

# THE VERDANTIUM

## A RED WAR ROLEPLAYING GUIDE

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# CREDITS

The Verdantium: A Red War Roleplaying Guide  
Version 1.1

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Events leading up to the Red War and the Battle for Mulmaster began as a player-initiated roleplaying effort within the Adventurers League. The AL Administrators then developed it into a multi-season high stakes struggle between good and evil. The war spilled into several published adventures and the promise of more content to follow in season 9. This document is for everyone in the AL community (players, DMs, game designers, convention organizers, and admins). We want to answer one question: Now that Thayan flags are flying over Mulmaster, what's next for our heroes?

**Disclaimer:** No AL Admins were harmed in the making of this roleplaying guide.

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## 1. USING THIS GUIDE

The Red War began online. Discussions were happening via Facebook groups, mass emails, and Discord chat servers. It was a viral event where players communicated back and forth, often *in character*—sometimes even giving descriptions of their actions and surrounding environment, just as someone might during a D&D campaign.

Players would spend hours in deep discussion, up all hours of the night. The factions found new vitality. Players began to strongly identify with their favored group. Players debated. Characters clashed and conspired. Petitions were drafted and signed. Counter petitions were put forward. It was difficult to keep track of everything. But it was incredible. I should know. I was partially responsible for the whole mess.

My character wrote the original petition, which introduced the basic premise (“let’s declare war on the baddest villains in Faerûn”) and got the conversation started (“uh, should we?”). But it wasn’t just me. Several players were making noise and sharing their twisted ideas. Some of these crazy people also contributed to this roleplaying guide. No single person can take the credit . . . or the blame for what the Red War became.

The AL Admins graciously took what we gave them, and played along. That’s when things got interesting. They responded with mysterious messages, cryptic countdown clocks, secret wartime dealings, a 3-hour season agnostic epic (DDEP00-01), and an open invitation for people to write Red War CCC (Community-Created Content) adventures.

No one could have predicted this outcome.

So, where does it go from here? How do we take these experiences and bring them to the table? How do we move the Red War along?

I hope this guide can provide some answers.

*The Verdantium: A Red War Roleplaying Guide* was designed to be consistent with the most current Adventurers League rules and guidelines, and in keeping with the spirit of AL and organized play for D&D, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. **Nothing in this guide was endorsed, approved, or created by the D&D Adventurers League.** But we hope it might be used to enhance your AL experience—or heck, use it in your homebrew campaign.

Have fun, roll the dice, flash your Verdantium hand sign (see chapter 10), and kick some Red Wizard ass.

- David Hopkins, October 2018

**Weaponized Head Canon.** When you’re roleplaying from a published adventure, you don’t always have time for your character to be in the spotlight. There are other people at the table. And after several hours playing D&D, we’d all like to go home at some point.

Obsessive players will partake in extravagantly detailed “head canon,” away from the table. They daydream about what’s happening to their characters in-between the sessions. They email the DM elaborate side story ideas. It’s not official, but nor is to be disregarded. Head canon is a natural response to a truly immersive story experience. These players move from observers to participants.

The Red War created a context for such players to talk about their characters and roleplay them away from the table, without dice, by indulging in a collaborative story with similarly obsessed players.

You can think of this guide as weaponized head canon.

**For Players.** *The Verdantium* should allow for an easy point of entry to the Red War, if you’re unsure what this whole thing is about. It may also provide ideas for how you can participate in the war and engage with other players—or possibly inspire you to create a character shaped by these events. Who knows? Maybe you’ll organize a team of insurrectionists to take down the powerful Red Wizards or create a camp for Mulmaster Revolutionaries?

*The Adventurers League Player’s Guide* (ALPG) for season 8 changed how factions operate, creating a greater level of dedication. If you want to be part of a faction, you need the “Safe Haven” faction feature in your background (either as a Faction Agent or part of a customized background). Much of the mechanical benefits have been removed.

*The Verdantium* was not designed to circumvent those rules or the reasoning behind them. The Verdantium, as a story element, is not a new faction. It’s the pledge a character makes when they decide to fight against the Red Wizards. (More about that in chapter 3.) Thus, the Verdantium pledge—unique to each character—provides a way for all players, faction members and the factionless, to participate in the Red War storyline. Our goal is to make D&D as collaborative and as interactive as possible, and to foster a “roleplaying first” mentality.

**For DMs.** *The Adventurers League Dungeon Masters Guide* (ALDMG) states in the section about playing the Dungeon Master: “You’re empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure’s spirit.”

Somewhere between improvisation and maintaining the spirit of the written adventure is where this guide belongs. Use it for flavor. Use it for an adventure hook or to add more context to a setting. Use this guide as a handy reference, if you choose to run DDEP00-01, some of the Red War CCCs, or any future Red War content.

**For Writers and Game Designers.** The Forgotten Realms is a busy place. It'd be nice to think we could create a flawlessly consistent fantasy setting, but we know and expect some variance from table to table. This guide can be a tool to understand the Red War.

We would urge writers and game designers to not let anything in this guide get in the way of you creating a good story. If something in here inspires you, great! However, nothing is set in stone. Nothing in this guide carries the burden of being "official canon."

#### WRITING A CCC

If you would like to write a Red War CCC, the D&D Adventurers League website is helpful. Go here: [dndadventurersleague.org/how-do-i-ccc-and-other-questions/](http://dndadventurersleague.org/how-do-i-ccc-and-other-questions/) You can also email: [resource@dndadventurersleague.org](mailto:resource@dndadventurersleague.org)

**For Convention Organizers.** With all the content available on the DMsGuild.com, you could plan an entire weekend just around the Red War. *The Verdantium* offers organizers some fun side activities for attendees. Our hope is that more D&D players will feel a greater affinity with the AL experience and use conventions as a rallying point.

**For AL Admins and everyone at WotC.** You've been busy this year! Thank you for all the incredible work you have done for this game we love. I hope this guide makes your job a little easier. We've contained all the Red War madness in one easy-to-reference guide. And if you want to use any of this material for future Red War shenanigans, that's one of the reasons why we wrote it.

Hugs and kisses.



## 2. A RED WAR PRIMER

*"We may indeed be on the verge of war as Thay, Mulmaster, and the Enclave are pulled into a conflict. Who knows how many others they'll drag in to it?"*  
– Sandyse Thunderquill

From a blog post, published January 25, 2018 on the Adventurers League website:

"Recently a group of Adventurers League players (and their characters, of course) have decided to take matters into their own hands and are seeking to guide some storyline development by entering into a prolonged roleplaying session amongst themselves and with the city of Mulmaster as the backdrop. They are putting themselves into the roles of heroes and adventurers and are seeking to put a cap on the power that the Thayans are building in this beleaguered place. Their interactions have been many, with multiple Discord servers and Facebook groups being spun up and tensions are high—all because one group of Emerald Enclave members decided to make an announcement of war upon the Thayans of Mulmaster."

It would be impossible to implement all the suggestions and side stories that emerged from these online interactions. Some Red War ideas got lost in the discussion. But other ideas stuck, becoming an essential part of the narrative.

Here's what we know.

### A MEETING IN THE HIGH FOREST

*"So . . . I hear we're killing Thayans now?"* – Badger

Deep in the High Forest, the leaders of the Emerald Enclave held a historic meeting to consider a dangerous declaration.

Thayan expansionism in the Moonsea region, growing antagonism from the Thayan archlich ruler Szass Tam, and the wicked acts of the nation itself, all presented a grave threat to the balance of civilization in Faerûn (for more information about the Shadowtop Cathedral Declaration, see chapter 4).

The Emerald Enclave declared war on the Red Wizards of Thay and petitioned the other factions to join them—and also providing guidance for a strategy. The Enclave did not have a gift for politics or diplomacy, but they knew how to fight. They had skilled hunters, deadly Uthgardt, and druids who were deeply connected to the primal way of things.

The factions had come together in the past. Surely, this time would be no different.

### NPCs AND PCs IN THE RED WAR

Since the Red War has been largely player-initiated, many PCs (player characters) have featured prominently in the events. DMs and game designers *may not* use these characters as NPCs (non-player characters). In other words, a PC belongs to that player, and that player alone. A player may be willing to permanently retire his or her character from AL play in order to serve as an NPC. But that is their decision to make. In this guide, we include "played by" parenthetical information to indicate a PC—with the exception of any quotes and the content in chapter 4.

With all these characters, it can be easy to get lost in the details. Ultimately, the PCs at the table should be the real heroes of their story.

### DEBATE & FRACTURED FACTIONS

*"With whatever happens, we need to be decisive, act quickly, and not flinch from what needs to be done. The black blades are coming out, and there will be plenty of red before the job's done."*

– Samuel Geddarm

With the public announcement of the Shadowtop Cathedral Declaration, the responses from the major factions of Faerûn were quickly made known. While the signatories of the declaration might have expected overwhelming support from the factions, it only served to divide. This was not Tiamat, come from the Nine Hells to threaten existence itself. Thay was not some overt threat like before. The nation had even shown kindness to the people of Mulmaster after the destruction from the Cults of Elemental Evil. Red Wizards from the Thayan embassy regularly walked the streets of Mulmaster, helping close elemental rifts and rebuilding the city.

The air was filled with debate, controversy, and bickering. Heroes who had fought side-by-side in the conflicts of the past now vehemently argued over the wisdom of opposing Thay. Public approval and denouncements of the declaration were made daily, many with opposing sides coming from within the same faction. Even among the Emerald Enclave there were outcries and pledges to banish those who had penned their name on the declaration.

Fueled by the controversy, rumors began to swirl around the towns and cities of a war with Thay; a "Red War"—a conflict where the factions and their heroes might not all be united on the same side. Pleading ears turned towards the factions in hopes of a unified response, but were met with discord.

Thay remained mostly silent during these matters, only posting a single public statement in their defense, announcing themselves the saviors of

Mulmaster and denouncing the factions for their lack of follow-up support.

#### THAYAN LOYALISTS

During the events leading up to the Red War, there were those who sided with the Thayans in the conflict. Some were citizens of Mulmaster who didn't want the factions involved, some were Thayan loyalists and employees, and there are even those who were a part of the Red Wizards themselves. The Red War is certainly not a black and white situation. Everyone has a unique perspective on the events taking place, and we want everyone to be heard and their voices to matter.

However, keep in mind that most adventures are written with Thay as the opposition. Even if you want Thay to succeed, you are never encouraged to sabotage the adventure and your fellow players to accomplish that goal. Now, on the other hand, if you were to form an adventuring group consisting of Thayan loyalists . . .

#### THE HAWKS OF MULMASTER

*"The city of Mulmaster shall not be used as a bartering chip by those who hold no stake in her future. So I advise that you weigh your future choices with great care." – Stabbing Master Ar'soon*

A statement from the leadership of Mulmaster was issued as the war declaration reached the Tower of the Blades. The City of Danger had been listening to the debate, and the High Blade was not pleased. Stabbing Master Ar'soon, a Hawk in the Service of High Blade Selfaril Uoumdolphin issued a harsh statement about the situation. (The Hawks are the secret police of Mulmaster. They maintain law and order through intimidation and strongarm tactics.)

The statement from Master Ar'soon directly targeted the factions, calling them out for their lack of assistance after the Cults of Elemental Evil ravaged their city. At the same time, it praised the Thayans for their help, and promised to withdraw Mulmaster from the Lords' Alliance should any of the factions take up arms against Thay. Furthermore, anyone who remained within those factions afterwards would have a writ of execution brought against them.

This harsh rebuke of the factions only served to divide even further. Now there were words directed against Mulmaster for their public attack, and loyalists of Mulmaster fiercely defended their city against accusations. The Zhentarim, who had a great stake in Mulmaster, pledged their protection to the city, and the leadership of the Lords' Alliance fought to hold back arms against Mulmaster, lest they lose an important member of the Alliance.

#### AN ASSASSINATION IN HILLSFAR

*"A man so small has never seemed so large."  
– Morc Stonejaw*

The author of the Shadowtop Cathedral Declaration, the gnome wizard Tick Tary Tanner (played by David Hopkins) went into hiding, along with some of his closest allies. They traveled through Myth Drannor and then stayed in Hillsfar for a while.

One afternoon, Tick was walking alone through the crowded streets near the market. A young boy ran to Tick, handed him a paper crane and hurried away. Several poisoned crossbow bolts from rooftop assassins hit Tick. The wounded wizard tried to flee, to take the fight away from the civilians. But a long-range fireball engulfed the gnome, and he fell dead.

All attempts to resurrect the gnome failed.

Less than an hour later, another assassination attempt was made on Tick's ally Maalkur dun'Lareth (played by Michael Brown), a high-ranking member of the Lords' Alliance. Maalkur was able to defeat his foes and sent the heads back to the Zulkir Dar'lon Ma.

Tick's assassination further emboldened the more radical members of the Emerald Enclave. Most notably Elijah Sul-Rima (played by William Rowland) and Misha Alhena (played by Shawna Lynne) went on a bloody quest to avenge him.

