assaulting the cultists until they lose half of their HP, at which point they fly away, never to be seen again.

Treasure. The artworks in the hall are worth a total of 3500 gp if sold to the right buyer.

5. Hall of Games

This hall was dedicated to games of chance that the cloud giants loved so much. The middle of the hall features a depression that resembles a slowly deepening pool with

some holes and pins sticking out, designed for a long-forgotten game. The torn and dirty remains of a huge old card deck made out of thin wood plates lies scattered throughout the room. The faces of the cards contain runes in Giant language and the portraits of different types of giants as face symbols. The north-western part of the hall contains a separate booth, which could fit one cloud giant at a time.

Memnor's Whim. The outside of the booth is decorated with the engraving of a thin runed obelisk on all four sides, the holy symbol of Memnor, the god of trickery and luck in the giant pantheon, venerated mostly by cloud giants. A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) skill check can identify the holy symbol. A single stone door allows entry into the booth, which can be opened from the outside with a circular handle that needs to be turned. The door has an engraving of runes in Giant language on the outside, reading "Memnor's Whim". It does not have an opening mechanism from the inside. Facing the door from the inside is a 20-foot diameter stone disc with 19 slots, each marked with two alternate cloud giant faces - one smiling, the other sad. There's also a 20th slot with a laughing giant's face. Above the disc there is a stone hand extruding from the wall of the booth, pointing downward to the slot currently resting at the top of the wheel. The wheel can be spun only if the door is closed, and a soft melody plays from a music box while it is in motion. The door opens after every spin. Have each player spin the wheel, roll 1d20.

- If the result is an even number, several 20-foot long blades spring horizontally from the walls of the booth at every 2 feet of height and retract immediately. The trap attacks with a bonus of +10 and deals 3d6+4 damage. Make one attack roll against a small creature, two attacks against medium, three attacks against large, and four attacks against huge creatures. The blades can be noticed with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) skill check, and the trap can be disabled with a successful DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves tools.

- If the result is an odd number, a grinding sound can be heard and some dust pours out from four openings in the top corners. The machine used to shower the winners with small gems, but the main gem storage of the booth had been emptied long ago.
- If the player rolls 20, a secret compartment opens and four large emeralds (500 gp each) roll out of the four openings located at the top corners of the booth.



6. Guard Tower

This 60-foot high, two-storey stone tower houses most of the cult's troops. There are eight **guards** on each level, who sleep on straw mattresses with their equipment at their feet. There are some human-sized tables and chairs scattered in the rooms, along with other equipment and tools that indicate that the residents have been living here for a while.

7. Aerie

The aerie houses four trained **wyverns**, all of them kept docile by the regular castings of Abate Dracorage spell. The wyverns are tamed, well fed, and regularly ridden out by the Wearers of Purple to hunt or to scout the region from a great height. The wyverns attack anyone entering the aerie who is not dressed in purple.

8. Servant's Barracks

This building used to house the ogre and frost giant servants of the cloud giants and there are many old mammoth and dire animal furs scattered over the floor of this hall. Some huge tools, used around the house or in the gardens, can be found here and there, but most of them are rusty, broken, or just simply overused. Amongst these items there

are human-sized crates and barrels piled up on top of each other. The cult obviously uses this area as a storage.

The cult currently uses this building to store weapons, armor, ammunition, food, water, ale, and other resources in crates and barrels. Some of the crates are marked with the sign of the Zhentarim.

9. Skydeck

This area looks exactly like a shipyard, but only half of an enormous stone pier remains. Two 40-foot tall alabaster statues of cloud giant warriors wielding longspears stand where it starts.

The skydeck used to harbor the flying ships of the cloud giants and various other races that visited their domain.

10. Hanging Garden

The garden was used by the giants to grow enormous fruits and vegetables, but now it is nothing more than a parcel of dry dirt.

Treasure. One of the ancient cloud giants hid a Mantle of Spell Resistance that he stole, 10 feet deep in the ground.

11. Library

The library of the cloud giants is separated into three huge halls which hold over several hundred huge books and illustrated codices on large shelves.

The Wearers of Purple have made great effort to study these books to find hidden knowledge and useful information related to their cause. The books are mostly dedicated to art, literature, poetry, and songs from all over Faerûn. Researching any historical topic in the library provides an advantage on an Intelligence (History) skill check made to recover the desired information. There are usually 2d4 **initiate cult wizards** and a **Wearer of Purple** present in this part of the keep.

Treasure. One of the books in the library, entitled Ode to Monsters, contains songs and

WYRMSMOKE KEEP - LOWER LEVELS



poems about different types of creatures. The last fourteen pages of the book are actually Scrolls of Protection against aberrations, beasts, celestials, constructs, dragons, elementals, feys, fiends, giants, humanoids, monstrosities, oozes, plants, and undead. The book cannot be found with the use of detect magic, because its magical aura is suppressed by a permanent spell. The reference at the Shrine of Memnor might motivate the players to search for a book with odes to monsters. This search can be accomplished in 30 minutes with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) skill check, because the books aren't organized in any definite order.

12. Arcane Laboratory

This used to be a guard room in the time of the giants, but now it is set up by the cult's wizards as an arcane and alchemical research and production laboratory. Tables hold copious amounts of laboratory equipment, spell components, notebooks and

manuals on arcana, alchemy, and nature, all indexed and bearing scribbles. A single iron chest with a complex lock mechanism rests on one of the tables.

Iron chest. This iron chest contains a single scroll of Abate Dracorage spell, written by Sammaster himself. The chest is secured to the huge stone table with Sovereign Glue, it has AC 19, HP 30, a damage threshold of 10, and immunity to acid, cold, fire, electricity, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant and thunder damage. It has damage resistance to piercing and slashing damage. It can be picked with a successful DC 30 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, and it can be forced open with a DC 35 Strength (Athletics) check. A glyph of warding (DC 17) spell cast on the chest activates when the chest is opened by anyone but Dalgar, who has the key to it. It creates a mass suggestion spell that voices the command to flee Wyrmsmoke Keep. An alarm spell also activates when the chest is opened without the prop-

er key, mentally alerting Dalgar.

Laboratory equipment. The laboratory equipment and the tables, drawers, and shelves hold 6 potions of healing, 2 potions of greater healing, 3 oils of slipperiness, 2 potions of gaseous form, 2 potions of invisibility, a potion of heroism, 5 vials of acid, 8 flasks of alchemist's fire, 4 flasks of oil, 2 vials of antitoxin, 3 vials of basic poison, a magnifying glass, two merchant's scales, 2 herbalism kits, an hourglass, 8 vials of ink, many books, and paper sheets.



