



THIMBLERIGGING

A Dreams of the Red Wizards Adventure

The chase is on to recover the stolen Wyrmskull Throne. Getting ahead of the Cult of the Dragon will require secret lore, favors from new friends—and an excursion to a site of forgotten horrors.

Part Three of the *Storm King's Descent* series of adventures.

A Six-Hour Adventure for Tier 3 Characters.

Optimized For: APL 13



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ADVENTURE PRIMER

All warfare is based on deception.

—Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 11th- to 16th-level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 13**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure takes place in the Cloakwood, Candlekeep, and Chult.

BACKGROUND

ZEHIRA DERYAN, the daughter of a wealthy Turmish merchant, has previously (DRW-01 through DRW-03) acquired a magical rod dedicated to **CLANGEDDIN SILVERBEARD**, the dwarven deity of battle and honor in warfare. This rod is the **ILTKAZAR SCEPTER**, one of ten artifact **RULING SCEPTERS OF SHANATAR** that can be used to control the **WYRMISKULL THRONE**, itself an artifact that is the centerpiece of **KING HEKATON'S** throne room in the storm giant undersea citadel of **MAELSTROM**. Unwilling to part with her scepter, her presence would be needed if it was to be used to activate the throne.

Very recently agents of the **CULT OF THE DRAGON** secretly stole into Maelstrom, assassinated King Hekaton, and took the throne for themselves. The Cult of the Dragon had turned the corpse of the ancient blue dragon sorcerer **IYMRITH** into a dracolich and has since concocted a ritual to bind the *Wyrmskull Throne* as her phylactery. Particularly enraged by her murder by adventurers, Iymrith seeks vengeance on those who murdered her should they cross paths again (anyone who played *Storm King's Thunder*).

The **RED WIZARDS OF THAY** also want the throne for themselves, and sought to acquire it as well, but their agent was moments too late; the cult had already spirited it away. Never one to let an opportunity pass them by, the Thayans stole the body of King Hekaton and used necromantic rituals to raise him as a death knight slave of **SZASS TAM**.

With the absence of her father, **PRINCESS SERISSA** was thrust into power, a familiar position after the events that occurred in *Storm King's Thunder*. Serissa still possesses the **KOROLNOR SCEPTER**, the Cult of the Dragon having failed to claim it during their theft of the *Wyrmskull Throne*. So far, holding this piece of regalia has helped her to keep her position, but her reign is tenuous at best. With her sisters defeated for previously betraying her father, her mother dead, and her father missing amidst signs of signs of violence, she is desperate for aid.

Previously, Zehira and her allies uncovered that the **CULT OF THE DRAGON** was responsible for the attack and theft of the Wyrmskull Throne. During the investigation, they met the Turmish wizard **KHYNREE**, an ally of the Thayan **ZULKIR OF ENCHANTMENT, DARLON MA**. Accepting a devil's bargain with the Zulkir, Zehira learned that another group is responsible for King Hekaton's disappearance – **THE RED WIZARDS OF THAY**.

With that information, Zehira and her allies stole in the dungeons under **THAYMOUNT** to discover the fate and whereabouts of King Hekaton. There they learned that the storm giant king had been slain and remade as a death knight under the control of Szass Tam. The undead Hekaton has been tasked with recovering the *Wyrmskull Throne*. Hekaton soon plans to strike at Cult of the Dragon redoubt where the throne is suspected to lie. If the party acts fast, they and their storm giant allies might just get it first.

OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over **three parts** and takes approximately **six hours** to play. The adventure begins with a Call to Action scene.

Call to Action: To the Cloakwood. The characters agree to travel to the Cloakwood, entering a site there known as the Shadowed Tower in search of the *Wyrmskull Throne*.

Part 1: Pretty in Purple. The characters infiltrate the Shadowed Tower, taking on agents of the Cult of the Dragon. There, they learn that the *Wyrmskull Throne* has been duplicated using powerful magic, with those duplicates scattered across the continent to make tracking the true throne impossible. Discovering this high-stakes game of thimblerrigging engaged in by the Cult of the Dragon is **Story Objective A**.

Part 2: Secrets and Libraries. A scant clue found in the Shadowed Tower sends the characters to the great fortress-library of Candlekeep, where they hope to discover lore that might let them track the *Wyrmskull Throne*. If they can earn the trust of Master Reader Alsbith, he promises that he can create a ritual to find the throne. However, the characters must first recover a lost book from the ruins of the Tomb of the Nine Gods in Chult. Striking a deal with Alsbith is **Story Objective B**.

Part 3: Deja Tomb. The characters infiltrate a section of the legendary Tomb of the Nine Gods, searching for a book called *The Death of the Mind*. In doing so, they

discover that the tomb is not as abandoned as it seems—and that agents of Thay are seeking the same book. Successfully obtaining *The Death of the Mind* is **Story Objective C**.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Thimblerrigging follows directly from *DDAL-DRW04 Foreign Affairs* and *DDAL-DRW05 Uncertain Scrutiny*. It assumes that the characters have been assisting Zehira Deryan in the search for information regarding the fate of King Hekaton and the *Wyrmskull Throne*. If the characters didn't play the previous adventures, the following hooks provide possible ways to involve them in the scenario.

Heroes for Hire. While the characters are in Baldur's Gate, Zehira Deryan approaches them seeking aid. She explains that she is working with Princess Serissa of Maelstrom to track down the *Wyrmskull Throne*, which has been stolen by agents of the Cult of the Dragon. During a recent journey to Thay, Zehira uncovered information hinting that the throne might be in the Cloakwood, just south of Baldur's Gate. With a band of hardy adventurers beside her, Zehira hopes that she will be successful in claiming the throne.

A Zulkir's Offer. The characters' adventuring reputation leads them to be approached by Dar'lon Ma, the Zulkir of Enchantment of Thay, and a foe of Szass Tam. The zulkir knows that Szass Tam has something to do with the disappearance and death of King Hekaton, and that the lich is searching for the *Wyrmskull Throne* that was stolen from Maelstrom by members of the Cult of the Dragon. Dar'lon Ma has been secretly aiding Zehira Deryan of Turmish in the search for the *Wyrmskull Throne*, on behalf of Princess Serissa. Whether the characters are enemies of Thay, have bad blood with the Cult of the Dragon, or have reason to seek the favor of the storm giant court, the zulkir requests that they aid Zehira in her search.



CALL TO ACTION: TO THE CLOAKWOOD

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

The characters and Zehira Deryan have traveled to the Cloakwood in the Western Heartlands, where they join Thellan, a storm giant warrior and trusted ally of Princess Serissa, who leads a squad of several of the princess' guards. Based on intelligence gathered by Zehira in Thay, the giants have tracked the Cult of the Dragon to this mysterious site. The Cloakwood is famed as the location of numerous portals to other worlds, and though all or most of those portals are believed to now be sealed, strange things are still occasionally found in the forest.

The giants have located a site they call the Shadowed Tower—a bizarre structure of twisted, opaque, black glass that appears to be occupied by the cultists. Unfortunately, the cult has a veritable army outside, including several dragons. The plan is for Thellan and the storm giant guards to attack as a distraction, to draw the Cult of the Dragon's forces away from the tower long enough for the characters and Zehira to sneak inside. There, they will hopefully recover the *Wyrmskull Throne*.

STORMY COUNCIL

The adventure starts in a broad forest glade in the Cloakwood. A light rain falls, and thunder occasionally booms in the distance.

If the characters played through *Foreign Affairs*, they have already met Thellan, the **storm giant** leader of the group. The other five **storm giants** are guards from Maelstrom who the characters might recognize as well. If not, Zehira can make introductions to the storm giant warrior and his retinue.

If the characters have not played through the previous adventures, Thellan knows all the background information described in the "Adventure Primer" section. It should be established by Thellan or Zehira that the Cult of the Dragon assassinated King Hekaton (leaving his body to be claimed by the Red Wizards of Thay) and stole the *Wyrmskull Throne*.

Read or paraphrase the following when you're ready to begin:

Six immense storm giants stand in this dim and rugged glade, surrounded by tall, shaggy trees and thick, green undergrowth. Thellan traces a circle in the air with a glittering gem. A moment later, the circle is filled with bright images.

The magical images within the circle show a tower of twisted black glass standing in the middle of a five-hundred-foot-wide forest clearing. Thellan explains that the tower's single door faces west. Camped around the tower is a small army consisting of hundreds of cultists—as well as three adult blue dragons. Thellan then shares the following information in discussion with the characters:

- The Cult of the Dragon occupy the black glass tower in the middle of the large forest clearing. Thellan can't confirm that the *Wyrmskull Throne* is in the tower, but he believes that the cult's focus on defending the site make the artifact's presence there all but certain.
- The giants don't know the tower's name, but have taken to calling it the Shadowed Tower.
- The large clearing is about two miles east of the characters' current location.
- The storm giants have been unable to gain any intelligence of the interior of the tower, as they are too large to enter it even if concealed and protected by magic.

It is Thellan's suggestion that the giants perform a frontal assault on the dragon cult army, distracting them while the characters sneak in. He listens respectfully to any suggestions the characters have, and is happy to negotiate details such as what time the attack should take place, any preparations the characters want to make, and so on.

CALL TO ACTION

Following Zehira's lead, the characters agree to enter the Shadowed Tower in search of the *Wyrmskull Throne*.

Once the characters are ready, Thellan and his entourage escort them toward the tower's forest clearing. Go to part 1 of the adventure.

THELLAN

Chaotic good storm giant

Thellan is over twenty feet tall and has gray skin, blue-tinged hair, and green eyes. He wears a richly embroidered blue tunic and a belt of gold. His brow is furrowed, he speaks in a steady, low-pitched voice, and he frequently strokes the hilt of his greatsword.

What They Want. Thellan urgently desires to recover the *Wyrmskull Throne* for Princess Serissa.

Stalwart Ally. Thellan's family sent him and his sister to Maelstrom, where they were raised as wards of King Hekaton alongside Serissa. He is willing to risk his life—and the lives of others—to recover the *Wyrmskull Throne* and shore up the power of the princess.



PART 1: PRETTY IN PURPLE

Estimated Duration: 120 minutes

In this section of the adventure, the characters make a dangerous incursion into the Cult of the Dragon's sanctum in the Cloakwood. The goal of reclaiming the *Wyrmskull Throne* seems within their grasp—until they discover that the cult is one step ahead of them.

SETTING: THE SHADOWED TOWER

Like many similar towers drawn from the Shadowfell into the Cloakwood, the mysterious edifice dubbed “the Shadowed Tower” by the storm giants stood empty for long years. The cult has recently turned the site into a hotbed of magical research that has made the characters' search for the *Wyrmskull Throne* even more difficult, as they will come to learn. The Shadowed Tower is not where the *Wyrmskull Throne* is being kept—at least not the real one.

Ehharde Eremaev, one of the powerful cult leaders known as a Wearer of Purple, was tasked with using the powers of the Shadowed Tower to shape a ritual that could duplicate the *Wyrmskull Throne*. The cult has been sending these replica thrones to their agents across Faerûn to help conceal the location of the real throne. At the same time, Ehharde and an adult green shadow dragon named Sollanaceae have been tasked with growing their forces for the cult's next push for power.