#### THE SUMMIT OF ELMWOOD

*"The summit sought peace and reasonable terms. The closest the summit came to wanting to fight was declaring Mulmaster a neutral zone, as much as that 'helped.' The five factions have become the Moonsea's scapegoat." – Churnack Healhand*

As the days turned to tendays, the controversy continued to grow in intensity with no end in sight. Fueled by the death of Tick Tary Tanner and stories of Red Wizard assassins roaming the lands, faction members began to skirmish with Red Wizards and their associates. Some publicly proclaimed their deeds and dared retribution.

The leaders of the factions saw they would have to make a formal, united decision before the situation became untenable. With the promise of retribution from Mulmaster and the increased sightings of Red Wizards in the land of Chult, they would have to be careful with their final decision.

A summit consisting of faction representatives was formed in secret. Only select members were allowed to participate as bodyguards and representatives. It was to last for a few days, at

which point they were to come to a consensus and make a public announcement.

One month later, the summit was still in session. At this point, it had been publically leaked that negotiations were taking place, although the exact meeting location was still a secret. Summit members went back and forth to other faction members for feedback. Rumors flew around, and finally, a joint-faction letter was announced to be in-progress and would serve as a unified faction response.

#### WHAT DOES “SEASON AGNOSTIC” MEAN?

The *AL Content Catalogue* lists the Red War (DDEP00-01) as a Season 0 Adventure, which means it is “not part of our main storyline seasons and may not be explicitly linked to other content.” A note indicates DDEP00-01 takes place after DDEP02 Mulmaster Undone. However, people should avoid a narrow interpretation of the Red War timeline.

#### DAYS BEFORE THE FIRST BATTLE

*“The richest rewards often come from the biggest gambles.” – Zulkir Dar’lon Ma*

The first major conflicts with Thay came not in the Sword Coast or Moonsea regions, but far south in the jungles of Chult. Hordes of undead rose from the jungle, infecting the living and transforming them instantly into undead. They were joined by a force of Red Wizards, who directed the horde to march on Port Nyanzaru. However, the horde was rebuffed by the heroes who were stationed at the port.

Although Thay was clearly part of the assault, blame also fell on two of the major factions for their assistance in causing the attack, the Lords’ Alliance and the Order of the Gauntlet. A joint-faction experimental ritual had gone terribly wrong, causing the plague and the horde of ravenous undead.

A shadow had been cast over two of the more prominent factions. The once-clear line between themselves and Thay had now been blurred. Each side seemed to be willing to use terrible, magical afflictions to reach their goals.

Meanwhile, as attention and forces were diverted elsewhere, Szass Tam arrived at Mulmaster to oversee the situation and press for a firmer resolution. Disappointed by the efforts of the current Thayan leadership in Mulmaster, Szass Tam took control of the situation and set to work eliminating any possible resistance. This took the form of a powerful, magical curse crafted by himself, one that would ensure that the greatest strength of anyone who opposed them would become their greatest weakness—their unity.

#### SZASS TAM, RULER OF THAY

Formally referred to as the Red Wizard Zulkir of Necromancy, Szass Tam is a lich of great power, wealth, ambition, and the de facto ruler of Thay. Over hundreds of years, Szass Tam murdered his way into his position of power while fighting off countless plots to destroy him. He is a master of politics, magic, and is considered one of the most intelligent beings alive today. There is no question that he is the reason that Thay still exists as a nation today and why it is becoming a vastly increasing force on the Faerûn world scene.

Despite his apparent ruthlessness, he is courteous to those who show him respect and intelligence, although this can quickly turn to cold, murderous intent at the slightest hint of defiance or failure. Knowing that so many wish for his death, Szass Tam has made himself near impossible to locate. When he does make a public appearance, it is almost always through a proxy such as a simulacrum, which is still every bit as powerful and cunning as his real form.

#### THE BATTLE FOR MULMASTER

*“Today, I purge this city of you and everything here you care about. Mulmaster will burn, thousands will die, and the blood is on your hands!” – Szass Tam*

Early, on a particularly cold morning, Mulmaster rose to conduct its daily business. Craftsmen trudged to work, taverns were half-filled with tired-looking patrons, and the docks already bustled with the sounds of trade.

Suddenly, all activity ceased. The voice of Szass Tam rang out across the city, magically amplified to reach every ear. He cursed the factions and their heroes for their continued efforts to oppose him, promising retaliation for all they had done. Mulmaster would suffer because of them.

All at once, the sounds of battle and magic erupted throughout the city. Massive magical rifts opened and began spewing forth destruction and terrible creatures. Smoke and spellfire rose in great voluminous plumes as buildings crumpled, sometimes even completely disappearing in flashes of powerful magic.

Companies of Red Wizards marched through the streets, accompanied by terrible and powerful creatures. Terrified citizens fled as the heroes fought off the massive attack from the Thayan forces. Any efforts against the Thayans was met with a swift end as resistance forces found themselves afflicted with a terrible, magical curse that sapped their strength. Thay quickly routed the resistance.

The attack had been carefully planned from the start. The scattered, unorganized factions stood little hope of defeating Thay. It was all the heroes of the city could do to hold off the Thayan forces and



evacuate as many citizens as possible before their escape routes were gone. When the sounds of battle finally died down, hundreds had managed to escape the city, the factions were gone, and a decimated Mulmaster pledged their loyalty to Thay.

### AFTERMATH

*"The city's kinda destroyed again, but, y'know, we saved some people." – Ajax Worm-Rider*

The Red Wizards have taken complete control of Mulmaster, placing magical defenses and walls around the city. The factions were forced to withdraw and wait. The Red Wizards declared that they intend to occupy Mulmaster for five more years. At that time, they will consider a negotiation regarding their presence in the city.

Someone known only as "The Platinum Harp" shared this news (from a letter, published August 10, 2018 on the AL blog):

"The Thayans redoubled their efforts and tightened their chokehold on the region. For every faction member discovered, regardless of membership, three citizens would die, or worse. For every spell cast by someone other than a Red Wizard, three citizens would die. Any agent acting of their own volition or motivation that is discovered in the vicinity of Mulmaster would result in their extermination, and the death of three citizens."

#### WHO IS THE PLATINUM HARP?

We don't know. You'd have to ask AL community manager Alan Patrick, and he's not going to say anything.

However, we have a few theories:

- *Dathlue Mistwinter*. Founder of the Harpers, also known as Lady Steel, she died during the Weeping War. Is this her dramatic return?
- *Dove Silverhand*. Chosen of Mystra and one of the Seven Sisters, the letter does end with the phrase "all my doves."
- *Elminster Aumar*. Sage of Shadowdale, the Old Mage himself! He was an original member of the Harper council.
- *Artus Cimber*. He's a former Harper who has occasionally been at odds with the Red Wizards of Thay.

Whoever it is, they could play a role in season 9 Red War activities. These AL Admins are clever people.



### THE PRINCE & THE GADFLY

*"The war is not over. But we cannot afford another loss." – Tick Tary Tanner*

As the saying goes, "All gnomes are elusive, especially in death." Tick Tary Tanner had a clone, hidden away in the High Forest. That being the case, the notorious gnome was able to escape his assassination. He spent almost a year in Candlekeep, deep in study and under the protection of the followers of Oghma. Tick was well aware that he had failed to mobilize an inter-faction army against the Thayans, and now he carried the burden of those lost lives. But an idea began to form.

Well regarded throughout Faerûn, Prince Doran Hightower of the Lords' Alliance (played by Garrett Colón) was one of Tick Tary Tanner's greatest critics. Even so, the Prince is no friend of Thay. Tick journeyed to meet secretly with the Prince. The two of them, along with some close associates, spent many hours in discussion—forming an unlikely partnership and a plan.

### 3. WHAT IS THE VERDANTIUM?

*"Taking the Verdantium is the courageous act. Charging into battle against Szass Tam is merely your obligation." – Nadarr Linxakasendalor*

The Verdantium is the pledge you take when you state you are going to devote your life to the war against Szass Tam and his Red Wizards. When you "take the Verdantium," you are saying you're in this fight to the bitter end. When a player posts on social media to announce, "This is who I am and I'm committed to fighting the Red War," they are taking the Verdantium.

For all those who pledge, they are part of an inter-faction army, which has come to be known as "The Verdantium." (Technically, it's a misnomer.)

Inter-factions armies are not new to Adventurers League. We've seen them with most of the D&D Epics and in some other AL modules, such as *Assault on Maerimydra*. Often times, they are lead by NPC faction representatives, where the objectives and strategies are decided behind closed doors—i.e., within the imagination of whoever wrote the adventure.

#### WHAT IS AN EPIC?

From the AL website: "D&D Epics are exciting multi-table events where participants cooperate in a 'mass raid' of truly EPIC proportions; as every table works toward the same goal, individual tables act as squads that might take on different tasks, possibly affecting other tables or unlocking side quests needed to progress the event."

With the Verdantium, we're taking this inter-faction army idea and expanding upon it with new roleplaying opportunities (which attempt to support, and not contradict, the spirit of AL and organized play)—and empower DMs and players to contribute their own stories to this multi-season high stakes struggle between good and evil.

The Verdantium (and this guide) is just one way to engage in the Red War. It is by no means the ONLY way. Like so much of D&D, you get out of it what you put into it.

#### STORY IDEAS FOR TAKING THE VERDANTIUM

D&D adventures tend to center around heroes reacting to a threat. It's rare for heroes to take preemptive action. That's what happened with the Red War. However, there are always consequences when you pick a fight, especially if it's with the vile magocratic nation of Thay. Already, the consequences have been severe beyond imagining.

Taking the Verdantium should be big moment for your character. It's a declaration that may cost them their life and will forever shape their destiny. Each faction may handle the Verdantium differently. Here are some ways a character might join the war:

#### THE HARPERS

Placed on your nightstand pillow is a sheet of vellum, sealed with red wax and stamped with the imprint of a flaming gemstone. It smells lightly of exotic spices, which covers up a hint of . . . sulfur? The vellum is marked in Calishite hand and includes a simple map.

"The Flame of the South greets Another Who Harps, and entreats your aid combating the Thayan incursion into the Moonsea. If you desire to take hammer to tyranny, make your way to the mapped faerie ring. At high night, fill a metal bowl with water and cast into it seven Waterdhavian silver crescents, intoning a god protecting our fraternity as you drop each. Finally, recite the final verse of the Harper Code and shed a single drop of your blood into the gazing bowl. The gate thus opened will whisk you to our hearth."

#### FORT MALKYN

Fearing that Thayan kill-squads would begin hunting any faction agent who revealed their identities one-by-one, the High Harper Malkyn Fenris constructed a highly defensible fortress by magic to serve as a command center, and retreat from hostile Thayan forces.

Situated near the mouth of the White River on the southern slopes of the Galena Mountains, *Fort Malkyn* is intended to serve as a stronghold for members of all factions who oppose the Thayan occupation of Mulmaster.

Nestled between two peaks, the fortress is an impressive two-tiered structure consisting of not one but *two* separate keeps (one on each tier), three baileys, and a barbican entrance. The outer-wall is fully 10-feet of packed earth surrounded by 6" walls of stone either side.

The entire structure is crafted using a combination of *move earth*, *wall of stone*, and *stone shape*, with the inner keep being a fully-functioning *mighty fortress* that serves as the command center and Malkyn's private retreat.

#### THE ZHENTARIM

A paper crane flies to you and lands in the palm of your outstretched hand. It unfolds with the following message:

"If you wish to pledge yourself in this Red War, go to any city in the Sword Coast or Moonsea. Visit the eastern-most tavern at noon. Order red wine. Then say to barkeep, 'Asmuth's brother has a glass

everday. It maintains our vitality.’ Then in another day or two, you will be approached by an agent dressed in white who will introduce himself as The Minshar. Follow them. They will have more information for you.”

The message then disintegrates into a fine powder.

## LORDS’ ALLIANCE

“Thousands dead in Mulmaster,” grumbles Dornal Whitebeard, “Refugees scattered across the Moonsea. Children in exile, now orphaned. This region is in chaos.”

Dornal quotes the shared beliefs of the Lords’ Alliance to those assembled: “If civilization is to survive, all must unite against the dark forces that threaten it. Glory comes from protecting one’s home and honoring its leaders. The best defense is a strong offense.”

He then draws a line across the polished stone floor with a piece of yellow chalk.

“For those who wish to fight alongside the good Prince Hightower and restore order, step across this line. From here, we move forward.”

### LIGHTHOUSE AND THE MOONSEA CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL

Displaced by the Great Law of Humanity in Hillsfar, a small group of non-human refugees fled to Elua’s Lighthouse, and a small village sprung to life. While many refugees returned to Hillsfar following the overthrow of the First Lord, many decided this new village life suited them better.

The town of Lighthouse, located on the Moonsea coast directly north of Elventree, currently consists of a handful of businesses such as Falwan’s Half-Cakes, the Beacon Tavern & Inn, and Elua’s General Store. The owners of these businesses also act as the local governors.

While exploring the surroundings of their new home, some of the villagers discovered the forgotten ruins of a decently sized sanatorium. The residents of Lighthouse decided it was time to put it to good use and under the direction of Erika Salinop, opened the Moonsea Children’s Hospital. Acting as not only hospital, but orphanage and safe haven for the region’s children, the Moonsea Children’s Hospital has been welcomed warmly by the surrounding community.

