



D&D
ADVENTURERS
LEAGUE

NECROMANCER OF ZHENTIL KEEP, PART I
BINDER'S TORMENT



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NECROMANCER OF ZHENTIL KEEP, PART I

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While attending the first annual Reclamation Day Festival in Phlan, a mysterious book is given to the adventurers, leading them to what appears to be an abandoned print shop west of the city. There they meet a would-be benefactor, who seeks their help in ridding the southern ruins of Zhentil Keep of a growing threat, the Ebon Tide, a group of mercenaries and bandits that are quickly becoming the scourge of the Moonsea.

A 4-hour adventure for 11th-16th level characters

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Binder's Torment*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure. It is part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and Con Created Content Program.

This adventure is designed for 11th through 16th -level characters, and is optimized for five 13th-level characters. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in the adventure.

The adventure takes place in the Moonsea region, and will take the players from the city of Phlan to the ruins of Zhentil Keep in the Forgotten Realms campaign setting.

THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that continues their story.

If you're running this adventure as part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a DCI number. This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters

after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit :

www.dndadventurersleague.org

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before running this module for your players, you should make sure you've taken the following steps to prepare.

- Make sure you have the most recent copy of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*. Errata is available online.
- Read through this adventure to familiarize yourself with the storyline. Take notes or highlight areas you find important, or as a reminder during the game. Decide how you would like to portray NPCs, or choose tactics for use in combats.
- Be familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- If you want to use resources such as a DM screen, a battle map, miniatures, or other options, gather them together prior to running.
- If you can find out the composition of the group, you can make alterations as noted throughout the adventure.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Prior to game play, ask your players to provide you with relevant information about their characters.

- Character name and race
- Character class and level
- Passive Wisdom (Perception), which is the most commonly used passive ability check
- Other notes that you may like to have, or that are specified by the adventure, such as backgrounds, traits, fears, flaws, etc.

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she fills in the other values and writes notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time or see the need to do so, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for their irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now. Alternatively, they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure

description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this module, you will find sidebars provided that give information to assist you in making adjustments in encounters for weaker or stronger parties, as well as smaller or larger groups.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL <	Very Weak
3-4 characters, APL =	Weak
3-4 characters, APL >	Average
5 characters, APL <	Weak
5 characters, APL =	Average
5 characters, APL >	Strong
6-7 characters, APL <	Average
6-7 characters, APL =	Strong
6-7 characters, APL >	Very Strong

A result of average party strength indicates that no adjustments should be made for encounters.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

You are the Dungeon Master, and so you have the most important role in the game; making it fun for your players! It's up to you to help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in the mind the following:

You Are Empowered. You get to make decisions about how the group interacts

with the NPC's and the environment within this adventure. It is okay to make considerable changes or engage in improvisation, so long as you maintain the original spirit of what's written.

Challenge Your Players. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience level of the players (not the characters) in the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Mind the Time. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. *The Dungeon Master's Guide* has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a

maximum of three per day total, unless otherwise noted.

Spellcasting Services

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1 st level)	10gp
<i>Identify</i>	20gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2 nd level)	40gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90gp
<i>Divination</i>	210gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250gp
<i>Resurrection</i> *	3,000gp
<i>True Resurrection</i> *	50,000gp

*These spells require an additional expenditure of downtime days (150 for *resurrection* and 350 for *true resurrection*). This cost can be reduced by 50 days for each faction rank above 1 that the character possesses. This downtime is spent in community service for the church that provided the spell in question. The Acolyte Background feature does NOT reduce the gp or downtime cost for either of these spells.

ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Acolytes can call upon spellcasting services in and around Phlan as follows: Kelemvor

DEATH AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

DEATH

A character who is killed during the course of the adventure has few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all experience and rewards from the session (both those earned prior to and after death during that session) and cannot replay that episode or adventure

with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is not longer available.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The city of Phlan has seen its share of ups and downs. A year ago, the city was under the harsh talons of the green dragon, Vorgansharax, known as the Maimed Virulence. Heroes rose up, and along with the armies of the factions around the Moonsea, defeated the Cult of the Dragon and slew Vorgansharax.

The last year has been a rough one, but not without its boons. In celebration of the fall of the Maimed Virulence, and the ongoing rebuilding of Phlan, the first annual Relcamation Day festival is being hosted, and the town is bustling with the excitement of citizens and tourists alike.

West from Phlan lies the ruins of Zhentil Keep, founding city of the Zhentarim. The faction no longer calls the fallen city home, their base of operations now being Darkhold near the Sunset Mountains in the Western Heartlands. Zhentil Keep was destroyed by the Shadovar after the Zhentarim were found to be in league with phaerimm, foul creatures from the Underdark. Decades have passed, yet no effort has been made by the Zhentarim to raise the city once again. That does not mean it has been abandoned, however, and a mercenary force of ex-Zhentarim and others searching for wealth and power have taken up residence in the southern ruins of the city. Calling themselves the Ebon Tide, they have become an ever growing scourge of the Moonsea.

Between Phlan and the ruins of Zhentil Keep sits the remains of a warehouse district, abandoned due to its proximity to the Keep. Krenez, a minstrel and Harper, has founded a bindery in one of the warehouses, which also functions as a waypoint for Harper activities in the area. Other factions have approached him as well, and he has

brokered a deal to offer adventurers a contract to clear the Ebon Tide from Zhentil Keep.

After an attack on Phlan, evidence is found that the Ebon Tide was involved. The characters are led to a meeting with Krenez, and offered a contract to defeat the mercenaries and drive them from the Moonsea, or to convince them to sign on with a regional power or faction.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Binder's Torment is divided into five parts:

Part 1. Reclamation Day. (1 hour) The characters are in the city of Phlan for the first annual Reclamation Day Festival. They partake in competitions and see the sights. During the Reclamation Parade, an attack on the city must be dealt with, or innocents will die. In the aftermath, a stranger presses a book into their hands, which will lead them deeper into the mystery.

Part 2. The Binder. (15 minutes) Traveling west from Phlan, the adventurers seek Krenez's bindery. Once they meet the dragonborn, he tells them more of the Ebon Tide, and asks them to help defeat the group of bandits.

Part 3. Ebon Tide Ambush. (1 hour) On the way to the ruins of Zhentil Keep, the party is ambushed by Ebon Tide bandits. These are no simpletons, however, and the group may be in for a harder fight than they expected.

Part 4. Against the Tide. (1 hour 30 minutes) Entering the southern ruins of Zhentil Keep, the PCs meet the Blackwind, leader of the Ebon Tide. It's either talk or fight, but either way, someone is not getting out of here alive.

Part 5. Zhentarim in the Shadows. (15 minutes) The first strike against the Ebon Tide has been made. A Zhentarim reveals himself and his small army, and tells the adventurers they have work to do yet.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Any of the following hooks may justify the party's presence in Phlan during the start of the adventure.

Reclamation Day. The city's freedom from the Maimed Virulence is a big deal, and people have traveled from distant lands to partake in the first annual Reclamation Day festival.

Against the Ebon Tide. The mercenaries that make up the Ebon Tide have been an ever-growing thorn in the side of the Moonsea region. Adventurers may have a personal stake in finding the group and stopping them, whether it is as simple as fame and fortune, or deeper such as justice or revenge for the death or injury of a loved one at the hands of the Ebon Tide.

Faction Requests. While the city of Phlan is free from Vorgansharax and the Cult of the Dragon, things are never truly at peace in much of the Moonsea region. Faction requests for their agents to attend the festival and keep an eye out for odd occurrences would be a viable reason for a character to be in the city.

PART I. RECLAMATION DAY

The adventure begins with the group walking the crowded streets of Phlan. They may take part in one or more of the competitions occurring in the city, leading up to the final event of the day, the Great Race.

1. A DAY OF FESTIVITIES

The day is bright and warm, only a few wispy clouds visible in the blue sky. Crowds bustle in the streets of Phlan, everyone trying to see as much of the festival as they can. Citizens of the Moonsea region rub elbows with exotic foreigners, and merchants from across Faerun hawk their wares as various games of skill and fun take place.

These games and competitions are meant to be short roleplaying opportunities, with ability checks determining the outcome if necessary.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The cobbled streets of Phlan are mostly repaired since the fall of the Maimed Virulence. However, some areas of the city are still under construction, and the throngs of people make moving quickly through the city difficult.

Light. The clear sky makes for bright light across the city.

Sound. Shrieks of joy and laughter from children and adults alike fill the air. Good-hearted shouts encourage those taking part in competitions, and milk-curdling insults spill out from those taking part in the Sharpest Barb contest.

Smell. Pleasant scents of foods and flowers mix with the odors of people (washed and unwashed) as they mingle throughout the city.

The air thrums with excitement as you move through the crowded streets of Phlan. Children shriek with delight as magicians make fantastic creatures appear in the air, and crowds cheer at those taking part in feats of strength and cunning. Ahead you see a large billboard covered in brightly colored papers, announcements of the day's events.

The billboard reveals sponsored events going on throughout the city during Reclamation Day. Many events have prizes donated by sponsors, as seen below. Allow the characters to take part in as many of the events as time allows, ideally one each, but also keep the game moving for all the players. (Player Handout 1)

The Sharpest Barb : An insult contest being sponsored by the Laughing Goblin tavern. The grand prize winner receives a free beer (no, no wine you flower-sniffing cream puff!) every day for one year, and a trophy made from one of the Maimed Virulence's teeth. Participants make Intimidate (CHA) or Performance (CHA) checks against one another. Each may make three insults, with the highest check winning. Whomever has the best winning insults at the end takes home the prize. If only one player is participating, they go up against Flarg Toegnasher, a half-orc with an amazing wit. The DM rolls for Flarg, who has a +5 bonus to his rolls.