13. Treasure Vault

This vault has no door. Instead, it has a tiny hole that leads to the storage area. The giants entered the vault with the use of their gaseous form innate spell ability. The members of the Wyrmsmoke Cell have not found this room so far. From the inside, the room looks barren, without any adornments. The treasure in the room is stored in huge open chests, or placed on pedestals and racks. These items were collected by generations of cloud giants.

Treasure. The room has chests filled with gold and platinum coins, totalling 87,459 gp and 5,724 pp. Iron pedestals hold the following rare and exquisite works of art:

- A 3-foot high, hollow, spidersilk sculpture interwoven with small diamonds, depicting a drow priestess of Lolth lying on her back on the back of a tarantula, worth 16,400 gp.
- A painting of Asmodeus painted with the blood of a planetar, framed in a ruby-decked black frame, made out of the charred bones of the same planetar, worth 7500 gp.
- A masterfully sculpted silver sculpture of an archer medusa with gems as the eyes of the snakes and the medusa herself,

worth 5900 gp.

- A huge dragon egg made out of porcelain and gold, covered with sheets of platinum and mithral, worth 5600 gp.
- A golden ring fit for a cloud giant's finger, decorated with rubies and diamonds, worth 3600 gp.
- A single large sapphire worked into the shape of a cloud, worth 3200 gp.
- A 2-foot diameter, golden censer resembling two open palms of a clawed hand, worth 2500 gp.

On a weapon rack, the following giant-sized (huge) weapons are on display.

- A frost brand greatsword.
- A flame tongue glaive.
- A dagger of venom.

14. Shrine of Memnor

A huge white alabaster obelisk, runed and decorated with the holy symbol of Memnor, god of cloud giants, stands in the middle of this hall. The walls are covered with murals of white to blue shades, depicting cloud giants sitting on clouds with unworldly, meditating expressions. The room around the obelisk is filled with rotting wooden giant furniture and the ruined sheets of covers and cushions, all thrown around, mostly broken and torn.

The furniture was moved here by the cult from the guard station next door when they created their laboratory. A yellowed paper, stuck on the bottom of a huge wooden table has the following written message in Giant language: "Look for the odes and you shall be protected." The paper can be found easily with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) skill check if someone makes the effort to walk into the debris and look around. This note, made by one giant to the other, was a reference to the book entitled Ode to Monsters, that can be found in the library.

15. Bedrooms

There are two **ogre zombies** stationed at the beginning of the corridor leading to the rooms. They are ordered to attack anyone who tries to pass, other than the initiates and the Wearers of Purple. The cult has turned the remains of the ancient giant wooden furniture of these rooms into firewood long ago. The largest room, once the master bedroom of the keep, is now the communal sleeping hall of the initiates of the cult.

Many mattresses with blankets and furs lie around the room, each serving as an initiate's poor quality bedspace, while makeshift tables, chairs and some lanterns serve their comfort and provide them with space to study. These young wizards spend their time studying here, discussing or arguing about arcane theories, or just generally spending some time away from the guards, whom they generally scorn. They always keep their spellbooks very close to themselves, never leaving them behind if sent out of the room for service. There are always 2d4 **initiate cult wizards** resting or studying here.

A single Wearer of Purple is housed in each of the smaller bedrooms. These enormous halls by human standards provide more than enough space for the higher level wizards. They sleep on clean mattresses and the rooms contain tables, chairs, hooded lamps, and every other feature for a level of basic comfort. The door to each room is always locked and the wizards use spells to open and close them. In each room there are two locked chests that contain the belongings of the inhabitants of the room. There is a 50% chance that a **Wearer of Purple** is present in one of these bedrooms at any time of the day.

Chests. Every chest has an alarm spell cast on it, which alerts its owner mentally if opened. The keys are carried by each wizard for their own chests. Each chest contains a selection of 2d4 wizard's spell scrolls from 1st to 5th level. Choose the spells yourself, or randomize them, but make sure that half of them are from the school of necromancy. Each chest also contains 10d10 x 1d10 gp and

1d3 potions of healing.

16. Storage

The storage area still holds the rotting remains of the food, drink, and generic household items stored here by the giants in enormous crates, sacks, and barrels.

The tiny hole at foot level that leads to the secret vault area can be spotted with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) skill check. The giants used this secret entrance in gaseous form to access their vault.



NPCS AND MONSTERS

ANTAZER CABRAX

Medium undead (ghost), lawful evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 85 (19d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +1

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Damaran, Draconic, Elven, Mulhorandi

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Ethereal Sight. Antazer Cabrax can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. Antazer Cabrax can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn in side an object.

Illusory Self. When a creature makes an attack roll against Antazer Cabrax, it can use its reaction to interpose an illusory duplicate between the attacker and itself. The attack automatically misses it, at which point the illusion dissipates. Once Antazer Cabrax uses

this feature, it can't use it again until it finishes a short or long rest.

Spellcasting. Antazer Cabrax is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). Antazer Cabrax has the following wizard spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): chill touch, dancing lights, fire bolt, minor illusion

1st level (4 slots): color spray, disguise self, illusory script, magic missile,

2nd level (3 slots): blur, melf's acid arrow, phantasmal force

3rd level (3 slots): fear, hypnotic pattern

4th level (3 slots): greater invisibility, phantasmal killer

5th level (1 slots): mislead

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. Antazer Cabrax enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Draining Vertigo. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of Antazer Cabrax that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw or loose the highest level spell it is able to cast. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target loses 1d4 of its highest level spells instead. If a target's saving throw is

successful, the target is immune to Antazer Cabrax's Draining Vertigo for the next 24 hours.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that Antazer Cabrax can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by it; Antazer Cabrax then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. Antazer Cabrax now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. Antazer Cabrax can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, Antazer Cabrax ends it as a bonus action, or it is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, Antazer Cabrax reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to Antazer Cabrax's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

BLACK ABISHAI

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +6

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities acid, fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Draconic, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the abishai's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The abishai has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The abishai's weapon attacks are magical.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the abishai can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The abishai makes three attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its bite.

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage.

Creeping Darkness (Recharge 6). The abishai casts darkness at a point within 120 feet of it, requiring no components. Wisdom is its spellcasting ability for this spell. While the spell persists, the abishai can move the area of darkness up to 60 feet as a bonus action.

CORPSE FLOWER

Large plant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened
Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Corpses. When first encountered, a corpse

flower contains the corpses of 1d6 + 3 humanoid. A corpse flower can hold the remains of up to nine dead humanoids. These remains have total cover against attacks and other effects outside the corpse flower. If the corpse flower dies, the corpses within it can be pulled free. While it has at least one humanoid corpse in its body, the corpse flower can use a bonus action to do one of the following:

- The corpse flower digests one humanoid corpse in its body and instantly regains 11 (2d10) hit points. Nothing of the digested body remains. Any equipment on the corpse is expelled from the corpse flower in its space.
- The corpse flower animates one dead humanoid in its body, turning it into a zombie. The zombie appears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the corpse flower and acts immediately after it in the initiative order. The zombie acts as an ally of the corpse flower but isn't under its control, and the flower's stench clings to it (see the Stench of Death trait).