In the wake of the fall of Mulmaster, Director Salinop has offered to take in children impacted by the Red War. Director Salinop is not associated with a faction; however, she is closely connected with all the faction leaders of the region.

## EMERALD ENCLAVE

An imposing, half-orc druid addresses the members of the Enclave. He is Shyft. His near omniscient connection to the forest and his brutal actions against the Red Wizards have become the things of legend and folklore.

“For those who wish to join us, all one need do is go to the largest forest you can, find the tallest tree, pledge yourself. The spirits of nature can sense truth of heart. I will send ravens to all such trees. To mark those who take the pledge, and should the pledge be true, I can open a portal for those who wish to convene in secret, to join us.”

## ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET

Certain priests of Tyr, Helm, Torm, and Lathander have erected small shrines to honor the lives lost in Mulmaster. Find one of these shrines. Kneel before it without any weapon or armor on you. There will be six candles (blue, green, gold, black, gray, and white); light the gray and white candles. Pledge yourself to the war.

As you leave, a woman sweeping the floor will say, “Quite a tangled mess.” Respond with: “The largest briar patch is nothing against the smallest flame.”

That night, this same woman will appear to you in a dream and tell you everything you need to know.

## NON-FACTION CHARACTERS

Characters who are not part of a faction may need a Verdantium-pledged faction member to sponsor them. They will vouch for the character, standing by their side as they take the Verdantium. If the character proves to be insincere in their Verdantium pledge, the DM might consider consequences for both the character and their sponsor. (The DM ought to keep AL rules and guidance in mind, always maintaining the spirit of the written adventure.)

From a roleplaying standpoint, the players can make the sponsor relationship a special one. This non-faction character has been given special insight into the faction’s war effort. This trust is not easily given, and it may include additional obligations.

### GET CREATIVE AND SHARE!

If these suggestions don’t work, the player and DM can work together to create a meaningful Verdantium. We recommend sharing your pledge online through one of our Verdantium/faction-specific groups (see chapter 13). This is a good way to introduce your character and get involved in the AL community.

## 4. THE FIRST VERDANTIUM

*"You wanna kick 'em in the teeth, go ahead. I'll be there, but do it smart and careful, and try not to get everyone killed." – Forgydd Forgeborne*

Before we take a look at the organization and strategy of the inter-faction coalition, now known as the Verdantium, let's go back, to some time ago, when the first declaration was made against Thay.

High-ranking members of Emerald Enclave were summoned to the Shadowtop Cathedral, an ancient and sacred meeting place for the Emerald Enclave. (See *Storm King's Thunder*, p.107 for information on Shadowtop Cathedral.) It was a small gathering, no more than thirty people—all of them uncertain about the purpose of this gathering.

A gnome cleared his throat and stepped forward. With a wave of his staff, he levitated above those assembled and read the following . . .

### SHADOWTOP CATHEDRAL DECLARATION

I. We, the Emerald Enclave, are often spread far and wide, operating in isolation—but, on this day, we gather at the Shadowtop Cathedral in the High Forest to declare our common purpose: to restore and preserve the natural order; destroy all that is unnatural. These statements often lead to a discussion of what is truly unnatural in Faerûn, when gods speak to mortals, when mages pull at the threads of existence and call it art, and when our world overlaps with other planes of existence.

We may disagree on the particulars, but we agree on the general circumstances of our surroundings. Certain realities align with our spirit; we find harmony and call it truth. We gather here to acknowledge that the Red Wizards are discordant to the song of life within Faerûn.

II. Our grievances against the Red Wizards: (1) The Red Wizards provide a haven for liches and the undead. (2) Szass Tam is a tyrant with schemes detrimental to Faerûn. (3) The Red Wizards maintain slavery throughout Thay and sell slaves on the black market across Faerûn. (4) The magic they practice is disruptive and dangerous, tearing at the fabric of the multiverse.

III. Due to these unresolved grievances—I, Tick Tary Tanner, also known as the Intrepid Gnome, Impressive Illusionist, and Chosen of Shiallia, in the company of those undersigned who support this act hereby petition the Emerald Enclave to declare war upon the Red Wizards.

We will accept the surrender of the Red Wizards upon these three conditions: (1) a dismantling of the Red Wizard organization whereupon all wizards retire the signifiers of their allegiance and cease to operate as a group, (2) the total eradication of Szass Tam and any other discordant leaders, (3) a free Thay with no slave class, a self-governed network of city-states.

IV. We call upon the Harpers to renew their opposition of the Red Wizards with a greater sense of urgency and strategic resourcefulness. We ask your agents to seek and destroy the phylacteries of high-ranking lich leaders—Valindra Shadowmantle and Szass Tam, as a priority.

We call upon the Lords' Alliance and its council cities to end all diplomatic courtesies with the Red Wizards. We request an embargo upon the Red Wizards and Thay, including greater enforcement against black market dealings, such as the Thayan slave trade and sale of magic items. Goldenfields will levy heavy tariffs on cities that do not sign the Thayan embargo. The Granary of the North will not feed those who sit at the same table as Red Wizards.

We call upon the Zhentarim to honor the Thayan embargo in all their dealings, especially along the Black Road and other trade routes. We implore the Zhentarim to drive all Red Wizards from Mulmaster. We also ask for you to offer Mulmaster and other areas along the Moonsea as sanctuaries for runaway Thayan slaves—with reasonable opportunities for employment and refugee support.

We call upon the Order of the Gauntlet to mobilize its forces against the undead armies of Thay. Additionally, we implore the Order to liberate the Thayan slaves and provide safe passage for these refugees to the Moonsea region.

We call upon the people of Thay to rise up against the Red Wizard ruling class by laying down your plowshares. If possible, escape; if not, take apart Thay from the inside.

We call upon the Red Wizards exiled by Szass Tam to put aside any hope for "restoring Thay to its former glory." Thay, as you knew it, is gone. Retire your red cloak for your own safety. Join the fight against Szass Tam and then go your own way.

V. The Emerald Enclave is not naïve about the power of the Red Wizards. Many groups have tried and failed to defeat them. The Red Wizards are a highly structured bureaucracy, which will be their downfall. We will deprive the Red Wizards of all that sustains them. We will isolate and uproot them. We are more than survivalists and guides. United, we are as unyielding as nature itself.

VI. The following leaders within the Emerald Enclave support this declaration of war, and mutually pledge to each other our lives and our fortunes to the fate of this endeavor:

Tick Tary Tanner, Grehiel Darkwood, Badger, Matias Stormsong, Jason Greatbear, Lexa kom Trikru, Panther Claw, Van'Coril, Baeshara Barnalby, Ajax Worm-Rider, Meepo of the Golden Scale, Kitten, Ash, Forgydd Forgeborne, Eldon Turren, Morc StoneJaw, Argon, Beau Dangle, Findolfin, Sturmis Icevein, Mornhavon, Daine, Lana, Rhogar, Cadebrennus Drunken Ranger, Tana "Tipsy" Timbers, Driftwood

### WHAT DID THE FIRST VERDANTIUM ACCOMPLISH?

The Shadowtop Cathedral Declaration was widely distributed across the Sword Coast and Moonsea regions. It became a popular topic of conversation in the taverns, especially among the adventurers.

Many were indignant. Why does this foolish gnome think he can tell us what to do? Who gave the Emerald Enclave permission to declare war on the Red Wizards? But many others embraced the rightness of this cause. For too long, They had encroached upon Faerûn with impunity. It was time for the factions to come together and make a stand.



## 5. ORGANIZATION & LEADERSHIP

*"My weapons are sharp, and my family's motto still holds true: 'Our strength is absolute'."*

– Prince Doran Hightower

The inter-faction armies are usually managed by NPCs. During the module, they are the quest givers, and the ones keeping the characters on the right track. Go here! Do this! Don't forget to rescue so-and-so! Obviously, this is the most logical, expedient way to handle it.

But what if we did something else?

We readily admit this chapter is a bit of an experiment. But what if we placed a *player* in charge? That person wouldn't be standing at your table to pat you on the back, but they could operate as a sounding board for roleplaying that takes place away from the table. You can send correspondence, petitions, and you will get a response. This person's job would be to make sure that good ideas don't get lost in the conversation. It should provide forward momentum and further organization. The Red War, as an online initiative, has always been about making the roleplaying aspects of organized play more dynamic, less static.

With that in mind, we'd like to introduce again—Prince Doran Hightower (played by Garrett Colón).

### WHAT? I DIDN'T VOTE FOR HIM!

Yes, we know. The purpose of a player-led Verdantium is to enhance the roleplaying experience. There's no intention for it to alter anything at your table. If you enjoy the additional interaction, that's great. If not, don't worry about this chapter. It doesn't have to be part of your Red War "head canon." This chapter is merely how we see it playing out.

We chose Prince Hightower for two reasons:

Firstly, the character fits well into the overall narrative—a powerful hero from a power family capable of uniting the various factions. Prince Hightower is a high-ranking member of the Lords' Alliance who is trusted by the other faction leaders. This move can be seen as a strategic compromise. The Alliance gets "their guy" and the pleasure of seeing the Emerald Enclave's Tick Tary Tanner bend his knee, pledging fealty to Prince Hightower. Additionally, the other factions get a charismatic, levelheaded leader they can rally around.

Secondly, Garrett Colón is an active member of the Adventurers League—a convention organizer, DM, CCC writer, and former local coordinator. He will represent us well—able to work with the AL Admins and with whatever crazy story ideas we send his way (mostly).

## THE HOUSE OF HIGHTOWER

The Hightower family has a long history in Cormyr, where they were a well-respected family with many of their bloodline joining the Purple Dragon Knights. As time passed, the family's deeds, money, and charisma earned them land on the border between Cormyr and the Dalelands. The citadel *Thunder Peaks* has been their base of operations ever since.

The current heads of the family are Roland Hightower and his sister Tabitha, wise and ancient in years (though neither look a day over 50). The good Prince Doran Hightower is one of their children, and has been marked as the next in line for his father's position. Having trained with Purple Dragon Knights and paladins of the Red Knight, Doran has faced many challenges and obstacles over the years but has never broken the values that he holds dear.

He spares those who he can, punishes those who do evil deeds, and strives to protect all he touches from harm. This initially placed him at odds with the more outspoken adventurers pushing for war with the Thayans, but the Red War and the events that transpired before and directly after have changed his opinion of their efforts.

Sparing no expense, be it equipment or infrastructure, Doran has quietly put his entire family's might behind the Verdantium to ensure that Szass Tam and his plans are crushed underfoot. He also continues to ensure the inter-faction army does all it can to keep civilian and city safe from their actions, even more needed after Mulmaster's complete takeover by Thay. Evil does not rest, so those who fight it cannot as well.

## THE WARLORDS

Prince Hightower often seeks the advice of his Verdantium warlords. These warlords are heroes of great renown. Each is respected as a voice of authority among the adventurers, and may be called upon by Prince Hightower to take on greater responsibility in the war against Szass Tam.

A character that chooses to be a warlord must meet three requirements:

1. They must achieve rank 5 in their respective background.
2. They must seek an audience with Prince Hightower (see below).
3. They must take on one or two of the faction-specific strategies (see chapter 7).

Once a player assumes this role, they may introduce themselves using this new title, e.g., "I am Morc

Stonejaw, Warlord of the Verdantium.” A player may also want to take a feat such as Inspiring Leader or an ability score improvement in Charisma to further indicate their legitimacy as a commander.

It will be up to the player and the DM to work out how being a warlord may impact whatever adventure they are playing. This title should *only* add extra roleplaying flavor and intrigue. It should not confer any additional mechanical benefit, exclusivity, or control over other players. However, if other characters willingly want to pledge fidelity to this warlord that is perfectly acceptable and could lead to some interesting moments at the table.

Any character, regardless of rank, has a voice within the Verdantium. Even a level 1 character may have something to contribute. And yet, the title of warlord does confer some prestige to those characters that have survived long enough to earn the respect of their peers.

## LEADING AN ARMY

Petitions and committees do not win battles. An army needs clear leadership, not the fractured coalition that marched into Mulmaster.

Leadership comes from active characters that fight on the fronts they know best—with Doran providing oversight and direction as advised by the warlords and others. This war against Szass Tam will be long and full of strife, but open conflict will only bring more ruin. The Verdantium’s ability to strike and blend back into the shadows, sow discord and conflict between Szass Tam and his allies will be key.

Each warlord can create and direct missions at their discretion, the only caveat being that other warlords and leaders are aware of these actions. In the off chance that the mission is a failure or someone is captured (or worse), knowing the actions of the inter-faction army as a whole allows for contingencies and safety measures to be set in motion. One does not fight a lich without ample planning and safety in place.

What does this mean for you, the player? As much or as little as you wish. A Discord server and a Facebook group are in place to discuss matters (see chapter 12). And while Doran might be the leader, he will not be imposing his will. This is a group effort. All are welcome to make this a great experience.

Note: The Verdantium does not exist to “force the hand” of AL through some sort of in-game collective bargaining. Verdantium decisions are for RP, and may not always have in-game consequences. AL is in charge of AL.