Alternatively, the DM may judge insults between players without an ability check. Players not participating could judge insults as well.

Tug-O-War : A team-based event, where the winning group receives free armor mending for the next six months by Brice Vang. Competing teams make three group Athletics (STR) checks against the DM's roll. The highest rolling team pulls the lowest rolling team forward one spot. A team must

pull their opponent forward three spots in order to win. If a team that has been pulled forward wins a subsequent round, they pull their opponent forward, and move back one spot as well. A roll of 1 by a team means they lose their balance and are pulled forward two spots.

Jousting : A three-round mounted combat skill competition, sponsored by Alero the Smithy. Participants attempt to catch rings on their lance, with varying degrees of difficulty. Three sets of four rings, differing in width from palm size to the size of a coin, are placed along a track where contestants ride their horses, or a horse supplied for them for the competition. Each round, have the player make three attack rolls (one for each set of rings) to determine the number of points they accrue.

Attack Roll	Points
10 & below	0
11-14	1
15-17	2
18-20	3
20 & above	4

The highest NPC scores 24 points. A player that beats that score wins. If multiple players participate, the highest scoring player wins. The prize for the competition is a voucher worth 100 gp at Alero's, where they can buy or repair weapons.

Bullseye : Archery and ranged attack contest sponsored by House Jannarsk. The winner receives a voucher that can be redeemed at the House Jannarsk merchant compound for 100 gp worth of goods (common goods available from the Player's Handbook). Enchanted bullseye targets float around in a random pattern through a small structure made of hay bails.

Participants get three shots, with the highest score winning. If only one player participates, then an NPC has a high score of 8, which the player must beat to win.

Attack Roll	Points
10 & below	0
11-14	1
15-17	2
18-20	3
20 & above	4

Small Batch Brew : For the brewers of ale, wine, or mead, the winner of this contest gets their brew put on tap at the Velvet Doublet festhall for one month, and receives fifty percent of sales over that time. The brewer will have made their concoction in advance, and will supply the judges with a few bottles to sample. Competitors describe the brew they created, then roll a Wisdom check. If they are proficient with a brewer's kit, they may add their proficiency bonus. A roll of 18 or better means their brew made it into the finals, when they should roll their Wisdom check one more time. The DM should roll a d20 and compare it to the player's rolls. Whomever scores the highest wins the competition, gaining 250 gp in one month's time.

Some players may have received the Brewer's Guild Membership certificate from playing a previous Adventurers League module. If so, they may add a +3 modifier to their check for this competition.

The Grand Illusion Contest : Part illusion show, part story telling, this contest is for spell casters who have a flair for the dramatic. Participants conjure illusions and tell a tale to go along with it. The DM may choose who wins, if the player describes the visual aspect and tells their tale. Or a Performance (CHA) check can be rolled to

determine the outcome. Sponsored by Denlor's Tower, the winner receives spell scrolls equivalent to 4 levels of wizard spells (four 1st level, two 2nd level, one 4th level, etc).

Granny Smythe's Pie Baking Contest :

Have the player describe the type of pie they are making. A character may make either a Performance (Charisma) or Cook's Utensils check to see how their pie stacks up. If they are trained in both, they may double their proficiency bonus. If the pie seems out of the ordinary and delicious, they may roll a Performance (Charisma) check at advantage. If the pie sounds revolting (rat tail pie, for example), the player rolls their Performance check at disadvantage. A roll over 18 means they beat the other bakers. If more than one player is partaking, and both roll over 18, have a follow-up roll determine who wins, with the highest roll taking home the glory. The winner eats free for one year at the Cracked Crown Inn, the contest's sponsor.

Basilisk Dog Eating Contest : This is a competition of fortitude; basilisk dogs do *not* taste like chicken. They are revolting, and whoever can eat the most in 5 rounds will be declared the Basilisk Dog King! Players participating in the contest start the first round with a Constitution saving throw, DC 13. For each subsequent round, if they do not fail, the challenge increases in difficulty.

Round	Die Roll	DC
2	Normal	15
3	Normal	17
4	Disadvantage	17
5	Disadvantage	19

On a saving throw resulting in a 1 or lower, the competitor is turned to stone for 1d4 rounds.

The DM should roll as well, to determine if any NPCs can keep up with the player's involved. One roll for a group of NPCs is fine, just describe some of the participants getting sick and being disqualified, or giving up after the first or second round, as those of lower fortitude are weaned out. If all but one character fail before the final round, the last character standing wins.

Nat Wyler's Bell is sponsoring the event, and gives the winner a voucher to stay at the inn for one month, free of charge.

Nothing Here Looks Fun

The characters do not need to participate in any of the events. If they so choose, they can even explain another event or activity they do partake in, such as playing music for tips, spreading the word of their deity by providing spell services or labor to those who need it, or hosting their own vendor booth, selling their wares.

If the players participate in one of the day's competitions or roleplay their own activities during the festivity, grant them **500 experience points** each.

2. SOMETHING IS IN THE FOG!

When the characters are finished participating in the competitions, they find themselves in the crowd, watching the oncoming Reclamation Parade.

Laughter and good-hearted jibes fill the air as you watch the Reclamation Parade. Passing by in the street is a gaggle of children dressed in fake armor and robes done up dramatically to appear as if they were wizards. Several of them carry poles, on top of which are wooden puppets of knights riding griffons. The children wielding these poles cause the griffons to swoop in toward a green dragon. Though the dragon is obviously made of fabric and is worn as a costume, great care was taken to make it realistic looking. The actor within the costume growls menacingly, and emits a cloud of illusionary gas from the mouth of the dragon. The children shriek and giggle in surprise, but then press their attack again, pushing the dragon ever onward along the parade route.

The crowd lining the street cheers as the likeness of the Maimed Virulence grows ever closer to defeat, and the parade moves into a small square beyond, where vendors and festivity-goers alike pause to cheer on the child army.

As the dragon enters the square, a dark fog seems to appear from nowhere, then expands quickly to consume the square and those in it. The dragon and the first few children disappear, and those within the fog begin to scream.

As the Reclamation Parade is suddenly interrupted by the swelling fog, screams of those within the fog are heard. The children that were at the edge of the square dash back out of the fog into the crush of the waiting crowd. The actor dressed as the dragon does not appear.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The street in this area of Phlan is broken and uneven. Characters moving through it in the fog may trip on unseen obstacles (see below). Food carts and a flower vendor have set up in the square, and a bonfire roasts a boar. Two long tables have been set up for dining near the bonfire.

Light. A heavy grey fog fills the area, reaching up 30 feet into the sky. Sunlight is heavily obscured, and vision is reduced to 5 to 10 feet in much of the area. Shadowy figures can be seen as the group moves through the fog.

Sound. Shouts and cries of, “Where are you? I can’t see you!” are suddenly replaced with screams of terror and pain. “There’s something in the fog!” and “It’s biting me, help me!! AAAAAAAGH!” pierce through the fog until it dissipates.

Smell. A scent of rot hangs heavily in the fog, and lingers for several minutes after it disappears.

Nineteen **commoners** and four **guards** were in the fog, but were unaffected by its magic. Several other citizens and two guards were not so lucky. They were transformed into the following undead, which begin lashing out at the living three rounds after the fog appears: Five **skeletons**, a **vampire spawn**, a **wraith** (the costumed dragon), and two **wights** (former guards). (Appendix. Map 1)

Adjusting the Encounter

These adjustments are not cumulative, and do not alter the number of commoners and guards in the fog.

- Very Weak: Remove the vampire spawn.
- Weak: Remove one wight.
- Strong: Add two wights.
- Very Strong: Add one wraith.

As the first person moves into the fog, near where the costumed dragon was last seen, read or paraphrase the following.

Through the gloom of the fog, cries of terror ring out. Ahead of you, you see the dragon standing, swaying slightly as if dazed. It turns toward you, and you see wisps of black smoke leaking from its seams. With a ghastly roar, it leaps towards you!

The fog provides cover from the sunlight to those undead that are within it. The skeletons and the vampire spawn lash out at their former friends and fellow citizens. If the PCs are in the fog, the remaining undead will focus on them, their life energies drawing them. If the PCs do not enter the fog, all of the undead will attack the remaining commoners and guards. If no help comes, the undead kill four commoners and one guard each round until they are all dead, after which the fog dissipates and the undead move out into the crowds, or into a nearby indoor business (as is the case for the vampire spawn).

Effects such as *gust of wind* can move the fog in the spell's area of effect, though *dispel magic* does not affect it. Creatures in the fog are affected by *gust of wind* as usual, even if the caster cannot see them. The vampire spawn will attempt to move into the fog if it is exposed, or into the nearest building that it can enter (such as a building, or even the well).

Movement through the area may prove difficult. During a turn where a PC moves, have them make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. Those with a passive Perception of 14 or higher may roll with advantage. On a

failed save, the PC moves only half their movement, then trips on an uprooted cobblestone and falls prone.

If the adventurers are able to save at least half of the people in the area, they gain **1500 experience points**. Grant them an extra **100 experience points** per person saved over half. They also gain the **Heroes of Reclamation Day** story award. However, if over half or all of the commoners and guards die, and a character did not enter the mist or was otherwise cowardly, that character gains the **Yellow-Bellied Cowards!** story award.

After the battle, a small group of witnesses gather around a pendant hanging from a staff driven into the ground near the center of the small square. The pendant is made of black rock, and carved in the likeness of a cresting wave. Many curses can be heard from the crowd, as people lay blame for the strange attack on the Ebon Tide.

3. BARDIC INSPIRATION

In the chaos that follows the battle with the undead, a bent and aged chapbook merchant waddles up to the group of adventurers and presses a well worn copy of "Bardic Inspiration : Tales of a Band of Minstrels" into the hand of one of the PCs. He winks and says in a voice younger than one would expect, "You've earned this." Then he is gone, vanished as though he was never there.