Spider Climb. The corpse flower can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Stench of Death. Each creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the corpse flower or one of its zombies must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, unless the creature is a construct or undead. On a failed save, the creature is incapacitated until the end of the turn. Creatures that are immune to poison damage or the poisoned condition automatically succeed on this saving throw. On a successful save, the creature is immune to the stench of all corpse flowers for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The corpse flower makes three tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw

or take 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Harvest the Dead. The corpse flower grabs one unsecured dead humanoid within 10 feet of it and stuffs the corpse into itself, along with any equipment the corpse is wearing or carrying. The remains can be used with the Corpses trait.

DALGAR,

THE BLOOD OF IYRAUROTH

Medium humanoid (draconic half-orc), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (studded leather)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Int +7, Wis +6

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +10, Intimidation +6, Perception +10, Stealth +13

Damage Resistances acid

Senses blindsense 10 ft., blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Common, Damaran, Draconic, Orc, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Assassinate. Dalgar has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't yet taken a turn in the combat. In addition, any hit he scores against a creature that is surprised is a critical hit.

Cunning Action. Dalgar can take a bonus action on each of his turns in combat. This action can be used only to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. When Dalgar is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Dalgar instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Relentless Endurance. When Dalgar is reduced to 0 Hit Points but not killed outright,

he can drop to 1 hit point instead. Dalgar can't use this feature again until he finishes a long rest.

Reliable Talent. Whenever Dalgar makes an ability check that lets him add his proficiency bonus, Dalgar can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Savage Attacks. When Dalgar scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, he can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Dalgar deals an extra 28 (8d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of Dalgar that isn't Incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Dalgar can see hits him with an attack, Dalgar can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Dalgar makes one kukri and one hand crossbow attack in the same turn.

Kukri. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



DELPHAERYN LEIYRAGHON

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 67 (15d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +10, Wis +7

Skills Arcana +10, Persuasion +7 (+12 when interacting with dragons), Animal Handling +7 (+12 when riding a dragon)

Damage Resistances necrotic

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran, Draconic, Tharian

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Delphaeryn Leiyraghon is a 15th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). Delphaeryn Leiyraghon has the following wizard spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, mending

1st level (4 slots): false life, mage armor, ray of sickness

2nd level (3 slots): blindness/deafness, ray of enfeeblement, scorching ray

3rd level (3 slots): animate dead, bestow curse, vampiric touch

4th level (3 slots): blight, dimension door, faithful hound

5th level (2 slots): arcane hand, cone of cold

6th level (1 slot): circle of death, eyebite

7th level (1 slot): finger of death, teleport

8th level (1 slot): mind blank

Dragon Friend. Delphaeryn Leiyraghon has advantage on Charisma ability and skill checks when interacting with dragons.

Draco Ride. Delphaeryn Leiyraghon doubles her proficiency bonus using the Animal Handling skill when riding dragons.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's choice that is within 30 feet of her and aware of her must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or

become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours. Dragons are immune to this effect. Delphaeryn Leiyraghon cannot use this ability again until she finishes a long rest.

ACTIONS

Paralyzing Touch. Melee Spell Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 10 (3d6) cold damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be Paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Chill Touch. Ranged Spell Attack: +10 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. Hit: 13 (3d8) necrotic damage. Target can't regain Hit Points until the start of Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's next turn. If target is an Undead, it also has disadvantage on attack rolls against Delphaeryn Leiyraghon until the end of Delphaeryn Leiyraghon's next turn.

DRAGONBORN BARBARIAN

Medium humanoid (dragonborn), any evil

Armor Class 14 (unarmored defense)

Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Skills Athletics +5, Survival +2

Damage Resistances acid

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge (100 XP)

Danger Sense. The dragonborn barbarian has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that it can see. It does not gain this benefit if it was blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Rage. The dragonborn barbarian can enter a rage as a bonus action that lasts for 1 minute. It can rage three times and must finish a long rest before it can rage again. While raging, it gains the following benefits.

- It has advantage on all Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- It gains +2 bonus to damage rolls when making a melee weapon attack.
- It has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- It can make a single melee weapon attack as a bonus action on each of its turns. When the rage ends the dragonborn barbarian suffers one level of exhaustion.

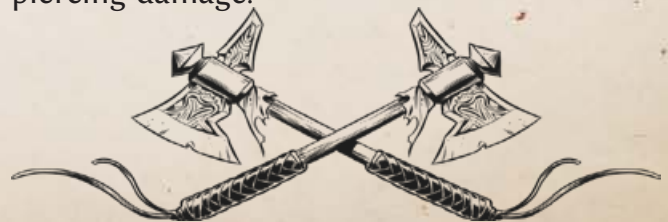
Reckless Attack. When making the first attack on its turn, the dragonborn barbarian can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives the dragonborn barbarian advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls that turn, but attack rolls against the dragonborn barbarian are rolled with advantage until the beginning of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Acid Breath. The dragonborn barbarian exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The dragonborn barbarian can't use its breath weapon again until it completes a short or long rest.

Greataxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Javelin. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.



DRAGONFLESH GOLEM

Large construct, neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 123 (13d10 + 52)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire
Damage Immunities lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks that aren't adamantite
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Understands Draconic, but can't speak.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragonflesh golem's choice that is within 120 ft. of the dragonflesh golem and aware of it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragonflesh golem's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Immutable Form. The dragonflesh golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Lightning Absorption. Whenever the dragonflesh golem is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

Magic Resistance. The dragonflesh golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The dragonflesh golem's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragonflesh golem makes two bite attacks.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5-6). The dragonflesh golem uses one of the following breath weapons at random.

- **Acid Breath.** The dragonflesh golem exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- **Cold Breath.** The dragonflesh golem exhales an icy blast in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- **Fire Breath.** The dragonflesh golem exhales fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- **Lightning Breath.** The dragonflesh golem exhales lightning in a 60-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



EMBRURSHAILE, THE DEVOURER OF THE WEAVE

Gargantuan undead (dracolich), chaotic evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)
Hit Points 525 (30d20 + 210)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80ft., swim 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	14 (+2)	25 (+7)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +15, Wis +10, Cha +14

Skills Arcana +11, Intimidation +14, Perception +17, Stealth +10

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities acid, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60ft., darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 26

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

Bend Luck. When another creature that Embrurshaile can see makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a saving throw, Embrurshaile can use its reaction and spend 2 sorcery points to roll 1d4 and apply the number rolled as a bonus or penalty (Embrurshaile's choice) to the creature's roll. Embrurshaile can do so after the creature rolls but before any effects of the roll occur.