Though the characters will finish their incursion of the tower with no idea where the *Wyrmskull Throne* is, a clue points to nearby Candlekeep and the next stage of the search.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Learning that the *Wyrmskull Throne* has somehow been duplicated, and that the duplicates have been spread across the continent to make tracking the true throne impossible, is **Story Objective A**.

FIELD OF BATTLE

The large clearing around the Shadowed Tower is the starting point of Thellan's distraction attack and the characters' incursion.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Dimensions and Terrain. The forest clearing is about five hundred feet across. The land here is broken and uneven, and the soil looks scorched. Old ashes cover the ground, and the area is dotted with blackened tree stumps.

Weather. A light rain falls, and thunder occasionally booms in the distance.

CREATURE INFORMATION

Encamped around the tower are some three hundred Cult of the Dragon **cultists** watched over by three **adult blue dragons**.

GETTING TO THE TOWER

When the characters are ready, Thellan gives the order for the giant attack. He and the other five storm giants race in from the east, drawing the cult forces to that side of the tower. The battle is impressive, with the mighty storm giants clearing a swath through the cultists with lightning bolts and massive rocks before drawing their enormous swords. The blue dragons attack with teeth and claws, furious that the giants are immune to their lightning breath. The cultists swarm about the feet and legs of their foes with scimitars drawn.

With the cult forces occupied on the east side of the clearing, the characters can approach the door on the west side of the tower. Making any minimal effort at being stealthy—staying low to the ground, using the broken landscape as cover, and so on—allows them to approach unseen. If the characters simply stroll up to the tower door, an **adult blue dragon** spots them from the edge of the fight and immediately flies in to attack.

The tower door is 8 feet high and made of thick basalt engraved with strange runes clearly not shaped by mortal creatures. The door is not locked, and easily swings open when pushed. Characters who enter the tower arrive on the ground floor entrance hall (area 1).

THE SHADOWED TOWER

Thrusting up in the middle of the clearing is a tower of twisted, opaque black glass. The Shadowed Tower is roughly circular, and approximately 150 feet high and 50 feet wide at its base. It has no windows and only a single hefty door of basalt, on the tower's west side.

See appendix 1 for a map of the Shadowed Tower's three floors.

AREA INFORMATION

The three floors of the tower share the following features.

Lighting. The interior of the tower is dimly lit by chunks of glowing purple jade set atop candelabra scattered around each area. The light flickers to fill the area around it with shadows.

Walls. The outer walls of the tower are made from dark, rough glass. The interior walls on the second level are made from thick duskwood.

Floors. The tower tapers from its base, so that the first level is 50 feet across, while the second and third levels are 40 feet across. The floor of the first and third levels are rough glass, while the floors of the second level are polished basalt. Any creature that falls prone on the rough floor of the first or third level takes 1 slashing damage.

Ceiling. The uneven ceilings of each level are made of black glass. The first and third levels are 60 feet high, and the second level is 30 feet high.

Interior Doors. The interior doors of the tower are made of thick duskwood and feature dragon-skull-shaped handles made of iron.

Air. A foul necrotic odor hangs on the air.

Stairs. A 5-foot-wide set of black glass stairs winds around the interior of the tower, connecting its three floors. The jagged, uneven stairs are difficult terrain.

LET THE BODIES HIT THE FLOOR

The damage dealt to a creature that falls prone on the rough glass floors of the first and third level should be a less-than-minor annoyance for most characters—except when those characters fall prone after dropping to 0 hit points. Any damage taken by a creature at 0 hit points causes the creature to fail a death saving throw, including the minimal damage dealt by the floor.

CREATURE INFORMATION

With the Shadowed Tower so well defended outside, the Cult of the Dragon have only minimal defenses inside. The **adult green shadow dragon** Sollanaceae guards against intruders on the ground floor, and the **archmage** Ehharde Eremaev is a potent threat on the third level, protected by his **clay golem** servants.

1. ENTRANCE HALL

The ground floor of the tower is a 50-foot-wide, 60-foot-high open space dominated by an enormous dragon's skull. The ceiling here is covered in a shroud of shadow.

Dragon Skull. An enormous dragon skull some 10 feet wide sits atop a stone dais at the center of the room. Written in Draconic on the dais are the words: "Though dead, yet they shall reign." The interior of the skull is filled with magical darkness, as that created by the *darkness* spell.

Four basalt pillars surround the skull, each 4 feet wide and 12 feet high. Each pillar is engraved with grotesque images of faces and twisted limbs.

Unseen Guardian. Sollanaceae, an **adult green shadow dragon**, hides among the shadows that cover the ceiling. Anyone who examines the ceiling and succeeds on a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check spots her, causing her to drop down and attack. Otherwise, Sollanaceae watches the characters carefully and attacks once they are all ascending the stairs.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Consider the following suggestions for adjusting this scene depending on the relative combat strength of the party:

Very Weak. Sollanaceae has 186 hit points.

Weak. Sollanaceae has 206 hit points.

Strong. Sollanaceae has 266 hit points.

Very Strong. Sollanaceae has 306 hit points.

Playing the Pillars. You can make use of the following suggestions when running this encounter.

Combat. Sollanaceae's goal is to surprise the characters. Her Shadow Breath is always her preferred option, but when that attack is recharging, she flies in close to use her Multiattack. She uses her Wing Attack legendary action whenever characters move within 10 feet of her, and uses her Detect legendary action once per round to look for anyone attempting to hide from her. She also has a special legendary action called Shadow Restoration (see the sidebar), which she uses once she starts to take serious damage.

Exploration. Characters examining the enormous dragon skull notice the magical darkness inside it (see "Treasure" below).

Social. If Sollanaceae starts the round with 40 hit points or fewer, or whenever you feel it's appropriate, she asks the characters to parley. In exchange for her life, she offers to tell them what creatures await them in the top-floor workroom (area 5).

SHADOW RESTORATION

Legendary action; costs 3 actions

If Sollanaceae is within 5 feet of the dragon skull, she regains 30 hit points.

Treasure. The sphere of darkness inside the dragon skull conceals a valuable tiny wyrmling skeleton dipped in gold, as well as a *potion of heroism*.

2. STUDY

This study is the working space of Ehharde Eremaev. The characters will need to deal with powerful magical wards to gain access to it.

Warded Door. The door off the staircase is not locked, but is protected by a *glyph of warding* (the explosive runes option) that triggers when the door is opened.



Each creature within 20 feet of the door when the glyph is triggered must make a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The triggering glyph is at the bottom right corner of the door, and can be found with a successful DC 22 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Speaking the phrase, “Though dead, yet they shall reign,” in Draconic causes the glyph to glow blue for 10 minutes, during which time it is disabled.

Inside the Room. An imposing desk made of pale ivory sits against the west wall, while an ivory casket sits against the south wall. Both contrast sharply with the room’s dark decor.

One of the desk drawers holds a makeup kit. A quill and several sheets of paper sit on the desk. Most of the papers are notes in Common involving the recruitment of new cultists, but one is an unsent letter written in Draconic (see the handout in appendix 3).

The casket is locked. It can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools or forced with a crowbar and a successful DC 12 Strength check.

Treasure. The casket holds coins and a *necklace of prayer beads* containing the blessing, curing, favor, and wind walking beads). The casket and the desk can be sold if removed from the tower, though the desk is monstrously heavy.

3. BEDCHAMBER

A generously proportioned bed made of fine duskwood sits against the west wall of this area. An unlocked trunk holding clothing and other domestic bric-a-brac stands on the opposite side of the chamber. A bedside table holds a bottle of fine wine and a golden goblet.

Clock Hand. Hanging on a hook on the curved outside wall is an ornate clock hand, about six inches long and made of darkly burnished copper. This is one of the minute hands that fits the clock next to the door on the top-floor workroom (area 5). Beneath the clock hand, the words “Midnight Door” are scrawled in chalk.

4. LABORATORY

A long, broad duskwood table sits against the east wall, and is covered with magical paraphernalia including crucibles, decanters, pentacles, braziers, prisms, and lenses. A small bronze cauldron holds some sort of gray, gooey substance. A few scraps of paper with brief notes and formulas scrawled on them are scattered about.

A character who examines the table and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check deduces that experiments in illusion and shadow magic were undertaken in this area, bearing a similarity to the *simulacrum* spell—though more potent. The gray substance is quite solid, but it radiates illusion magic to a *detect magic* spell.

5. WORKROOM

The staircase comes to a dead end on this level, with no sign of any secret doors. A clock hanging on the wall here has no casing, leaving its inner workings of dark copper fully exposed. An hour hand on the clock face points to 12, but the minute hand is missing. Fitting the minute hand from area 3 to the clock face and pointing it to 12 causes a 7-foot-high by 4-foot-wide gap to magically and silently appear in the wall for 10 minutes.



False Prize. When the characters enter this area, they see their goal before them. The *Wyrmskull Throne* stands at the center of the room—a seat of dark obsidian with four dragon skulls for legs. Unfortunately, the throne is a magical fake created by Ehharde Eremaev. Sitting on the throne or trying to move it causes it to dissolve back into gray goo identical to that seen in area 4. The throne also dissolves if the creature attuned to it (at present, this is Ehharde) is unconscious or dead.

The *Itkazar Scepter* wielded by Zehira gives her an innate connection to the real *Wyrmskull Throne* that is reproduced in the duplicate thrones. Though a duplicate throne does not respond to its bond with the scepter, not even the scepter can be used to tell a duplicate from the real throne.

Vat. A five-foot-tall bronze vat with a ladle in it stands near the throne. A small amount of gray goo clings to its interior, and more goo is scattered across the floor around it.

Interior Clock. A clock on the inside wall is identical to the clock outside this area, and works the same way. The interior clock has both hands, with both pointing to 6.

Archmage at Work. Ehharde Eremaev, an **archmage**, has his back to the magical doorway when it first opens, and is working with his three **clay golem** servants. If the characters enter without making too much noise, they see Ehharde directing his golems as they clean up the workshop. The archmage attacks at once when he spots intruders. Even if the characters practice some kind of deception, such as disguising themselves as cultists from the Cult of the Dragon, Ehharde is furious at being disturbed and might attack anyway.

EHHARDE EREMAEV

Lawful evil human archmage

Ehharde wears sumptuous purple robes, and his bald head is well powdered. His cheeks are highlighted with rouge, his lips are painted with berry juice, and his eyes are lined with kohl.

What They Want. Ehharde has finished creating the duplicate thrones (an accomplishment he takes great pride in), and must now focus on building up his small army.

Vain Sadist. A lifelong member of the Cult of the Dragon, Ehharde is infamous for his cruelty and his refined taste. He always dresses well and is impeccably made up.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Consider the following suggestions for adjusting this scene depending on the relative combat strength of the party:

Weak or Very Weak. Remove a clay golem.

Strong. Add a clay golem.

Very Strong. Add two clay golems.

Playing the Pillars. You can make use of the following suggestions when running this encounter.