If the group failed to save at least half the citizens, the merchant still passes the book along to them, but says instead, "You lot could have done better out there...but

there's hope for you yet!" He then winks and disappears.

The book, written and published by Verthisathurgiesh Krenez, is bound in simple brown leather, the title and author stamped onto the cover. When opened, a glyph on the front inner cover activates, playing a song. Those who are musically inclined may recognize the sound of a bone flute. On a DC 12 History check, a character has heard the tune before, possibly even performed by Krenez, whose wanderings took him far and wide. When the cover is closed, the song ends, and restarts if the book is opened again. Once the song ends, it will start again after a few moments, blessing the reader with an ongoing soundtrack. Characters who make a DC 12 History check know that dragonborn write their clan name before their given name, so the author goes by Krenez. Dragonborn characters succeed automatically on this check. PCs who are members of the Harpers feel their harp pins vibrate slightly in time with the music. On a DC 12 Perception check, a Harper notices the faction's symbol worked intricately into the glyph on the inside cover.

While the story of Krenez and his band of bards is both comedic (there are many antics described by the bard about his troupe of minstrels and their attempts to make it big in show business) and tragic (the dragonborn carried the corpses of two of his band members hundreds of miles through the wilderness, back to Waterdeep, where it was too late to return their souls to their bodies), it is on the newly added pages, stitched into the center of the book that the adventurers will find the clue that leads them on. On parchment much fresher, a

note has been scrawled in a languid handwriting.

"Receiving this book, you have made some great show of strength or aptitude. We need more of that. Please visit me at my bindery, near the coast east of the ruins of Zhentil Keep. We have much to discuss. -K"

The following page has a decent map of the Moonsea region, with all major and minor towns marked. Next to a symbol of a book that is marked east of the ruins of Zhentil Keep, a phrase is written in Draconic and phonetically in Common, "Shaan Zu'u." Those who understand draconic may translate it to roughly mean, "Inspire Me."

Asking around Phlan, a DC 15 Investigation check will reveal the following about the bindery.

- A dragonborn bard took up residence in an abandoned warehouse district a few miles from Zhentil Keep.
- While the area around Zhentil Keep is dangerous, the bard and his workers have managed to stay below the Ebon Tide's notice.
- It is rumored that some magic guards the bindery, though what that magic is, no one can say for certain.
- Stay away from the northern ruins of Zhentil Keep. While the Ebon Tide may have claimed the south ruins, the undead still dominate what is left of the city north of the River Tesh.

PART 2. THE BINDER

The adventurers arrive at the spot where the bindery should be located, a day and a half away from Phlan.

1. FINDING THE BINDERY

The violence of the threatening storm never breaks, though the clouds linger and the occasional rumble of thunder can be heard.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The shoreline of the Moonsea sits quietly less than a quarter of a mile away. Flat ground pervades, with small groupings of trees appearing in almost planned intervals.

Light. The clouds remain, the sun remaining hidden.

Sound. In the distance, lapping waves can be heard on the shore. A gull cries out every so often, seemingly seeking its flock.

Smell. The saltwater of the Moonsea is obvious in the air. Traces of a sulphuric scent linger here and there.

Though the group stands near where they believe the book symbol to mark the location of the Waypoint Bindery, they see nothing to show there are even ruins of buildings in the area. If one of them speaks, “Shaan Zu’u” aloud, any ally within 30 feet can suddenly see the buildings of the warehouse district, a veil suddenly lifted. The magic that shrouds this place keeps passerby’s from coming too close to run into a building, their path diverted as though they meant to go a different direction. A creature with True Sight can see through the guarding illusion, though they cannot approach the buildings until

the speak the pass phrase aloud or are affected by hearing it spoken. See *invisibility* does not reveal the buildings, as it is an illusion of something else placed over the area, and not a spell making the buildings invisible.

Along with the bindery, a building that has seen better days, but has obviously been undergoing repairs, what appears to be a papermill sits in the small gathering of buildings, down close to the water’s edge. It is from this building that the stench of sulphur is emitting, an unfortunate odor of the paper creation process.

Characters curious about the Waypoint Bindery and its location may make a DC 15 History (Intelligence) check. Those who succeed believe this area was once a small settlement known as Stillmere, founded almost a century ago by freefolk of the region. After numerous attacks by orcs, goblins, and even a giant, not to mention the oppressive presence of the Zhentarim, the residents of Stillmere abandoned the town, which was thought to have long since been claimed by the ravages of time.

2. MEETING THE BINDER

Once they near the bindery, an *alarm* spell, set to go off if someone breaches the protective illusion, alerts those inside to the PCs presence.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The old warehouse has been crammed full of books, and hand-worked printing presses. Navigating the maze of shelves, stacks of books, and people could be a puzzle itself, should a quick retreat be necessary.

Light. Dim but well placed covered lamps light the inside of the building.

Sound. The bustle of a workplace pervades the building, as well as hushed but

jovial speech between co-workers of the bindery.

Smell. Parchment and ink, the cold iron smell of the printing presses.

Nearing the bindery, a dragonborn steps out of the door, wiping his darkly stained hands on an equally stained rag. "Welcome, friends, I'm so glad you could make it. I take it you are fans of my novel." He grins wryly at you, still blocking the door into the building.

While Krenez had no forewarning of the adventurers' arrival, they are not the first group to have been given such a book. They must only show him the copy of Bardic Inspiration to confirm that they were invited to meet him. Once they do so, he visibly relaxes and invites them inside.

There are seven workers currently bustling around the bindery. While they nod at the adventurers and smile, perceptive PCs will note that each one is armed, and has the look of an ex-adventurer. The NPCs are listed below. Combat is not expected in this part of the adventure, so the NPCs are not listed in the Appendix. Their NPC type is labeled in their description however, in case things turn out for the worse. They are not wearing their armor when the players enter the bindery.

The following information about the NPCs in the Waypoint Bindery is for DM use, and is not necessary to pass along to the players. It may be useful if the characters interact with the Bindery agents, but should not be read to the players in the interest of time.

- Darr the Widowmaker: a former **gladiator** from the blood ring of Hillsfar. The human's dark skin does not hide the obvious scars of battle he wears.
- Chenoh Goodwater: Gond worshipping halfling **master thief**, who seems to be

hard at work on some kind of machine. It seems to automate the printing process, but when turned on, it squeals and belches smoke, much to Chenoh's frustration.

- Erys Bethil: A **champion** who used to be a member of the Hawks in Mulmaster. Erys retired as she reached middle age, unhappy with the political climate in the city, and was invited by Krenez to join his small group of go-betweens.
- Minain Firebeard: A young dwarf recently conscripted by the Lords' Alliance to be a liaison at the bindery. Minain's excitement at being a part of the intrigues of the great wide world is hard to contain. The **scout** is more than happy to meet another member of the Lords' Alliance, and will pass along the information that his faction is very interested in conscribing the Blackwind and his Ebon Tide into service. (See Faction Assignment : Lords' Alliance.)
- Karinn Tragidore: Human female **illusionist**, she wears a robe with the symbol of the Zhentarim proudly displayed. Karrin is the Zhentarim representative stationed at the bindery, and she is loyal to both her faction and to Krenez. She does have information that she has not shared with the dragonborn, however. If another Zhentarim member is in the PC's group, she will attempt to share this information with them privately. She knows that a Zhentarim spy has infiltrated the Ebon Tide, and is sending information back to Darkhold. She does not know who the spy is, but feels confident that should the party run into too much trouble in the Keep, the Zhentarim will reveal himself to help them. She also mentions that the spy was put in place to attempt to bring the Blackwind and his growing army back

into the fold of the Zhentarim. So far he has not succeeded, but perhaps with the PC's help... (See Faction Assignment : Zhentarim)

- **Serie Mithrime:** The half elf **acolyte** hails from Waterdeep, where she previously worked in another bindery. She was instrumental in setting up the bindery, helping Krenex to learn the ins and outs of book printing. Serie has loose ties with the Emerald Enclave, having done much of their printing in the Waterdeep area. While she is not a member of the faction, she delivers messages for them while at the bindery, and knows how to contact them in times of need.
- **Elres Larke:** An aged human with thinning and wispy white hair, Elres was a former **knight** in service to Cormyr. These days, he spends more time reciting tales of yore than he does swinging a sword, though he is far from incapable of defending himself. Elres is the Order of the Gauntlet's permanent liaison at the bindery.

Faction Assignment : Lords' Alliance

The Lords' Alliance sees the value of the Ebon Tide, and of their position in the ruins of Zhentil Keep. Their banditry must end, however. If a character is a member of the Lords' Alliance, Minain Firebeard tells them that the faction is willing to conscribe the Blackwind and his Ebon Tide into service. The character is given a writ that states the Lords' Alliance's offer, which includes full citizenship at any city in the Moonsea region, a steady income for every member of the Ebon Tide, and even housing at their port of choice.

Faction Assignment : Zhentarim

The Zhentarim know of the Blackwind's past, and his previous service to the faction. They also understand that he has built a force to be reckoned with in the Ebon Tide, and hope to draw him back into their ranks, thereby conscribing his men as well. If a character is a member of the Zhentarim, Karrin Tragidore passes a sealed envelope to them in private. The letter within details the Zhentarim's offer to the Blackwind and his army. The Zhentarim require that the Blackwind returns with at least half of his troops to Darkhold, though

the other half may remain at Zhentil Keep to maintain their hold of the ruins.

The bindery itself is more than it appears. While Krenex does publish his and other's books here, the building acts as a waypoint for a growing network of information and goods exchange. The Harpers use it frequently, but so do other factions in the area. Krenex does not stand for fighting in his establishment, even between enemy factions.

Krenex explains the situation, as he understands it.