Devour Magic. When Embrurshaile overcomes a spell with a successful saving throw, it heals as many Hit Points as the spell level of the spell and recovers 1 Sorcery Point up to the maximum Sorcery Points she can have.

Font of Magic. Embrurshaile has 9 Sorcery Points.

Magic Resistance. Embrurshaile has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Metamagic. Embrurshaile can use the Empowered Spell (costs 1 Sorcery Point) and the Quicken Spell (costs 2 Sorcery Points) Metamagic options on a spell when it casts

it. Embrurshaile can use Empowered Spell on a spell even if it has already used Quicken Spell during the casting of the same spell.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Embrurshaile fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Embrurshaile is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). Embrurshaile can cast the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): fire bolt, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, true strike
1st level (4 slots): charm person, detect magic, magic missile
2nd level (3 slots): detect thoughts, scorching ray
3rd level (3 slots): dispel magic, lightning bolt
4th level (3 slots): banishment, confusion
5th level (1 slots): hold monster

Tides of Chaos. Embrurshaile can manipulate the forces of chance and chaos to gain advantage on one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw. Embrurshaile must finish a long rest before it can use this feature again. Any time before Embrurshaile regains the use of this feature, if it had to roll on the Wild Magic Surge table it regains the use of this feature.

Wild Magic Surge. Immediately after Embrurshaile casts a sorcerer spell of 1st level or higher, the DM rolls a d20. If you roll a 1, roll on the Wild Magic Surge table (page 104 of the Player's Handbook) to create a random magical effect.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Embrurshaile can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +18 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 21 (2d10 + 10) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +18 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d6 + 10) slashing damage.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +18 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (2d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage.

Paralyzing Touch. Melee Spell Attack: +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 10 (3d6) cold damage. The target must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or be Paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Embrurshaile's choice that is within 120 feet of Embrurshaile and aware of it must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Embrurshaile's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). Embrurshaile exhales acid in a 90-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 67 (15d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Embrurshaile can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Embrurshaile regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. Embrurshaile makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. Embrurshaile makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Embrurshaile beats its wings. Each creature within 15 feet of Embrurshaile must succeed on a DC 26 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (2d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. Embrurshaile can then fly up to half its flying speed.

HALF-DRAGON MANTICORE

Large monstrosity (half-dragon), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d10+24)

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances acid

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Draconic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). The Half-Dragon Manticore exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Tail Spike Regrowth. The Half-dragon Manticore has twenty-four tail spikes. Used spikes regrow when the manticore finishes a long rest.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The manticore makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws or three with its tail spikes.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Tail Spike. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 100/200 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.



HALF-DRAGON OGRE BOLT LAUNCHER

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)

Damage Resistances acid

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Draconic, Giant

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Fist. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Bolt Launcher. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (3d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). The Half-Dragon Ogre Bolt Launcher exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

INITIATE CULT WIZARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any evil

Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +3

Skills Arcana +4, Persuasion +3 (+5 when interacting with dragons)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Damaran, Draconic

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Dragon Friend. The Initiate Cult Wizard has advantage on Charisma ability and skill checks when interacting with dragons.

Spellcasting. The Initiate Cult Wizard is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). The Initiate Cult Wizard has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand

1st level (4 slots): false life, mage armor, magic missile

2nd level (2 slots): blindness/deafness, web

ACTIONS

Chill Touch. Ranged Spell Attack: +3 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d8) necrotic damage. Target can't regain Hit Points until the start of the Initiate Cult Wizard's next turn. If target is an Undead, it also has disadvantage on attack rolls against the Initiate Cult Wizard until the end of the Initiate Cult Wizard's next turn.

INNERDAIN JUSTDARK

Medium humanoid (half silver dragon), lawful good

Armor Class 21 (plate armor, shield, fighting style)

Hit Points 98 (13d8 + 39)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Cha +11, Wis +10

Skills Athletics +8, Insight +7

Damage Resistances cold

Condition Immunities charmed, all diseases, frightened

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic, Chondathan, Damaran

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5-6). Innerdain Justdark uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Cold Breath.** Innerdain Justdark exhales an icy blast in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- **Paralyzing Breath.** Innerdain Justdark exhales paralyzing gas in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be Paralyzed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Divine Sense. Innerdain Justdark knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of himself, that is not behind total cover. He can detect the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated. Innerdain Justdark can use this feature 4 times and regains all uses of this feature after he finishes a long rest.

Divine Smite. Innerdain Justdark can expend one spell slot to deal extra radiant damage to a target with a melee weapon attack. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell-level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend, to a maximum of 6d8.

Lay On Hands. Innerdain Justdark can restore up to 65 Hit Points with a touch, or use 5 Hit Points of healing to cure a target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it.

Sacred Weapon. As an action, for 1 minute, Innerdain Justdark can add his Charisma (+3 bonus) modifier to attack rolls made with a weapon, which also becomes magical for the duration of this effect. The weapon also emits bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light 20 feet beyond that. Innerdain Justdark can end this effect on his turn as part of any other action. If Innerdain Justdark is no longer holding or carrying this weapon, or if Innerdain Justdark falls unconscious, this effect ends. Innerdain Justdark cannot use this ability again until he finishes a short or long rest, or if he used the Turn The Unholy

ability before finishing a short or long rest. **Spellcasting.** Innerdain Justdark is a 13th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Innerdain Justdark has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): cure wounds, detect evil and good, protection from evil and good, sanctuary, shield of faith,
 2nd level (3 slots): branding smite, lesser restoration, protection from poison, zone of truth
 3rd level (3 slots): beacon of hope, dispel magic, magic circle, remove curse
 4th level (1 slot): banishment, death ward, freedom of movement, guardian of faith

Turn Chromatic Dragons. As an action, Innerdain Justdark can make any chromatic dragon, provided that it's within 30 feet and that can see or hear Innerdain Justdark, make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Innerdain Justdark as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of him. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action. Innerdain Justdark can not use this ability again until he finishes a short or long rest, or if he used the Sacred Weapon ability before finishing a short or long rest.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Innerdain Justdark makes two attacks with his magic longsword.

Magic Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.

Magic Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

IYRAUROTH, THE WYRM OF THE PEAKS

Gargantuan ancient black dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)

Hit Points 413 (25d20 + 150)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80ft., swim 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	16 (+3)	23 (+6)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +13, Wis +9, Cha +11

Skills Deception +18, Perception +16, Stealth +17

Damage Immunities acid

Senses blindsight 60ft., darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 26

Languages Common, Draconic, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 23 (50,000 XP)

Amphibious. Iyrauroth can breathe air and water.