Combat. The golems come at the characters in a shoulder-to-shoulder formation intended to prevent anyone from rushing through and attacking Ehharde. Each golem uses its Haste action first, then follows up with a slam attack as a bonus action. On each round thereafter, the golems use Multiattack. Ehharde casts *globe of invulnerability*, then attempts to *banish* the most dangerous-looking character. In round 3, he casts *wall of force* to divide the party in such a way that each golem is

attacking one or two characters. Once all the golems are destroyed, Ehharde uses the throne wing attack property of the false *Wyrmskull Throne* to keep the adventurers at bay while he casts *cone of cold*. If he is under serious threat, he casts *time stop* and escapes out the door, determined to one day have his revenge.

Exploration. Characters who examine the gray goo in the vat or on the floor recognize it as the same substance in the laboratory (area 4).

Social. If the characters use disguises or subterfuge to talk to Ehharde, he is highly suspicious, and it takes little provocation for him to attack. If captured, he turns out to be easily cowed, and shares the information contained in the “Setting: The Shattered Tower” section above.

THRONE WING ATTACK

Although the throne in this area is a copy, it still has some power as long as it has not been reduced to goo. Ehharde is attuned to the duplicate throne, which allows him to use a bonus action to cause a spectral blue dragon to appear over the throne and beat its wings, then vanish. Each creature except Ehharde within 15 feet of the throne must succeed on a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (2d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. Ehharde can then move up to half his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Treasure. Ehharde has a leather purse holding several precious gemstones and some platinum coins. A burned piece of paper can be found in a pocket of his robes, with only part of a title still legible: “Shadow Repl ...” This page once held a record of the ritual he used to create the replica thrones, but a minor enchantment caused it to burn up in his picket when he was killed or captured by the characters.

ON TO CANDLEKEEP

Once the characters have dealt with Ehharde and left the tower, they find that Thellan and his colleagues have dealt with the army, albeit with the loss of two giants. The characters should now know that an unknown number of replicas of the *Wyrmskull Throne* have been scattered across the Sword Coast, and that they should head to Candlekeep to seek help tracking the original, as suggested by Ehharde’s note (see area 2 and appendix 3). If the characters do not realize they need to go to Candlekeep, Thellan can suggest they do so, believing that the library’s close proximity and its reputation for knowledge and magic make it an ideal place to ask about the unknown ritual that created the duplicate thrones.

When the characters are ready to head to Candlekeep, go to part 2 of the adventure.



PART 2: SECRETS AND LIBRARIES

Estimated Duration: 100 minutes

The knowledge that the Cult of the Dragon has been making magical duplicates of the *Wyrmskull Throne* threatens to shut down the characters' search for that great artifact. But a letter found in the Shadowed Tower holds out a faint hope that someone in the legendary library of Candlekeep might know how to track the real throne.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Striking a deal with Master Reader Alsboth is **Story Objective B**, involving the characters offering to recover the tome known as *The Death of the Mind* from Chult. This will allow the master reader to create a ritual that will locate the true *Wyrmskull Throne*.

ABOUT CANDLEKEEP

Candlekeep is the largest and most complete library in Faerûn. Throughout its jumbled complex of interconnected towers lie books, scrolls, tomes, and other forms of literature covering every topic imaginable. Due to the diligence of the Avowed in maintaining and cultivating them, a great proportion of the works within Candlekeep are either the most complete example or the last remaining copy in existence. Each year, hundreds of supplicants journey to Candlekeep, hoping to find answers in the great library, afflicted with burning existential questions of purpose, the looming threat of an ancient evil, or simply an earnest, unshakable curiosity.

—*Elminster's Candlekeep Companion*

SETTING: CANDLEKEEP

The great library and fortress known as Candlekeep lies south of the Cloakwood, a journey of some 150 miles by road or 100 miles if flying. Though the characters will likely want to travel directly there, they have no reason to hurry, and can easily rest as they go.

Any character who has been to or heard of Candlekeep knows that gaining entrance to the great library is accomplished only by presenting the scholars there with a book not already on their shelves. Once inside, the characters are free to search for the lore they seek. However, before they can learn how to work around the magic of the Cult of the Dragon, the characters must secretly impress a particular scholar who holds a secret.

AREA INFORMATION

The characters might know of Candlekeep already, or might learn the following during their stay.

Terrain. Candlekeep is perched on a spur of rock overlooking the Sea of Swords. It is reached by a road called the Way of the Lion, running west from the Coast Way.

Weather. It is a clear day when the characters arrive, and a gentle breeze blows in off the sea.

Outer Wall. The outer wall of the fortress is 50 feet high, and made of heavy stone blocks reinforced with iron.

Gates. The great double gates of Candlekeep are three times the height of a human, and wrought of strange black metal.

Towers. Within the walls of Candlekeep stand numerous interconnected towers and spires, encompassing a bewildering variety of architectural styles.

Defenses. If any visitors become violent or use magic against those within or around the fortress, four purple-robed **archmages** swiftly appear and deal with them.

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

A long line of **commoners** are seeking to enter the fortress when the characters arrive, and it takes over two hours of queuing to reach the gates. When the characters finally do so, five monks in purple robes (three humans, a halfling, and an elf, all **priests**) greet them, and ask them to “present their gift for inspection.”

THE AVOWED

The cloistered scholar-monks of Candlekeep, who are called the Avowed, guard this place and work tirelessly to ensure the library's protection and preservation. Though they are friendly enough in a workaday fashion, they are also suspicious of all visitors to the library.

—*Sword Coast Adventurers Guide*

THE GIFT

Those seeking to enter Candlekeep must give the monks a book not already in their library. One of the characters might already have a unique book in their possession—including a spellbook. But if the characters lack the required “entrance-gift,” an alternative opportunity presents itself.

The person immediately behind the characters in the queue is a chatty poet from Greenest named Melgora Gladthrall (use the **commoner** stat block). She travels to Candlekeep once a year to look through the archives for inspiration. During a long conversation (whether the characters want to be part of it or not), she talks of planning to offer a book of her own poetry to the monks, called *When I Am Dead*. In response to anything resembling interest, she insists on reading the characters the first poem:

*When I am dead, methinks the stars should hide
Their veiled brightness from the troubled sky,
Pale Sune, like a specter glide
Through paths she lately glorified on high,
The startled spheres flutter far and wide,
Like frightened birds that know not where to fly,
And nature in unutterable dread,
Pause, in her wonted course, when I am dead.*

The rest of the poet's work is in a similar vein.

Melgora is willing to join the party at the gates, allowing everyone to enter the library using her gift, for 250 gp—a sum that she describes as enough to support her artistic endeavors for several years. The monks happily accept *When I Am Dead* as an offering, granting the party admittance to Candlekeep.

GUESTS OF CANDLEKEEP

A junior halfling acolyte of the Avowed named Portia Underfoot (use the **commoner** stat block) is assigned to guide the characters while they are in Candlekeep. She leads them through the gatehouse into a broad courtyard known as the Court of Air, which contains various amenities such as dormitories, a bathhouse, and a tavern. Portia then quietly informs the characters that they are asked to accompany her beyond the Court of Air, where most visitors would halt, and to the great library. The manner in which she avoids looking any of the characters in the eye speaks to how important she thinks they must be to have secured this honor.

PORTIA UNDERFOOT

Lawful good halfling commoner

Dressed in the plain lavender robes of a junior monk, Portia has large, brown eyes and a full face. Though friendly, she is somewhat shy.

What They Want. Portia has been a monk for only a few months, and she desperately wants to impress her superiors.

Bashful Helper. Portia's current job is guiding guests around Candlekeep, though her shy nature means she is reluctant to offer too much advice.

THE GREAT LIBRARY

Portia leads the party across the courtyard and through an imposing emerald door, down a short path through a garden, and then into an entrance tower. The great library of Candlekeep is not a single structure, but rather a collection of towers and buildings all containing a seemingly endless array of book-filled chambers, vaults, and offices.

AREA INFORMATION

The great library tower the characters are escorted to has the following features.

Tall Tower. This circular tower features a spiral-shaped mezzanine level leading all the way to the top. The ground floor is covered in reading tables, and features several wooden offices built against the walls.

Bookshelves. Bookshelves line the ground floor and the spiraling mezzanine level, each one stuffed with books, tomes, codices, and scrolls. Hundreds of thousands of books are on display here.

Exits. Numerous exits line the ground floor and the mezzanine level, most leading off to chambers and vaults in other towers.

Light. A dome-shaped skylight in the roof provides ample light by day. By night, the area is lit by magical *driftglobes*.

Sound. The air is filled with the sound of gently rustling paper. When conversations are conducted, they are held to the level of a whisper.

MEETING ALSBITH

Dozens of Avowed occupy the reading tables as the character pass, as well as a small number of guests (all

commoners). Portia leads the party to a spacious wooden office on the ground floor, where a scholar sits behind a polished oak desk. Though seemingly annoyed at the interruption, Master Reader Alsbith (an **archmage**) leans back with a forced smile and speaks:

“Welcome to Candlekeep. My name is Master Reader Alsbith, and I have been instructed to assist you. My superiors, for reasons of their own, have directed me to give you access to the great library. Please understand that this is a rare honor, afforded only to a small number of guests. You must remain with your guide at all times while here.

“So that I can assist you better, please tell me what you wish to learn.”

(The reason that the characters have been granted special access to the great library—and the figure who has arranged that access—is not known to Alsbith, or to anyone else the characters can speak with during this adventure. The identity of this behind-the-scenes figure will be revealed later in this adventure series.)

As the characters describe their mission and recount what happened at the Shadowed Tower, Alsbith's eyes grow a little wider, he becomes pale, and he begins fidgeting. When he responds, he pauses and stumbles as he speaks. If asked, he denies that anything is upsetting him.

Depending upon what topics the characters are seeking information on, Alsbith directs them to different chambers within the great library—each one a small library in and of itself. Each chamber is covered in its own section below.

Topic	Chamber
The Cult of the Dragon	Esoterica Bibliotheca
The Red Wizards of Thay	Library of the Globe
The <i>Wyrmskull Throne</i>	The Artifactorium

Portia guides the characters to whichever chamber they wish to visit. The characters can visit as many chambers as they wish and in any order. They can return and speak to Master Reader Alsbith at any time and as often as they wish. The chambers are described in more detail in the following sections.

ALSBITH'S SECRET

Alsbith's nervous reaction to the characters stems from a disturbing connection to the party's current quest and the recent incursion against the Cult of the Dragon. About a year ago, the cult archmage Ehharde Eremaev came to Candlekeep in disguise to research shadow magic. Alsbith assisted Ehharde in his work, which resulted in the shadow replication ritual that Ehharde used to replicate the *Wyrmskull Throne*. It was only after Ehharde departed that Alsbith figured out who the archmage really was, and he has been racked by guilt over the matter ever since.

WINNING OVER ALSBITH

Alsbith's secret knowledge of the magic used to create duplicates of the *Wyrmskull Throne* makes him a most valuable asset to the characters. However, having been fooled once, he is suspicious about their story. Though he is obliged by his vows to help them, he is willing to do only the bare minimum at the outset.