- The Ebon Tide is a growing organization in the Moonsea region, and if left unchecked, they could prove to be quite detrimental to many in the area.
- People that he is affiliated with have put out a call for those willing to confront the Blackwind and his group of mercenaries, and drive them from the ruins of Zhentil Keep by force or brokered deal. However, the Blackwind must be confronted about the mystical attack on Phlan, and proven to not have been involved. If he is responsible, he and his followers must be taken into custody, or otherwise...removed.
- If a Harper asks if their organization is involved with this movement, Krenex will reveal that they are, but only after they have proven their own membership to the faction.
- He will reveal that the Order of the Gauntlet and the Lords Alliance are also involved, if members of those factions inquire.
- He states that though Darkhold has seemed quite busy of late, no request for aid has been formerly returned by the Zhentarim. "Curious, don't you think, that

the Zhents don't mind this rabble running rampant in their old stomping grounds."

The PCs are informed that the collection of factions, as well as some other people in positions of power in the region, have offered a 2000 gp reward to those who can remove the Ebon Tide threat. If the PCs seek more funding, Krenez will agree to increase the reward to 3000 gp, using his own money. They should give very good reasons as to why they deserve so much. Krenez is willing to help them out, but isn't gullible. Potential reasons that the dragonborn would supply additional funding might include the characters needing to purchase goods with which to bribe or entertain the Blackwind or his guards, the need to purchase expensive spell components for magic that may sway the warlord, or drive him out if necessary.

After discussing the problem of the Ebon Tide, Krenez reveals, "I actually met the Blackwind once, many years ago. He went by a different name then, and was a Zhentarim, but I didn't hold it against him. The man had such presence...he would have made a great performer. But that was a different time, and these troubled days seem to be turning good-minded people to bad deeds."

If pressed, Krenez will reveal the Blackwind's name, as he knew it before, as Ezechiel Irnestul. The meeting was in Waterdeep, and was purely by chance, as they were both attending a festival and happened to sit next to one another during a performance. Conversation struck up, and Krenez got the feeling Ezechiel was meant for great things...but he never imagined that man would become the Blackwind, leader of the Ebon Tide.

If the PCs ask Krenez about the chapbook merchant, he asks them to describe the man to him. He nods and says, "That was probably Sharl. Mask smiles a little too much upon that one, if you ask me, and the man wears a different face every time I see him." After a ponderous moment, he includes, "I'm not even sure Sharl is his real name, for that matter. But he's proved helpful in our efforts here, and I'd wager he'll continue to do so." Krenez can also reveal that Sharl is responsible for the powerful illusion that cloaks the bindery and surrounding buildings from unwanted guests. It is not quite a spell, as such, but some bending of the Weave akin to magic, or perhaps the will of a god.

All of those who work or are stationed at the bindery have seen members of the Ebon Tide. Should the PCs ask for disguises, Krenez and Karinn Tragidore could help to fashion robes and cloaks that may help them pass as low ranking members of the Ebon Tide. The binders have not seen the Ebon Tide amulets, however, and cannot create new ones to complete the disguise. If the PCs have the amulet from the attack on Phlan, they could attempt to replicate it, though it would not pass a close inspection due to the Phlan amulet being a forgery. From a distance, these disguises can give a player advantage on Deception checks while pretending to be a member of the Ebon Tide. During a face-to-face confrontation, however, a member of the Ebon Tide would notice the fraud within a few rounds.

If the characters ask Krenez or the other workers at the bindery about the northern ruins of Zhentil Keep, they can supply the following information.

- The undead infestation of the ruins is not a rumor, they have seen it themselves. Though it is many miles away, they have had to deal with roaming undead that have made their way out of the ruins.
- They have seen other adventurers enter the ruins, but none have ever passed by to share stories of their success.
- There is a rumor that the power of the undead has been spreading out from the Keep. Tales have made their way to the bindery of a pirate crew returned to a dark semblance of life. If it is true, it is yet another threat on the open waters of the Moonsea.
- An old tale tells of liches that were once wizard lords of Zhentil Keep in life. After delving deeper into their magics, these wizards took steps to become powerful undead, who were trapped beneath Zhentil Keep long ago after they went insane.
- It was said that the liches would remain in containment below Zhentil Keep as long as a Lord of Zhentil Keep resided within the city. It has been many years since such a Lord lived in the Keep, however.

PART 3. EBON TIDE AMBUSH

Zhentil Keep is half a day's travel from the bindery. While traveling west from the bindery, the adventurers are set upon by an Ebon Tide ambush.

1. ON THE ROAD

The sky threatens rain as dark clouds roil.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. Mostly even plains stretch out to the east, west, and north. To the south, the Moonsea can be seen in the distance. Thick copses of trees are spread out along the way.

Light. During the day, the sun has been blocked by dark thunderclouds, making the scene dreary and low-lit. At night, a profound darkness covers the land as moon and stars are blocked from view.

Sound. Rolling thunder creates an ongoing rumble, though lightning seems to be contained within the dark clouds.

Smell. Ozone and the scent of rain promise for a thunderstorm.

As the group nears a larger standing of trees, a flash of blue fire goes up into the sky from near the edge of the tree line. A Perception (Wisdom) check of DC 15 will reveal to a character that they are standing near stones marked with blue paint on one side that is visible to the forest. Four **archers** then begin firing from the cover of the trees (DC 20 Perception (Wis) check to see the archers, who have three-quarter cover while they are up in the trees). At the end of the first combat round, any character with a passive Perception of 15 or higher notices figures soaring into the battle from the sky. A **knight** and a **diviner** ride a double-saddled **wyvern**, while a **war priest**

rides another wyvern solo. (Appendix. Map 2)

TACTICS

Both wyverns drop small boulders on the second round of combat. The DM picks a point on the map to target, and any creatures within 5 ft. of that point must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, or take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage as the boulder crash into them.

The knight guides his stubborn wyvern mount, while the war priest's mount is better trained for combat and can make its own movements. Both wyverns attempt to stay at least 60 ft from the PCs, or do strafing runs to get closer for their riders to attack and then move away. The wyverns do not attack while the casters are alive, and the knight uses his action to guide his mount. If the casters perish and the wyverns are still alive, the war priest's wyvern will engage in melee combat with the PCs, while the knight and his wyvern will retreat. If the knight and his wyvern succeed in their retreat, they fly to Zhentil Keep to warn the Ebon Tide of the adventurers nearby. If the knight is killed, but the wyvern escapes, it cannot tell the Ebon Tide specifics, but the encampment will be on guard for invasion.

The archers continue to fire upon the PCs from the cover of the trees. The war priest and the diviner will make ranged spell attacks at the party until at least one of them collapses. Then the diviner will cast *mass suggestion* on the group, and tell them to surrender. They will continue to attack any who stand firm against the suggestion until all the PCs have fallen.

Should all the PCs fall in combat, the war priest will cast *spare the dying* on any who need it, as the PCs are stripped of their gear and put in restraints (escape DC 17). In addition to metal manacles that all PCs will

be shackled with, casters hands are bound so they cannot use them for spells, and metal harnesses with wooden mouth gags are placed on their heads. These prisoners are worth much on the slave market, and their gear will fetch good coin. The ambushers will attempt to not outright kill any of the PCs, though they will not put themselves into harm's way to stop them from dying.

Adjusting the Encounter

These adjustments are not cumulative.

- Very Weak: Remove the knight and two archers. Reduce the wyverns' hit points to 80 each. The wyverns do not hurl rocks, but swoop in to drop nets (see Variant Tactics).
- Weak: Remove two archers.
- Strong: Increase the wyverns' hit points to 150 each.
- Very Strong: Increase the wyvern's hit points to 130 each. The knight's wyvern is trained and does not need to be commanded by the knight. The knight hurls rocks stored on the saddle of the wyvern. He may make two rock attacks as an action, or he may make a single heavy crossbow attack.

Thrown Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, range 30/60, one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage.

Each of the members of the ambush wears a carved stone on a leather strap around their necks. The stone is shaped from obsidian, and resembles a cresting wave. A DC 12 Perception check notes that it looks vaguely different from the similar stone found at the attack in Phlan. Those who roll a 15 or higher realize that the carving of those from the ambush is definitely different from the stone from Phlan, which was probably a forgery. The stones do not appear to be worth anything, but are used as identifiers for the Ebon Tide.

If they search the field they were ambushed in, they note that stones are marked with red and green, similar to the blue painted stones. They can determine

that colored signal flares were used to mark where targets were for the wyverns to drop from the clouds and attack.

Treasure. The ambushers carry a handful of gems between them, worth a total of 50 gp. Two of the archers carry sets of flares, which can shoot a bolt of colored, non-damaging flame up to 120 feet. Each set has a red and a green flare left, with only one blue left in one set. The diviner carries his spellbook with the following spells:

1st level: *detect magic, feather fall, mage armor*

2nd level: *detect thoughts, locate object, scorching ray*

3rd level: *clairvoyance, fly, fireball*

4th level: *arcane eye, ice storm, stoneskin*

5th level: *Rary's telepathic bond, scrying*

6th level: *mass suggestion, true seeing*

7th level: *delayed blast fireball, teleport*

8th level: *maze*

Variant Tactics

If you choose, the wyvern riders may throw nets to attempt to capture the characters, instead of smashing them with boulders. This may work well with Very Weak parties, though it does force the wyverns to get in much closer.

Also, you could alter the diviner to have *sleep* prepared, and not *delayed blast fireball* (or another spell), which the wizard could cast at a higher level to attempt to remove characters from the battle.

PART 4. AGAINST THE TIDE

The adventurers make their way into the southern ruins of Zhentil Keep to face off against the Blackwind. The manner in which the group enters the ruins may vary, depending on how the Ebon Tide Ambush played out, and their own plans (if arriving of their own volition).