## ENCOUNTERS: GIVE ME SOMETHING TO FIGHT!

The ALDMG says, “You may adjust the encounter by adding or removing thematically appropriate monsters.” In a Red War encounter, liches (CR21), dracoliches (CR17), mages (CR6), and archmages (CR12) may be appropriate. They are all available in the *Monster Manual*. The Red Wizard Zulkir (CR12) and Thayan Knight (CR8) stat blocks can be found in DDAL 07-15. For lower tier encounters, you may also want to consider the Thayan Apprentice (CR2) and Thayan Warrior (CR2), which are available in *Tales from Yawning Portal*.

## SEEKING AN AUDIENCE

Those who wish to speak with Prince Doran Hightower can do so via letter or other means secret communication. The one most watched is [prince.doran.hightower@gmail.com](mailto:prince.doran.hightower@gmail.com).

The Prince is also looking into other means of communication, but has not found more secure ways to do so just yet.



## 6. THE FACTIONS

The factions are a critical part of the Red War. These organizations provide a framework for rallying adventurers against threats that no single hero could defeat. Each faction has responded to the Red War in a different way.

While the Verdantium is not a faction in itself, the characters who take the pledge are often members of a faction. According to the ALPG, you must have the “Safe Haven” background feature in order to be part of a faction. No background requirements are necessary to pledge your character to fighting the Red Wizards. However, much of the content in this guide was inspired by the direction provided in the Safe Haven feature.

**Feature: Safe Haven.** As a faction agent, you have access to a secret network of supporters and operatives who can provide assistance on your adventures. You know a set of secret signs and passwords you can use to identify such operatives, who can provide you with access to a hidden safe house, free room and board, or assistance in finding information. These agents never risk their lives for you or risk revealing their true identities.

### THE HARPERS

**Banner Color.** Blue

**Symbol.** The Harp

**Beliefs.** (1) One can never have too much information. (2) Too much power leads to corruption. (3) No one should be powerless.

The Harper faction is ancient, having existed for more than a thousand years. Historians, scholars, and heroic vigilantes, Harpers seek to preserve history, while championing the cause of good against tyranny. (To further study Harper lore, players may want to download *The Code of the Harpers* by Ed Greenwood. It is available on DMsGuild.com.)

The Harpers have been at war with the Red Wizards for centuries, and have a vendetta with Szass Tam, after the lich manipulated the Harpers into helping him stage a coup on zulkir rivals.

During most of this time, the Harpers have been able to do little more than engage in guerrilla warfare against the Thayan nation. The Harpers excel in espionage, infiltration, sabotage, assassination, and deep cover operations, but are not above the use of powerful arcane magic should more covert options not be available.

Upon learning of the Shadowtop Cathedral Declaration, an emergency council was formed, and it was determined the Harpers would stand with

their new allies and fight to liberate Mulmaster from Thayan occupation, with high hopes that the other three factions would swiftly follow suit.

Olisara Lightsong and Elanil Elasadil are two NPC faction leaders in the Moonsea region, based in Phlan and Hillsfar respectively. Some of the most renowned PC members include Grey Owl Skraid (played by Angad Grewal), Grandmaester Talint (played by Jonathan Connor Self), and Professor Junduvai (played by Caleb Ferestad Davis).

In the prelude to the Red War, the Harper faction saw a necessity to reveal the identities of some of their membership so as to lure enemy forces into pursuit, and also to serve as the face of the faction in inter-faction meetings.

Known internally as **Open Harpers** and **Masked Harpers** respectively, these two groups fulfill different roles within the faction.

- **Open Harpers.** Open Harpers engage in espionage, sabotage, and open warfare with the Thayan forces. By revealing their identities, Open Harpers seek opportunities to become high priority targets in order to bait Thayan forces into breaking formation, while also providing a public face to the faction with the other factions.
- **Masked Harpers.** Spies and saboteurs, Masked Harpers have kept their identities secret so as to engage in covert missions, especially those that require them to go undercover behind enemy lines. Masked Harpers seek opportunities to capitalize on distractions caused by the Open Harpers, and members of other factions.

#### OPEN HARPER NPC: MALKYN FENRIS

*Male CN. forest gnome (archmage)*

**Personality.** Known as the Emerald Harper, Malkyn is a cunning, hedonistic narcissist, and a brilliant tactician. He is spendthrift and generous with his wealth, living a life of wanton excess. Extremely loyal to his friends, he sees himself as a champion of the common folk, yet is more than willing to parlay with evil, so long as they aren't an immediate threat.

Malkyn speaks in a thick high-pitched voice and is obsessed with the color green.

**Appearance.** Malkyn's skin is ashen and grey, and his ginger hair and beard streaked with white.

**Clothing.** Malkyn wears magical emerald-green *half-plate* armor, and grey robes. A felt green top hat and forest green cape complete his ensemble.

**Quote:** “Care for a wee nip o’ fire spirits? I brewed a whole batch!”



## THE ZHENTARIM

**Banner Color.** Black

**Symbol.** The Winged Viper

**Beliefs.** (1) The Zhentarim is your family. You watch out for it, and it watches out for you. (2) You are the master of your own destiny. Never be less than what you deserve to be. (3) Everything—and everyone—has a price.

Once a great host of murderous and power-mad villains, today's Zhentarim are a wide network of mercenaries, considered by many to be some of the best that money can buy. While the public faces of the organization are fighting people of negotiable morals, the private side is a collection of thieves, assassins, unusual spellcasters, and ne'er-do-wells that refer to themselves as the Black Network, offering their services to the highest bidder.

In the matter of The Red War, the Zhentarim originally sought to play both sides against the middle for profit, offering their services to both the Emerald Enclave and the Hawks that were allied with the Red Wizards. As pronouncements from the Red Wizards grew more dire, the organization shifted its stance to be focused on protecting the frequently downtrodden people of the Zhent Ghettoes as they had the organization's namesake. This stance led to unlikely alliances among the Zhentarim, Harpers, and Lords' Alliance in service and protection to get the people, be they homeless dregs or displaced nobles, out of the city.

These changes were decided by vote – unlike other organizations, the Zhentarim consider themselves a large family of equals. Potential courses of action are set forward by the eldest and highest ranked, then votes from the whole family decided the course of action.

Chaab is the NPC faction leader in the Moonsea region, an enigmatic elderly man who can often be found in the Zhent Ghettoes. An information broker by trade, Chaab is a hub of information and rumored to be a connection to the Pereghost of Darkhold. Other notable Zhentarim include a Turami man of outspoken support for the common people, Samuel Geddarm (played by Ben Heisler), a foul-mouthed and even fouler smelling human woman cleric of Umberlee, Miraz "The Kraken" Stevens (played by Paige Miller), a wood elf and local hero of the ghettos, Ergaravon Bannidulles (played by Ian Kimmel), the tiefling Barkus Esteem (played by Curtis Glenn), and a warlock of frightening prowess who only refers to herself as the Daughter of Evil (played by Nikka Lao).

### ZHENTARIM NPC: NURAH BRUISEBINDER

*Female NG. hill dwarf (master thief)*

**Personality.** Good luck trying to get Nurah to crack a smile. She's as serious as they come, a good trait in her line of work. She runs the trade route from Mulmaster to Dragon Falls with a fully loaded wagon pulled by rare blue mules that never seem to tire. Hidden within her wagon are runaway Thayan slaves and other fugitives.

With lives in her care, Nurah focuses on the road before her and the task at hand.

**Appearance.** Nurah has frizzy dark hair, gentle brown eyes, and soft rounded facial features, which contrasts with her near-constant stern expression. She is short, stocky. Youthful.

**Clothing.** Nurah wears common work clothes, dull leather and wool, except for her bright blue fringe vest. If anyone asks her about the vest, she responds, "It was a gift. I like it." And then resumes what she was doing.

**False Bottom.** She is never far from her wagon, loaded with a variety of trade goods. The inside is smaller than it would seem from the outside, as there is a false bottom where the runaways hide.

**Quote:** "Don't waste my time. I got places to be."

## LORDS' ALLIANCE

**Banner Color.** Gold

**Symbol.** The Crown

**Beliefs.** (1) If civilization is to survive, all must unite against the dark forces that threaten it. (2) Glory comes from protecting one's home and honoring its leaders. (3) The best defense is a strong offense.

The Lords' Alliance is the strongest mercantile group in the north. The Alliance values stability, always seeking to bring peace and prosperity to their members. Those who share trade and work together see more profit.

It would seem that the Red Wizards of Thay, under Szass Tam, do not care for stability. Nor do they care for peaceful trade. These things were offered by the Alliance, and were not taken. An offer of peace and mutual aid rejected is viewed with suspicion.

Those in the Alliance that wish to eliminate this threat to the Moonsea and, indeed, the world at large, reacted cautiously to the Shadowtop Cathedral Declaration. Who were these people, did they have the power to start something and allow open action against Thay?

The Alliance is governed by a strict hierarchy. In the lead up to the Red War, everything was put to a vote. The most popular option would be backed by those who presented the idea, while the rest would only speak if asked for their opinion. Truth in the discussions was paramount to the outcome. Not everyone agreed, and there were some who tried to instigate things, they were given one warning.

The Alliance would try to keep the peace, and keep the profits coming. Placate others into a more subtle strike than this very noisy one? It was not to be. Some of the Alliance agreed, to war we must go. To war they went.

The NPC leader for the Lords' Alliance on the Moonsea is the shield dwarf Dornal Whitebeard. He can be found in Phlan. He is not a front-line fighter, and instead prefers living a life of luxury and comfort. Some of the most distinguished members who openly participate in the war are Markus Larylian (played by Logan Ruggaber), Tyriel Larylian (played by Jordan Caroline), and Soar Averem (played by Jason Koh).

#### LORDS' ALLIANCE NPC: SINDRIE SILHELWYN

*Female NG. high elf (archmage)*

**Personality.** Known as the World Weaver, Sindrie is kind and excitable. She often puts on a silly, scatterbrained façade. She speaks in a distinctly feminine voice, with a lilting accent. But when things get serious, or she is enraged, she speaks flatly, showing her true, astounding intelligence and breadth of knowledge.

**Appearance.** Sindrie is short, barely over five feet tall. Her eyes are purple and her hair is a deep black. She has a spiraling tattoo on her right shoulder, which can be identified with a DC 25 History check (see below).

**Clothing.** Sindrie wears whatever catches her fancy that particular day—and has yet to wear the same thing twice in the same combination. She also makes her own clothing.

**Secret of the Spiraling Tattoo.** The symbol on her shoulder of a long dead guild of assassins. Their leader vanished shortly before they were destroyed over 200 years ago. They were a lesser guild and feared in the province they held power, how they were destroyed or by whom is a mystery.

**Quote:** "Oh! Are you the people I was told to expect? Come, let me show you around! I have so much to tell you about! Come on, let me show you!"

#### EMERALD ENCLAVE

**Banner Color.** Green

**Symbol.** The Stag

**Beliefs.** (1) The natural order must be respected and preserved. (2) Forces that seek to upset the natural balance must be destroyed. (3) The wilderness can be harsh. Not everyone can survive in it without assistance.

Founded in the Vilhon Reach over a thousand years ago, the Emerald Enclave is now a far-ranging group that opposes threats to the natural world and helps others survive the unknown perils of the wild. Many understand the Enclave as a loose confederation of druid circles and their allies. However, the

organization is more than a group of nature worshippers. The Enclave also consists of hunters, Uthgardt barbarians, disaffected outcasts, and the many mysterious children of the wilderness.

The Enclave has been the most ambitious in opposing the Red Wizards of Thay. They have made travel between cities, without teleportation spells, virtually impossible for the Red Wizards—as the wilderness and trade routes are being continually monitored by Enclave agents.

A few Enclave members aren't in favor of the war. However, the general philosophy has been that members don't all have to agree or act in unison. Voting and polite consensus is for the bureaucrats. They see value in a diversity of perspectives and roles. It may seem paradoxical to outsiders, but the accepted wisdom is "You support my war, and I'll support your peace. Some reap and others sow."

Seranolla the Whisper is the NPC faction leader of the Moonsea region. She is not a warrior able to stand at the front lines of a battle. Fortunately, the Enclave is a bold and savage group. Many PC leaders have stepped forward during the Red War, including a tall satyr named Grehiel Darkwood (played by Cody Garcia), a wood elf named Panther Claw (played by Alexander Cardona), and a half-elf paladin named Lady Penelope Alhena (played by Shawna Lynne).

#### EMERALD ENCLAVE NPC: BRAELEN THE UNTAMED

*Male unaligned. damaran human (druid)*

**Personality.** Braelen was an orphan, collectively raised by the Emerald Enclave. He grew up around rangers, druids, and barbarians. Braelen has a definite feral quality. He's just as likely to shake your hand as sniff you, instinctively growling and bearing his teeth when a threat is nearby. He honors his pack above all and is wary of outsiders.

**Appearance.** Braelen rarely bathes. His hair is a tangled mess. Underneath all that muck is an attractive young man, all lean muscle. He carries a hickory quarterstaff that is intricately carved and painted in warm colors.