The research that the characters can undertake in the different areas of the library turns up interesting information, but it does not directly help them achieve their goal. Rather, Alsbith magically observes how they interact with the scholars in each chamber, hoping to assess the true nature and motivations of the characters during their unguarded moments. If the characters treat them well, they earn reputation points representing Alsbith's positive opinion of them. Once they earn 2 reputation points, Alsbith is convinced of their integrity and decides to help them. When this happens, go to the "Alsbith's Aid" section below.

MASTER READER ALSBITH

Neutral good human archmage

Dressed in embroidered mulberry-colored robes, Alsbith has a craggy face and spiky gray hair.

What They Want. Alsbith desperately wants to repair the damage he thinks he did by helping Ehharde.

Thoughtless Genius. Alsbith is a brilliant scholar and magic user, but he sometimes fails to consider the social consequences of his actions.

Playing the Pillars. You can make use of the following suggestions when running this encounter.

Combat. The characters would be foolish to start any fights within Candlekeep. If they do so, four **archmages** show up in short order to eject them from the fortress.

Exploration. The characters have a chance to explore some of the protected areas of Candlekeep during this encounter, and also to learn some useful lore.

Social. To succeed here, the characters need to engage the scholars of Candlekeep in conversation, determine what they need, and come to their aid. Satisfying those needs enables them to gain favor in Alsbith's eyes.

NERVOUS WATCHER

As the characters and Portia move throughout Candlekeep, another guest to the library begins to repeatedly show up nearby. Elsba, a young gnome scholar from Baldur's Gate, starts out in the reading room at a table not far from Master Reader Alsbith, then nonchalantly begins shadowing the party. For more about these recurring encounters, see "The Smitten Scholar" below.

ESOTERICA BIBLIOTHECA

When the characters want to research the Cult of the Dragon, Portia leads them through a door and into another tower, then up a long, circular flight of stone steps. At the top of the stairs, the party passes through a door labeled "ESOTERICA BIBLIOTHECA."



AREA INFORMATION

This library has the following features.

Dimensions and Terrain. This circular room is 40 feet wide, and features a floor covered with soil and living grass.

Ceiling. The dome-shaped ceiling is colored deep red at its base, which blends into a rich purple higher up.

Light. The ceiling radiates dim light, and resembles a clear, twilight sky.

Smell and Sound. The air here smells of fresh, damp turf, and is filled with a faint whispering.

Mounds. A number of eight-foot-high grassy mounds are scattered about the room, each one set with a red wooden door bearing a neat label. Five mounds in total bear the labels “Cults,” “Sects,” “Secret Societies,” “Zealots,” and “Fads.” The door labeled “Zealots” is open, and a cheerful yellow light shines out. All the doors are unlocked. Inside, each mound is set with circular wooden shelves crammed with various kinds of books.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The librarian in charge of this chamber is a scholar named Fallthra Eversharp, a dwarf **commoner**. She is in the “Zealots” mound when the characters arrive, working to reshelve a massive pile of books that looks likely to take her several hours. If the characters ask for assistance, she grumpily tells them she is busy, and they need to look after themselves.

STUDY AND RESEARCH

For every two hours of research a character undertakes here regarding the Cult of the Dragon, they can make an Intelligence (History or Investigation) check. The check DC determines what the character learns (including all information from lower DCs):

- DC 10.** The Cult of the Dragon has existed for centuries. During most of that time, its members have focused on the creation and worship of dracoliches.
- DC 12.** The cult has members all over Faerûn.
- DC 14.** The cult has a simple hierarchical structure, consisting of initiates at the bottom, several ranks for cultists, and one highest rank for Wearers of Purple.
- DC 16.** The cult and the Red Wizards of Thay have been fierce enemies ever since Thay helped defeat the cult's plans to draw Tiamat to the world. (These events played out in the *Tyranny of Dragons* adventure.)
- DC 18.** Members of the cult are sometimes known to draw upon the power of the Shadowfell.

While doing their research, the characters hear Fallthra occasionally cursing from the other mound.

EARNING A REPUTATION POINT

Fallthra gratefully accepts any offer to help replace the books on the shelves. With help from the characters, it takes about an hour to complete the job, and the party earns 1 reputation point.

FALLTHRA EVERSHPARP

Neutral good dwarf commoner

Dressed in plain purple robes, Fallthra has a round build, neat hair, and a weathered face.

What They Want. Fallthra wants to keep her sections of the library well organized, but gets easily overwhelmed by the amount of work that entails.

Grumpy Martinet. Fallthra believes that people should follow the rules, and likes everything to be kept in perfect order. She gets very touchy when faced with a mess.

LIBRARY OF THE GLOBE

When the characters want to research the Red Wizards of Thay, Portia leads them down a long passageway that eventually reaches a door labeled “LIBRARY OF THE GLOBE.”

AREA INFORMATION

This library has the following features.

Dimensions and Terrain. This circular room is 60 feet wide, and features a floor covered with a tiled mosaic depicting a map of Toril.

Ceiling. The dome-shaped ceiling is painted deep blue.

Light. A 3-foot-wide glowing yellow sphere is suspended in the air about 20 feet above the ground, filling the room with bright light.

Bookshelves. Freestanding bookshelves of varying sizes stand scattered across the room. The books on the shelves reflect the geographical area depicted on the map on the floor beneath them.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The volunteer librarian currently in charge of this chamber is Little One, a most unusual **ogre**. Little One is watching over this area while the regular acolyte is elsewhere in the library attending to other business. He sits behind a large desk in the south part of the room, staring at a book with his shoulders slumped and his face downturned. If the characters approach, he slams the book shut, revealing it to be an old but exquisite copy of *A Dove at Dawn* by Ardreth, the High Harp of Berdusk over 150 years ago.

If the characters ask for help, Little One responds in a monotone voice, directing them to the bookshelf covering Thay.

STUDY AND RESEARCH

For every two hours of research a character undertakes here regarding Thay, they can make an Intelligence (History or Investigation) check. The check DC determines what the character learns (including all information from lower DCs):

- DC 10.** Thay represents one of the greatest concentrations of magical might in Faerûn.
- DC 12.** The land is a ruthless magocracy that lies east of the Sea of Fallen Stars.
- DC 14.** Thay is ruled by the ancient lich Szass Tam, who has long sought to conquer other lands.
- DC 16.** The Cult of the Dragon and Thay have been fierce enemies ever since Thay helped defeat the cult's plans to draw Tiamat to the world. (These events played out in the *Tyranny of Dragons* adventure.)

While doing their research, the characters occasionally hear Little One sniffing miserably.

EARNING A REPUTATION POINT

If a character respectfully asks Little One why he's sad, the ogre shows them that he has accidentally ripped a page in the book he's reading. It's a first-edition copy and extremely valuable, and Little One is worried about how the acolyte who trusted him to watch over the library will react.

If the characters can repair the book (most easily with the *mending* cantrip), if they offer to take the blame for the damage, or if they find some other way to help Little One, the party earns 1 reputation point.

LITTLE ONE

Chaotic good ogre

Dressed in plain robes, Little One wears a *headband of intellect* that he looted from a halfling many years ago. After donning it, he grew interested in scholarly matters and came to Candlekeep to learn as much as he could. Recently, Little One has been granted special volunteer status that allows him carefully controlled access to the Great Library. By volunteering to cover for busy acolytes from time to time, Little One hopes to one day be invited to join the Avowed.

What They Want. Little One wishes desperately to be fully accepted by the Avowed.

Gentle Scholar. Because of his size, Little One works especially hard to be as gentle as he can. He is a scholar at heart, and likes nothing so much as to study a good book.

THE ARTIFACTORIUM

When the characters want to research the *Wyrmskull Throne*, Portia leads them down a set of dark stairs, then finally through a heavy iron door labeled "THE ARTIFACTORIUM."

AREA INFORMATION

This library has the following features.

Dimensions and Terrain. This cube-shaped room is 20 feet on a side and features walls paneled with dull iron, fastened on with large rivets.

Light. Glowing green spheres sit atop four brass candelabra in the corners of the room, filling the area with bright light.

Bookshelves. Four rows of towering iron bookshelves stand in the middle of the room, along with a portable iron ladder.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The librarian in charge of this chamber is the scholar Jhewana Grimcroft (a human **priest**). She stands in one corner when the characters arrive, silently watching them. If they ask for help, she distractedly replies that she is not there to do their research for them.

STUDY AND RESEARCH

For every two hours of research a character undertakes here regarding the *Wyrmskull Throne*, they can make an

Intelligence (History or Investigation) check. The check DC determines what the character learns (including all information from lower DCs):

DC 10. The *Wyrmskull Throne* is an ancient and powerful artifact.

DC 12. The throne was built by dwarven gods for the rulers of Shanatar, an ancient dwarven empire.

DC 14. After Shanatar fell, the throne passed through several hands, but ultimately came into the possession of King Hekaton, who had it enlarged and placed in his throne room.

DC 16. A character needs one of the Ruling Scepters of Shanatar to harness the powers of the throne. Those powers include the ability to move through earth and stone, and the ability to cast lightning bolts.

While doing their research, the characters notice Jhewana staring at them intently.

EARNING A REPUTATION POINT

Pick a magic item of rare or greater rarity that one of the characters wears or holds in plain sight. Jhewana notices that item, making it the clear focus of her interest. If a character asks why she's staring, Jhewana ignores the question and boldly offers them 1,500 gp for the item. If the characters accept the offer, Jhewana's face lights up and the party earns 1 reputation point.

JHEWANA GRIMCROFT

Lawful neutral human priest

Jhewana dresses in plain purple robes, and her face is pale and drawn. Some years ago, she was killed in a magical accident at Candlekeep. The scholars arranged for her to be resurrected, but something went wrong during the casting and left her in a perpetual state of grim pallor.

What They Want. Collecting magic items is one of the few things that gives Jhewana pleasure.

Bitter Lifer. Jhewana's experience of death and rebirth has left her feeling bitter toward Candlekeep. However, she dares not leave, for she knows no other life.

THE SMITTEN SCHOLAR

Elsba, the young gnome **commoner** scholar from Baldur's Gate who has been shadowing the characters as they move throughout the great library, has developed a crush on Portia. However, she is afraid to confront the Avowed with her feelings, instead watching her from afar. Seeing the characters get to spend time with the object of her affections, Elsba takes an instant dislike to them.

During the previous sections as the characters move from library to library, Elsba shadows them, casually trying to learn what they might be up to. Any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher notices the young scholar. If the characters split up, Elsba follows the group with Portia, and a character with a passive Wisdom (Insight) score of 15 or higher notes that her focus is much more on Portia than the party members.

Elsba is brusque if confronted, telling the characters to mind their own business as she stalks off.

EARNING A REPUTATION POINT

If Elsba is confronted without anger, a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince her that the characters mean no harm. With appropriate roleplaying, Elsba admits she has no interest in the characters but rather is trying to figure out how to ask Portia to dinner. If the characters help Elsba overcome her nervousness enough to speak to Portia, not only does Portia happily accept the invitation, but the party earns 1 reputation point.

ELSBA FLIVUL

Chaotic good gnome commoner

Elsba came to Candlekeep two years ago to research crops her family was considering planting on their farm. While being assisted in her search by Portia, Elsba developed feelings for the halfling, and has returned to the library every few tendays just to shyly catch sight of her.