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. Most of the southern area of Zhentil Keep lies in ruins. This provides ample opportunities for cover, though construction can be seen as the Ebon Tide works to rebuild.

Light. During the day, the ruins are dimly lit by a sun hidden behind dark clouds. At night, torches are lit throughout the ruins, providing dim light and casting long shadows.

Sound. Though the storm clouds remain, only the occasional rumble of thunder can be heard. Voices echo through the ruins as members of the Ebon Tide go about their daily business.

Smell. The scent of campfires lingers constantly, and the occasional whiff of fresh cut timber can be noticed. If the PCs pass nearby the stables, the smell of hay and dung is strong. Unwashed bodies emit a pungent odor if they happen by the slave pens.

Over 400 members of the Ebon Tide are garrisoned in the southern ruins of Zhentil Keep. As a general reference, there are around 50 commoners, 35 scouts, 100 knights, 25 war priests, 25 master thieves, 3 necromancers, 25 champions, 20 diviners, 7 conjurers, 10 enchanters, 50 archers, 15 swashbucklers, 10 blackguards, 4 abjurers, 10 apprentice wizards, 2 transmuters, 5

warlocks of the Fiend, 3 warlocks of the Great Old One, and 1 warlord. The Ebon Tide is not a force to be taken head on by a small adventuring party.

1. ENTERING THE RUINS

The air is charged as dark clouds glare down from the sky. Depending on how the PCs arrive at the ruins of Zhentil Keep, play out one of the following scenarios.

Captured!

If the adventurers were captured by the Ebon Tide ambush, they are put into holding cells in the slave pens. They awaken to the horrid scent of unwashed bodies and humanoid waste. An undercover Zhentarim **scout** named Jamie Yolund frees them, and can lead them to their gear, and then through the maze of the ruins to the Blackwind. Jamie then melts into the shadows, returning to his post before he is found out.

Sneaking In...

If the adventurers defeated the Ebon Tide ambush, they can sneak in to the ruins through the crumbling walls. They must succeed on two group DC 14 Stealth (Dexterity) checks to make it through the ruins to the Blackwind. A failure means they catch the attention of a patrol of Ebon Tide made up of two **knights** and three **shadow mastiffs**. If the battle goes poorly for the guards, they will attempt to flee to summon help, possibly forcing the characters to retreat as the full encampment is made aware of the intruders.

Forewarned Is Forearmed

If the adventurers defeated the Ebon Tide, but one wyvern rider managed to escape,

the guard duty has been doubled, and the group must succeed on four group DC 18 Stealth (Dexterity) checks to make it through the ruins to the Blackwind. If they are noticed, the guards (the same patrol type as listed in *Sneaking In...*) do not attack, but rather say, “We were told you were coming. The Blackwind wishes to speak with you.” If the characters do not follow the guards, but choose to attack, the guards will attempt to alert the rest of the encampment.

2. THE BLACKWIND

The adventurers have found **Ezechiel Irnestul**, the Blackwind. He and his entourage are in a building that might have once been a temple, but now has almost no roof. How they deal with him is up to them.

While the roof of the building is gone, the walls are sturdy and have remained mostly intact. They reach up 15 feet, and are wide enough for the archers to walk upon. The back part of the building once had a glass dome, which has long since shattered. The building has been cleared of debris.

His armor gleaming, a powerful looking man walks around a wide table, making gestures at different pins stuck into a map that covers the entire top of the table and then spills over its edges. Surrounding the table, other members of the Ebon Tide nod as the warlord talks about his steps to clear out the undead from Zhentil Keep.

Ezechiel is accompanied by **Risan Thiyass**, **Erorm Perrarm**, and **Omelei Criet** and her three **shadow mastiffs** (one is a **shadow mastiff alpha**). Five **archers** walk the broken walls that surround the room, which has no roof. (Appendix. Map 3)

If confronted about the necromantic attack in Phlan, the Blackwind knows nothing of the event, nor had anything to do with it. To the best of his knowledge, none of his followers were involved, either. If the players have the pendant found at the scene of the attack, Ezechiel can point out that it is a fake, and will show his own amulet as comparison. Insight (Wisdom) checks show that he is telling the truth, and if a character rolls a DC 13 or higher, they notice that the Blackwind seems disturbed by the news of such an attack.

If a battle ensues, and it goes against the Blackwind and his allies, an archer will attempt to warn the encampment. A **war priest**, a **diviner**, and seven **knights** are nearby and can arrive within five rounds if they are warned.

True to his nature, Risan may use the battle to his benefit. Should the players weaken the Blackwind, the wizard may take the opportunity to assassinate his leader, either by his own hand or ordering either Omelei or Erorm to do it. He may even attempt to convince the adventurers to help him overthrow Ezechiel. The characters are witnesses to his deceit, however; they cannot be allowed to leave the room alive.

Adjusting the Encounter

These adjustments are not cumulative.

- Very Weak: Remove the archers, Omelei and her shadow mastiffs, and reduce Ezechiel’s hit points to 135. Ezechiel may make only 1 Legendary Action.
- Weak: Remove the archers, reduce Ezechiel’s hit points to 180, and reduce Erorm’s hit points to 100. Ezechiel may make only 2 Legendary Actions.
- Strong: Add two knights.
- Very Strong: Add two knights. Increase Ezechiel’s hit points to 285.

Should the characters arrive escorted by guards (as in the Forewarned is Forearmed scenario), the Blackwind stops speaking to his officers, turning his attention to the newcomers. As valuable as slaves are, these characters would make powerful allies. Ezechiel will attempt to sway them to his side, even offering them positions in his Ebon Tide.

Bargaining with the Blackwind

Despite his unscrupulous methods, Ezechiel Irnestul wants what is best for himself and his followers. Players who have been empowered by city or faction have the ability to bargain with the warlord, and can offer him considerable boons for the Ebon Tide. Any empowered character can make offers that would give Ezechiel a wealthy lifestyle, allegiant to faction or city, with his followers set up to live modest to comfortable lifestyles (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 157, for Lifestyles. While Ezechiel would be stationed within the Moonsea, his men may be split up if the Lords' Alliance gains his allegiance, as they send the new faction members across the face of Faerun on faction business. Allegiance by the Blackwind to a city might secure the ability to keep his followers together. The characters may make use of these tactics, as Ezechiel has followers he would wish to remain close, while others he knows he would be better to have sent far away. He has suspicions that Risan Thiayiss might not have the best intentions any longer.

If talks stall, players may use Persuasion (Charisma) checks, DC 15, to move things along. Use of Deception or Intimidation checks warrant failures increasing further Charisma checks to be at higher difficulty, with DCs rising +2 per failure. Once the DC reaches above 19, the Blackwind has had enough of these intruders, and moves to put them down.

If the characters convince Ezechiel to leave the ruins of Zhentil Keep peacefully, or to join either the Zhentarim or the Lords' Alliance, Risan escorts them to the gate of the city. If their efforts fail, but they do not attack, the Blackwind tells them they are free to return to their city with his answer. Risan has other plans, of course. The characters earn the **An Ally In the Ebon Tide** story award. Proceed to 3. Not My Ebon Tide!

If the characters battled and defeated the Blackwind and his cronies, proceed to Part 5, Zhentarim in the Shadows, Success!. Should the party fall to the might of the Ebon Tide, they are placed once again in chains. Continue to Part 5, Zhentarim in the Shadows, Or Defeat?.

Treasure. Risan carries a *wand of the war mage +2*. He also has three diamonds in a pouch, each worth 100 gp. Omelei wears a golden torque worth 200 gp, and has a *spell scroll of banishment*. Erorm carries two *potions of greater healing*, and has a wicked looking kris dagger, an onyx set in its pommel, worth 100 gp. Ezechiel carries a *potion of speed* and a *potion of superior healing*. In a pouch, he carries a set of three 6-sided dice made from emeralds worth 100 gp each.

3. NOT MY EBON TIDE!

Run this section only if the characters came to an agreement with the Blackwind, and did not do battle with him and his followers.

Risan and his cohorts turn on the adventurers, despite the Blackwind's agreement to leave Zhentil Keep. They hope that once the adventurers are dead, Ezechiel will change his mind, or they will have to remove him as well and take his place as leaders of the Ebon Tide.

Risan Thiayiss is accompanied by **Erorm Perram**, **Omelei Criet**, and the conjurer's three **shadow mastiffs** (one is a **shadow mastiff alpha**). They lead the group into a narrow ruin, where a **war priest** and two **archers** hide on the second story rooftops, keeping to the shadows. Four **knights** move in to flank the battle on the second round. (Appendix. Map 4)

Adjusting the Encounter

These adjustments are not cumulative.

- Very Weak: Remove Erorm and the war priest.
- Weak: Remove the archers and war priest.
- Strong: Increase Risan's hit points to 96, Omelei's to 64, and the shadow mastiffs' to 48 each.
- Very Strong: Increase Risan's hit points to 108, Omelei's to 64, Erorm's to 200, and the war priest's to 135.

Treasure. Risan carries a *wand of the war mage +2*. He also has three diamonds in a pouch, each worth 100 gp. Omelei wears a golden torque worth 200 gp, and has a *spell scroll of banishment*. Erorm carries two *potions of greater healing*, and has a wicked looking kris dagger, an onyx set in its pommel, worth 100 gp. The war priest carries a pouch with emeralds in it, worth 300 gp total, and a *potion of superior healing*. If the war priest was removed while adjusting the encounter, his treasure is found on Risan.

PART 5. ZHENTARIM IN THE SHADOWS

SUCCESS!

After defeating the Ebon Tide (either the Blackwind or Risan and their compatriots), another presence lets itself known in the ruins.

“Wonderful, wonderful!” The sound of clapping draws your attention to a darkly handsome human in black leather armor, his cloak emblazoned with the sigil of the Zhentarim. Two guards move out of the shadows to flank him, eying the ruins for would-be attackers, and you notice more move in the shadows beyond them.