Assassinate. Iyrauroth has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't yet taken a turn in the combat. In addition, any hit it scores against a creature that is surprised is a critical hit.

Cunning Action. Iyrauroth can take a bonus action on each of its turns in combat. This action can be used only to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Iyrauroth fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Iyrauroth can deal an extra 2d6 damage to one creature it hits with a finesse or a ranged attack if it has advantage on the attack roll. Iyrauroth's natural weapons are not considered as finesse weapons.

Spellcasting. Iyrauroth is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). Iyrauroth has a Spellbook (with false life and unseen servant in it in addition to the spells

prepared), can use Ritual Casting, and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): fire bolt, message, true strike

1st level (2 slots): comprehend languages, detect magic, expeditious retreat, shield

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Iyrauroth can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +15 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (2d10 + 8) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +15 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d6 + 8) slashing damage.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +15 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Iyrauroth's choice that is within 120 feet of Iyrauroth and aware of it must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Iyrauroth's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). Iyrauroth exhales acid in a 90-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 67 (15d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Iyrauroth can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Iyrauroth regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. Iyrauroth makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. Iyrauroth makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Iyrauroth beats its wings. Each creature within 15 feet of Iyrauroth must succeed on a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw or take 15 (2d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. Iyrauroth can then fly up to half its flying speed.

MOHMITATH, HALF-DRAGON GYNOSPHINX

Large monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Skills Arcana +14, History +14, Perception +9, Religion +9
Damage Resistances fire, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical weapons
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Draconic, Sphinx
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Inscrutable. Mohmitath is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as any divination spell that it refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain the sphinx's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Magic Weapons. Mohmitath's weapon attacks are magical.

Spellcasting. Mohmitath is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). It requires no material components to cast its spells. Mohmitath has the following wiz-

ard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation
1st level (4 slots): detect magic, identify, shield
2nd level (3 slots): darkness, locate object, suggestion
3rd level (3 slots): dispel magic, remove curse, tongues
4th level (3 slots): banishment, greater invisibility
5th level (1 slot): legend lore

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Mohmitath makes two claw attacks.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6). Mohmitath exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Mohmitath can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Mohmitath regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw Attack. Mohmitath makes one claw attack.

Teleport (Costs 2 Actions). Mohmitath magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 12 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Cast a Spell (Costs 3 Actions). Mohmitath casts a spell from its list of prepared spells, using a spell slot as normal.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties),

Mohmitath can take a lair action to cause one of the following magical effects. Mohmitath can't use an effect again until it finishes a short or long rest.

- The flow of time is altered in such a way that every creature in the lair must reroll initiative. Mohmitath can choose not to reroll.
- The effects of time are altered in such a way that every creature in the lair must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become 1d20 years older or younger (the Mohmitath's choice), but never any younger than 1 year old. A greater restoration spell can restore a creature's age to normal.
- The flow of time within the lair is altered in such a way that everything within moves up to 10 years forward or backward in time (Mohmitath's choice). Only Mohmitath is immediately aware of the time change. A wish spell can return the caster and up to seven other creatures designated by the caster to their normal time.
- Mohmitath shifts itself and up to seven other creatures it can see within in its lair to another plane of existence. Once outside its lair, Mohmitath can't use lair actions, but it can return to its lair as a bonus action on its turn, taking up to seven creatures with it.

ORINSKAR OF THAR

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (unarmored defense)

Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +9

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Brutal Critical. Orinskar can roll one additional weapon damage die when determining the extra damage for a critical hit with a melee attack.

Danger Sense. Orinskar has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that it can see. Orinskar does not gain this benefit if it was blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Feral Instinct. Orinskar has advantage on initiative rolls. Additionally, if he is surprised at the beginning of combat and isn't incapacitated, Orinskar can act normally on his first turn, but only if he enters his rage before doing anything else on that turn.

Frenzy. For the duration of his rage Orinskar can make a single melee weapon attack as a bonus action on each of his turns. When his rage ends, Orinskar suffers one level of exhaustion.

Intimidating Presence. Orinskar can choose one creature that he can see within 30 feet. If the creature can see or hear Orinskar, it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of Orinskar until the end of his next turn. On subsequent turns, Orinskar can use his action to extend the duration of this effect on the frightened creature until the end of his next turn. This effect ends if the creature ends its turn out of line of sight or more than 60 feet away from Orinskar. If the creature succeeds on its saving throw, Orinskar can't use this feature on that creature again for 24 hours.

Mindless Rage. Orinskar can't be charmed or frightened while raging. If Orinskar was charmed or frightened when he enters his rage, the effect is suspended for the duration of the rage.

Rage. Orinskar can enter a rage as a bonus action that lasts for 1 minute. Orinskar can rage four times and must finish a long rest before it can rage again. While raging, Orinskar has advantage on all Strength checks and Strength saving throws, gains +4 bonus to damage rolls when making a melee weapon attack, and has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Reckless Attack. When making the first attack on its turn, Orinskar can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives Orinskar advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls that turn, but attack rolls against Orinskar are rolled with advantage until the beginning of its next turn.

Relentless Rage. If Orinskar drops to 0 hit points while he is raging and doesn't die outright, he can make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. If he succeeds, he drops to 1 hit point instead. Each time Orinskar uses this feature after the first, the DC increases by 5. When Orinskar finishes a short or long rest, the DC resets to 10.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Orinskar makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (2d12 + 5) slashing damage.

Javelin. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage.

STUMP

Huge giant (half-dragon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (unarmored defense)

Hit Points 138 (12d12+60)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-2)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +8

Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +1, Perception +2

Damage Resistances acid

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Draconic, Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). Stump exhales acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 16

Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Danger Sense. Stump has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that it can see. Stump does not gain this benefit if it was blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Rage. Stump can enter a rage as a bonus action that lasts for 1 minute. Stump can rage two times and must finish a long rest before it can rage again. While raging, Stump has advantage on all Strength checks and Strength saving throws, gains +2 bonus to damage rolls when making a melee weapon attack, and has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Reckless Attack. When making the first attack on its turn, Stump can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives Stump advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls that turn, but attack rolls against Stump are rolled with advantage until the beginning of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Stump makes two greatclub attacks.

Greatclub. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 60/240 ft., one target. Hit: 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

THE NAMELESS WYRMLING

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and

slashing from non-magical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Aura of Pain. The Nameless Wyrmling is surrounded by a 30-foot radius Aura of Pain. Any creature within this area must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw at the beginning of its turn or suffer wrecking pain which causes it to roll its saving throws, ability checks, and attack rolls with disadvantage until the beginning of its next turn. Construct, undead, and creatures that can't feel pain are immune to this effect.