**Clothing.** Braelen wears a wolf pelt—his most cherished personal item—and a necklace of various teeth.

**It's Your Turn.** If you're a member of the Emerald Enclave, at some point, you've probably been asked to care for Braelen. He isn't a burden, but someone needs to keep an eye on him.

**Quote:** "Grrrrr."

## ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET

**Banner Color.** Gray

**Symbol.** The Sword and Clenched Gauntlet

**Beliefs.** (1) Faith is the greatest weapon against evil—faith in one’s god, one’s friends, and one’s self. (2) Battling evil is an extraordinary task that requires extraordinary strength and bravery. (3) Punishing an evil act is just. Punishing an evil thought is not.

One of the more recent factions to form in Faerûn, the Order of the Gauntlet is a devout group of crusaders that serve to protect others and put a stop to evil wherever they find it. Their primary goal is justice for those who have been wronged, and while most of their goals are similar to the Harpers, they choose to go about reaching this goal in a vastly different way: force for the sake of retribution.

Due to their strong sense of justice and honor, relations between the Order of the Gauntlet and the Thayan nation have always been strained. The Order has largely held off on any sort of attack or direct confrontation against the Thayans due to their tenant against preemptive attacks. So long as the Thayans never flagrantly attacked the peoples of the Sword Coast and the Moonsea regions, the Order of the Gauntlet has stood back.

The allure of the Soulmonger proved too much for the Thayan nation to resist though. Szass Tam’s hunger for power would cause a divide among the close-knit ranks of the Order.

Some saw the Thayan’s actions in Chult as enough cause to become actively militant against the nation. These members embrace their fury, hoping that their righteous rage will be enough to fight against the injustices they have seen, and vindicate those that have been lost in the war.

Others choose to remain silent, building up their strength, establishing safe havens, and growing the Order. They channel their rage into decisive strategy, the tremors of the Red War still reverberating through the ground, strengthening their resolve.

The NPC leader of the Order of the Gauntlet in the Moonsea region is the honest-to-a-fault half-orc Zern Xerkstil. Many brave and honorable PCs are part of the Order, including a genial dragonborn paladin Nadarr Linxakasendalor (played by Marshall Miller), famed wizard and librarian Augustus Shatterdrake (played by Travis Melton), and the jovial, vain bard, Galen Bradwarden (played by Grady Smart).

### ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET NPC: KARL DAVION

*Male LN. shou human (champion)*

**Personality.** Karl Davion is a no-nonsense kind of guy. He expects nothing less from other members of the Order. He is a charismatic leader on the battlefield, but speaks only when necessary out of combat.

He has a keen eye for details and always urges others to be careful of the manipulation of evildoers.

**Appearance.** Davion is in his late twenties with fiery red hair. He is most often seen in studded leather armor and carrying two halberds. He wears a ring that sparks with lightning.

**Favorite Son of Hillsfar.** Davion can often be found in his mansion in Hillsfar, tending to his griffin or sparing with his twin sister. She has the same fiery red hair, so they are hard to miss. At other times, you can find him in local high-end taverns, enjoying the company of friends and fans alike, as bards tell tales of his exploits in the background.

**Quote:** “If everything seems right, something is wrong.”

## 7. FACTION-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

*"The watchful eye of Thay is upon us and we cannot turn from this course, lest we upset the balance that has been struck. It is a delicate game, but we Harpers are no strangers to such things." – The Platinum Harp*

Sometimes war is waged with sword and spell. Other times it's through hard-earned diplomacy and destabilization efforts.

Listed below are some ambitious goals, which could help topple the Red Wizard organization. Unless there are specific adventures written in the future around these ideas, for the most part, these faction-specific strategies are intended for discussion and head canon.

### ESTABLISH THE EMBARGO

Every nation depends on trade and commerce. If Thay was shut off from the rest of Faerûn, it would hinder the country's economy. Recommended factions: Lords' Alliance and Zhentarim

### END ALL DIPLOMATIC COURTESY

Due to their hostile actions against Faerûn, Red Wizards should not be allowed safe passage through the countryside or entrance into other cities. Recommended factions: Lords' Alliance and Emerald Enclave

### INSPIRE AN UPRISING

Thay is a highly-structured bureaucracy built on fear and an endless struggle for power. With the right motivation, the common people of Thay may rise up against the upper class. Recommended factions: Any

### FREE THE SLAVES

Thay is one of the only nations in Faerûn with slavery. The Verdantium must liberate the slaves, breaking the chains of their bondage. Recommended factions: Harpers and Order of the Gauntlet

### HELP THE REFUGEES

Every war creates a refugee crisis. The Verdantium must offer sanctuary to runaway slaves and displaced people. Recommended faction: Zhentarim

### DEFEAT THE UNDEAD ARMIES

Szass Tam commands an army of undead soldiers. The Verdantium is up for a good fight. Recommended factions: Order of the Gauntlet and Emerald Enclave

### CONDUCT RESEARCH & RECONNAISSANCE

If Szass Tam no longer had his phylactery, he may be more inclined to negotiate Thay's surrender. Finding it will be nearly impossible. Nearly. Recommended faction: Harpers

### DISTANT ALLIANCE

The far removed nation of Halruaa is every bit as powerful as Thay. If they could be convinced to support the Verdantium-pledged forces, that might turn the tides. Recommended factions: Any

### CAST INTO THE LIGHT

Candlekeep, Vault of the Sages, and the other great libraries of Faerûn, in a rare alliance, are sharing their Thayan knowledge with each other. Recommended factions: Any

### RAGE OF THE UTHGARDT

The Uthgardt tribes have never been fond of wizards. The Red War gives them an opportunity to cut loose. If only they had some guidance . . . Recommended faction: Emerald Enclave

### THREE DAYS OF PEACE & MUSIC

Northeast of Waterdeep, halfway to Goldenfields, a farmer is loaning his land for an epic festival to raise support for Mulmaster. He needs some help. Recommended factions: Harpers and Lords' Alliance

### EVERYONE HAS A PRICE

The Red Wizards are smart enough to know they serve a ruthless megalomaniac. We might be able to put a price on defection and encourage mutiny. Recommended faction: Zhentarim

### FAITH IS OUR GREATEST WEAPON

Temples devoted to Lathander, Tyr, Helm, and Torm should all have a shrine and a priest seeking divine favor for the Verdantium. Recommended faction: Order of the Gauntlet



## 8. OBJECTIVES

Fighting in the Red War can take many forms. Sometimes it may be a victory on the battlefield. Other times, it might be delivering important information or gaining a valuable ally.

We've listed some of these objectives below. DMs, players, and game designers can create additional objectives, as long as they are reasonably compatible with the adventures available to a player. Journeying into Thay to detonate a devastation orb may seem like a good idea. But if the adventure takes place in Waterdeep, that action does not maintain the spirit of the written adventure.

Most of these objectives should be doable within a campaign, adventure, or where specified, as a downtime activity. Players should work with the DM to ensure that any objective does not derail the overall mission, e.g., "gaining the support of nobility" could be a single interaction and a Charisma (Persuasion) skill check; it shouldn't take two hours.

In some instances, you may need to play a particular adventure to gain the objective—such as earning a story award or defeating a specific foe. We would not encourage players to play an adventure *only* to achieve these objectives, which is why specific modules are not referenced in this chapter. Rest assured, everything here is possible. We think.

A character does not have to be in a specific rank in order to complete the objective. These ranks, listed below, do not indicate a particular rank in the inter-faction army—but rather, the rank a player earns in connection to their background and career as an adventurer. The ranks only serve as a recommendation for goals that are consistent with the character's renown.

Accomplishing an objective is not required for progressing in your rank, and it does not confer any additional renown or benefit. (However, we encourage DMs to award inspiration for such accomplishments.) These objectives exist as a way to participate in the Red War, creating distinct goals for Verdantium-pledged characters.

### RANK 1: NOVICE

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Renown: 0 | Required Level: 1<sup>st</sup>

- **Dedication.** Write and share your Verdantium.
- **Research.** Buy a book (adventuring gear, 25 gp) about the Red Wizards of Thay.
- **Recruiting.** Join a faction. Must have the "Safe Haven" background feature.
- **Diplomacy.** Establish a friendly contact within a city, tribe, guild, or other organization.

- **Communications.** Use the coded conversations (see chapter 10) in your game.
- **Support.** Provide protection along a trade route.
- **Combat.** Defeat undead monster (CR 1 or higher).
- **Dedication.** Wear something signifying your Verdantium pledge (see chapter 9).
- **Research.** Talk with someone who has been to Thay before.
- **Recruiting.** Play at a table where everyone in your party is pledged to the Verdantium.
- **Diplomacy.** Encourage a shop or tavern to place a bowl of acorns near the front door (see chapter 9).
- **Communications.** Discuss events with other Verdantium-pledged characters (consider using a social channel, such as Facebook or Discord).
- **Support.** Feed or heal other members of the Verdantium.
- **Combat.** Successfully intimidate an enemy.

### RANK 2: NOTORIOUS

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Renown: 2 | Required Level: 3rd

- **Dedication.** Go to a local tavern. Buy a round of drinks for everyone there to honor Mulmaster and the people who lost their lives to those wretched Red Wizards. "To the fall of Thay in our lifetime!"
- **Research.** Crash course! Spend 20 downtime days to research Thay.
- **Recruiting.** Convince another character or NPC to take the Verdantium.
- **Diplomacy.** Gain favor with an influential NPC.
- **Communications.** Write and share a poem, song, or other creative work to rally people to the cause.
- **Support.** Liberate slaves during an adventure.
- **Combat.** Defeat any Red Wizard or Thayan agent.
- **Dedication.** Wear Verdantium war paint during a combat encounter (see chapter 9).
- **Research.** Roll a successful DC 20 History check about Szass Tam or the Red Wizards. Smarty pants.
- **Recruiting.** Corrupt the youth! Tell a group of children an amazing story that will make them want to pledge the Verdantium someday.
- **Diplomacy.** Save the life of a character from another faction.
- **Communications.** Deliver a warning to local officials about the threat of the Red Wizards.
- **Support.** Help a city that supports the Verdantium.
- **Combat.** Capture a Red Wizard. Deliver them to a Verdantium warlord (see chapter 5).

### RANK 3: SEASONED

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Renown: 10 | Required Level: 8th

- **Dedication.** Receive a written endorsement from a Verdantium-pledged character that's rank 4 or 5.
- **Research.** Spend downtime to learn how to speak, read, and write the Thayan language.
- **Recruiting.** Point an Uthgardt tribe in the direction of Thay. Persuade them to conduct raids.
- **Diplomacy.** Gain the favor of guild merchants within a large city (requires wealthy lifestyle).
- **Communications.** Publish a news story with the Thunderquill Tribune.
- **Support.** Run a business that acts as a front for Verdantium operations.
- **Combat.** Destroy the Phylactery Vault.
- **Dedication.** Graffiti a Thayan embassy with the "Dethek V" (see chapter 9).
- **Research.** Learn all six sigil addresses of the Sword Coast Harper Teleportation Network.
- **Recruiting.** Awaken or conjure creatures to fight the Red Wizards.
- **Diplomacy.** Seek audience with a dwarven or elven community to discuss the Thayan threat.
- **Communications.** Roll a successful DC 20 Performance check with a song, story, or poem about the war. Move your audience to tears.
- **Support.** Acquire a Horn of Valhalla.
- **Combat.** Enchant a Red Wizard to do your bidding and sow confusion with the enemy.

### RANK 4: HEROIC

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Renown: 20 | Required Level: 13<sup>th</sup>

- **Dedication.** Gain "Enmity of Thay" story award.
- **Research.** Become a benefactor. Pay five scholars (skilled hireling; 2 gp per day) to conduct a year's worth of research on Thay and related concerns.
- **Recruiting.** Resurrect a fallen Verdantium companion. "You're not done fighting this war!"
- **Diplomacy.** Establish a friendly contact within Halruaa's Council of Elders.
- **Communications.** Send letters to every Lords' Alliance member city urging their support in opposing the Red Wizards.
- **Support.** Create a permanent teleportation circle, which is available to your allies (see AL FAQ document for guidance on teleportation circles).
- **Combat.** Defeat a dracolich.
- **Dedication.** Take the *mage slayer* feat.
- **Research.** Gain entrance to Candlekeep. Maintain a favorable relationship with the scribes there.

- **Recruiting.** Effectively persuade a metallic dragon to ally with the Verdantium.
- **Diplomacy.** Gain support from nobility (requires aristocratic lifestyle).
- **Communications.** Send a detailed update of your efforts to Prince Doran Hightower (see chapter 5, "Seeking an Audience.>").
- **Support.** Own property by story award, special certificate, or outright purchase that can be use as a base for Red War operations.
- **Combat.** Defeat Valindra Shadowmantle or a Red Wizard Zulkir.