“I am Marzellus Marshward, and I have a proposition for you.” The man flashes a winning smile, a glint in his eye.

Marshward and his fellow Zhentarim were sent to deal with the Ebon Tide problem, and he is grateful to the adventurers for the impact they’ve had on the issue. He and his soldiers will complete the process of removing the Ebon Tide from Zhentil Keep if necessary. Without the Blackwind, the Ebon Tide flee readily from the invading Zhentarim forces.

OR DEFEAT?

If the group was defeated by the Blackwind and his Ebon Tide, the characters awaken in the slave pens without their gear, bound and hobbled to keep them from casting spells. Sounds of battle can be heard all around them, and they catch sight of what appear to be Zhentarim soldiers fighting with the Ebon

Tide. While they were unconscious, Risan attacked and defeated Ezechiel with the help of Omelei and Erorm. Bad timing has sealed Risan’s fate, however, as Marzellus Marshward and his army of Zhentarim arrived immediately thereafter and slew them. The characters awaken to the Ebon Tide being routed from the ruins of Zhentil Keep. Marzellus and several Zhentarim soldiers approach their slave pen.

A darkly handsome human in black leather armor approaches, his cloak emblazoned with the sigil of the Zhentarim. Several soldiers move out to flank him, and he motions for one to unlock your prison door.

“I was hoping for more out of you lot. So it goes, I believe you shall still prove to be useful.”

The man flashes a winning smile, a glint in his eye, as your gear is thrown at your feet.

“I am Marzellus Marshward, and I have a proposition for you.”

This is where Binder’s Torment ends. If you are playing through the Zhentil Keep trilogy, please advance to part 2, Zhentarim’s Lament.

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Provide them with your name and DCI number (if applicable) so they can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes and divide the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards listed are per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless noted otherwise.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP / Foe
The Blackwind / Warlord	8,400
Risan Thiayiss / Evoker	5,000
Omelei Criet / Conjurer	2,300
Erorm Perram / Blackguard	3,900
Archer	700
Diviner	3,900
Knight	700
Shadow Mastiff	450
Skeleton	50
Vampire Spawn	1,800
War Priest	5,000
Wight	700
Wraith	1,800
Wyvern	2,300

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task/Accomplishment	XP / Character
Participate in the Reclamation Day events.	500
Save at least half of the innocents in the fog	1,500
Each innocent over half	100

saved in the fog
Convincing the Blackwind 1,680
to rejoin the Zhentarim
or join the Lord's Alliance

The minimum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **11,700 experience points**.

The maximum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **13,760 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine whom gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided up according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Ambusher's Gems	50
Risan's Diamonds	300
Omelei's Torque	200
Erorm's Kris Dagger	100
Ezechiel's Dice	300
War Priest's Emeralds	300
Reward from Krenez	2,000 or 3,000

Permanent Magic Item Distribution

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

WAND OF THE WAR MAGE +2

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This foot-long, twisted iron spike emits a faint coppery scent when channeling magical energies. A description of this item can be found in **Player Handout 2**.

BLACK LEATHER SPELLBOOK

This black leather wrapped tome is embossed with the sigil of Azuth, a clenched human hand with its index finger pointing skyward, the hand wreathed in flame. It contains the following spells:

1st level: *detect magic, feather fall, mage armor*

2nd level: *detect thoughts, locate object, scorching ray*

3rd level: *clairvoyance, fly, fireball*

4th level: *arcane eye, ice storm, stoneskin*

5th level: *Rary's telepathic bond, scrying*

6th level: *mass suggestion, true seeing*

7th level: *delayed blast fireball, teleport*

8th level: *maze*

POTION OF GREATER HEALING

Potion, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 187).

POTION OF SUPERIOR HEALING

Potion, rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 187).

POTION OF SPEED

Potion, very rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 188).

SPELL SCROLL OF BANISHMENT

Scroll, rare

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 200).

RENOWN

All faction members gain one renown point for successfully completing the adventure. Members of either the Lords' Alliance or the Zhentarim who completed their faction assignment (only one faction can succeed in convincing the Blackwind to join them) gain **one additional renown point**.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **ten downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **3,375 XP**, **1,688 gp**, and **ten downtime days** for each session you run of this adventure.

DM Appendix.

NPC Summary

Below is a list of NPCs that appear in this adventure.

Verthisathurgiesh Krenez (VAIRT-hiss-ATH-urg-EE-esh KREH-nezz). Male dragonborn bard and former adventurer. After the band of minstrels he traveled with met a grisly ending, Krenez began to take his role as a Harper more seriously. Years passed, and he settled in the Moonsea region, opening a book bindery in an abandoned warehouse district between the ruins of Zhentil Keep and Phlan. The binder acts as a waypoint for members of the Harpers, as well as members of other factions in the area. Note that Verthisathurgiesh is his dragonborn clan, while Krenez is his name.

Ezechiel Irnestul (EH-zeek-EE-el EARN-eh-STULL). Male human warlord. Years of service in the Zhentarim honed Ezechiel's skills as a warrior and as an effective leader. During this time, his contempt for the modern day inefficiency of the faction grew. Ezechiel resigned his commission as a Zhentarim officer, and traveled the lands of Faerun for many years. He took on the moniker of the Blackwind, and began to organize a new faction, an army that he hoped would be able to retake Zhentil Keep from the undead that now infest it. An army that would spread out from Zhentil Keep and dominate the Moonsea region and beyond.

Risan Thiayiss (REE-zahn THEE-yay-ISS). Male human wizard. Formerly a member of the Zhentarim, Risan was demoted from his

officer rank due to insubordination. Approached by Ezechiel due to his dissatisfaction with the Zhentarim, Risan was key in helping the Blackwind to build up the Ebon Tide. Now, however, he looks to Ezechiel's position of power with covetous eyes, and waits for the day he may usurp the Blackwind and take the Ebon Tide for his own.

Omelei Criet (OHM-eh-LAY KREE-yet). Female human wizard. Found by Risan as an apprentice to the Brotherhood in Mulmaster, Omelei was convinced by the wizard to abandon the city of her birth to join him and the Ebon Tide. She is fiercely loyal to Risan, who has taught her much in the ways of magic and the world, she helps his machinations to rise to replace the Blackwind as leader of the Ebon Tide.

Erorm Perrarm (EE-roarm PEAR-rarm). Male human blackguard. Erorm was once a paladin of Loviatar, Mistress of Pain. He fell from his position when his bloodlust caused him to begin taking lives instead of only inflicting pain for his goddess. Indoctrinated into the Ebon Tide by Ezechiel, the Blackwind now regrets bringing the fallen paladin into the fold. Erorm's mind is unhinged, and will likely be a liability for the Ebon Tide some day.

APPENDIX. MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

Ezechiel Irnestul (Warlord)

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 229 (27d8 + 108)

Speed 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +7, Con +8

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +8,

Perception +5, Persuasion +8

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Orcish

Challenge Rating 12 (8,400 XP)

Ezechiel Irnestul is a handsome man nearing middle age, and scarred by years of service to the Zhentarim. Disillusioned by the faction's lack of purpose, he set out to create his own force, the Ebon Tide, to reclaim Zhentil Keep and to crush the Moonsea into submission.

Indomitable (3/day). Ezechiel can reroll a saving throw he fails, and must use the new roll.

Survivor. Ezechiel regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point but fewer than half his hit point maximum.

Actions

Multiattack. Ezechiel makes two weapon attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Legendary Actions

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

Weapon Attack. Ezechiel makes a weapon attack.

Command Ally. Ezechiel targets one ally he can see within 30 feet of himself. If the target can see and hear the warlord, the target can make one weapon attack as a reaction and gains advantage on the attack roll.

Frighten Foe (Costs 2 Actions). Ezechiel targets one enemy he can see within 30 feet of himself. If the target can see and hear him, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of the warlord's next turn.

Risan Thiayiss (Evoker)

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, History +7

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish, Giant, Orcish

Challenge Rating 9 (5,000 XP)

Risan is a wiry young man, whose short cropped hair and mannerisms allude to a strict military upbringing. Schooled in magic and entering into service with the Zhentarim, he was removed from his status as an officer within a few years due to insubordination. Risan is power hungry, and looks to a day when he can replace Ezechiel as the head of the Ebon Tide. The evoker makes use of a *wand of the war mage +2*, which increases his spellcasting attack bonus and allows him to ignore half cover for spell attacks.

Spellcasting. Risan is a 12th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt**, *light**, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost**
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands**, *mage armor*, *magic missile**
2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image*, *misty step*, *shatter**
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball**, *lightning bolt**
4th level (3 slots): *ice storm**, *stoneskin*
5th level (2 slots): *Bigby's hand**, *cone of cold**
6th level (1 slots): *chain lightning**, *wall of ice**
*Evocation spell

Sculpt Spells. When Risan casts an evocation spell that targets other creatures he can see, he can choose up to 13 creatures. These creatures automatically save on their saving throws against the spell. If a successful save means a chosen creature would take half damage from the spell, it instead takes no damage from it.

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee weapon attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Omelei Criet (Conjurer)

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Abyssal, Goblin, Infernal

Challenge Rating 6 (2,300 XP)

Omelei's fiery red hair spills over her shoulders. While not excessively attractive, her intensity cannot be missed. Loyal to Risan first, then to the Ebon Tide, she lends her magical prowess to furthering the organization's ambitions.