What They Want. Elsba hopes to win over Portia.

Intensely Shy. Elsba is uncomfortably shy about her feelings. She assumes that others are being cruel or mocking her when they try to interact with her, which can make her inadvertently appear hostile.

ALSBITH'S AID

Once the characters have earned 2 reputation points, Alsboth decides they can be trusted. The master reader sends a message to Portia telling her to bring the party back to his office. Once there, he grimly tells the characters the truth of his history with Ehharde Eremaev. Now that he knows he can trust the characters, Alsboth is intent on helping them track down the *Wyrmskull Throne*, hoping to undo some of the damage he's caused.

FINDING THE THRONE

Alsboth believes that he can create a ritual that will locate the real *Wyrmskull Throne*, but he needs key information from a tome called *The Death of the Mind*. The book was last seen in the collection of the archlich Acererak. With Acererak having been defeated by brave adventurers, Alsboth is confident that the book must still be in the ruins of the legendary Tomb of the Nine Gods.

The master reader entreats the characters to travel to the lost city of Omu in Chult, then to explore the now-empty ruins of Acererak's tomb to retrieve the book. He can provide full and accurate directions for getting there. When the characters are ready to head to Chult, go to part 3 of the adventure.

BAD REPUTATION

If the characters spend more than a day attempting to drum up a lead and have exhausted their chances to gain 2 reputation points, a benefactor to be revealed in a future adventure pays a visit to Master Reader Alsboth and demands that he assist the characters. In this event, Alsboth offers the same deal as above, but does not explain his history with Ehharde Eremaev. Instead, he claims to have taken pity on the characters, but refuses to say more.

If the characters require this assist, when they arrive at the tomb, the Thayans in area 6 have already executed the last surviving gnome worker and used magic to burrow through the wall into area 7, bypassing the door. At the entrance to the tunnel, they have inscribed a *glyph of warding* storing a *cone of cold* spell (DC 16). Another 10 feet down the hallway, a *symbol* spell has been set with the death option (DC 16). Each glyph requires a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check to locate. If either glyph is triggered, the Thayans are alerted and ready for a fight. If not, they are packing up the books when the characters arrive.



PART 3: DEJA TOMB

Estimated Duration: 120 minutes

This last part of the adventure sees the characters set off on an unusual side trek, seeking the site of what was once one of the most dangerous dungeons in Faerûn. The Tomb of the Nine Gods was the archlich Acererak's greatest creation. It tested—and destroyed—heroes for centuries before its power was recently broken by brave adventurers. But though the tomb remains a ruin, the site still conceals a few challenges—and even more surprises.

SETTING: OMU

The ancient and ruined city of Omu lies deep in the jungles of Chult, far from Candlekeep. For characters who can fly, the journey covers some 1,300 miles. For those traveling by more conventional means, it is a five-day journey from Candlekeep back to Baldur's Gate, a thirty-seven-day voyage to Port Nyanzaru in Chult, and then a forty-day trek through the jungle to arrive at Omu.

Despite the time and distance, the journey to Chult and Omu is uneventful. But when the characters arrive, they find that Acererak's lair is not as abandoned as they had hoped.

AREA INFORMATION

The city of Omu has the following features.

Dimensions and Terrain. Omu lies in a basin in the depths of the jungle, surrounded on all sides by sheer cliffs. Debris-strewn boulevards are flanked by crumbling buildings, and the jungle has reclaimed extensive portions of the city.

Light. It is a clear day when the characters arrive, and the city is in bright sunlight.

Sound. The pounding of a distant waterfall and the cry of the birds overhead are the only sounds in the city.

STORY OBJECTIVE

Recovering *The Death of the Mind* for Master Reader Alsbith is Story Objective C.

RENEWED TOMB

The archlich Acererak earned the sobriquet "Acererak the Eternal" for a reason. Despite the failure of his plans and the destruction of the Tomb of the Nine Gods, the archlich has already begun repopulating his legendary dungeon. At the same time, a Thayan knight named Seddikai Sharpblade has led a party in service to Szass Tam to the fallen tomb, hoping to recover what is left of Acererak's library.

This section involves a mix of combat, the exploration of a layer of the tomb in the process of being rebuilt, and social interaction with the Thayans. (That interaction might or might not result in more combat.) As followers of Szass Tam, these Thayans are nominal enemies of Dar'lon Ma, and characters with the **Ally of the Zulkir** legacy event gain no benefit when dealing with them.

See appendix 2 for a map of this section of the tomb. Rooms and staircases not numbered are empty, holding only garbage and rubble.

AREA INFORMATION

Unless noted otherwise, the halls and chambers of the tomb have the following features:

Walls. The walls are made from grimy limestone bricks.

Floors. Floors are covered by well-fitted flagstones.

Ceilings. Ceilings in the tomb are 8 feet high in corridors and 12 feet high in rooms.

Lighting. The tomb is unlit except for whatever light the creatures exploring it bring with them.

Stairs. Stairs are hewn from rock and topped with slabs of cut limestone.

Spell Restrictions. Special wards imbued into the tomb when it was constructed remain in effect even after its destruction. The *arcane gate*, *astral projection*, *dimension door*, *etherealness*, *gate*, *misty step*, *passwall*, *plane shift*, *stone shape*, *teleport*, *teleportation circle*, *transport via plants*, and *tree stride* spells all fail when cast inside the tomb.

Excavation. The limestone bricks and flagstones of the tomb can be dislodged using a crowbar or similar tool, but the raw stone beneath is magically impervious to excavation.

CREATURE INFORMATION

As the characters will discover, the abandoned tomb is not as abandoned as all that. Guarded by **yuan-ti abominations** at the entrance, this surviving section of the Tomb of the Nine Gods is being renovated by a large crew of gnome **commoners** under the direction of a gnome **mage**—and has been infiltrated by powerful agents of the Red Wizards of Thay (use the **githyanki supreme commander** and **githyanki knight** stat blocks).

TOMB ENTRANCE

Near the base of Omu's northern cliffs, a 15-foot-tall obelisk stands covered by vines and moss. Behind it, flanked by thick foliage, is a 10-foot-wide passageway leading into the cliff.

Watchful Guardians. Six **yuan-ti abominations** lurk in the foliage near the tomb entrance, and can be spotted only with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. They have been engaged by Acererak to watch over the rebuilding of the tomb, and are under orders to prevent anyone except the gnomes currently in area 5 and area 6 from entering the tunnel. (The Thayans who the characters will discover in the tomb spotted the yuan-ti and used stealth and invisibility magic to get past them.)

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Consider the following suggestions for adjusting this scene depending on the relative combat strength of the party:

Very Weak. Remove two yuan-ti abominations.

Weak. Remove one yuan-ti abomination.

Strong. Add one yuan-ti abomination.

Very Strong. Add two yuan-ti abominations.

Playing the Pillars. You can make use of the following suggestions when running this encounter.

Combat. If the yuan-ti are not seen by the characters, they wait until the characters enter the tunnel, then attack from behind with surprise.

Exploration. Characters who explore the ruins close by the entrance find an in-use campsite set up for some thirty Small humanoids, featuring makeshift beds and well-used excavation tools. The camp holds nothing of value. (The gnomes currently working to restore the adjacent section of the tomb sleep here. See areas 5 and 6.)

Social. The yuan-ti have been instructed to attack any people they do not recognize. The characters might be able to fool the serpent folk into believing they are servants of Acererak, though such a deception is not likely to last long.

Into the Tomb. The 10-foot-wide tunnel continues for 40 feet into the cliff, then turns east and opens onto a set of stairs descending 50 feet to the tomb below.



1. YELLOWPOWDER TRAP

At the bottom of the stairs leading down from the entrance tunnel, a rectangular chamber opens up. The air here smells of sulfur, and the ceiling is supported by four rough iron pillars.

Furnishings. Several hard, wooden benches are scattered across the floor. A dried-up fountain set on a stone dais stands against the north wall. Inside the fountain is a rusty iron key (it opens nothing in the tomb).

Yellowpowder. The floor and the benches are covered in a heavy layer of a grainy yellow substance. Called yellowpowder, it was developed by Acererak and is highly explosive. Thankfully, it ignites only under special circumstances, as described below.

Silver Sphere. Hovering 4 feet off the ground in front of the south door is a 6-inch-wide silvery-white sphere. The sphere has AC 10 and 1 hit point, and a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check made from at least 10 feet away suggests that it is fragile. If the sphere takes any damage or if any creature comes within 10 feet of it, it turns into a silvery liquid and slops to the floor. When this liquid touches the yellowpowder, it ignites. The room is filled with orange-red flames, which spread 10 feet up the western staircase. Each creature in the flames must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The sphere can be safely moved with a *mage hand* spell or an inanimate object such as a net or pole, as long as no creature comes within 10 feet of it. If moved, it remains where it is placed for 10 minutes, then gently drifts back to its position in front of the door.

2. PLAYING POOL

Secret doors to the east and west are the only way into this cramped chamber. The secret doors slide open on stone runners, and are unlocked by pressing a certain brick that can be spotted by a character who examines the wall and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Air. The air in this chamber is cloudy and caustic. For every minute spent here, a creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 13 (2d12) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures that do not breathe automatically succeed on the saving throw.

Pool. The stone pool in the middle of the room is 3 feet high and 5 feet wide. It is filled to the brim with dark yellow acid that gives off clouds of noxious vapor. Any creature that enters the pool for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 9 (2d8) acid damage.

Engraved on the floor of the pool are the following words:

Left horn, right horn
Left eye, right eye
Nose, chin

The only way to discover the words is for a creature to place their hand in the acid and feel the engraved letters, or to somehow drain the pool. The words provide a clue to bypassing the trap in area 4.

3. ONCE-GRAND STAIRCASE

This broad open space was once the heart of the Tomb of the Nine Gods, but is now a stairway to nowhere.

Open Shaft. A 5-foot-wide stone balcony with a tarnished bronze rail surrounds the area, whose open center plunges down into darkness. The central shaft is 80 feet deep, its stone floor covered with debris from smashed statues. A crudely hewn stone ceiling opens up 30 feet above the balcony.

Stairs. The stairway against the north wall climbs 20 feet and then ends abruptly, overhanging the central shaft. The stairway against the west wall descends 20 feet before likewise ending over the central shaft. The bottom 5 feet of the west stairway are weakened, and collapse when more than 40 pounds of pressure are put on them. Anyone on the stairs when they collapse must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or plunge down the shaft.

4. THE DEVIL INSIDE

Acererak hid a valuable magic item behind a lethal trap in this area, which went undiscovered when the tomb was raided and left in ruins. The floor and walls here are engraved with images of unattached arms and hands. The air has a faint caustic smell, reminiscent of area 2.

Devil Face. Set into the middle of the floor is a stone bas-relief of a bearded devil face, painted green. Its mouth is open and completely filled by a two-foot-wide sphere of intense darkness. The sphere obliterates all matter that passes through it, with the exception of artifacts. Anything that touches the sphere but isn't wholly engulfed and obliterated by it takes 4d10 force damage. The sphere is stationary and cannot be moved.