### RANK 5: PARAGON

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Renown: 30 | Required Level: 18th

- **Dedication.** Gain the "Lich Slayer" story award.
- **Research.** Deliver rare Thayan tomes to Candlekeep or Vault of the Sages.
- **Recruiting.** Cast *true resurrection* to bring back a great warrior from the past to fight in the Red War.
- **Diplomacy.** Use divine intervention (or something comparable) to gain the favor of a god for this war.
- **Communications.** Spend 250 downtime days to write a memoir about the Red War that moves the hearts of people across Faerûn.
- **Support.** Help fund the Moonsea armada. Buy a warship, galley, or longship. Hire sailors.
- **Combat.** Capture a high-ranking Red Wizard through an *imprisonment* spell or Iron Flask.
- **Dedication.** Don't retire! Reach level 20, and then keep going. Earn 16 more Advancement Checkpoints.
- **Research.** If proficient in cartography, spend 125 DT mapping the region in and around Thay.
- **Recruiting.** Meet one of the Seven Sisters—or some other powerful reoccurring character from the Forgotten Realms novels. Roll a DC 30 Persuasion check when asking them to join the Verdantium. (If you achieve this objective, send word to Prince Doran Hightower.)
- **Diplomacy.** Deliver a legendary magic item upon a chest full of gold to Halruaa's Council of Elders as a gift from the Verdantium.
- **Communications.** Become a patron of the arts. Support a traveling theatre troupe (5,500 gp) that performs farcical material about the Red Wizards.
- **Support.** Create a permanent *mighty fortress* (spell available in XGE) for the Verdantium.
- **Combat.** Defeat Szass Tam!

## 9. SYMBOLS OF SOLIDARITY

Adventurers tend to be strong-willed individuals who charge down the path less traveled. It's a familiar tale—the outcast hero who doesn't play by the rules. Presenting a unifying concept, like the Verdantium, to such characters can be difficult.

And yet, most D&D adventures focus on the idea of incredible people from divergent backgrounds coming together for a common purpose. One way to promote unity is through the use of symbols and imagery that heroes can rally around.

### THE TREE OF LIFE

The Tree of Life (in some myths, referred to as “Yggdrasil”) is the symbol most frequently associated with the Verdantium and all those who oppose Szass Tam. It is common to see this symbol on the banners of an army marching into war against Thay, engraved on the shields of soldiers, or embroidered onto the cloaks of adventurers. And it's easy to see why. Since Szass Tam, an archlich and the Zulkir of Necromancy, represents death and decay—this tree represents life, rebirth, and hope.

We recommend players find a way to incorporate this symbol into what they wear when attending a D&D convention or a special event at the local game store. You can do a quick online search to find items (t-shirts, necklaces, buttons, pins) on Amazon, Etsy, and Earthbound Trading Co. It's an easy way to represent the Verdantium at your table, and connect with other PCs who took the Verdantium.

Many variations of the tree design exist. Any of them would be appropriate for your game.



### DETHEK V

In the streets of Mulmaster and even in some parts of Thay, one might see graffiti of the letter “V” from the dwarvish alphabet.

Wherever the Red Wizards claim dominion, this simple marking is a reminder that nothing lasts forever, including Thay.



### ACORNS

When a character wants a tangible, but subtle way to show support for the Verdantium, they carry an acorn with them. The acorn alludes to the tree of life.

Throughout Faerûn, shops, taverns, and guildhalls will place a bowl of acorns near the front door as a way to say they support the Verdantium. Even a few nobles have been seen wearing acorn pendants.

### WAR PAINT

Some adventurers wear war paint on their faces to represent the faction they serve while pledged to the Verdantium—blue for the Harpers, green for the Emerald Enclave, gold for the Lords' Alliance, black for the Zhentarim, and gray for the Order of the Gauntlet. Non-faction heroes will either opt for white or the color of a sponsoring faction (see chapter 3, “non-faction characters”). The pattern of the war paint is often unique to that character, perhaps a sigil, rune, or other significant marking.

### FOLK SONGS

Many bards have composed ballads about the Red War. These songs have become quite popular. Here are some tunes that have struck a chord with the people of Faerûn.

- The Red Road to Mulmaster
- The Huntsman
- A Cold Day in Thay
- When Gilb'art Broke His Staff
- Shael Vuk, Shael Vuk!
- No More Upon the Moonsea
- If I E'er Survive this War, My Love
- Valindra's Rotting Nose
- The Prince and the Gadfly
- How Soon is Soon?
- Raise the Bloody Flag
- A Verdant Shield

## 10. BATTLE CRIES & CODED CONVERSATIONS

*“Let’s load up and roll out for one hell of a fight!”*

– Harbek Graybeard

### SHOUT AT THE DEVIL

When you’re facing possible death on the battlefield, you want to be able to yell something at the enemy on the other side. The Verdantium have a few popular phrases to rally the troops.

- **Vel karsh!** A gnomish phrase, “ruin them,” meaning to utterly destroy your enemy. This phrase is the most common Verdantium battle cry.
- **Shael vuk!** Another gnomish phrase. It means “empty box,” an insult used to describe someone who is a frustrating waste of time. In the Verdantium, the “empty box” also refers to Szass Tam—someone without a soul.
- **East of the Stars!** A phrase referencing the goal to drive the Thayans back beyond the eastern coastline of the Sea of Fallen Stars.
- **Uproot!** The Red Wizards are the weeds.
- **For Mulmaster!** The horrible fate of Mulmaster has had a sobering effect on the people of Faerûn.

### SECRET LANGUAGE

Verdantium-pledged adventurers often need to exercise secrecy. This is especially true when operating in the Moonsea, particularly in and around the city of Mulmaster. Spies and operatives of Thay have seeded themselves throughout the region.

According to a proclamation from Szass Tam, being identified as a faction member puts civilian lives in Mulmaster at risk. Thus, the Verdantium uses a loosely structured coded language to identify themselves and pass on information.

### GREETINGS

To introduce oneself as someone who has pledged the Verdantium, you begin by claiming to “come by way of the winding road.” Just as you mention the winding road, a subtle hand gesture is offered. With your index finger and thumb extended, a pointing motion is made. The hand is tilted at a 45-degree angle, giving the appearance of the letter “V.”

To test whether the person you are speaking to is affiliated with the Verdantium, you ask



what “pests” they have encountered in their travels. The other should respond with mention of a “a feral cat that looked half-dead.”

An example of this dialogue may go as follows:

“Well met, fellow travelers. I come by way of the winding road from Voonlar.” The pointing gesture is made. “From whence do you hail?”

“We return to Hillsfar from a quest near Mirabar. What is your business?”

“I journey to visit a friend in Silverymoon. Tell me, what pests have you encountered along this way?”

“Usual ogres and highwaymen. Nothing we couldn’t handle. Oh, and a feral cat that looked half-dead.”

### CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGES

Once members of the order have established contact, a variety of mundane words and phrases can be used to pass along sensitive information.

- **Agents.** While in the presence of others, Verdantium-pledged characters refer to one another as “badgers.” Referring to someone as a “badger” in the third-person indicates they are a member or supporter of the faction.
- **Gathering.** When gathering for a meeting, it is known as “planning a hunt.” The details of when and where this will occur are never disclosed in the presence of nonmembers.
- **Safe haven.** When a member needs refuge or a secure place to talk they seek a “burrow.” To locate one, members ask one another “where can a tired badger dig his burrow?”
- **Verdantium quest.** A mission carried out in service of the order is known as a “storm.” To tell a fellow member you are “chasing a storm” means you are actively engaged in such a quest. “A storm has just passed” means you are returning from that quest. To say “a storm is brewing” means that a plan of action is being formulated.
- **Red Wizards.** Though gossip about Mulmaster is quite common, characters that pledge the Verdantium seek to avoid unwanted attention by referring to Red Wizards as “briars.” To warn fellow members of a Red Wizard, they would say a place is “full of briars.” Large bands of Red Wizards are referred to as a “briar patch.” To “step on a briar” means a Red Wizard was recently encountered. To say the briar was “removed” means the wizard was killed.
- **Spies.** A reference to “crows” indicates that spies of Thay are involved. To call someone an “old crow” identifies that person as an informant of Thay. To



say “the crows have been noisy” in a place means that many spies have been active there. Telling someone “the crows have taken a liking to you” informs them that spies are pursuing them.

- **Assassins.** Thayan assassins are known as “mosquitoes” and spoken of similar to spies. To be “pestered by mosquitoes” means an assassination was recently attempted. To “swat a mosquito” means to have killed the assassin.
- **Refugees.** Though it might seem insensitive, refugees, particularly those from Thay, are spoken of as pack animals. Slaves and commoners are referred to as “ponies,” while nobles and defecting Red Wizards are referred to as “mules.” To “have some ponies grazing” means you have a group of refugees hidden somewhere. To ask “where could I stable some ponies” means you are seeking asylum for refugees.

### BATTLE STRATEGIES

In the heat of battle, it behooves any adventuring party to conceal their strategies. Being ever the crafty sort, the Verdantium has worked out codes for common tactics.

- **Focus Fire.** This is a common strategy where the group combines their attacks to take down a single enemy first—typically the most dangerous or injured among your foes. To reiterate the need for this approach, you would declare the target “is looking sleepy.”

- **Disable the Casters.** Another common strategy is for one or more members to focus on any mages and healers among the enemy. This is known as “draining the lake.”
- **Attack from a Distance.** In some cases, you will want to keep your distance and attack at range. To communicate this strategy, you would say the group should “make it rain.” This also serves as a warning to avoid melee combat so that spell casters can employ area effects without fear of friendly fire.
- **In Need of Healing.** If the bruises and spilled blood aren’t enough indication, declaring you “need a snack” is a subtle way of requesting healing or other restorative aid.
- **Low on Resources.** Claiming you “have a rock in your shoe” informs your comrades that you are running low on whatever is necessary for you to be effective. For an archer, this would mean they are running low on arrows. For a spellcaster, this would mean you have nearly exhausted your spellcasting potential.
- **Retreat!** Sometimes a battle goes sideways. When it becomes apparent the group should fall back and regroup, you announce, “The sun is getting low.”



## 11. CUSTOM BACKGROUNDS

When you first create a character for D&D Adventurers League, you will need to choose or create a background from the *Player's Handbook* (or another resource permitted in the *Adventurers League Content Catalogue*). The AL FAQ document states, "You can create a custom background for your character by following the rules in the PHB, but you can't create custom background features."

In this chapter, we have four custom backgrounds, relevant to the Red War, which are AL legal and ready for you to use.

### THAYAN REFUGEE

Once a member of Thayan society, you now live a life of independence, blending in among the free people of Faerûn. This new life requires your constant vigilance, however, for you are always on the lookout for disguised Thayan patrollers and spies seeking to execute or extradite runaways.

Perhaps you were a slave who suffered constant abuse, or a commoner who realized your dictators had no respect for the legal protections afforded by your citizenship. You may have even been a noble or Red Wizard who grew tired of the constant blackmail, mistreatment, and threats used to ensure your compliance.

Whatever the case, when word spread that well-meaning smugglers had established an escape route for dissenters, you decided to take your chances and fled. As a former slave or commoner, you now rely on the kindness of others to conceal your past. If you were a Thayan noble or Red Wizard, you have leveraged your resources to establish a secret identity.

**Skill Proficiencies.** Deception, Insight

**Tool Proficiencies.** One type of artisan's tools or forgery kit

**Languages.** Thayan

**Equipment.** A set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), a token of the life you once knew, a set of traveler's clothes, and a belt pouch containing 15 gp (from Phlan Refugee background, *Mulmaster Bonds and Backgrounds* pdf supplement)

**Alternative Equipment.** A disguise kit, a forgery kit, a set of common clothes, a belt pouch, 5 gp (from Secret Identity background, *Hillsfar Regional Character Options & History* pdf supplement)

### FEATURE: RUSTIC HOSPITALITY

Since you come from the ranks of the common folk, you fit in among them with ease. You can find a place to hide, rest, or recuperate among other commoners, unless you have shown yourself to be a danger to them. They will shield you from the law or anyone else searching for you, though they will not risk their lives for you.

### ALTERNATIVE FEATURE: FALSE IDENTITY

You have created a second identity that includes documentation, established acquaintances, and disguises that allow you to assume that persona. Additionally, you can forge documents including official papers and personal letters, as long as you have seen an example of the kind of document or the handwriting you are trying to copy.

#### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I live in the moment, knowing my life could turn upside down any day.
- 2 I get along with everyone.
- 3 I always lock the door behind me, and then double check it.
- 4 While in public, I keep the hood of my cloak up.
- 5 I'm not afraid of a hard day's work, as long as it's my choice to do it.
- 6 I openly wear the color red as an act of defiance to my former oppressors.
- 7 I don't talk about my past, except with those I trust.
- 8 I worked hard to get where I am, and I refuse to let a little hardship stop me from succeeding.

#### d6 Ideal

- 1 Survival. No matter the cost, I will take any action necessary to survive. (Any)
- 2 Independence. When in trouble, the only person I can rely on is myself. (Chaotic)
- 3 Compassion. I have suffered at the hands of my oppressors, and take pity on the suffering of others. (Good)
- 4 Justice. I have been wronged, and I will not allow the same fate to befall others. (Lawful)
- 5 Reserved. I am withdrawn, and conceal my past for fear of drawing unwanted attention. (Chaotic)
- 6 Secretive. I will silence anyone who becomes suspicious of my past. (Evil)

**d6 Bond**

- 1 I owe my life to the kind souls who smuggled me out of Thay.
- 2 I have family still in bondage back in Thay.
- 3 I cherish my new home and would defend it with my life.
- 4 The people who harbored me after my escape become like family to me.
- 5 Contributing to the community helps me feel like I belong here.
- 6 I owe a debt for being freed, so now I too help liberate the oppressed.

