

EBERRON

MASTERMINDS OF SHARN



TROY TAYLOR

MASTERMINDS OF SHARN

Evil-doers and schemers for an Eberron campaign.

Design

Troy E. Taylor



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INTRODUCTION

MASTERMINDS

“Oh, ho ho! You sly dog! You got me monologuing! I can’t believe it ...”

Syndrome, “The Incredibles,” 2004

No doubt about it. The evil mastermind gets all the best lines.

Books. Stage. Audio drama. Movies. Video Games. It’s all the same. A little grandstanding. A little scenery-chewing. A little ‘monologuing,’ as Syndrome would call it.

So, who gets to portray the evil mastermind in a roleplaying game? That’s right. You — the dungeon master.

The best lines are yours, too — if the players’ let you.

Oh, the rub of roleplaying games.

Unlike these other forms of entertainment, in which the mastermind’s exposition can be depicted at any time or place in the narrative — the evil mastermind in an rpg gets very little screen time. The action almost always follows the player characters. So, in most instances, the big bad of a Dungeons and Dragons session doesn’t appear until he or she shares a scene with the player characters, usually, at the very end of the adventure.

The PCs rush into the final room — there’s an NPC there wearing black and curling a mustache. The evil mastermind is about to say something clever ...

... and a player says, “I shoot ‘em with my crossbow.”

The dice rolls. It’s a 20. Max damage.



You deliver the grim news. “You killed ‘em. Dead.”

High fives all around.

But for the DM, no mastermind moment, no scenery chewing.

Masterminds get the best lines

“Gee, Brain. What are we going to do tonight?”
“The same thing we do every night, Pinky. Try to take over the world.”

Brain educates Pinky. “Pinky and the Brain,” 1995

“Oh, yes! I love the smell of near extinction!”
Cruella DeVil, “101 Dalmations,” 1996

“And once the moon is mine, the world will give me whatever I want to get it back, and I will be the greatest villain of all time! That’s what I’m talking ‘bout!”

(Minions cheer!)
Gru, “Despicable Me,” 2010

“Somebody has to die.”
“Why?”
“Somebody always does.”

Catherine Trammel responds to Nick, “Basic Instinct,” 1992

“You know, I have one simple request. And that is to have sharks with frickin’ laser beams attached to their heads!”

Doctor Evil, “Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery,” 1997

“Fools! Idiots! Imbeciles! Oh, they’re hopeless. A disgrace to the forces of evil.”

Maleficent, “Sleeping Beauty,” 1959

“No, Mr. Bond, I expect you to die!”
Auric Goldfinger, “Goldfinger,” 1964

“Why a spoon, cousin? Why not an axe?”
“Because it’s dull, you twit. It’ll hurt more.”

Sheriff of Nottingham replies to Guy of Gisborne, “Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves,” 1991

“When they touch down, we’ll blow the roof, they’ll spend a month sifting through rubble, and by the time they figure out what went wrong, we’ll be sitting on a beach, earning twenty percent.

Hans Gruber, “Die Hard,” 1988

“Just try and stay out of my way. Just try! I’ll get you, my pretty, and your little dog, too!”

Wicked Witch of the West, “The Wizard of Oz,” 1939

“Hope. It is the only thing stronger than fear. A little hope is effective. A lot of hope is dangerous. A spark is fine, as long as it’s contained.”

President Snow, “Hunger Games,” 2012

“You’re a piece of work, Dredd. But so am I. You think I didn’t know I’d get busted some day? Goes with the territory. This entire level is rigged with enough high explosives to take out the top fifty stories. If they go, the rest go too.”

Ma-Ma, “Dredd,” 2012

“For ridiculing you earlier, I apologize.”
O-ren Ishii, “Kill Bill Vol. 1,” 2003

“Your hand is staining my window.”
Nurse Ratched, “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest,” 1975

Just some players looking expectantly at the battle map. “Hey, DM, is there any magic or treasure in the room?”

Alas ...

It doesn’t have to always be that way, however.


The “Evil Mastermind” can be a great part to a roleplaying experience — as a recurring character.

The mastermind is an evil baddie that returns again and again to torment the players. The mastermind has a hideout. The mastermind has minions. The mastermind is

“untouchable” in public, boasting a reputation far more sterling than a bunch of misfit adventurers.

And, the mastermind is a key component to the Eberron experience.

From the first *Eberron Campaign Setting* book in 2004, scenarios involving an “evil mastermind” were configured to be part of the experience. On Page 256, there is an outline for how to run an “evil mastermind” adventure. The two-fisted noir action of an Eberron campaign fits hand in glove with an NPC villain who’s got a plan to activate a doomsday device. The PCs have no choice



but to storm a hideout, fight through a gaggle of goons, outwit a devoted minion, then take down the big boss.

The supplement is a tool that can be useful in making that happen.

Part 1 presents a villain — the half-elf archmage Mindartis — and shows how he can work as a recurring villain. He's obsessed with gaining immortality. He's got secret labs located throughout the city. He's got a halfling sidekick. And he'd really, really like to get the upper hand on the Wayfinder Foundation. In so many ways, he's the perfect foil for adventurers trying to make ends meet in Sharn. In three appearances, the villain's plots become more ambitious and more deadly. All three adventure scenarios can be run at your table, each one designed to test the PCs' resolve as they move up in levels. Will there be a chance at delivering a choice line? There should be several, in fact.