Touching the parts of the devil face in the following order causes the sphere to disappear: left horn, right horn, left eye, right eye, nose, and chin (as per the inscription in area 2).

Treasure. Once the sphere is gone, the characters can access an *ioun stone of vitality* that sits in the mouth cavity of the devil face.

5. TRAP REPAIR CREW

This huge chamber has a checkerboard marble floor. The gnome in charge of the tomb's current restoration is currently here, overseeing some work. She is also dealing with a rather special problem.

Fixtures. A silver-plated sarcophagus stands in the middle of the room. Four huge stone gargoyle heads, their mouths closed, protrude from the walls. The narrow conduits behind the gargoyle faces, and the accompanying storage tanks, are filled with debris and can no longer be used.

Gnomes at Work. Fifteen gnome **commoners** are here when the characters first arrive, dressed in overalls and wielding tools. The gnomes are installing traps in various parts of the room. Some are working on the sarcophagus, while others have lifted certain of the checkerboard squares of the floor to set triggers beneath them.

A gnome **mage** named Lilli Folkor stands off to the side, scribbling on a sheet of paper with a charcoal pencil. The piece of paper has the following words on it, all crossed out:



Tomb of Fear
Tomb of Trepidation
Tomb of Horrorz
Tomb of Badness
Tomb of Pure Annihilation
Tomb of Horrors 2: Necrotic Bugaboo

All the workers stop and stare when they become aware of the characters, and Lilli nervously asks what they want. If questioned, Lilli freely admits that she and her crew are turning this abandoned section of the tomb back into a death trap dungeon. But she apologetically explains that she has signed a confidentiality agreement with the owner of the tomb, and cannot reveal anything about it.

Lilli does not know about the Thayans in area 6, who entered after her and her crew had started work, or the fate of the gnome crew working in that area.

What's in a Name? Acererak has told Lilli to come up with an exciting new name for the tomb, but she is finding the process difficult. If the characters help her come up with a name, she happily gives them the book pendant (see "Treasure" below) and explains how to use it.

LILLI FOLKOR

Lawful neutral gnome mage

Dressed in neat and unstained work attire, Lilli is the overseer of the restoration of this level of the tomb.

What They Want. Lilli wants to succeed in her assigned tasks—and understands the probable price for failure.

Pragmatic Contractor. A job is a job. Sometimes you're working for a baker in Waterdeep, and other times you're working for the most feared lich in the multiverse.

Treasure. Lilli carries a heavy belt pouch full of coin, which is this month's payroll. She also has a brass pendant about her neck in the shape of a book. A creature wearing the pendant automatically opens the door to area 7.



6. THAY IS HERE

Behind a pale door made entirely of bones, a group of Thayans are searching for Acererak's library. The floor here is covered with bones and stony debris, and six shattered glass cauldrons line the walls.

A wooden cart in the middle of the room is loaded with debris, and brooms and shovels scattered around speak to the place being in the process of a cleanup. Twelve gnome corpses are also here, each dressed in overalls and killed by slashing wounds.

Thayan Negotiations. Seddikai Sharpblade, a Thayan knight commander (use the **githyanki supreme commander** stat block) is here with two Thayan knights (use the **githyanki knight** stat block). He is interrogating the last surviving gnome, named Urshar, about how to enter area 7. (The gnome does not know.)

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Consider the following suggestions for adjusting this scene depending on the relative combat strength of the party:

Very Weak. Remove two **Thayan knights**.

Weak. Remove one **Thayan knight**.

Strong. Add one **Thayan knight**.

Very Strong. Add two **Thayan knights**.

Playing the Pillars. You can make use of the following suggestions when running this encounter.

Combat. If combat seems inevitable, the Thayan knights immediately close to engage the characters. On the first round, Seddikai stays out of range to cast *Bigby's hand*, either using the clenched fist option to attack spellcasters, or the grasping hand option to immobilize rogues and monks. He also uses his Command Ally legendary action to give the knights extra attacks. On the second round, Seddikai enters melee, seeking to aid any knights who are in trouble.

Exploration. Searching the debris locates a potion (see "Treasure" below).

Social. Seddikai wants to avoid combat if possible. He first seeks to ascertain why the characters are there, and what their quest is. Once that's established, he urges them to leave the tomb and let the Thayans go about their business, describing the power of Thay and saying how foolish the characters would be to cross them. If the characters refuse to comply, he orders the knights to attack. Although Seddikai knows of Dar'lon Ma, he reports to Szass Tam and does not care about the characters' relationships with other zulkirs.

Treasure. Anyone searching the debris and making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a *potion of superior healing*.

SEDDIKAI SHARPBLADE

Lawful evil human Thayan knight commander

Dressed in gleaming red plate armor with gilt highlights, Seddikai is one of Szass Tam's most impressive minions.

What They Want. Seddikai wants what's left of Acererak's library, and will not be swayed from this mission.

Confident Champion. Seddikai is used to getting his own way, and is even more used to winning. He is positive he can handle any challenge he encounters.

7. ARCHITECT'S OFFICE

The door to this chamber is made of burnished adamantine and is magically immune to all forms of damage. The door has no handle and is locked. A keyhole is set in the middle of the door—but is a fake, and trapped. Anyone who touches the door while wearing the brass pendant carried by Lilli in area 5 causes it to swing open. It automatically locks again when closed. This is the only way to open the door.

Keyhole Trap. Inserting anything into the keyhole causes the door to emit a booming shockwave that forces each creature within 20 feet of the door to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 55 (10d10) thunder damage and is knocked prone. On a successful save, they take half as much damage and are not knocked prone.

Inside the Room. Beyond the door stand a tall-backed chair and a dusty wooden writing desk covered with architectural drawings. Decrepit bookshelves line the north and south walls, covered with dozens of books, tomes, codices, scrolls, and fragments. Some are so ancient that they crumble when touched. Others are covered in mildew and are completely unreadable. The books, scrolls, and fragments cover every topic imaginable, including history, geography, theology, philosophy, and magic (though no spellbooks are present).

Treasure. A thorough search of the material on the shelves takes two hours—and fails to turn up *The Death of the Mind*. The book is here, but has been magically disguised as a copy of *A Merchant's Musings* by Holdryn Nalaster. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of illusion magic around that book. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 16) cast on the book destroys the illusion.

The characters can choose to make a copy of the book before returning to Candlekeep. If they do so, they gain access to the **Code Breaker** legacy event.

WRAP-UP

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

When the characters return to Candlekeep with *The Death of the Mind*, Master Reader Alsbith uses the lore contained within to complete his research into a ritual that can track the true *Wyrmskull Throne*. If asked, he refuses to make a copy of the book, citing the dangerous lore it contains, and does not offer to loan it to the characters.

ALSBITH'S RITUAL

Alsbith explains that all of the duplicate thrones retain a magical connection to the original. With the real *Wyrmskull Throne* thus sitting in the center of dozens of connections, the ritual he has created tracks that magic back to the center of the web.

THE CHASE CONTINUES

The characters have the ritual in hand. However, to be fully successful, the ritual requires detailed knowledge of the magic of the *Wyrmskull Throne*, making the mages of the storm giant court the best choice for performing it. The characters will return to Maelstrom, where the next adventure begins. When the complex ritual is performed, the characters learn that the *Wyrmskull Throne* is on Wyvernfang, a mountain in the Thunder Peaks—marking that mountain range to the east of Cormyr as the next location in the party's search.

REWARDS

At the **end of the session**, the characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments.

CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters earn the following rewards.

ADVANCEMENT

A character participating in this adventure gains one level. Players must tick the box to show this reward has been claimed.

OPTIONAL: DECLINING ADVANCEMENT

Each player can decline advancement if they so choose, gaining potential benefits. It's possible that a player might want their character to not advance outside of an adventure's level range, meaning that they'd be unable to play the adventure as planned. Similarly, advancing too quickly means that a character won't earn as much gold as their peers.

Conversely, remind the players that the amount of gold their characters can earn per level is limited. Characters declining advancement might reach a point where they no longer earn gold.

GOLD

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically feature cues for where this treasure appears, but you can add it wherever you see fit. The maximum gold that you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

MAGIC ITEMS

The characters can keep the following magic items (described in "Appendix 4: Character Rewards") if they are found during the adventure:

- *Ioun stone of vitality*
- *Necklace of prayer beads*
- *Potion of heroism*
- *Potion of superior healing*

LEGACY EVENTS

The characters can gain the following legacy event in this adventure.

Code Breaker. You have made a copy of *The Death of the Mind*, the book requested by Master Reader Alsbith. Written in a code using an ancient dialect of Chultan, the book is nearly indecipherable. If you speak Chultan or can use magic or class features every day to read it, you can attempt to break the code. Spend 10 DT and attempt a DC 20 Intelligence check in front of your DM. If you are successful, you will eventually crack the code in a future adventure. If not, you fail, but you can choose to spend another 10 DT and try again.

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

For running this adventure, you earn a DM Reward. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure.

EHHARDE EREMAEV

(EH-hard air-mayv)

Ehharde wears sumptuous purple robes, and his bald head is well powdered. His cheeks are highlighted with rouge, his lips are painted with berry juice, and his eyes are lined with kohl.

What They Want. Ehharde has finished creating the duplicate thrones (an accomplishment he takes great pride in), and must now focus on building up his small army.

Vain Sadist. A lifelong member of the Cult of the Dragon, Ehharde is infamous for his cruelty and his refined taste. He always dresses well and is impeccably made up.

ELSBA FLIVUL

(elz-ba FLIV-ul)

Elsba came to Candlekeep two years ago to research crops her family was considering planting on their farm. While being assisted in her search by Portia, Elsba developed feelings for the halfling, and has returned to the library every few tendays just to shyly catch sight of her.

What They Want. Elsba hopes to win over Portia.

Intensely Shy. Elsba is uncomfortably shy about her feelings. She assumes that others are being cruel or mocking her when they try to interact with her, which can make her inadvertently appear hostile.

FALLTHRA EVERSHPARP

(FALL-thra)

Dressed in plain purple robes, Fallthra has a round build, neat hair, and a weathered face.

What They Want. Fallthra wants to keep her sections of the library well organized, but gets easily overwhelmed by the amount of work that entails.

Grumpy Martinet. Fallthra believes that people should follow the rules, and likes everything to be kept in perfect order. She gets very touchy when faced with a mess.

JHEWANA GRIMCROFT

(ju-WAHN-uh)

Jhewana dresses in plain purple robes, and her face is pale and drawn. Some years ago, she was killed in a magical accident at Candlekeep. The scholars arranged for her to be resurrected, but something went wrong during the casting and left her in a perpetual state of grim pallor.

What They Want. Collecting magic items is one of the few things that gives Jhewana pleasure.

Bitter Lifer. Jhewana's experience of death and rebirth has left her feeling bitter toward Candlekeep. However, she dares not leave, for she knows no other life.

LILLI FOLKOR

(lil-lee FOL-kur)

Dressed in neat and unstained work attire, Lilli is the overseer of the restoration of this level of the tomb.

What They Want. Lilli wants to succeed in her assigned tasks—and understands the probable price for failure.