**d6 Flaw**

- 1 I betray my background by peppering my speech with Thayan expressions.
- 2 I become paranoid in the presence of law enforcement agents or town officials.
- 3 I have difficulty trusting strangers. I see spies and informants everywhere.
- 4 Years of bondage have left me despondent and pessimistic about the future.
- 5 I have a habit of hoarding baubles or scraps of food.
- 6 It is difficult for me to let go of the national pride we Thayans were taught to have.

**AWAY-FROM-THE-TABLE ROLEPLAYING**

For some players, roleplaying away from the table comes naturally. For others, it can be a confusing or frustrating process. The secret is knowing how to fill in the spaces between adventures with meaningful story moments without pushing the main narrative too far forward or including elements that should be left for the published AL module (or homebrew D&D session).

D&D is still very much a game with die rolls and a DM to mediate the story. But space exists for non-adventure experiences. For example, in between adventures, a character may meet and share meals with other player characters. A character may write in their journal or compose an important letter. They may travel. They may engage in any number of AL approved downtime activities, which a player can unpack in greater detail. If you're in doubt about the legitimacy of an activity, ask an AL Admin or experienced DM.

Having high-stakes combat encounters (or anything else that could involve die rolls or the possibility of monumental success or failure) remains the domain of the DM and the playing table. Headcanon—no matter how riveting—shouldn't throw a campaign off the rails.

When interacting with other player characters, online or elsewhere, keep the *AL Standards and Expectations* in mind ([dndadventurersleague.org/standards-and-expectations](http://dndadventurersleague.org/standards-and-expectations)). These expectations apply to all AL activities, even those not directly monitored by an AL Admin. We want to have an inclusive game, where players are courteous to each other. Just because "it's what my character would do" does not excuse any combative or abusive behavior from the player.

In-character (IC) and out-of-character (OOC), D&D is a cooperative and collaborative game.



## MULMASTER REVOLUTIONARY

You are an insurgent—a long-time resident of Mulmaster who secretly aids the efforts of the Red War from within the city. It started with stockpiling hidden weapons and sowing the seeds of discontent. Now you are a full-fledged agent of espionage.

With the aid of fellow revolutionaries, you contribute to a network of information exchange about the movements and activities of the Red Wizards. You've learned their native language so that you can eavesdrop on their conversations. When the occasion calls for it, you've even broken into the embassy or other dwellings to gather intelligence.

Working in conjunction with the Zhent ghettos, you are able to pass information beyond the city. Missives are usually concealed with a cipher and passed along with subtle gestures easily overlooked by the untrained eye. A variety of other creative methods are used as well; hand signals, semaphore, strategic placement of candles, and messages inscribed within trade goods are all viable options.

With Szass Tam's annexation of Mulmaster and the expulsion of faction members therein, your role is more crucial than ever. Methods of gathering intelligence are now extremely limited. Thus your observations, no matter how trivial they may seem, are critical for staging the next phases of the Red War. Doing so comes with no small risk, however. Insurgents are looked upon as nothing more than terrorists and criminals. Should you be caught, it will most certainly be at the cost of not just your life, but also the lives of innocent civilians.

**Skill Proficiencies.** Stealth, Sleight of Hand

**Tool Proficiencies.** Thieves Tools

**Languages.** Thayan

**Equipment.** A crowbar, a set of dark common clothes including a hood, and a belt pouch containing 15 gp (from Criminal background, PHB)

### FEATURE: CRIMINAL CONTACT

You have a reliable and trustworthy contact who acts as your liaison to a network of other criminals. You know how to get messages to and from your contact, even over great distances; specifically, you know the local messengers, corrupt caravan masters, and seedy sailors who can deliver messages for you.

### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am brash, valiant, and overly confident.
- 2 My charmed life did not adequately prepare me for this moment.
- 3 I'm looking for a way to prove myself.
- 4 I don't see how things can get any worse...
- 5 The explosions and constant thrum of war has made me jumpy.
- 6 I'm ashamed to admit it, but I love the war.
- 7 I haven't said five words since the war began, but I've written volumes about my experience.
- 8 My positive outlook confuses those around me.

### d6 Ideal

- 1 Freedom. Everyone should live free from tyranny and oppression. (Good)
- 2 Peace. I want to end this war as quickly as possible, regardless of the outcome. (Lawful)
- 3 Life. I stand in opposition to the evil necrotic forces, and wish to keep casualties to a minimum. (Good)
- 4 Anarchy. The war has given me a taste of lawless, free-for-all society. I like it. (Chaotic)
- 5 Opportunity. I am looking for a way to profit from other people's misfortune. (Evil)
- 6 Solidarity. I am only as strong as the person fighting to the left and to the right of me. (Any)

### d6 Bond

- 1 It's hard to enjoy life, when you're dead.
- 2 I grew up in Mulmaster; I believe in Mulmaster, and I have ambitions to lead it one day.
- 3 I want to survive long enough to take my revenge on the people responsible for this mess.
- 4 My fellow revolutionaries are like my family.
- 5 It is by the will of the gods that I fight against the forces of evil and corruption.
- 6 I'm here to protect the weak and innocent.

### d6 Flaw

- 1 I have a martyr's complex. I want to sacrifice everything for Mulmaster.
- 2 I invented a secret language that no one understands but me. It's annoying to other people.
- 3 I'm too candid to be a good spy.
- 4 When faced with a major decision, I often change my mind several times.
- 5 I arrive late to most planned activities.
- 6 I blindly follow whoever seems most confident.

## RED WAR EXTREMIST

You are a radical, a rogue agent who met the call to arms against Thay with fervent embrace. You are a ruthless combatant that operates alone or in small bands. You seek more than just the liberation of Mulmaster and dismantling Thay. You want to see every Red Wizard put to death.

In accordance with the battle strategies outlined by the Verdantium, you seek to avoid conflict within the borders of a settlement. Avoiding unnecessary civilian casualties is paramount. Rather, you've taken to the wild, laying in wait—sometimes for weeks at a time—to ambush Thayan travelers and caravans. You've mastered the use of natural terrain for cover and learned to rely on nature for provisions you lack. You avoid entering settlements while on mission, doing so only when the elimination of a target is urgent, and only under the cover of night to assassinate your target.

**Skill Proficiencies.** Stealth, Survival

**Tool Proficiencies.** Disguise kit, Herbalism kit

**Equipment.** A scroll case stuffed full of notes from your studies or prayers, a winter blanket, a set of common clothes, a herbalism kit, and 5 gp (from Hermit background, PHB)

### FEATURE: GUERRILLA

You've come to know the surrounding forests, streams, caves, and other natural features in which you can take refuge—or set up ambushes. You can quickly survey your environment for advantageous features. Additionally, you can scavenge around your natural surroundings to cobble together simple supplies (such as improvised torches, rope, patches of fabric, etc.) that are consumed after use. (This feature is a variant of the Outlander feature. It appeared in season 4 background, Phlan Insurgent.)

#### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I love it when people are afraid of me.
- 2 I view everything as a matter of fate. Whether good or bad, life is as it should be.
- 3 There's a situation in my head. It's all in my head.
- 4 I feel uncomfortable in civilization. I don't understand the rules and etiquette.
- 5 I often whistle a jaunty tune while stalking my prey.
- 6 I sharpen my blades while lost in thought about the past.
- 7 I'm not sure how I ended up here. Things escalated quickly.
- 8 I never say no to a contest testing my willpower.

#### d6 Ideal

- 1 Hope. I do what I do because I want to believe in a better future. (Good)
- 2 Independence. No one will tell me how to fight this war, except me. (Chaotic)
- 3 Punishment. I keep the lawless in check through fear and intimidation. (Lawful)
- 4 Fatalism. The world is ending anyway, so what does it matter? (Chaotic)
- 5 Notoriety. I crave the respect of my enemies. (Any)
- 6 Mercilessness. The weak deserve to suffer. (Evil)

#### d6 Bond

- 1 I will follow my leader to the gates of hell and back.
- 2 I've witnessed the Red Wizards do terrible things. I can do terrible things too.
- 3 A family in Mulmaster was kind to me once. I must know if they are all right.
- 4 I'm searching for truth in a deceitful world.
- 5 I am an artist with my weapon. This war is my masterpiece.
- 6 Necromancy is unnatural. This magical knowledge should be wiped from the world.

#### d6 Flaw

- 1 My quest for revenge has caused me to lose touch with reality.
- 2 I sometimes pick fights with the wrong person.
- 3 I actually have a terrible sense of direction.
- 4 Even if someone asks the simplest question, I look off into the distance and tell a boring story about my life.
- 5 I never fight fair, because life isn't fair.
- 6 I think my gravelly voice sounds cool. It's just irritating.

## ABOLITIONIST

When word reached you that a movement to free the oppressed slaves and citizens of Thay had begun to organize, you jumped on board. Working alongside other like-minds, you've helped establish and operate routes by which runaways and dissidents can be smuggled away from Thayan held territories.

Whether by land or by sea, the journey is long, arduous, and fragmentary. Abolitionists work together and contribute in their own unique ways. Some provide resources in the form of money or goods, while others secure passage and refuge along a route. Some work to disrupt the efforts of Thayan slavers that wander the land. Whatever your particular role is, you help liberate the oppressed and provide them a chance for a new life.

**Skill Proficiencies.** Choose two from Deception, Medicine, Persuasion, and Stealth.

**Tool Proficiencies.** Vehicles (land) or vehicles (water).

**Artisan's Tools.** One of your choice

**Equipment.** A set of clothes appropriate to your duties and a pouch containing 20 gp (from Urban Bounty Hunter background, *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*)

### FEATURE: GUILD MEMBERSHIP

As an established and respected member of a guild, you can rely on certain benefits that membership provides.

Your fellow guild members will provide you with lodging and food if necessary, and pay for your funeral if needed. In some cities and towns, a guildhall offers a central place to meet other members of your profession, which can be a good place to meet potential patrons, allies, or hirelings. Guilds often wield tremendous political power. If you are accused of a crime, your guild will support you if a good case can be made for your innocence or the crime is justifiable. You can also gain access to powerful political figures through the guild, if you are a member in good standing. Such connections might require the donation of money or magic items to the guild's coffers. You must pay dues of 5 gp per month to the guild. If you miss payments, you must make up back dues to remain in the guild's good graces.

#### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I get a good feeling from helping others.
- 2 I become very upset when I see others mistreated.
- 3 Regardless of the task, I take my work seriously.

- 4 I enjoy hearing the stories others have to tell.
- 5 I sometimes drift away in thought, lingering on the choices and events that lead me to this path.

- 6 Given the chance, I eat well and drink heartily.
- 7 I often scorn others for not contributing more to society.

- 8 I know my good deeds will earn me a satisfying afterlife.

#### d6 Ideal

- 1 Equality. Everyone deserves a chance at making a life for themselves. (Good)
- 2 Liberty. You have the right to do what you want with your life. (Chaotic)
- 3 Freedom. No one should be forced under the yolk of another. (Lawful)
- 4 Fairness. We all deserve equal protection under the laws of the land. (Lawful)
- 5 Purpose. My actions give my life meaning. (Neutral)
- 6 Legacy. My good deeds will honor my family and be remembered for generations. (Any)

#### d6 Bond

- 1 Someone I knew as a child was stolen and enslaved by Thayans.
- 2 My dear friend introduced me to this life, and I'm grateful they did.
- 3 I strive to see a world where all people are free to live their lives as they see fit.
- 4 I understand what it means to be oppressed; my wicked stepmother mistreated me for years.
- 5 A traveling gypsy once told me I was destined for great things.
- 6 Someday I will settle down on a quiet plot of land and live my life in peace.

#### d6 Flaw

- 1 I tend to brag about my good deeds.
- 2 I'm far too naive with who I'm willing to trust.
- 3 I have a fear of goats. I swear they are the offspring of demons.
- 4 No matter how much I bathe, I can't seem to get rid of this onion smell.
- 5 What can one more drink hurt?
- 6 I'm told my snoring sounds like a badger caught in a hunting trap.

## 12. A LETTER FROM THAY

To Whom It May Concern:

This is in response to a letter from a person calling herself Rose, identified as an adventurer, which found its way to the office of His Exaltedness Lord Szass Tam, Regent of Thay, then quickly disappeared.

First: Thank you for writing. Lord Tam is unavailable, but I am happy to reply to the rare polite message from an adventurer, even to answer such an absurd question as "Why would Thay attack Mulmaster?"

To be clear, the rulers of Thay had no prior plan to attack Mulmaster. We were helping Mulmaster. Helping just happened to benefit us in the long-term, but I'm sure those benefits are nothing you would care about. Really. I'm sure. You can trust me. Would an undead servitor lie?