In Part 2 there is a list of seven other villains that can be shaped into the evil mastermind mold within the context of Eberron. Each has an obsession for their villainy, and a series of ploys that become progressively more dangerous.

Part 3 is a worksheet you as a DM can print out to formulate your own "evil mastermind" moments. The fact is, a DM knows what sort of NPC will work best as an adversary for their particular style of game and table of players. Customizing material in this way is an essential part of the DM-planning experience. This worksheet can be useful in organizing session notes so you can make that evil mastermind moment happen. It is my hope this supplement will prove useful for DMs running in Eberron.

*Troy E. Taylor,
August 2018*

PART ONE

MINDARTIS

Mindartis is a half-elf archmage. Long has he admired the true elves of Aerenal and how their Undying Court has seemingly cheated death through the Priests of Transition.

Of course, as a half-elf, this path is denied to him.

Jealousy at their accomplishment fuels his obsession.

Swearing an oath to The Keeper, one of the Dark Six gods, Mindartis embarks on a plan to learn the secret to long life, if not immortality, itself.

If it can be achieved without turning himself into a lich, so much the better. Mindartis is driven by vanity and he cannot comprehend an existence reduced to a magical skeleton and deprived of simple, sensual pleasures. He still desires to dine on flavorful delicacies and pursue carnal

pleasures, though old age has diminished his senses.

Mindartis knows time is running out. In Sharn, the old archmage hopes to gain the means to extend his life.

TIER 1: NECKLACE OF DEATH

Noted halfling Wayfinder Jalinda Feathers is on the run and desperate for the help of adventurers who've been recommended by "a friend" as trustworthy.

Less than a year ago she and her company returned from the giant ruins of Tharkgun Dhak in Xen'drik to acclaim. Now she is in hiding, going from safehouse to safehouse in the lowest sections of the city, including the Cogs. She fears for her life and needs adventurers to help to fend off those hunting her.

A few weeks ago, members of her expedition started to disappear one at a time,

The elves of Aerenal found a way to exist beyond death.



then turn up dead a few days later. Each of the deaths was treated as an accident by the authorities. But Jalinda believes they were assassinated. She suspects her compatriots were interrogated and forced to divulge the great discovery they made in Xen'drik, an artifact they were keeping secret until it could be thoroughly studied.

Jalinda has made several attempts to reach the Aundair embassy in the Middle City's Central Plateau, but was intercepted by agents each time. She barely escaped and is thankful her "friend" provided assistance on that day. And even if she reaches the embassy, any attempt to get to her homeland by airship or lightning rail will be challenged. But first things first. Once she gets inside the embassy, she can seek the help of the head of the Wayfinders, Lord Boroman ir'Dayne, who might provide sufficient protection

Mindartis' Plan

Mindartis believes Jalinda's expedition returned with one of the famed *necklaces of the phantom library* the ancient giant wizards fashioned from Siberys dragonshards. Some *necklaces of the phantom library* are believed to contain upward of 500 spells. Mindartis seeks the means to extend his life, and he's fairly certain an ancient repository of magic is likely to have such a spell.

To date, his abductions and interrogations of Jalinda's fellow adventurers confirmed that they believe, at least, they had recovered one of the necklaces. But they wanted to research its properties before declaring it as such. Mindartis would prefer to capture Jalinda, believing she might have insights into the properties of

the necklace. But above all, he wants the necklace, and he is willing to risk her life if need be.

Jalinda is correct, he intends to stop her from reaching the Aundair embassy. But even if she does that, he intends to make other attempts to gain the necklace regardless of how she is transported to Aundair. He won't relent in his pursuit of the necklace until it reaches the custody of Lord Boroman I'Dayne.

Why not have Jalinda go to the Wayfinder office in the Upper City?

1) The office is higher — and farther away — than the embassy. 2) It is far less secure a location. She figures Mindartis' agents could steamroll through the front door, and she is probably right.

Noted halfling Wayfinder Jalinda Feathers returned from Xen'drik with a treasure thought to be one of the necklaces of the phantom library.



“A friend” ploy

Mindartis wants deniability in this scheme. One of his agents is the halfling **spy** Crayleaf Tiller, a master of impersonation.

Crayleaf is posing as an old Aundair “acquaintance” of Jalinda’s. His personality and approach is to earn her trust. “We were in the same general studies class back at the University of Wynarn. You probably don’t remember me. I mean, you were so popular, so full of adventure, even then. But I always admired you and followed your career with interest. Imagine, running into each other here in Sharn. Hey, you look worried about something. Is there anything I can do to help?”

Jalinda, in her desperation, has come to rely upon Crayleaf. In fact, when she wanted adventurers as bodyguards, he made sure he found the most ragtag and inept group he could find and convince to help — the player characters.

Crayleaf keeps Mindartis informed as to their movements, which makes sure he stays a step ahead of Jalinda. Mindartis is too impatient to let Crayleaf’s charm offensive develop in full, otherwise the halfling could arrange a circumstance that would deliver an unsuspecting Jalinda and the necklace into his clutches. Crayleaf is more than a little miffed at his boss’ rash attempt to intercept them in the Middle City, but the episode did cement Jalinda’s trust in him.

The next time Jalinda makes a try for the embassy, Crayleaf will not betray her directly. But he will quietly disappear when Mindartis’ agents appear.