Spellcasting. Omelei is a 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash**, *mage hand**, *poison spray**, *prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *unseen servant**
2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers**, *misty step**, *web**
3rd level (3 slots): *fireball*, *stinking cloud**
4th level (3 slots): *Evard's black tentacles**, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill**, *conjure elemental**

*Conjuration spell of 1st level or higher

Benign Transportation (Recharges after the conjurer casts a conjuration spell of 1st level or higher). As a bonus action, Omelie teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that she can see. If she instead chooses a space within range that is occupied by a willing Small or Medium creature, they both teleport, swapping places.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or ranged weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Erorm Perram (Blackguard)

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +5

Skills Athletics +7, Deception +5, Intimidation +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge Rating 8 (3,900 XP)

Erorm Perram is probably the most unhinged member of the Ebon Tide, though his prowess in battle has kept Ezechiel from exiling him. Erorm was once a paladin of Loviatar, and though his thoughts still linger on inflicting pain, he enjoys seeing his enemies die on his glaive too much to save them from death.

Spellcasting. Erorm is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *protection from evil and good*, *thunderous smite*

2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *find steed*

3rd level (2 slots): *blinding smite*, *dispel magic*

Actions

Multiattack. Erorm makes three attacks with his glaive or shortbow.

Glaive. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Dreadful Aspect (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Erorm exudes magical menace. Each enemy within 30 feet of the blackguard must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If a frightened target ends its turn more than 30 feet away from Erorm, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Archer

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge Rating 3 (700 XP)

Archer's Eye (3/day). As a bonus action, the archer can add 1d10 to its next attack or damage roll with a longbow or shortbow.

Actions

Multiattack. The archer makes two attacks with its longbow.

Shortsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6-4) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Diviner

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 67 (15d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	18 (-4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int+7, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +7, History +7

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Primordial

Challenge Rating 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The diviner is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic**, *feather fall*, *mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts**, *locate object**, *scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance**, *fly*, *fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye**, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *Rary's telepathic bond**, *scrying**

6th level (1 slot): *mass suggestion*, *true seeing**

7th level (1 slot): *delayed blast fireball*, *teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *maze*

*Divination spell of 1st level or higher

Portent (Recharges after the diviner casts a Divination spell of 1st level or higher). When the diviner or a creature it can see makes an attack roll, a saving throw, or an ability check, the diviner can roll a d20 and choose to use this roll in place of the attack roll, saving throw, or ability check.

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee weapon attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Knight

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (-0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge Rating 3 (700 XP)

Brave. The knight has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Actions

Multiattack. The knight makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the knight can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that is can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight is incapacitated.

Reactions

Parry. The knight adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Shadow Mastiff

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks while in dim light or darkness

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive

Perception 13

Languages -

Challenge Rating 2 (450 XP)

Ethereal Awareness. The shadow mastiff can see ethereal creatures and objects.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The shadow mastiff has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing and smell.

Shadow Bond. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow mastiff can use a bonus action to become invisible, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. The invisibility lasts until the shadow mastiff uses a bonus action to end it or until the shadow mastiff attacks, is in bright light, or is incapacitated.

Sunlight Weakness. While in bright light created by sunlight, the shadow mastiff has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Actions

Bite. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Shadow Mastiff Alpha

A shadow mastiff alpha has the statistics of a normal shadow mastiff with the following modifications:

- The alpha has above average (54) hit points.
- It has an Intelligence of 6 (-2).

- It has the Terrifying Howl action option described below.

Terrifying Howl. The shadow mastiff howls. Any beast or humanoid within 300 feet and able to hear its howl must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to any shadow mastiff's Terrifying Howl for the next 24 hours.

Skeleton

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Common, but can't speak

Challenge Rating 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Claws. *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) slashing damage.

Vampire Spawn

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +3

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances necrotic;

bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive

Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge Rating 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. The vampire regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the vampire takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire's next turn.

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

Vampire Weaknesses. The vampire has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. The vampire can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. The vampire takes 20 acid damage when it ends its turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. The vampire is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated in its resting place.

Sunlight hypersensitivity. The vampire takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Actions

Multiattack. The vampire makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Claws. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4+3) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 13).

Bite. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

War Priest

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (-0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +7

Skills Intimidation +5, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge Rating 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, sacred flame, spare the dying*

1st level (4 slots): *divine favor, guiding bolt, healing word, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, magic weapon, prayer of healing, silence, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *beacon of hope, crusader's mantle, dispel magic, revivify, spirit guardians, water walk*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, freedom of movement, guardian of faith, stonewalk*

5th level (1 slot): *flame strike, mass cure wounds, hold monster*

Actions

Multiattack. The priest makes two melee attacks.

Maul. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Guided Strike (Recharges after a short or long rest). The priest grants a +10 bonus to an attack roll made by itself or another creature within 30 feet of it. The priest can make this choice after the roll is made but before it hits or misses.

Wight

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge Rating 3 (700 XP)

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

Actions

Multiattack. The wight makes two longsword attacks or two longbow attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one longsword attack.

Life Drain. *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Wraith

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

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

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

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge Rating 5 (1,800 XP)

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

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

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8+3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an

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

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

Wyvern

Large dragon, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (splint barding)

Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)

Speed 20ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive

Perception 14

Languages -

Challenge Rating 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

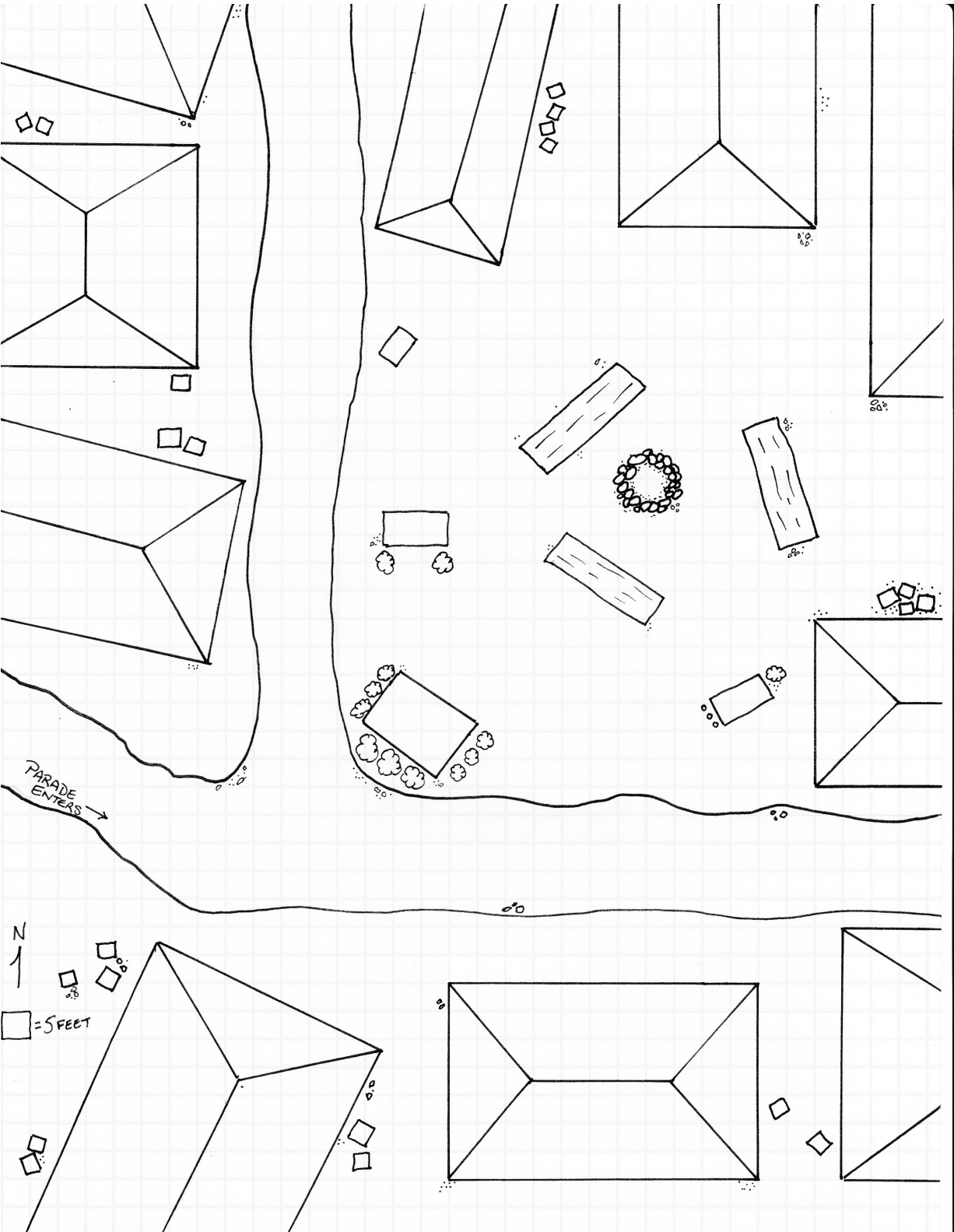
Multiattack. The wyvern makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.

Bite. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage.