Anyhoo . . . we weren't *planning* to attack anyone. We were providing disaster relief and help to Mulmaster, a service which—let's not kid ourselves—a bunch of factious murder-vagabonds such as yourselves weren't terribly well-positioned to render. (Or at least, I assume you weren't well-positioned to render it. Because you didn't. Help, I mean. As in: You adventurers didn't actually help.)

So we happened to be in Mulmaster, helping victims of disaster, and then a bunch of you lot declared war. On us. That was silly in so many ways.

Not the least of which is: Nations declare war. Factions like the Emerald Enclave declare, I don't know, harvest feasts or something.

And also silly because: Your big plans tend to be how to kill one scary creature in an underground room. While Szass Tams's big plans involved, say, strategically undermining the other seven genius archmages who ruled a magocratic empire and setting them against one another before destroying them all in one masterfully executed coup. So maybe, possibly, Thay might have a slight advantage in terms of executing large-scale geopolitical regime change. Forgive the digression.

Anyways, you declared "war" (or whatever you call it when a loosely-organized horde of tomb-robbing mercenaries mobilizes militarily—maybe, generously, "marauding?"). You declared war on a sovereign nation aiding an ailing city-state. With the apparent goal of stopping our charitable aid at all costs. Certainly noble of you to assemble your crusade and ride against a scourge on civilization like "rebuilding orphanages," heroes!

It turns out, leaving Mulmaster because of your unjustified—and likely empty—threat wasn't, strictly speaking, gonna work for us.

Your declaration necessitates drastic measures. An outcome no sane or compassionate person would actually want, but that is where we are now.

You probably won't regret your rash and irrational actions. Your kind seldom do. You tend to get some healing from the local cleric and wander off to the next opportunity for glorious/self-serving exploits. But I will wager a chest of gold (the gold you no doubt desperately crave despite having nothing to spend it on) that others will regret it. I will wager that the Mulmasterite mothers and fathers weeping over their fallen sons and daughters will regret your recklessness before this "Red War" is done. I suspect they will regret it bitterly.

Of course, maybe you can just defeat us quickly and save all the bloodshed, right? After all, we are just the most brutal and necromantically powerful nation on the face of the planet, and you lot have leftover driftglobes and 10-foot poles and tricky gnomes with pointy shoes or whatever.

Quite the epic rivalry we have going.

High body count or low body count, I'm sure it's all just the price of your high-minded heroism, right?

(I have yet to find an aesthetically pleasing way to convey loud cackles of menacing laughter on the written page, but, you know, try to imagine that sort of thing.)

So, the actual answer to your question is: We didn't attack Mulmaster. You are the ones who attacked Mulmaster, by declaring war. A war you can't win against the city's allies—allies who are already present here, not attacking but giving needed aid your kind cannot and/or will not provide. I should say that what happens next is on your head, but realistically, the notion of consequences isn't in your wheelhouse, is it?

Hope that helps.

Anyways, we look forward to seeing you soon in Mulmaster! Die before then or don't, works for us either way—realistically, the line between the two is enjoyably blurry around these parts nowadays.

XOXO

Sincerely Yours, A Nameless Undead Assistant to His Dark Majesty Szass Tam

P.S. Yes, I am undead. I'm sure that upsets your pearl-clutching, life-privileged sensibilities, but the day you adventurers stop making corpses is the day we'll stop animating them. Until then, I'll thank you not to make any ignorant necrophobic comments about my non-vivified status. Wake up and smell the 1490s already, would you?

P.P.S. Thanks again so much for your thoughtful message.

## 13. OTHER RESOURCES

Early editions of D&D flourished with an “open source” philosophy—meaning, so much of the content was created by passionate members of the community and made freely available to other players. That is still true today. D&D Adventurers League has no shortage of people who contribute their time and talent. We’re all here to create cool stuff, tell great stories, and share what we’ve made. (Sometimes we charge a few bucks to feed our children and keep the lights on.)

- **D&D Adventurers League Website.** Let’s face it. None of this would be possible without the D&D Adventurers League and our amazing AL Admins. The official AL website has all the information you need to run an enjoyable AL campaign at a convention, local game store, or even at your house. – [dndadventurersleague.org](http://dndadventurersleague.org)
- **Online Verdantium/Faction Groups.** These groups are the online communities for the Verdantium and the AL factions.

### **The Verdantium on Facebook**

[facebook.com/groups/verdantium/](https://facebook.com/groups/verdantium/)

**Discord** – [discord.gg/cvnrjQZ](https://discord.gg/cvnrjQZ)

### **The Harpers on Facebook**

[facebook.com/groups/141365973227765/](https://facebook.com/groups/141365973227765/)

**Discord** – [discord.gg/Wyjyhhk](https://discord.gg/Wyjyhhk)

### **The Zhentarim on Facebook**

[facebook.com/groups/TheBlackNetworkDDAL/](https://facebook.com/groups/TheBlackNetworkDDAL/)

**Discord** – [discord.gg/nkjwFUw](https://discord.gg/nkjwFUw)

### **Lords’ Alliance on Facebook**

[facebook.com/groups/1493658917597511/](https://facebook.com/groups/1493658917597511/)

**Discord** – [discord.gg/7cXz6pj](https://discord.gg/7cXz6pj)

### **Emerald Enclave on Facebook**

[facebook.com/groups/DnDALEmeraldEnclave/](https://facebook.com/groups/DnDALEmeraldEnclave/)

**Discord** – [discord.gg/AR6U6KR](https://discord.gg/AR6U6KR)

### **Order of the Gauntlet on Facebook**

[facebook.com/groups/OrderoftheGauntlet/](https://facebook.com/groups/OrderoftheGauntlet/)

**Discord** – [discord.gg/UE2tb5e](https://discord.gg/UE2tb5e)

- **Thunderquill Tribune.** This Neverwinter-based organization reports on the important issues of the moment, and is quickly earning the reputation of being a complete and comprehensive source of both professionally and publically submitted curated news about Faerûn. The Thunderquill

Tribune vows to connect the major adventurers and events that are defining today’s issues and engage faction decision makers. This site provides some of the most comprehensive coverage of the Red War. The editor-in-chief Sandysy Thunderquill is an active player character in AL who encourages other characters to submit reports and breaking news, especially if it’s relevant to the Red War. – [thunderquill.com](http://thunderquill.com)

- **Conversations with . . . Faction Contacts in the Moonsea, vol. 1.** “Conversations With” is a regular column written by Delwyn Ilar of the Podal Prophet broadsheet of Phlan, bringing you Out-Of-Character knowledge of important NPCs in the Moonsea region from the Adventurers League campaign, so that you might better portray them and their organizations in your games. This volume contains updated and edited previously published interviews with Olisara Lightsong (Harpers), Zern Xerkstil (Order of the Gauntlet), Seranolla the Whisperer (Emerald Enclave), Dornal Whitebeard (Lords’ Alliance), and Chaab (Zhentarim), along with new descriptions and statistics of these notable NPCs (including Delwyn himself) and a few suggestions on how you might use them in your game. – written by Greg Marks, available on [DMsGuild.com](http://DMsGuild.com)
- **City Guide: Mulmaster.** Inside this supplement you will find some campaign setting information regarding the status of the City of Danger since the Devastation occurred. The Devastation—the aftermath of the original few runnings of DDEP Mulmaster Undone—is widespread and the city must now not only discover their identity in these uncertain times but also how best they can begin to rebuild. – available on [DMsGuild.com](http://DMsGuild.com)
- **D&D Beyond: How to Play a Lich Like a Dark Overlord.** In this wonderful essay by James Haeck, he provides some tips on how DMs can make a lich encounter truly memorable.  
“A lich played properly should feel invincible, both to you and your players. A lich played like a dark overlord, a figure of mythic power like Sauron, Voldemort, or Szass Tam, deserves tactics and spells worthy of its foul title. And there is no better way to play a lich than as a dark tyrant, overflowing with evil monologues and supported by a brilliant mind worthy of your 20 Intelligence. If you want to play your lich like a dark overlord, read on.” – [dndbeyond.com/posts/185-how-to-play-a-lich-like-a-dark-overlord](https://dndbeyond.com/posts/185-how-to-play-a-lich-like-a-dark-overlord)



- ***Tyrants in Scarlet: The Founding History of the Zulkirs of Thay.*** The realm of Thay has always been a place of strange magic, its red-robed wizards casting a grim and feared shadow over the lands of the Inner Sea and the Unapproachable East. More feared still have been the machinations of the land's mysterious rulers, the fabled zulkirs of Thay. Presented here is the founding history of Thay and its mighty rulers, as well as hitherto unrevealed lore on the secret source of their mighty Art and the origins of the dread Szass Tam, the Zulkir of Necromancy. – written by George Krashos and Ed Greenwood, available on DMsGuild.com

## DDEPO0-01: RED WAR EPIC

The Cults of Elemental Evil had wrought incredible destruction on the city of Mulmaster and in its hour of need, the City of Danger received aid from an unlikely ally—the Mageocracy of Thay. Now, with Mulmaster moving ever closer into Thay's orbit, strife is brewing within the factions as some call for action against the Red Wizard. A three-hour epic adventure for all tiers, written by Bill Benham, Dan Dillon, Alan Patrick, and Travis Woodall

**To request an epic.** Conventions (single or multi-day) and store game days can request a D&D Epic by filling out a request form on this page: [dndadventurersleague.org/start-here/conventions/](http://dndadventurersleague.org/start-here/conventions/) (scroll to the section titled “D&D Epics”).

D&D Epics have minimum table requirements, which events must meet to offer the adventure.

## RED WAR CCCs

These adventures debuted at various conventions with more Red War CCCs coming soon.

**CCC-ST2-01 Red War: Embassy of Evil.** As magic rains down upon Mulmaster and the city falls to ruin, deep within the inner sanctum of the Thayvian Embassy, Szass Tam's agents work tirelessly to decipher the *Lost Journal of Karsus*. Can the heroes stop Szass Tam before he learns the secrets of history's most notorious Wizard? A four-hour adventure for tier 2 characters, written by K. Jasmine Vernon – available on DMsGuild.com

**CCC-REAP-01 Red War: Lost Ashes of a Wayward Gnome.** A priestess has traveled far from home to find herself in the middle of the Red War. Join her on a surreal, madcap journey through a dangerous warzone to recover the ashes of the gnome

responsible for this conflict. Can anything good come out of this fool's errand? A four-hour adventure for tier 2 characters, written by David Hopkins – available on DMsGuild.com

**CCC-OCC-01 Red War: Housekeeping.** The dawn of the final day arrives: The Red War looms on the horizon, and nothing can stop what is to come. But in those early hours before battle begins, a group of adventurers are tasked with a covert operation to remove sensitive information left behind by the factions and sow subterfuge if possible. Will internal and external influences keep them from completing their mission? A four-hour adventure for tier 3 characters, written by Garrett Colón – available on DMsGuild.com

**CCC-JGD-01 Red War: Left Black and Blue.** As tensions between factions and Thayans rise in Mulmaster, the characters are offered a job from an unlikely source—but can they breach the Black Earth Temple and survive the terrors within? A two-to-four-hour adventure for tier 3 characters, written by Fenway Jones and Ben Heisler – available on DMsGuild.com

## DDHC-TYP: DEAD IN THAY

The hardcover *Tales from the Yawning Portal* features an immense and lethal dungeon called the “Doomvault” in chapter 5: Dead in Thay. The adventure is for tier 2 players (target level 9). However, players are likely to advance to 11th level. Consult the most up-to-date *AL Content Catalogue* for further guidance.

Dead in Thay features enough Red Wizard mischief to be an exciting Verdantium adventure.

## OUR GREATEST RESOURCE IS YOU!

Congratulations! You've read this guide from beginning to end. Love it? Hate it? Have ideas for how we can make it better? Feel free to leave us a review on DMsGuild.com.

If you'd like to create content for a future version of *The Verdantium: A Red War Roleplaying Guide*, send us an email at [davidhopkins@gmail.com](mailto:davidhopkins@gmail.com).

And if your idea is too big for this guide (I don't know what's floating around in that head of yours), by all means, create your own Verdantium content! Share it on DMsGuild.com for others to enjoy.







AGE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
EYES	SKIN	HAIR

CHARACTER NAME

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

CHARACTER BACKSTORY

Faction \_\_\_\_\_  
 Faction Rank \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organizations: **Verdantium**

Allies \_\_\_\_\_

Titles \_\_\_\_\_



ALLIES & ORGANIZATIONS

**Novice** Requires: Level 1, 0 Renown  
 **Notorious** Requires: Level 3, 2 Renown  
 **Seasoned** Requires: Level 8, 10 Renown  
 **Heroic** Requires: Level 13, 20 Renown  
 **Paragon** Requires: Level 18, 30 Renown  
**RENOWN RANK**

COMBAT ○○○○○○○○○○  
 COMMUNICATIONS ○○○○○○○○○○  
 DEDICATION ○○○○○○○○○○  
 DIPLOMACY ○○○○○○○○○○  
 RECRUITING ○○○○○○○○○○  
 RESEARCH ○○○○○○○○○○  
 SUPPORT ○○○○○○○○○○  
**VERDANTIUM OBJECTIVES**

NOTES

STORY AWARDS