If Crayleaf’s duplicity is revealed and the PCs interrogate him, he will give up the name of his employer. “Mindartis. He’s a half-elf wizard. I don’t know all his plans and I only do business with him from a warehouse in Tavick’s Landing. But he’s obsessed with getting the necklace. He says it’s the key to a long life. A very, very long life.”

Mindartis’ other agents

Mindartis has two teams of agents, each of identical composition. One is intended to trail

Staking out the Aundair embassy in Sharn.



Jalinda and the adventurers then attack whenever they are about to enter the Middle City. The second team is positioned near the embassy and will strike then. Ideally, Jalinda and the adventurers will be caught in a pincer movement by the two groups. The agents are instructed to take the necklace, kidnap Jalinda, if possible, and discourage pursuit by the adventurers.

Level 1: four **bandits**

Level 2: four **bandits** and a **thug**

Level 3: four **thugs**

Level 4: six **thugs**

Rescue and other developments

If Mindartis' agents are successful in apprehending Jalinda they are instructed to take her to a warehouse in Tavicks Landing. They do not have reinforcements and are waiting for Mindartis to arrive. The PCs have only a brief opportunity at raiding the warehouse and escaping with Jalinda.

Mindartis is far too powerful for the PCs to challenge directly. He will *teleport* in just as the PCs are leaving. But without Crayleaf directing his movements, he won't know which path the PCs will take to the embassy (or even if they go that way). This is a good time to employ a chase scene. The escape can also be described narratively because the PCs' success at this point has been earned and Mindartis isn't interested in a public spectacle. Even if Mindartis gets to the embassy ahead of the PCs, he will be reluctant to engage them directly, especially because the area is likely on alert with security personnel after the previous abduction attempt. He prefers to work from the shadows.

He will send teams of agents to intercept any mode of transportation Jalinda takes to Aundair, providing one more encounter. This team will be configured as before, but it will

have an additional member, a **cult fanatic** devoted to The Keeper. This should be a clue to the PCs of Mindartis' own allegiances if they wish to pursue him when they are stronger characters.

Custody of Lord Boroman ir'Dayne

The PCs should be on hand when the *necklace* is given over to the custody of halfling philanthropist Lord Boroman ir'Dayne. It is a good opportunity to demonstrate Dayne's duplicitous motives. He, too, places great hope that the necklace contains the magic to effect a cure for the wasting sickness that is ravaging his body. That will be evident as he fawns over the necklace.

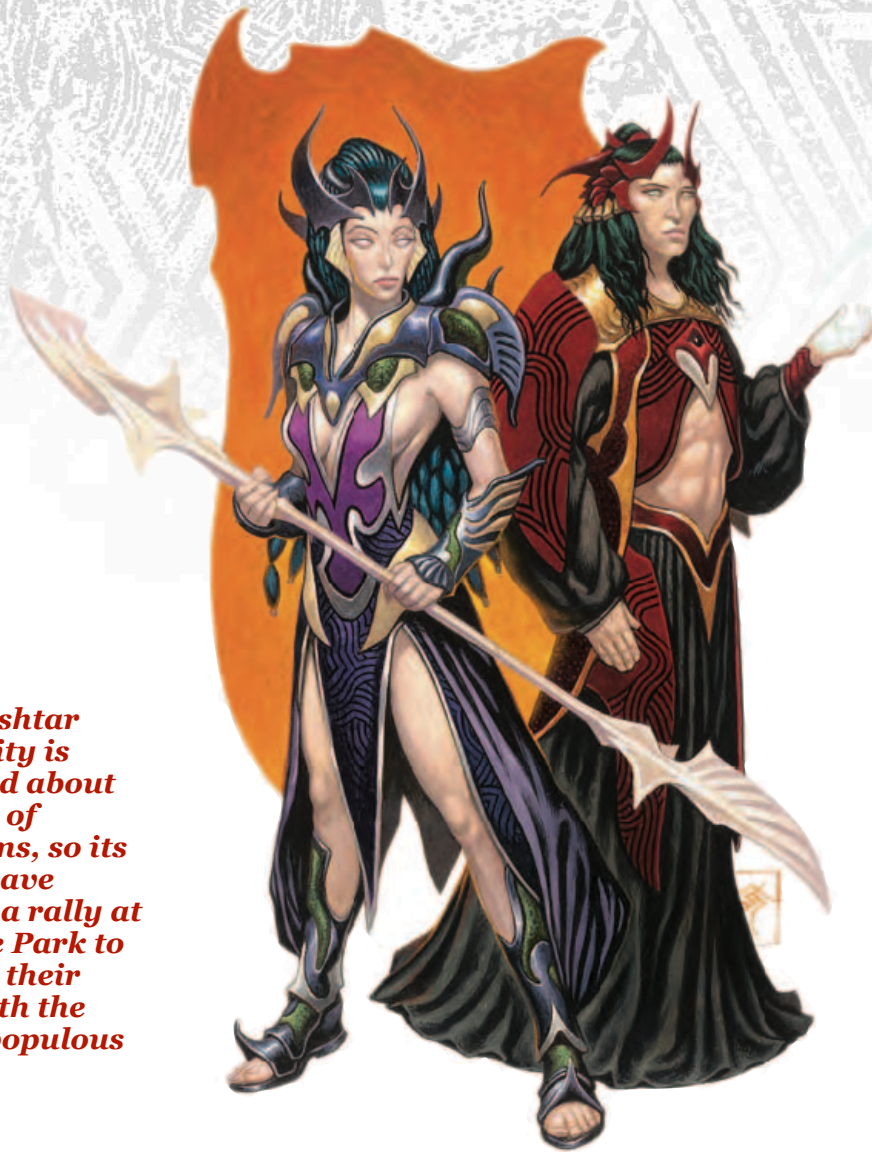
If the PCs haven't yet learned the identity of their tormentor, Lord Boroman should be able to provide it. "Mindartis. A half-elf mage of considerable resources. We had heard he was operating out of Tavick's Landing in Sharn, but we've heard other things too. It's hard to know what true with such as him. He used to have a halfling sneak in his employ. Tiller was his name. Did you encounter him?"