Stinger. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

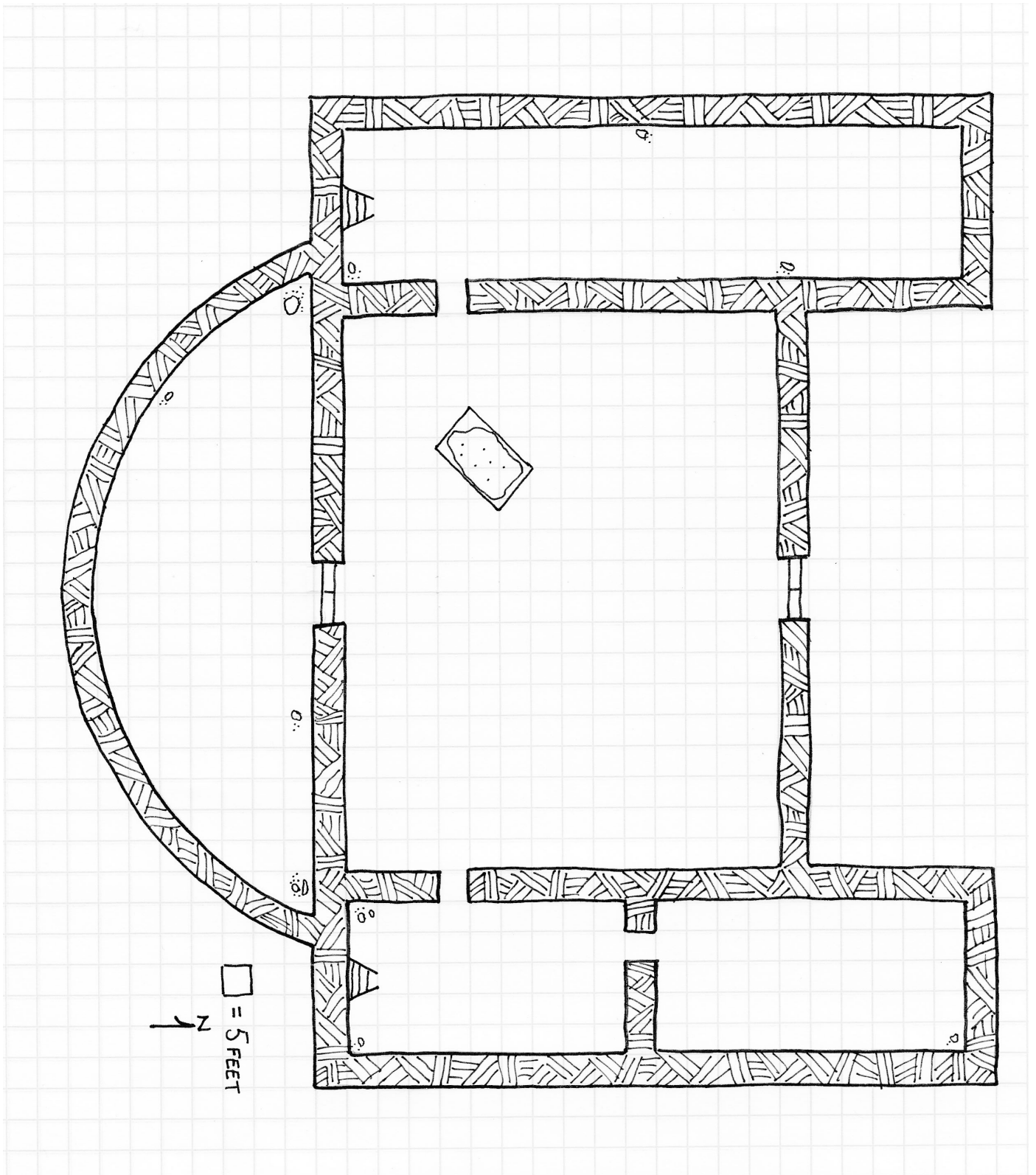
APPENDIX. MAP I



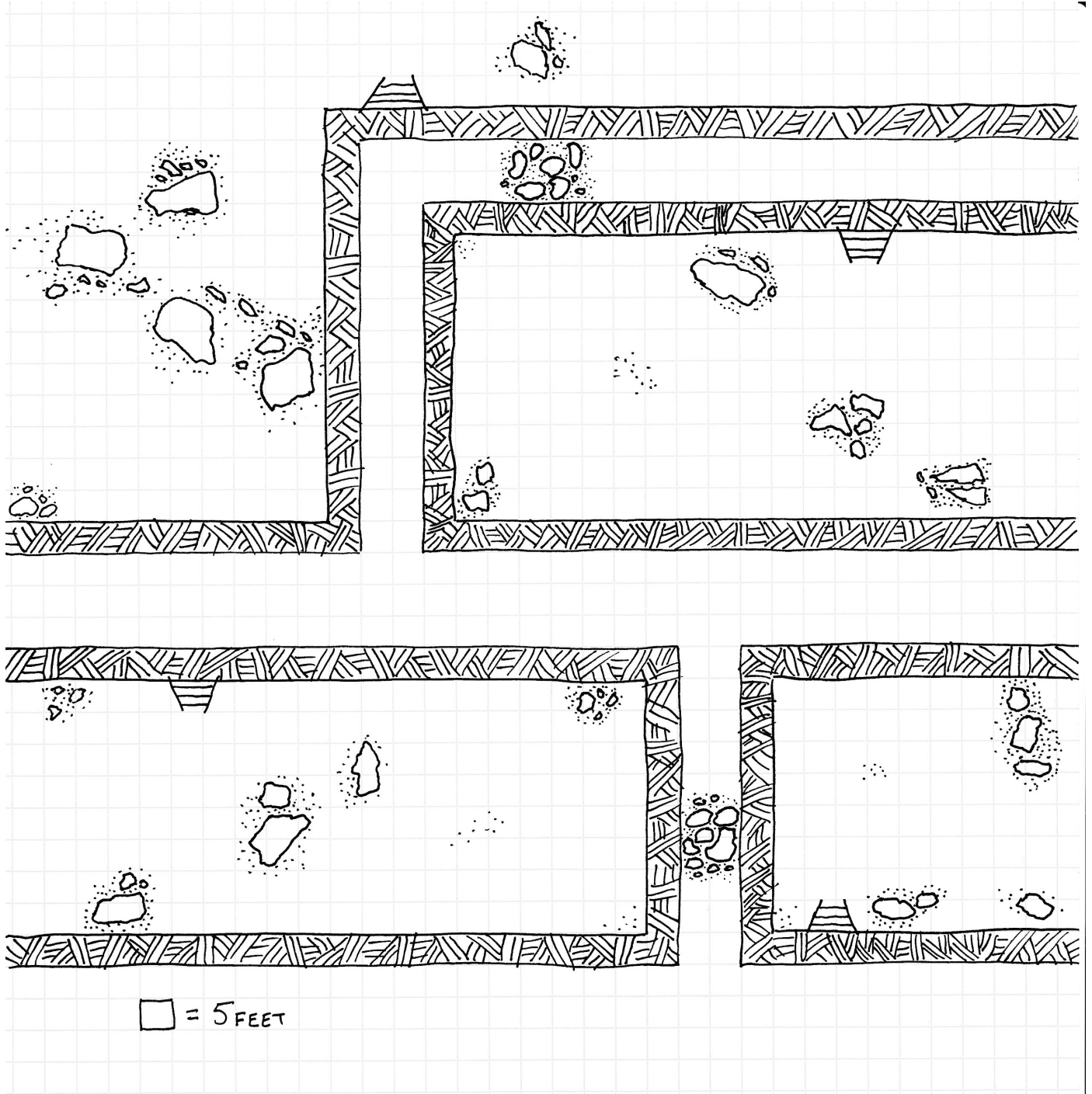
Appendix. Map 2



Appendix. Map 3



Appendix. Map 4



PLAYER HANDOUT I. RECLAMATION DAY EVENTS

During Reclamation Day, the players can take part in one of several events taking place. They see a billboard covered in fliers that announce the day's activities.

The Sharpest Barb

(sponsored by the Laughing Goblin)

Come ply your wit against those of barbed tongue! Insult your way to glory! Winners drink beer for a year at the Laughing Goblin!

Tug-o-War

(sponsored by Brice Vang, armorer)

Team building skills are for the weak! Compete against other teams to show them what you're really made of!

Jousting

(sponsored by Alero the Smithy)

The only gentleperson's match today, come show your skill with steed and lance!

Bullseye

(sponsored by House Jannarsk)

Archers! Dagger throwers! Ax tossers! Come one, come all, and may your aim always be in the red!

Small Batch Brew

(sponsored by the Velvet Doublet festhall)

Does your brew go down with a shiver and a sigh? Come stack it against the best brews in the Moonsea!

The Grand Illusion

(sponsored by Denlor's Tower)

Storytellers and magicians, show the crowd what you've got! How tall is your tale, and can your magic back it up?

Granny Smythe's Pie Baking

(sponsored by the Cracked Crown inn)

Think your ancient family recipe has what it takes to take home the gold? Put your pie where our mouth is!

Basilisk Dog Eating Contest

(sponsored by Nat Wyler's Bell inn)

This sure isn't chicken! How many petrifying sausages can you stomach and not turn to stone?

PLAYER HANDOUT 2. WAND OF THE WAR MAGE +2

WAND OF THE WAR MAGE +2

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This foot-long, twisted iron spike emits a faint coppery scent when channeling magical energies.

While holding this wand, you gain a +2 bonus to spell attack rolls. In addition, you ignore half cover when making a spell attack.

PLAYER HANDOUT 3. STORY AWARDS

Characters have the opportunity to earn the following story awards during this adventure.

HEROES OF RECLAMATION DAY

You ran toward danger and saved innocent lives. The people of Phlan will tell tales of your bravery, and business owners wish to show you the city's gratitude. You receive a 10% discount on goods sold within the city.

YELLOW-BELLIED COWARDS!

You stood by and watched as innocent lives were lost. Word of your cowardice spreads like wildfire through the city of Phlan. While in the city, you roll with disadvantage on any Charisma-based checks with the citizens of Phlan, and business owners charge you 10% more on goods sold within the city.

AN ALLY IN THE EBON TIDE

You convinced the Blackwind, Ezechiel Irnestul, to sign on with either the Zhentarim or the Lords' Alliance. He survives, and his Ebon Tide may prove useful someday soon.

Results Code for CCCROZK01-01, Binder's Torment

If you are DMing this adventure between the months of June 2017 and December 2017, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future.

If a player does not have a mobile device, please ask them to head to <http://www.whpublications.com/surveys/> to enter their feedback. Thank you!