Incorporeal Movement. The Nameless Wyrmling can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the Nameless Wyrmling has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Life Draining Breath. The Nameless Wyrmling exhales life-draining energy in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The target must also succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Life Drain. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount

equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Specter. The Nameless Wyrmling targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the control of the Nameless Wyrmling. The Nameless Wyrmling can have no more than seven specters under its control.

THELDAR HAMMERFIST

Medium humanoid (half-orc), neutral evil
Armor Class 20 (plate armor, shield)
Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +7

Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +3, Perception +6

Damage Resistances necrotic
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Damaran
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Action Surge. Theldar Hammerfist can take one additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action. Theldar Hammerfist must finish a short or long rest before you can use this feature again.

Fighting Style (Protection). When a creature Theldar Hammerfist can see attacks a target other than him that is within 5 feet of him, Theldar Hammerfist can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll if he has his shield equipped.

Indomitable. Theldar Hammerfist can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll. Theldar Hammerfist can use this feature twice, but can't use it again until he finishes a long rest.

Relentless Endurance. When Theldar Hammerfist is reduced to 0 Hit Points but not killed outright, he can drop to 1 hit point instead. Theldar Hammerfist can't use this feature again until he finishes a long rest.

Savage Attacks. When Theldar Hammerfist scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, he can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Second Wind. Theldar Hammerfist can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to $1d10 + 15$. Theldar Hammerfist must finish a short or long rest before he can use this feature again.

Skeletal Hand. Theldar Hammerfist's skeletal right hand provides him with damage resistance to necrotic damage. He also deals an additional $+1d8$ necrotic damage with melee attacks made with his skeletal right hand.

Superior Critical. Theldar Hammerfist's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 18-20.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Theldar Hammerfist makes three attacks with his longsword or longbow.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: $+9$ to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: $8 (1d8 + 4)$ slashing damage, plus $4 (1d8)$ necrotic damage.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: $+6$ to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: $6 (1d8 + 2)$ piercing damage.



VHLE-ZOTHA

Medium ooze (adult oblox), lawful evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 135 ($18d8 + 54$)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex $+7$, Con $+6$, Int $+7$, Cha $+7$
Skills Deception $+10$, Perception $+7$, Persuasion $+7$, Religion $+7$

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this distance), passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Drow, Undercommon
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amorphous. Vhle-Zotha can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without squeezing.

Aversion to Fire. If Vhle-Zotha takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Bardic Inspiration. Vhle-Zotha uses a $d8$ for its bardic inspiration. It can use bardic inspiration 4 times before finishing a short or long rest.

Innate Spellcasting. Vhle-Zotha's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

3/day each: charm person (as 5th-level spell), color spray, detect thoughts, hold person (as 3rd-level spell)

Jack of All Trades. Vhle-Zotha can add $+1$ to any ability check it makes that doesn't already include its Proficiency Bonus.

Lulling Voice. Whenever an opponent rolls a saving throw against one of Vhle-Zotha's charm spells, Vhle-Zotha can spend a bardic inspiration use to roll an inspiration die and lower the result of the opponent's saving throw by the result.

Spellcasting. Vhle-Zotha is a 8th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Vhle-Zotha has the following bard spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): dancing lights, prestidigitation, vicious mockery

1st level (4 slots): cure wounds, faerie fire, heroism, hideous laughter

2nd level (3 slots): invisibility, suggestion

3rd level (3 slots): hypnotic pattern, major image

4th level (2 slots): charm monster (X.G.T.E.), confusion

Sulfurous Impersonation. As a bonus action, Vhle-Zotha can extrude a piece of itself that assumes the appearance of one Medium or smaller creature whose memories it has stolen. This simulacrum appears, feels, and sounds exactly like the creature it impersonates, though it smells faintly of sulfur. Vhle-Zotha can impersonate 1d4 + 1 different creatures, each one tethered to its body by a strand of slime that can extend up to 120 feet away. For all practical purposes, the simulacrum is Vhle-Zotha, meaning that Vhle-Zotha occupies its space and the simulacrum's space simultaneously. The slimy tether is immune to damage, but it is severed if there is no opening that is at least 1 inch wide between Vhle-Zotha's main body and the simulacrum. The simulacrum disappears if the tether is severed.

Twin Charm. Whenever Vhle-Zotha casts a single target charm spell, as a bonus action it can effect a second target with the same casting of the spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Vhle-Zotha makes one pseudopod attack and uses Eat Memories.

Pseudopod. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., onetarget. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (2d4) psychic damage.

Eat Memories. Vhle-Zotha targets one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or take 18 (4d8) psychic damage and

become memory-drained until it finishes a short or long rest or until it benefits from the greater restoration or heal spell. Constructs, oozes, plants, and undead succeed on the save automatically. While memory-drained, the target must roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from any ability check or attack roll it makes. Each time the target is memory drained beyond the first time, the die size increases by one: the d4 becomes a d6, the d6 becomes a d8, and so on until the die becomes a d20, at which point the target becomes unconscious for 1 hour. The effect then ends. When Vhle-Zotha causes a target to become memory-drained, it learns all the languages the target knows and gains all its proficiencies, except for any saving throw proficiencies.

WEARER OF PURPLE

Medium humanoid (any race), any evil

Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +8, Persuasion +6 (+10 when interacting with dragons), Animal Handling +6 (+10 when riding a dragon)

Damage Resistances necrotic

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Damaran, Draconic, Tharian

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. The Wearer of Purple is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). The Wearer of Purple has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, mending, message

1st level (4 slots): false life, mage armor, ray of sickness

2nd level (3 slots): blindness/deafness, ray of enfeeblement, web

3rd level (3 slots): animate dead, bestow curse, vampiric touch

4th level (3 slots): blight, dimension door, stonewood
5th level (2 slots): teleportation circle, wall of force
6th level (1 slot): circle of death, disintegrate

Dragon Friend. The Wearer of Purple has advantage on Charisma ability and skill checks when interacting with dragons.

Draco Ride. The Wearer of Purple doubles its proficiency bonus using the Animal Handling skill when riding dragons.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the Wearer of Purple's choice that is within 30 feet of the Wearer of Purple and aware of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the Wearer of Purple's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours. Dragons are immune to this effect. The Wearer of Purple can not use this ability again until it finishes a long rest.

ACTIONS

Chill Touch. Ranged Spell Attack: +8 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. Hit: 13 (3d8) necrotic damage. Target can't regain Hit Points until the start of the Wearer of Purple's next turn. If target is an Undead, it also has disadvantage on attack rolls against the Wearer of Purple until the end of the Wearer of Purple's next turn.