Lord Boroman and Mindartis are longtime adversaries and in a strange way, both seeking the same thing, a way to prolong their lives.

TIER 2: THE WHEEL OF PAIN

Mindartis maintains a lair in the Cogs where he will conduct vile experiments on captive Kalashtar, sapping their life essence using a magical device intended to transfer that life energy to himself. He found insights by reading the *Vidarone Texts*, a copy of which he had Crayleaf Tiller steal.

The Kalashtar community is concerned about the spate of abductions, so its leaders have planned a rally at Skysedge Park to publicize their plight with the greater populous of Sharn.



Gathering Light

Friends within the Kalashstar community ask the PCs to investigate a robbery at the Gathering Light, community hall and martial arts studio in Upper Dura, in light of other recent assaults on the community. While there, the PCs learn that there have been a series of abductions. All of the victims are Kalashtar, heightening the level of concern within the community.

The thieves took one thing: a copy of the *Vidarone Texts*. While not irreplaceable, the theft is deeply felt by the martial arts masters. The texts are a treasured part of Kalashstar heritage, since it takes a long time for a scribe to create a copy. The *Vidarone*

Texts are a spiritual and, some might say, scientific examination of psionic energies that are a part of Kalashtar existence. There are sections that examine how this life energy prolongs the lives of the Kalashstar, beyond the life expectancy of humans, for example.

In light of this latest attack on the Kalashtar community, an organizer, Therenharabi, asks the PCs to attend a Kalashtar rally at Skysedge Park intended to educate all of Sharn on the plight of his people.

A person matching Mindardis' description repeatedly visited the community at length several months ago, asking questions about the Kalashstar and the

Vidarone Texts. He called himself Ardim Stin. It became clear that he never intended to learn the martial arts taught by the masters nor did he wish to become a student so he could have access to the texts. He did not return.

By Leaps and Bounds

Skysedge Park in the city's upper central plateau is the scene of a public rally, a show of support for Sharn's Kalashtar minority. This gathering at the park has drawn the curious, as well as, professional adventurers paid to augment local security. The prevailing wisdom is that a unified front will bring attention to this problem, encouraging the local authorities to apprehend the perpetrators. It will also be a sign of defiance. All the previous abductions were done in the dark privacy of Kalashtari homes. Many

Kalashtar believe there will be safety in numbers.

So many Kalashtari in one place is a target too tempting for Mindartis to pass up. He requires Kalashtar souls to further his work in extending his life. He dispatches a strike team to disrupt the rally with explosions, smoke grenades and other distractions so the main force can swoop in and capture one or more of the Kalashtar gathered.

What ensues is a mad dash, a run for his life, by the Kalashtar rally organizer Therenharabi. The elements of the chase are such that they account for changing elevation — leaps from tower balconies, hopscotching across moving skycabs, snagging cables and outcrops of buildings, and footraces across bridges. Whether Therenharabi eludes capture is irrelevant to the course of the adventure. With so many Kalashtari



A chase in the upper reaches of the city.

gathered at the rally, the strike teams were able to meet their abduction quota.

Mindartis' strike teams

Level 5: One **Cult fanatic** of The Keeper, a **half-ogre**, and five **thugs**

Levels 6-7: One **cult fanatic** of the The Keeper, two **half-ogres** and five **thugs**

Level 8-9: Two **cult fanatics** of The Keeper, two **half-ogres** and five **thugs**

Level 10: One **veteran**, two **cult fanatics** of The Keeper, five **half-ogres**