Pragmatic Contractor. A job is a job. Sometimes you're working for a baker in Waterdeep, and other times you're working for the most feared lich in the multiverse.

LITTLE ONE

Dressed in plain robes, Little One wears a *headband of intellect* that he looted from a halfling many years ago. After donning it, he grew interested in scholarly matters and came to Candlekeep to learn as much as he could. Recently, Little One has been granted special volunteer status that allows him carefully controlled access to the Great Library. By volunteering to cover for busy acolytes from time to time, Little One hopes to one day be invited to join the Avowed.

What They Want. Little One wishes desperately to be fully accepted by the Avowed.

Gentle Scholar. Because of his size, Little One works especially hard to be as gentle as he can. He is a scholar at heart, and likes nothing so much as to study a good book.



MASTER READER ALSBITH

(awls-bith)

Dressed in embroidered mulberry-colored robes, Alsbith has a craggy face and spiky gray hair.

What They Want. Alsbith desperately wants to repair the damage he thinks he did by helping Ehharde.

Thoughtless Genius. Alsbith is a brilliant scholar and magic user, but he sometimes fails to consider the social consequences of his actions.

PORTIA UNDERFOOT

(POR-sha)

Dressed in the plain lavender robes of a junior monk, Portia has large, brown eyes and a full face. Though friendly, she is somewhat shy.

What They Want. Portia has been a monk for only a few months, and she desperately wants to impress her superiors.

Bashful Helper. Portia's current job is guiding guests around Candlekeep, though her shy nature means she is reluctant to offer too much advice.

SEDDIKAI SHARPBLADE

(SED-uh-kie)

Dressed in gleaming red plate armor with gilt highlights, Seddikai is one of Szass Tam's most impressive minions.

What They Want. Seddikai wants what's left of Acererak's library, and will not be swayed from this mission.

Confident Champion. Seddikai is used to getting his own way, and is even more used to winning. He is positive he can handle any challenge he encounters.

THELLAN

(HELL-uhn)

Thellan is over twenty feet tall and has gray skin, blue-tinged hair, and green eyes. He wears a richly embroidered blue tunic and a belt of gold. His brow is furrowed, he speaks in a steady, low-pitched voice, and he frequently strokes the hilt of his greatsword.

What They Want. Thellan urgently desires to recover the *Wyrmskull Throne* for Princess Serissa.

Stalwart Ally. Thellan's family sent him and his sister to Maelstrom, where they were raised as wards of King Hekaton alongside Serissa. He is willing to risk his life—and the lives of others—to recover the *Wyrmskull Throne* and shore up the power of the princess.



CREATURE STATISTICS

The following creatures appear in this adventure.

ADULT BLUE DRAGON

Huge dragon, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 225 (18d12 + 108)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	10 (+0)	23 (+6)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +11, Wis +7, Cha +9

Skills Deception +12, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities lightning

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

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

ACTIONS

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) lightning damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Lightning Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales lightning in a 90-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 66 (12d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon 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. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- **Detect.** The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.
- **Tail Attack.** The dragon makes a tail attack.
- **Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions).** The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (2d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to half its flying speed.

ADULT GREEN SHADOW DRAGON

Huge dragon, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 207 (18d12 + 90)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +10, Wis +7, Cha +8

Skills Deception +8, Insight +7, Perception +12, Persuasion +8, Stealth +11

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Living Shadow. While in dim light or darkness, the dragon has resistance to damage that isn't force, psychic, or radiant.

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

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

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

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

ACTIONS

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Shadow Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales shadowy gas in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A humanoid reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies, and an undead shadow rises from its corpse and acts immediately after the dragon in the initiative count. The shadow is under the dragon's control.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon 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. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- **Detect.** The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.
- **Tail Attack.** The dragon makes a tail attack.
- **Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions).** The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to half its flying speed.

ARCHMAGE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +13, History +13

Damage Resistance damage from spells; nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from *stoneskin*)

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any six languages

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

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

Spellcasting. The archmage is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The archmage can cast disguise self and invisibility at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *identify*, *mage armor**, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *fire shield*, *stoneskin**

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *scrying*, *wall of force*

6th level (3 slots): *globe of invulnerability*

7th level (3 slots): *teleport*

8th level (3 slots): *mind blank**

9th level (3 slots): *time stop*

*: The archmage casts these spells on itself before combat

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

CLAY GOLEM

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 133 (14d10 + 56)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Dethek but can't speak

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

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

Berserk. Whenever the golem starts its turn with 60 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

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

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

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The target dies if this attack reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The reduction lasts until removed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Haste (Recharge 5-6). Until the end of its next turn, the golem magically gains a +2 bonus to its AC, has advantage on Dexterity saving throws, and can use its slam attack as a bonus action.

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

CULTIST

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

GITHYANKI KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (gith), lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (half plate)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +5, Wis +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Gith, Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The githyanki's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *mage hand* (the hand is invisible)

3/day each: *jump*, *misty step*, *nondetection* (self only), *tongues*

1/day each: *plane shift*, *telekinesis*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The githyanki makes two silver greatsword attacks.

Silver Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) psychic damage. This is a magic weapon attack. On a critical hit against a target in an astral body (as with an astral projection spell), the githyanki can cut the silvery cord that tethers the target to its material body, instead of dealing damage.

GITHYANKI SUPREME

COMMANDER

Medium humanoid (gith), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 187 (22d8 + 88)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +9, Int +8, Wis +8

Skills Insight +8, Intimidation +9, Perception +8

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Gith

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The githyanki's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *mage hand* (the hand is invisible)

3/day each: *jump*, *levitate* (self only), *misty step*, *nondetection* (self only)

1/day each: *Bigby's hand*, *mass suggestion*, *plane shift*, *telekinesis*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The githyanki makes two greatsword attacks.

Silver Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage plus 17 (5d6) psychic damage. On a critical hit against a target in an astral body (as with the astral projection spell), the githyanki can cut the silvery cord that tethers the target to its material body, instead of dealing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The githyanki adds 5 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the githyanki must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The githyanki 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. The githyanki regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack (2 Actions). The githyanki makes a greatsword attack.

Command Ally. The githyanki targets one ally it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see or hear the githyanki, the target can make one melee weapon attack using its reaction and has advantage on the attack roll.

Teleport. The githyanki magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing and carrying, to an unoccupied space it can see within 30 feet of it. It also becomes insubstantial until the start of its next turn. While insubstantial, it can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. If it ends its turn inside an object, it takes 16 (3d10) force damage and is moved to the nearest unoccupied space.

MAGE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any four languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

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

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*

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

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

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.

OGRE

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (hide armor)
Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages any two languages
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

ACTIONS

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

STORM GIANT

Huge giant, chaotic good

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)
Hit Points 230 (20d12 + 100)
Speed 50 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29(+9)	14(+2)	20(+5)	16(+3)	18(+4)	18(+4)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +10, Wis +9, Cha +9
Skills Arcana +8, Athletics +14, History +8, Perception +9
Damage Resistances cold
Damage Immunities lightning, thunder
Senses passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Amphibious. The giant can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The giant's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic, feather fall, levitate, light*
3/day each: *control weather, water breathing*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (6d6 + 9) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (4d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Lightning Strike (Recharge 5–6). The giant hurls a magical lightning bolt at a point it can see within 500 feet of it. Each creature within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

YUAN-TI ABOMINATION

Large monstrosity (shapechanger, yuan-ti), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6
Damage immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Shapechanger. The yuan-ti can use its action to polymorph into a Large snake, or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It doesn't change form if it dies.

Innate Spellcasting (Abomination Form Only). The yuan-ti's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The yuan-ti can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *animal friendship* (snakes only)
3/day: *suggestion*
1/day: *fear*

Magic Resistance. The yuan-ti has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The yuan-ti makes two ranged attacks or three melee attacks, but can use its bite and constrict attacks only once each.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the yuan-ti can't constrict another target.

Scimitar (Abomination Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage.

Longbow (Abomination Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

ZEHIRA DERYAN

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 19 (mariner's studded leather, shield +1)
Hit Points 90 (12d10 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dexterity +9, Intelligence +5
Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +12, Insight +8, Perception +8, Persuasion +12, Stealth +9, Survival +8
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Elvish, Infernal, Primordial, Sahuagin, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Cunning Action. Zehira can take a bonus action on each of her turns to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Fancy Footwork. During her turn, if Zehira makes a melee attack against a creature, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against her for the rest of her turn.

Rakish Audacity. Zehira adds her CHA modifier (+2) to her initiative rolls. She doesn't need advantage on the attack roll to use Sneak Attack against a creature if she is within 5 ft. of it, no other creatures are within 5 ft. of her, and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Zehira deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally that isn't incapacitated and Zehira doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll. Also see **Rakish Audacity**.

Spellcasting. Zehira is a 12th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Zehira has the following ranger spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *goodberry*, *zephyr strike*
2nd level (3 slots): *darkvision*, *lesser restoration*
3rd level (2 slots): *water breathing*