WITNESS OF VORBYX

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (armor plates)
Hit Points 85 (9d10 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0
Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 Ft., passive Perception 8
Languages Understands Common and Giant but can't speak.
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Regeneration. The Witness of Vorbyx regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the Witness of Vorbyx takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn. The Witness of Vorbyx's body is destroyed only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Morningstar. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

ZHENTARIM SKY Mage

Medium humanoid (any race), any evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Animal Handling +4, Arcana +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Chondathan, Damaran, Tharian
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Bonus Scrolls. A Zhentarim Skymage carries two 1st-level, one 2nd-level, and one 3rd level scroll with a spell from their spell lists. A typical selection is: magic missile, longstrider, detect thoughts, and fireball.

Share Spells. A Zhentarim Skymage can cast a spell with the range of self to also affect its mount. The Zhentarim Skymage cannot use this ability again until it finishes a long rest.

Spellcasting. The Zhentarim Skymage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The Zhentarim Skymage has

the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): fire bolt, light, prestidigitation, true strike

1st level (4 slots): feather fall, mage armor, magic missile, shield

2nd level (3 slots): darkvision, detect thoughts, web

3rd level (3 slots): fireball, stinking cloud

4th level (3 slots): evard's black tentacles, greater invisibility

5th level (1 slot): conjure elemental

ACTIONS

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Light crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.



SPELLS AND MAGIC ITEMS

ABATE DRACORAGE

4th-level abjuration (Cleric, Wizard, Sorcerer)

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 day / level

This spell, researched and created by Sammaster himself, helps to calm the effects of the Dracorage. It instantaneously restores 5 points of Wisdom damage resulting from the Dracorage (but not other sources) and dismisses any non-natural negative attitude of the dragon toward non-dragons. It also eliminates, for the duration of the spell, the urge to rage when the dragon is damaged. In addition, the spell also protects the dragon from having to make another save against the Dracorage for a number of days equal to the caster's level (maximum 20 days).

HEART OF EMBRURSHAILE

This black crystal, the size of human torso contains the life essence of Embrurshaile, an ancient black dragon sorceress. The crystalized heart of the dragon was created when the ancient wyrm's experimental ritual to suffuse creatures with magic failed and the Weave collapsed around it, sucking in time, space, magic and life forces before exploding as a wave of destructive force that swept over Thar. The Heart of Embrurshaile weighs 150 pounds, has AC 19, HP 100, immunity to acid, cold, fire, electricity, necrotic, poison, psychic, and radiant damage. It has damage resistance to piercing and slashing damage.

Infuse with magic. The Heart of Embrurshaile can infuse a magical item by adding one charge to its current total charges up to the maximum charges the item can have, or it can turn a normal weapon into a magical weapon for 8 hours, adding +1 bonus to its attack and damage rolls. It can also apply the Empowered Spell metamagic quality to a spell being cast by it or anyone within 120 feet. It can use this ability 3 times per day.

Font of magic. The Heart of Embrurshaile can cast one spell per day from the following list of spells, which the wyrm had mastered while it was alive. It is a 9th level spell caster, its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). It requires no material components to cast the following spells: charm person, detect magic, magic missile, detect thoughts, scorching ray, dispel magic, lightning bolt, banishment, confusion, hold monster.

Sentience. Heart of Embrurshaile is a sentient chaotic evil magic item with Intelligence 16, Wisdom 15, and Charisma 22. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet, and blindsight out to a range of 60 feet. It can communicate telepathically with anyone within 120 feet and can read and speak Common and Draconic. It has a bonus of +11 on Intelligence (Arcana) and +14 on Charisma (Intimidation) skill checks.

Personality. The Heart of Embrurshaile has two purposes. Firstly it seeks to regain its physical form in a body which it can control in any way to be able to cast spells again. Secondly it seeks to gain as much magical knowledge and power as it can. It is eager

to learn, even though it is unable to use this power in any form besides spoken knowledge. It will try to deceive anyone in order to achieve its goals and will be willing to assist anyone until it serves its purpose. If a conflict of interest occurs, it will attempt to take control of anyone within 120 feet. This results in the target being charmed for 1d12 hours, which can be resisted with a successful DC 18 Charisma saving throw. If the subject takes damage, it can repeat the saving throw. Whether it failed or succeeded to charm its target, the Heart of Embrur-shaile can't use this power again until the next dawn.

GEM OF THE SEVEN STEPS TO ETERNAL ENLIGHTENMENT

This gem was created by Daurgothoth, the Creeping Doom, a dracolich archmage, one of the mightiest creatures on Faerûn. The gem's sole purpose is to lure and manipulate unwilling dragons to the idea of becoming dracoliches. Daurgothoth created the cursed gem for Sammaster while it was a vassal of the lich archmage. He has created several of these magical gems to be spread by the cult's agents to specific dragons, to be contacted by their organization later. Over time, though it was turned into a dracolich by the cult, Daurgothoth came to despise the Cult of the Dragon and Sammaster. He didn't want to be controlled by living humans and wants to create his own army of dracoliches.

Any creature of dragon type possessing this large ruby for over a day must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw each day or become compelled never to ever give this item away or to lose it by accident. The victim of the failed save always keeps a very close eye on the item and stares at it for an hour every night, admiring its beauty and listening to the story it tells. During these one hour periods, the victim sees visions of grandiose scenes from Sammaster's life in a chronological order.

- Sammaster's journey with his first master and his devotion to Mystra.

- Sammaster's journey alone and his meeting with Mystra, him becoming a Chosen of Mystra.
- Sammaster's time spent learning with Elminster, and later with Alustriel, and his deeper exploration into necromantic magic.
- Sammaster's meeting with the Banite wizard Algashon Nathaire, who convinces him to turn against his former allies Alustriel Silverhand, Laeral Silverhand and Khelben Arunsun, all of them other Chosen of Mystra. Sammaster losing his chosen status.
- Sammaster translating ancient tomes of magic and writing a book entitled *Tome of the Dragon*, and becoming a lich.
- Sammaster creating his first dracolich, Shargrailar.
- Masses of dragons howling and roaring as their skin and flesh melt away to become undead dracoliches that take wing over large cities, dominating Faerûn.

Every time a cursed victim sees a part of the story, they become more drawn to accept the ideologies of Sammaster. This manifests in a madness that slowly builds up with each story watched. A victim must succeed at a DC 18 Charisma saving throw each time a new story unfolds or acquire a longer term madness than before. If the dragon does not fall victim to the indefinite madness before seeing the end of the story on the seventh day, then the gem just compels it to keep it closeby. The attunement to the gem can be broken by a remove curse spell.

The first failed save imposes a short-term madness of d10 minutes. The subject is overwhelmed with emotions caused by the discovery of Sammaster's story, begins babbling, is incapable of normal speech or spellcasting, and has disadvantage on ability checks.

The second failed save imposes a long-term madness of 1d10 x 10 hours. The subject becomes fanatically devoted to learn more about the story of Sammaster, does not eat,

or sleep for the duration of the madness, and does nothing else but talk to the cursed item, requesting it to tell more, and explaining to it the details of what it has shown before.

The third failed save imposes an indefinite madness, which manifests as a new flaw for the subject: "I agree with the teachings of Sammaster and want achieve dracolichdom, the highest form of existence for a dragon." At this point the subject makes every effort to find those who know more about the prophecies of Sammaster and fulfill its desire to turn into a dracolich and live eternally.



HANDOUTS

HANDOUT #1. EXTRACTS FROM INNERDAIN JUSTDARK'S JOURNAL

"It is truly horrific how the rage slowly eats away the brain and wit of my trueblood brothers. The sages say that the King-Killer Star used to spread the rage, but now the blood-red comet is absent. Time has become our most valuable asset. We must find the source of the Dracorage and eliminate it once and for all."

"Havarlan ensured us that through divinations the Holy Dragonfather, and also His Resplendence, the King of Justice, have informed her during the past tendays that the Cult of the Dragon is responsible for spreading the curse. I will strike hard and fast, wherever I find them. High-knight Jaerlethket tracked a cult cell to the north of the Moonsea and sent me to investigate. I will find them whatever it takes and find out what they know."

"I will arrive to the borders of Thar within a day. My best option to gain information might be to confront the black called Iyrauroth, to see if he has already aligned himself with the cult. The rage will make it a tough parley though. I will have to figure out a way to be able to either defend myself, or escape his possibly already mad wrath. I have been informed that he was chased away centuries ago by his elder sister, who is his greatest fear. I wonder if that could help me in some way. I am not here to hurt or kill dragons of any kind. I come to cleanse this

region of the cult, or at the least unveil their machinations and find out how they fuel the curse. And by my oath on the Code, I shall do so, even if it draws my last breath."

"Praised be Bahamut for guiding me! I have finally found evidence of the cult's machinations near Melvaunt! The vile sect seems to raid Zhent caravans and I suppose they sell their cargo as their own. I must track them to their base and call in my silver brothers to erase them from history."



HANDOUT #2.

ENTRY FROM THE TESTAMENT OF YHORLANGLARORL

"...and so I dared to enter Embrurshaile's lair, trusting my protective spells while she was gone. The massive hidden crevice dropped into a domed cave that seemed to be nothing more than that at first glance. I have investigated the place, looking for a secret entrance to the her inner sanctum and soon realized that she had more magical potential than I suspected. The cave was lined with an illusion that hid its true form, perfectly exemplifying the personality of the wretched black. When the veil of the hallucinatory terrain fell, I saw that it was decorated with her image, immortalized in several huge stone reliefs depicting her in various scenes of "glorious" activities such as conquering cities, tearing other dragons apart, killing heroes of mankind, minotaurs, and the like.

I still did not find her true lair so I kept searching and soon found the carefully hidden sliding door mechanism, which was obviously crafted by some expert minions of hers. I pushed the piece of moving cave wall down a sloping passage and soon entered into a larger cave that housed a massive iron gate with magical sigils. I have found the gate to Embrurshaile's secret lair, the exact place where she was conducting those dangerous experiments with the Weave. I decided not to venture further, for I knew she might soon discover my trick by which I lured her away.

So I hurried back and still invisibly, flew away only to return later, when I had another, hopefully better chance to explore her inner sanctum. I couldn't wait to see her arcane laboratory and to expose her secrets. Oh, I just loved those times, when I was still so enthusiastic and daring."

HANDOUT #3.

ENTRY FROM THE TESTAMENT OF YHORLANGLARORL

"The black wyrm sought to secretly unlock the power of the ritual that she acquired from some unknown source, by sacrificing one of Kaiostrephistyllion's daughters, a young blue that she kidnapped from the nest of the Stormbringer of Ulgarth. I speculate that she must have followed the formulae of the arcane rite correctly, because the Weave reacted to her bidding by infusing the blue wyrmling with raw magical aptitude. Even though she partially succeeded in initiating the arcane reaction, she must have miscalculated, or deliberately overdid segments of the spell's components, because it has gone badly out of control. My assumption is that the life force of the sacrificial blue dragon, combined with the range-enhancing capabilities of the prismatic sand and verdant salts, caused an overflow in the primal focus of the spell and this has caused the catastrophic cataclysm that followed.

I felt, as later I learned did Iyrauroth and many others as well, the waves of energy when Embrurshaile's failure shocked the Weave itself for a moment. The raw magic-warping energies she released over the Gray Wastes of Thar immediately killed all vegetation for hundreds of miles and generated, as I have learned later from different sources, countless magically mutated locations throughout the region. Her lair spewed forth ash and raw magical substances when the blast took place. I have tried to remodel and calculate the actual possible outcome of the event, and to me it seems obvious that her very life essence, as the originator of the forces at hand, must have fallen victim to her mishap. If that is the case, and I am rarely, very rarely mistaken in my calculations, then the tremendous infusing effects of the ritual, which materialized in a suction effect before the final blast, must have trapped Embrurshaile's soul in a part of her body, probably her heart. This means that behind those rusty old gates, which I saw when I ventured into her lair so many years ago, the black she-wyrm still exists without a body, trapped for eternity in a form of undeath. It is for everyone's benefit that her body was destroyed and so her lingering soul cannot be formed into, Bahamut watch over our eternal souls, an unholy dracolich."



WEST GALENA MOUNTAINS

THAR

MOONSEA

20 MILES



VALLEY OF THE FALLS

MOHMITAH'S LAIR

TOWER OF THE HORNED WATCHERS

WYRMSMOKE KEEP

NORTH GLISTER PATH

GLUMPEN SWAMP

GLISTER

WINTERSPEAR RIVER

SHRINE OF GHAUNADAUR

LAKE HUL

THE HIGHFELLS

HULBURG

QUIVERING FOREST

VANISHING HILLS

TRANK RIVER

BLOODMUCK

CAVES OF THE TESTAMENT

SKULLSMASHER TRIBE

TORMEL RIVER

LAKE THENTAR

TROLL HILLS

PHLAN

PHLAN PATH

TWILIGHT MARSH

MELVAUNT

DELPHAERYN LEIYRAGOHN'S VILLA

THENTIA

SWORD TRAIL

RUINED WAY

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