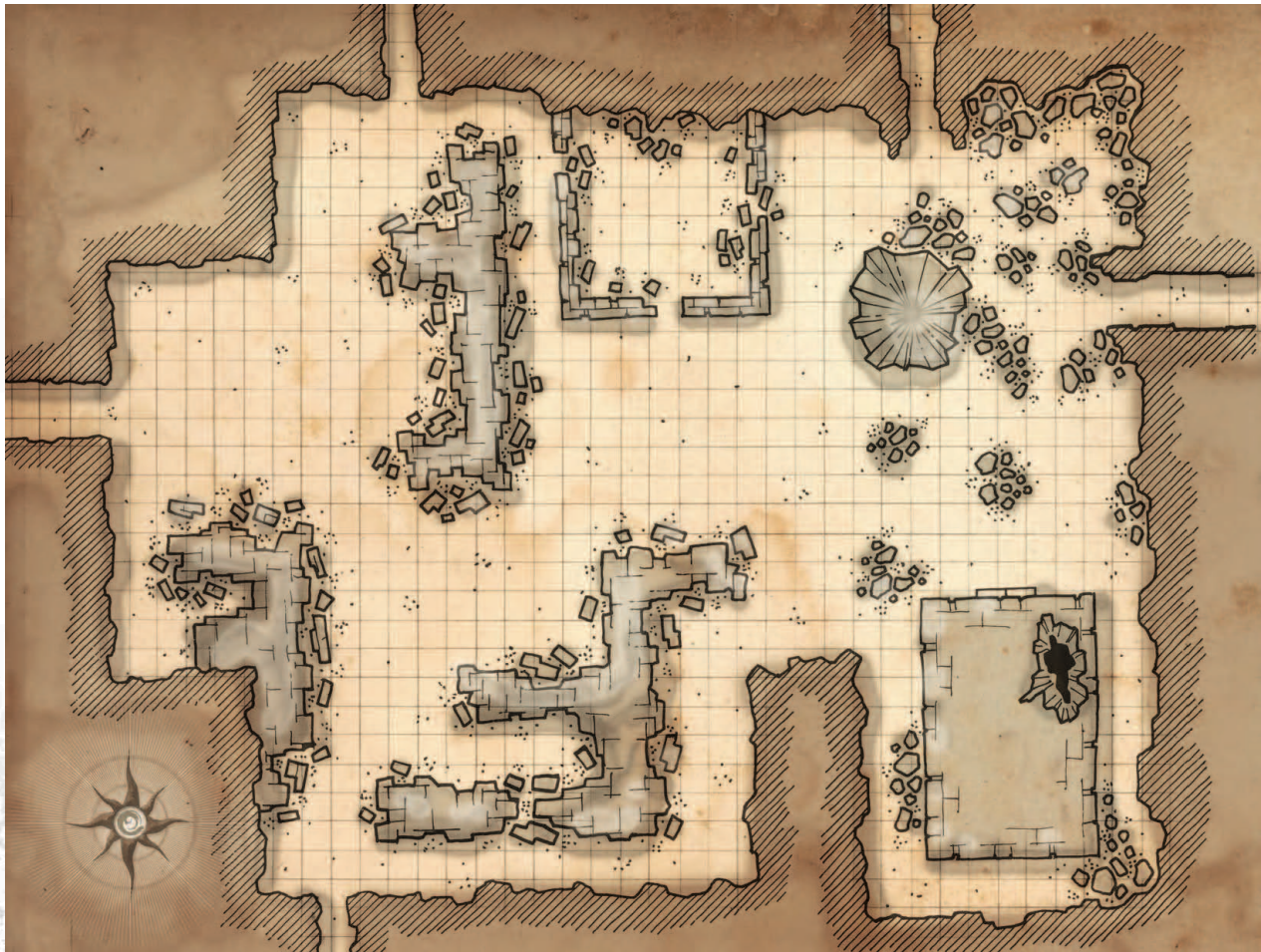
Jalinda's clue

Jalinda seeks out the adventurers. She has information courtesy of Lord Boroman. His informants say that shipments of technical and magical equipment have been delivered

in the Lower City by a single purchasing agent, Ardim Stin. (That is an anagram of Mindartis.) Coincidence? Who knows. But it is the best lead they have.

Confrontation in the Cogs

Following more clues, the PCs come to Mindartis' lair in the Cogs. He has one strike team guarding against intrusion during the experiment. There is a giant wheel machine in the center of the chamber, with a humanoid-sized capsule made of a some transparent material rising above it. Mindartis occupies the capsule. Kalashtar are strapped down upon the apparatus, a great wheel, atop the machine. His minions in the cave attack to give Mindartis time to complete the transfer of energy. The PCs likely will attempt to stop the experiment, rescue the captive Kalashtar



A confrontation in the Cogs.

before their life energy is drained and fight Mindartis' minions.

Failure in the Cogs

The experiment, in any event, will only be partially successful. The transfer will not give Mindartis the longevity he desires, and in a weakened state, he will need to use all his magical powers to escape.

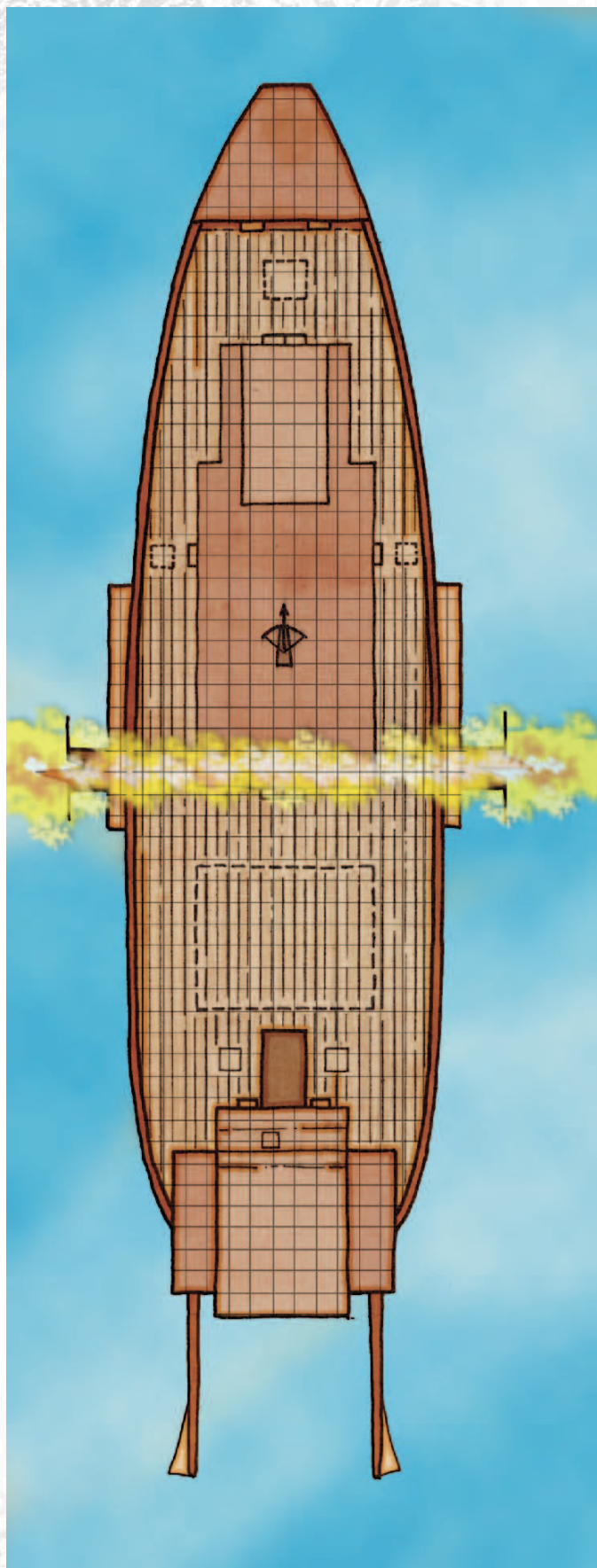
TIER 3: LAIR OF MINDARTIS

Mindartis, now a faithful servant of The Keeper, is still not yet willing to embrace the way of lichdom. He seeks an alternative, such as transforming his intellect and will into younger, more durable form. Jalinda has proven to be an able nemesis, and as an explorer, endure the rigors of exploring Xen'drik. Mindartis has chosen her to be the receptacle of his essence.

In preparation, he has outfitted an apartment in the Upper City with all the necessary equipment and scientific and magical apparatus. The apartment belongs to Xavier Colsworth, which is another of Mindartis' many identities, enhanced by his *disguise self* ability.

Expedition Launch

Jalinda and a new company of explorers, including a younger sister Malinda, are embarking on a new expedition to Xen'drik. This time the expedition is fully funded by Lord Boromon. Instead of Jalinda taking a sailing ship to Stormreach, she has booked a skyship. As the PCs are longtime friends of the halfling explorer, they are on hand for the launch from Lyrandar Tower.



Mindartis must strike before the elemental airship gets truly powered up and can outpace his smaller attack craft. He sends Crayleaf Tiller (now with **assassin** stats) and a strike team to make the grab (though in the confusion, the halfling may abduct Jalinda's sister, Malinda, instead).

Mindartis' strike team

Level 11-13: one **mage** and four **veterans**

Level 14-16: one **mage** and four **gladiators**

The PCs should be able to commandeer skycabs or other small craft to race out to the airship and try and fight off Mindartis' team. Mindartis may well use *teleport* to appear at pre-arranged coordinates, take custody of the captured woman, then escape. The remaining sister will then implore the PCs to help track down Mindartis. In this case, there should be stragglers from Mindartis' team that can be

interrogated and made to reveal the location of Mindartis' lair.

Final confrontation

With Jalinda or Malinda in tow, the PCs can burst in on Mindartis as he is about to take the other sister's life force. It should likely be a straight up battle between Mindartis and Crayleaf against the PCs. However, the archmage may unleash a guardian if it appears the PCs are about to overwhelm him, such as a uncaged **quaggoth thonot** that can cause chaos during the battle.

This time the PCs are capable of capturing or killing Mindartis, or he may, yet again, escape. If Mindartis flees, he will seek the help of the The Keeper and follow the path of a necromancy to its inevitable conclusion — becoming a lich.

But developing that adventure falls to you, intrepid dungeon masters.



PART TWO

EVIL~DOERS OF SHARN

THYA

Thya is a changeling who spent most of her life among the downtrodden and despised. In her heart, she desires the respect and adoration that persons of political power or great wealth are accorded. She will devote herself to gaining a foothold in the world of the dragonmarked houses, then exploiting their weaknesses to achieve her own power base.

Ploy 1. Gain the position as a faithful assistant to a mid-level, easily manipulated member of the House Cannith. She will earn the favor of the house by fixing a problem that seemingly has no apparent solution. Of course, her approach will involve an unethical or illegal approach, one that will bring her into conflict with the PCs.

Ploy 2. Thya will use her abilities as a changeling to infiltrate the upper echelons of the house, advancing her patron's career. The ultimate goal is to supplant a high-ranking member of the house with her patron. This will require sabotaging an initiative of superior and making sure her patron is positioned to soak up the glory by resolving the problem.

Ploy 3. Now it's time to turn the tables. Her service has reached the point where the patron has become completely reliant on her. The changeling will look for an opportunity to kill her patron and take their place.

VITARA WYLLS

Vitara Wylls is a human cleric within the Church of the Silver Flame, but one who has languished in lesser posts for years while trying to be devout and uphold the tenants of the faith. Over the years, she's seen

lesser clerics elevated while she was overlooked. Secretly and in desperation, she sought out the Shadow. Devotion to this dark power has given her the ambition to pursue a daring plan that will culminate with her ascendancy in the church hierarchy.

Ploy 1. After contacting the Shadow, Wylls learns of her first requirement. A rival cleric, one who was promoted underservedly, must die. The method does not matter. The attempt, however, will place her within conflict with the adventurers.



Ploy 2. The Shadow instructs Wylls to seek out the adventurers and employ them with a dangerous task that will further the cause of the Church of the Silver Flame. The endeavor will have an effect opposite than what was intended. Innocents may perish. Either way, the adventurers will be blamed and Wylls will somehow wriggle out of the blame and will be seen as a sympathetic figure.

Ploy 3. The Shadow is ready to up the ante, drawing Wylls into the abyss. This time, she must orchestrate a plan that will sacrifice hundreds, if not thousands, of lives to the Shadow, using her position as a high-ranking cleric of the Church of the Silver Flame to work this dark deed unchallenged.

GORSADON AMALVOVICH

Gorsadon Amalvovich is a Karnnath spy based in Breland who has left the fold and is now a rogue operative.

Ploy 1. Break free of his Karnnath handler. To avoid the blame, however, it will require dismantling Karnnath's entire spy network in Breland.

To this, the PCs are unwitting dupes. Gorsadon will act as an informant that will provide the PCs with the information they need to smash the Karnnath cell.

Ploy 2. Time to remove a link in the Brelish king's chain of authority to weaken him politically. Gorsadon will take action, plotting the assassination of a key Brelish noble, feeding the PCs misinformation about that noble's supposed ties to Karnnath. Gorsadon will make an appearance, not trusting that the PCs can be duped again, but will find a means of escaping.

Ploy 3. Gorsadon is now unhinged, or perhaps touched by a form of creeping undeath placed within him by his former Karnnath handlers. Either way, he is obsessed with a prophetic vision. He's timed his next atrocity to coincide with a certain planetary alignment. The PCs must race to stop his planned destruction of a section of Sharn.



MARLESA RHONDEL

Marlesa Rhondel is a human Cyran avenger who wants to resurrect their great nation. But the refugee plight of her people caused by the foot-dragging from the other surviving nations has left her embittered. There is no cost she will not pay to gain her revenge.

Ploy 1. Too many Cyran are integrating or “collaborating” with their host nations, losing their identity as Cyrans. Marlesa is targeting these wayward Cyrans who are achieving positions within the Sharn government with assassination. The PCs will have to stop one of these plots.

Ploy 2. To prolong the life of the resistance, Marlesa needs money. She intends to hijack a payroll carriage on the lightning rail from Wroat to Sharn.

Ploy 3. Cyre can't be great until the other nations are weakened. Marlesa's plan is a terrorist action, deploying a destructive device beneath the Brelish parliament building, then establishing New Cyre as the capital of a new nation.

TOWER

Tower the Warforged is secretly a longterm sleeper agent secretly aligned with the Lord of Blades.

Ploy 1. Tower must get close to the Brelish king. That means volunteering for service in the Army and gaining an assignment. Tower then will arrange an attack on the king, except that Tower will be positioned to save the king's life.

Ploy 2. Given positions of authority, Tower embarks on an expedition to reclaim territory in the Mournland. An able soldier, Tower recruits PCs willing to go on an adventure into the Mournland and do battle with whatever is there to pacify the territory and make it suitable for annexation.

Ploy 3. Tower is granted command of a sizeable force. Tower allows the Lord of Blades to move a force of warforged into Breland. Tower then seizes control of army and attempts a coup d'etat. Will the PCs stand in his way?



PREDDALON KORVANDRA

Preddalon Korvandra is a Dragonmarked excoriate, meaning he was stripped of title and inheritance. He refuses to recognize his own failings that led to his fall. Rather, he blames it on an unscrupulous house member and seeks revenge:

Ploy 1. Preddalons fall also included the death of a spouse. Preddalon hopes to isolate the betrayer an exact revenge. The PCs can be bodyguards or adventurers hired by the dragonmarked house as security.

Ploy 2. Preddalon now wants vengeance on the house because of the humiliation he felt from the lost of prestige. He will assault the holdings/business interests of the house, but from a position of plausible deniability, always working through minions or intermediaries.

Ploy 3. Reclaim the title. This means confronting the head of the house, and using means nefarious to kill them. Only the PCs stand in his way.

KRISSTOV MARDA

Krisstov Marda is a “self-made” entrepreneur who doesn’t play by the rules of the Dragonmarked houses. Why should they control commerce? He finds ways to “wedge” innovation, exploiting gaps in their business interests and getting dragonmarked houses to fight each other. His drive and business acumen would be admirable except that he uses criminal means to rob the houses of their magical research, extortion and theft to obtain the materials he needs.

Ploy 1. The Dragonmarked houses hope to co-op Krisstov by having him marry into one of the families. In fact, the wedding will be one of those celebrity “event of the century” affairs. Too bad he plans on assassins crashing the affair to eliminate key in-laws.

Ploy 2. There’s nothing like exploring ancient ruins and returning to Sharn with the



treasure, except for sending someone else to explore and then taking their treasure from them when they return. Adventurers beware.

Ploy 3. Sharn needs a facelift. Not everything has to go, just a lot of those towers in the Central Plateau. There’s going to be a fortune made in the rebuilding in the aftermath of whatever natural disaster befalls the city. But why wait on nature to intervene? The right magic should bring it all tumbling down. The key thing is to be on vacation while that is happening.

PART THREE

MASTERMIND PLANNING SHEET

Villain's name		Obsession, or motivation	
Alliases or false identities		PLOT NO. 1	
Gender and race		Objective	
Type of NPC		Type of scheme*	
Distinguishing features		Adversaries or monsters employed	
Public residence		Location(s) in Sharn	
Public persona		PLOT NO. 2	
Public affiliations		Objective	
Secret lair or hideout		Type of scheme*	
Sidekick or assistant		Adversaries or monsters employed	
Minions		Location(s) in Sharn	
Allies		PLOT NO. 3	
Dupes		Objective	
Secret affiliations		Type of scheme*	
Mundane resources		Adversaries or monsters employed	
Magical resources		Location(s) in Sharn	

* Dungeon Master's Guide, pg. 94-95

**A NEW CHAPTER
IN THE FIGHT
AGAINST THE
ELEMENTAL
EVILS**

**FITS WITHIN
THE PRINCES
OF THE
APOCALYPSE
STORYLINE**



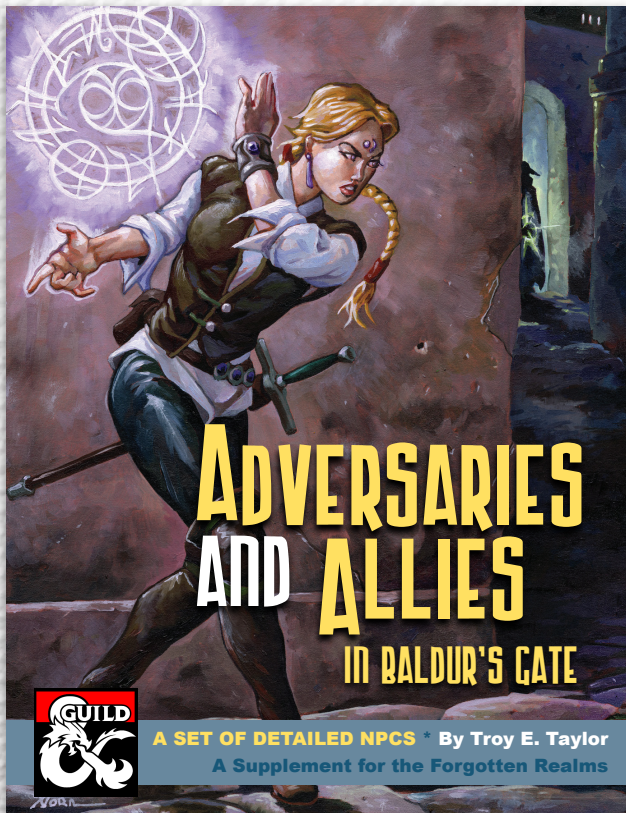
LORDS OF THE EARTH

AVAILABLE NOW

**TROY E.
TAYLOR**

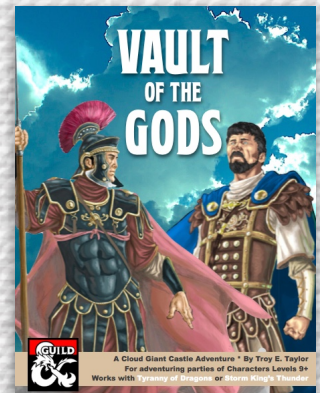
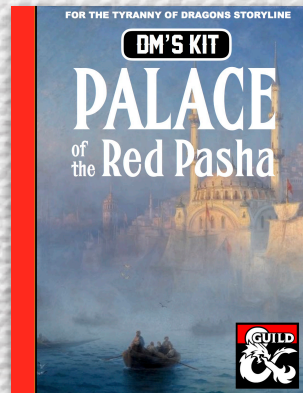
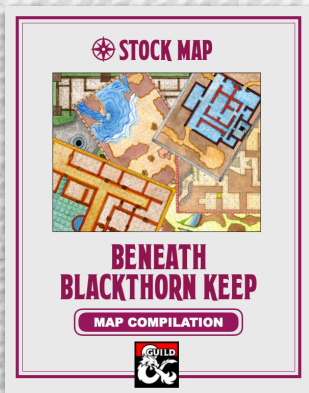
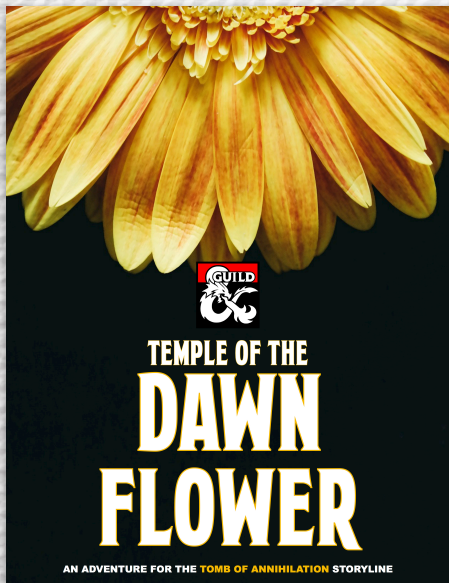


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