ACTIONS

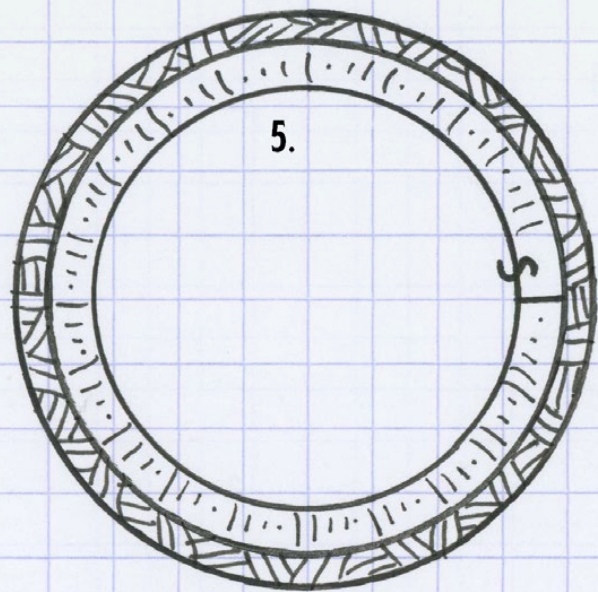
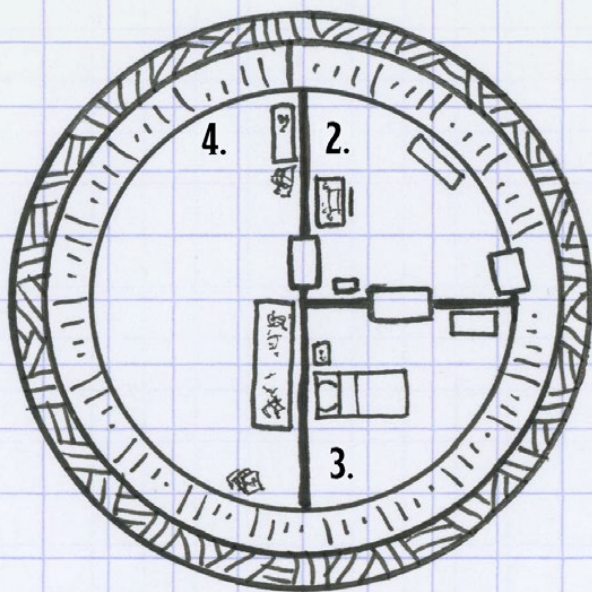
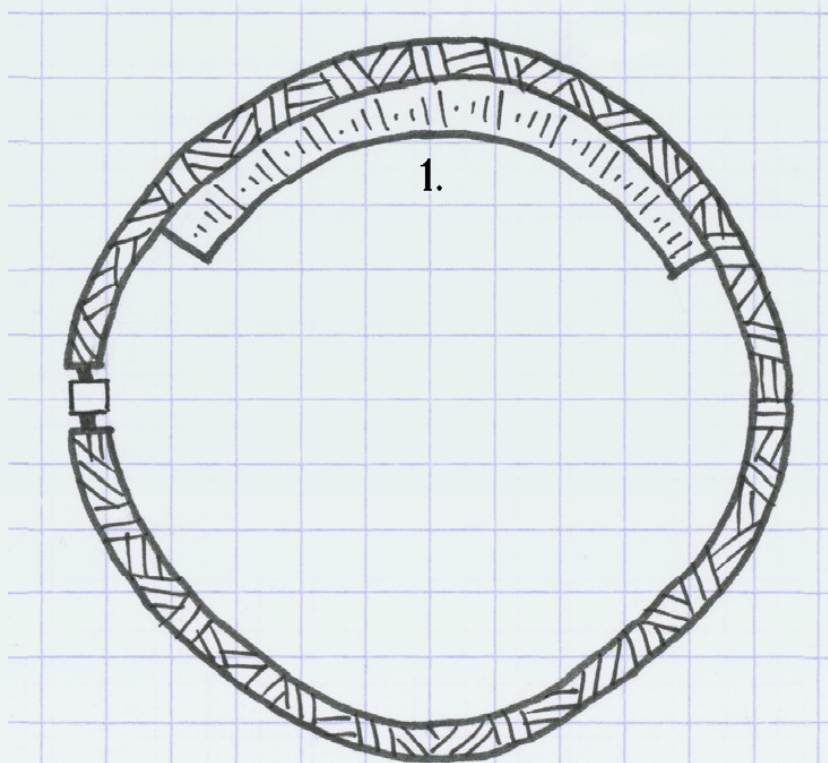
Multiattack. Zehira makes two attacks with either her club, dagger, or rapier.

Club +3. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d4 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

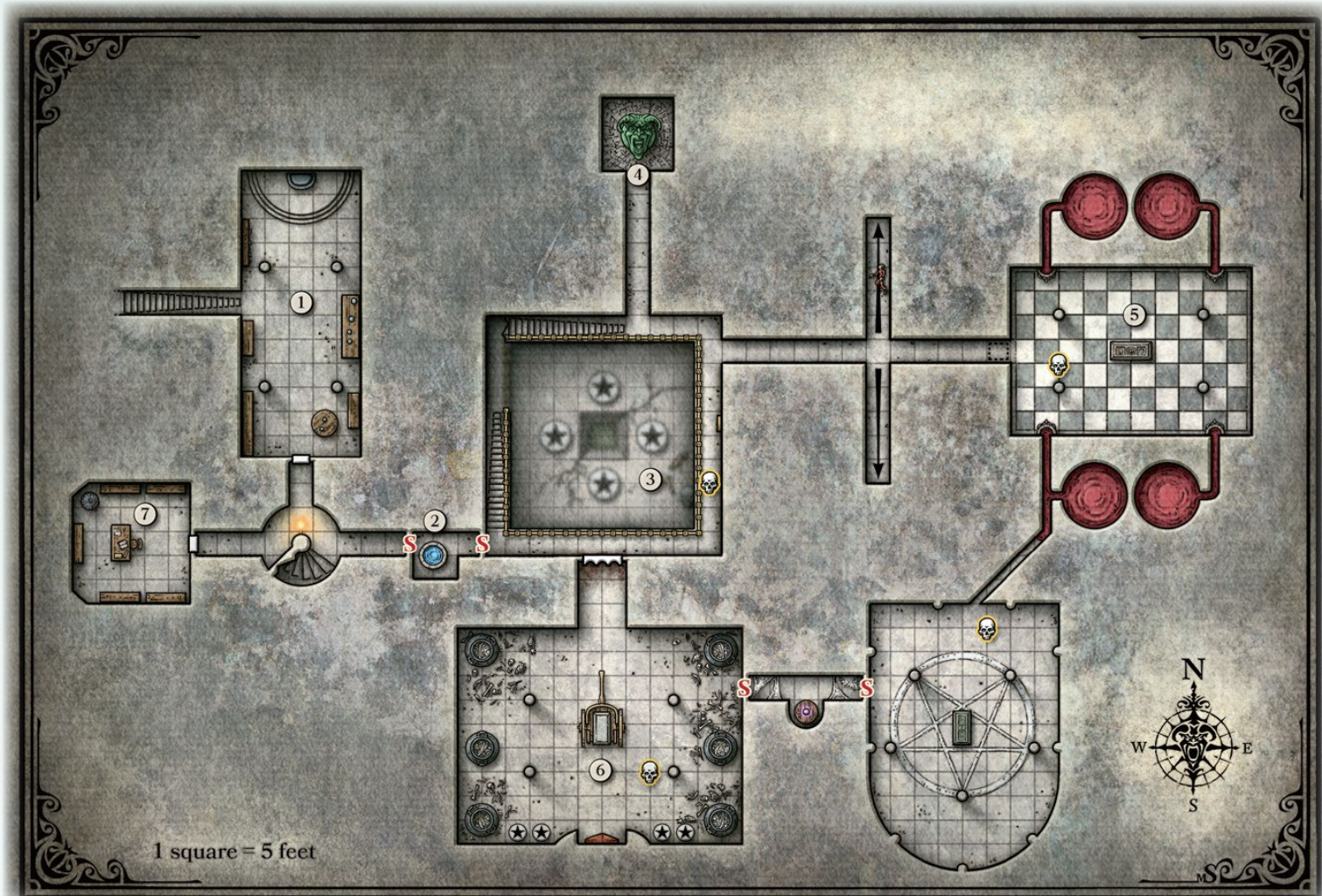
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage.

APPENDIX 1: SHADOWED TOWER MAP



APPENDIX 2: TOMB OF THE NINE GODS MAP



APPENDIX 3: HANDOUT

My dear colleague:

Thank you for your note confirming the safe delivery of the item, though it was quite unnecessary. You took a great risk writing to me in Common, and I must insist that you use the ancient tongue in future.

I will briefly answer your questions, even as I express my disdain for your inability to follow the instructions I sent you:

1. The item is quite harmless as long as you follow the instructions. It is merely a shadow replica, though a very good one.
2. Yes, I imagine it does rather put you in some danger, since it can be tracked. This is rather the point—to spread them out over a great distance, and to divide the attention of the enemy.
3. I have no idea where the other items went. Indeed, I would not have known you were given one except for your indiscreet letter.
4. I have no idea where the original is, nor would I tell you if I did. So far as I am aware, it is not possible to track it now, although one who still dwells in Candlekeep might be able to ascertain some way to do so. I intend to go there as soon as my other duties allow, and to tie off that loose thread.

Please do not message me again unless it is absolutely necessary. Otherwise, there will be consequences.

Regards,

Ehharde Eremaev
Wearer of Purple

APPENDIX 4: CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters can keep the following magic items if they are found during the adventure. It is suggested that you print off enough copies of this page to be able to give one to each of your players, crossing out rewards they didn't receive during the session.

IOUN STONE OF VITALITY

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

An Ioun stone is named after Ioun, a god of knowledge and prophecy revered on some worlds. Many types of Ioun stone exist, each type a distinct combination of shape and color.

When you use an action to toss one of these stones into the air, the stone orbits your head at a distance of 1d3 feet and confers a benefit to you. Thereafter, another creature must use an action to grasp or net the stone to separate it from you, either by making a successful attack roll against AC 24 or a successful DC 24 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. You can use an action to seize and stow the stone, ending its effect.

A stone has AC 24, 10 hit points, and resistance to all damage. It is considered to be an object that is being worn while it orbits your head.

Vitality. You gain a +1 bonus to death saving throws while this luminous green-and-blue marbled sphere orbits your head.

NECKLACE OF PRAYER BEADS

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a cleric, druid, or paladin)

This necklace has 1d4 + 2 magic beads made from aquamarine, black pearl, or topaz. It also has many nonmagical beads made from stones such as amber, bloodstone, citrine, coral, jade, pearl, or quartz. If a magic bead is removed from the necklace, that bead loses its magic.

Six types of magic beads exist. The DM decides the type of each bead on the necklace or determines it randomly. A necklace can have more than one bead of the same type. To use one, you must be wearing the necklace. Each bead contains a spell that you can cast from it as a bonus action (using your spell save DC if a save is necessary). Once a magic bead's spell is cast, that bead can't be used again until the next dawn.

d20	Bead of...	Spell
1–6	Blessing	<i>Bless</i>
7–12	Curing	<i>Cure wounds</i> (2nd level) or <i>lesser restoration</i>
13–16	Favor	<i>Greater restoration</i>
17–18	Smiting	<i>Branding smite</i>
19	Summons	<i>Planar ally</i>
20	Wind walking	<i>Wind walk</i>

POTION OF HEROISM

Potion, rare

For 1 hour after drinking it, you gain 10 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour. For the same duration, you

are under the effect of the *bless* spell (no concentration required). This blue potion bubbles and steams as if boiling.

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, common

You regain hit points when you drink this potion. The number of hit points depends on the potion's rarity, as shown in the Potions of Healing table. Whatever its potency, the potion's red liquid glimmers when agitated.

POTIONS OF HEALING

Potion of ...	Rarity	HP Regained
Healing	Common	2d4 + 2
Greater healing	Uncommon	4d4 + 4
Superior healing	Rare	8d4 + 8
Supreme healing	Very rare	10d4 + 20

APPENDIX 5: LEGACY EVENTS

The characters might earn the following story award in this adventure.

CODE BREAKER

You have made a copy of *The Death of the Mind*, the book requested by Master Reader Alsboth. Written in a code using an ancient dialect of Chultan, the book is nearly indecipherable. If you speak Chultan or can use magic or class features every day to read it, you can attempt to break the code. Spend 10 DT and attempt a DC 20 Intelligence check in front of your DM. If you are successful, you will eventually crack the code in a future adventure. If not, you fail, but you can choose to spend another 10 DT and try again.

APPENDIX 6: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To run an adventure as a DM, you must have three to seven players, each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see the "Adventure Primer" section at the start of the adventure).

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

Information about the Adventurers League, including finding places to play, organizing events, and a list of supporting resources and documents, can be found here: <http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>.

NEW TO THE ANNUAL STORYLINE?

You can find out more about the Dreams of Red Wizards storyline here: <http://dndadventurersleague.org/storyline-seasons/dreams-of-the-red-wizards/>

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Perception score, and anything the adventures specifies as notable (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether the completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that 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 the 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 Players Guide* for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or 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 THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong