

D&D

# ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

## RED WAR

### EMBASSY OF EVIL



K. Jasmine Vernon

CCC-ST2-1



# Red War: Embassy of Evil

**That which must remain lost has been discovered.**

As magic rains down upon Mulmaster and the city falls to ruin, deep within the inner sanctum of the Thayvian Embassy, Szass Tam's agents work tirelessly to decipher the *Lost Journal of Karsus*. Can the heroes stop Szass Tam before he learns the secrets of history's most notorious Wizard?

*A 4-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters*

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**CCC-ST2-1 Red War: Embassy of Evil**

## Introduction

Welcome to *Red War: Embassy of Evil*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system. This adventure takes place during the events of *DDEP00-01 The Red War* after the events of the *Elemental Evil™* storyline season, and the events of *DDAL00-01 Window to the Past*.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 10**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

## Adjusting This Adventure

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

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

### 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

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

## Before Play at the Table

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. Familiarize 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 Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

## Playing the Dungeon Master

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

**You're Empowered.** Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

**Challenge Your Players.** Gauge the experience level of your **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

**Keep the Adventure Moving.** When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling—play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

## Adventure Primer

*"Despair is a narcotic. It lulls the mind into indifference."*  
– Charlie Chaplin

### Adventure Background

The ancient kingdom of Netheril was once a mighty Empire of knowledge and magic, but a long and bitter war with an equally powerful foe threatened its survival.

In an act of desperation, Karsus; history's most powerful wizard – siphoned the divinity of Mystryl, and spelled doom for his people. In order to prevent his folly from repeating, Mystra – the reincarnation of Mystryl rewrote the laws of magic, and banished Karsus' research to the ends of the universe.

Or so it was believed....

Six months ago, an expedition of Red Wizards uncovered a long-forgotten Mythal buried beneath the Glacier of the White Wyrms. Hiring adventurers to explore its depths, they uncovered a veritable library of ancient magical lore, which was relocated to Mulmaster for study, but not before Harper agents stole several of the volumes, including 3 pertaining to the forgotten school of Chronomancy.

Over the intervening months, Malkyn Fenris – a High Harper and archmage of some repute studied the stolen Chronomancy texts, uncovering a hidden cipher pointing to the location of Karsus' lost research journals, long thought destroyed by Mystra. Learning of this too late, Malkyn was unable to prevent Szass Tam from acquiring the *Lost Journal of Karsus* and transporting it to Mulmaster.

With the dawning of the Red War, the fate of Mulmaster hangs in the balance. Spells rain down upon the city, and undead roam the streets. But all hope is not lost. Malkyn believes the war may prove sufficient distraction to infiltrate the Thayvian Embassy, and destroy the journal before it is deciphered.

#### Location and NPC Summary

The following NPCs and locations appear prominently in this adventure.

**Mulmaster (MUL-master).** The City of Danger was once a cosmopolitan metropolis under the dictatorship of the High Blade, but was devastated by the machinations of the Cults of Elemental Evil. In the years following, it has been rebuilding with the aid of the Mageocracy of Thay.

**Szass Tam (ZAZ TAM).** While claiming the title of Zulkir of

Necromancy, this vile lich rules over Thay and his fellow Zulkirs through power and fear. Extremely paranoid, Szass Tam's plots always include multiple layered contingencies, and he will not hesitate to sacrifice every living soul in Mulmaster to achieve his goals.

**Malkyn Fenris (MAL-kin FEN-ris).** The self-proclaimed "Archmage of Phlan", this cheerful yet narcissistic gnome is a renowned Open Harper and wizard with an obsession with the color green, and one of the signatories of the *Harper Declaration of Support*. Being partially responsible for the Red War itself, he seeks to minimize the damage caused to the city of Mulmaster, and prevent Szass Tam from accomplishing his goals at any personal cost. Somewhat unhinged, Malkyn often speaks of things which have yet to occur, and despite evidence to the contrary – refers to himself as a Leprechaun.

**Karsus (CAR-sus).** Inventor of the infamous *Karsus' Avatar* spell (the only 12<sup>th</sup> level spell in existence), Karsus was a wizard of great talent and a true genius at the magical arts. Unfortunately, he was wantonly reckless and shortsighted, and his actions resulted in the destruction of Netheril and the death of Mystryl. Despite changes to the weave created by her successor Mystra that prevented the use of 11<sup>th</sup> level and higher spells, his research notes would be invaluable and highly dangerous in the hands of any wizard.

**Thessyl'k (THES-ilk).** While not yet a Zulkir, Thessyl'k is a powerful archmage, enchanter, and master cryptographer. It is his duty to translate the *Lost Journal of Karsus*, sparing Szass Tam the tedium of doing it himself.

### Adventure Overview

The adventure is broken down into three parts:

**Part 1.** Trapped within Mulmaster, the heroes battle against a small contingent of Red Wizards before being recruited to assist Malkyn Fenris in destroying the *Lost Journal of Karsus*.

**Part 2.** With the aid of Malkyn, the characters infiltrate the Thayvian Embassy in search of the journal, while attempting to avoid detection.

**Part 3.** Locating the journal, the characters must battle Master Thessyl'k and destroy the tome before the magic binding the Embassy unravels.

### Adventure Hooks

For whatever reason, the characters find themselves in the city of Mulmaster just as the Red War against Thay begins.

**A call to arms.** Answering the call of war, you volunteered to assist your Faction in ridding Mulmaster of the Thayan scourge.

**Just unlucky I guess.** Unaware that war was brewing, you were unlucky enough to get swept up in the Red War while engaged in more mundane business within the city.

## The Red War

This adventure takes place during the events of *DDEP00-01 The Red War*. As a result, the following additional rules are in effect for the duration of this adventure.

### Szass Tam's Necrotic Kiss

With the assistance of Zulkir Dar'lon Ma – Szass Tam has blanketed the city of Mulmaster in a series of enchantments.

All living humanoids other than those specified in this adventure are immediately afflicted with the following curse (this includes player characters):

#### Szass Tam's Necrotic Kiss (Curse)

- Any living creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of this creature must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or else immediately gain one level of exhaustion. Levels of exhaustion gained as a result of this curse are healed at a rate of one per week.

**Removing the Curse.** This curse cannot be removed, dispelled, or delayed by any known spell or effect – including wish. The curse ends automatically at the conclusion of this adventure (but is also present in other adventures set during the Red War).

**Non-Humanoid Creatures.** Living non-humanoid creatures (beasts, elementals, summoned fey, etc.) are not afflicted with the curse, but are not immune to its effects. If any such creature (including the character's own mount, if any) ends its turn adjacent to an afflicted humanoid, they must make the saving throw or suffer 1 level of exhaustion from the Necrotic Kiss.

DMs should describe the effect after the first save is made. While this curse is an ever-present challenge for the duration of this adventure, it should not remain unexplained.

#### For example

- Myralk moves adjacent to a Red Wizard, and ends his turn. He does not need to make a saving throw against the Necrotic Kiss as Myralk is not adjacent to himself, nor is the Red Wizard afflicted.
- Saluri moves adjacent to Myralk and the Red Wizard, and ends her turn. Saluri must now make a saving throw against the Necrotic Kiss because Bob is afflicted.
- Red Wizard dances wildly, and ends their turn. The Red Wizard does not need to make a save because Red Wizards are immune to the effect.

- At the end of Myralk's next turn, if Myralk is still adjacent to Saluri he too will need to make a saving throw, as Saluri herself is afflicted.
- If the adventurers move so that there's 10 feet of space, no save is needed by either character.

### Cancerous Magic

The Thayans have been toiling away in an effort to harness the rifts into the elemental plane. These rifts are an abomination in the fabric of the Weave, and magic has begun to behave erratically as a result.

The following effects apply for the duration of this adventure:

#### Cancerous Magic

- **Spells (Wild Surge).** Every spell (including cantrips) cast by the characters and their allies automatically triggers a *wild surge*. Roll on the Wild Surge table in the *Player's Handbook* (p104).
- **Necrotic Kiss.** Any creature afflicted with *Szass Tam's Necrotic Kiss* has disadvantage on the first saving throw they make each round.

### Red Wizards and their Allies

NPC **Red Wizards**, and **Thayan Warriors** present in this adventure are:

- **Immune to the Necrotic Kiss.** They are not afflicted with this curse, and do not need to make saving throws if they end their turn adjacent to an afflicted humanoid.
- **Immune to the effects of Cancerous Magic.** NPC Red Wizards may cast all spells freely, without any risk of triggering a wild surge.

### Exhaustion

The following excerpt describes the effects of each level of exhaustion. For full details, please see sidebar on p291 of the *player's handbook*, or p105 of the *player's basic rules*.

#### Exhaustion

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on Ability Checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws
4	Hit point maximum halved
5	Speed reduced to 0
6	Death

# Part 1. Blood, Death, and Fire

**Estimated Duration:** 1 hour.

The adventure begins with the characters trapped within the city of Mulmaster as Szass Tam launches his attack.

## The Siege of Mulmaster

A crack of thunder rolls across the sky, as an unnatural storm swiftly blankets the city of Mulmaster in shadow. Crimson flashes of lightning erupt within the broiling clouds, lancing the sky with malice.

Surging toward you, a panicked stampede of civilians flees from an unseen terror to the north, forcing you to duck into a nearby blind alley or risk being crushed by the throng.

You watch in horror as numerous citizens are struck dead by a mysterious force that seems to ripple through the crowd like a plague; their emaciated bodies decaying rapidly before your very eyes.

### General Features

Mulmaster has the following features during the invasion:

**Terrain.** The city has cobbled streets and narrow alleys. Rubble and debris clog streets and alleys making most areas difficult terrain. Enormous chasms and sinkholes split buildings and roads in two. Swirling vortices of elemental fire burn continuously.

**Structures.** Most buildings are damaged, and in various states of repair. The city still bears the scars of the Elemental Cults, and has yet to heal.

**Weather.** A dark, unnatural storm rages overhead blotting out the sun. Violent red lightning arcs across the sky.

**Light.** During the day the area is dim light, and creatures with aversion to sunlight suffer no penalties within the city.

**Smells and Sounds.** Screams of panic, the roar of thunder, and the ring of battle create a cacophony of sound. The stench of blood, decay, and burning flesh assail the senses.

### A. Thayan Patrol (Social; Combat)

**One red wizard evoker, two Thayan warriors, and one Ogre zombie** pause near the mouth of the alley to animate several of the nearby corpses.

### Tricks of the Trade

**Ambush.** As the patrol is unaware of the characters hiding within the blind alley, they have an opportunity to ambush the patrol. If the characters initiate combat, each character must make a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If all characters succeed, the patrol is surprised.

**Communicate.** If the characters initiate dialogue, the evoker is momentarily surprised but quickly recovers their composure. The Thayans stall for time so that **MuLen** can complete their spell. See Social Interlude below.

**Hide and Wait.** If the characters wait for the patrol to leave, the evoker completes their spell. Add **three ghouls** to the encounter under the evoker's command. With the help of the newly animated ghouls, the patrol begins work constructing a barricade and checkpoint, and shows no sign of leaving the area. While they wait, each character may make a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If successful, they are hidden.

### Social Interlude

If the characters speak to the patrol, the **red wizard** introduces himself as **MuLen Xiph** (*LE non-binary human evoker, 29*) and greets the characters warmly.

- Their companions are **Alec** (*LE male human, 46*) and **Zaneth** (*LE male human, 23*).
- MuLen makes idle, yet polite conversation, but does not offer any information of value to the characters.

**Insight.** Characters with passive Wisdom (Insight) of 13 or higher, realize they are simply stalling for time, so that they can complete their spell.

**Create Undead.** If MuLen completes their spell (1 minute), add **three ghouls** to the encounter under their command.

### Roleplaying MuLen Xiph (*Moo-len ZIFF*)

*LE non-binary human red wizard evoker, 29.*

**Personality.** MuLen is quiet, soft-spoken and incredibly perceptive and insightful. They like to collect facts about those around them, and ask leading questions to ferret out information, while revealing as little about themselves as possible.

**Appearance.** MuLen wears a non-descript red robe, numerous pouches, and a hooded mantle that is drawn up over their bald head. Blue tattoos that glow softly can be seen on their forehead, and shaven scalp.

**Quote:** "That is most fascinating. Please go on."

**Spellcasting.** MuLen has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, fire bolt\*, light\*, Toll the Dead*<sup>XGE</sup>

1st level (3 slots): *burning hands\*, mage armor, magic missile\**

2nd level (3 slots): *scorching ray\*, mirror image, shatter\**

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

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

5th level (2 slots): *Bigby's Hand\*, enervation*<sup>XGE</sup>

6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning\*, globe of invulnerability*

\* Evocation Spell

**XGE:** Spell comes from Xanathar's Guide to Everything. DMs who lack this book may replace these spells with equivalent spells from the player's handbook.

## Combat

When combat occurs, consider the following.

**Thayan Warriors.** The Thayan warriors engage in melee, creating a shield wall near the mouth of the alley.

**Red Wizard.** MuLen avoids melee, and casts *greater invisibility* at their first opportunity. They *counterspell* damaging area spells.

**Undead.** Ogre zombies obey MuLen's spoken command. If the ghouls are present, MuLen can compel their actions by spending a bonus action as if they had cast a modified *create undead*.

## Random Events

At the start of each round of combat, roll on the table below to determine a new situation, or hazard for the encounter. Each event occurs only once.

### Random Events

d20	Hazard, or Event
1	<b>Fireball.</b> A stray <i>fireball</i> explodes adjacent to one enemy (DC 15).
2-4	<b>Minor Rift.</b> A minor elemental rift forms in a 10-foot cube and lasts until the end of the round. Any creature which starts or ends its turn adjacent to, or within the rift must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) cold, fire, or lightning damage, and be knocked prone.
5-8	<b>Allies.</b> Two friendly <b>veterans</b> come to the characters aid. Roll initiative for the veterans. They remain for the duration of the combat.
9-12	<b>Volley.</b> A volley of arrows arcs overhead. This acts as a 3 <sup>rd</sup> level <i>hail of thorns</i> targeting one random creature (DC 15; +8 to hit, 1d8+4 piercing damage plus <i>hail of thorns</i> ).
13-16	<b>Smoke.</b> Thick choking smoke creates a 20-foot area of heavy obscurement, and persists until dispersed.
17-19	<b>Stampede.</b> Terrified citizens afflicted with the <i>Necrotic Curse</i> fill a 40-foot cube at the east end of the street, and moves west at 30 feet per round. Creatures within the area must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or become restrained by the press of bodies until the mob passes (Escape DC 12)
20	<b>Red Lightning.</b> Crimson lightning crashes from the sky. Make 3 ranged spell attacks (+8 to hit). On a hit, each bolt deals 7 (2d6) lightning damage.

## Adjusting This Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative:

- **Very Weak:** Remove the **Ogre Zombie**. MuLen has the statistics of a **Red Wizard mage** instead.
- **Weak:** MuLen has the statistics of a **Red Wizard mage** instead.
- **Strong:** Add one additional **Ogre Zombie**.
- **Very Strong:** Add one additional **Ogre Zombie**, and one **Red Wizard mage**.

## Treasure

The patrol carry a collective treasure of 200 gp worth of coins and gems. MuLen also carries their spellbook in a leather case (see **Player Handout 5**).

## Development

Let the characters process the outcome of the battle, and assess the situation. Be sure to describe the ongoing war raging around them:

- Swarms of undead rampage through the streets.
- Citizens flee southward in a mad panic. Many succumbing swiftly to the *Necrotic Kiss*.
- Volleys of arrows impale friend and foe alike.
- Stray spells whiz overhead, while *fireballs* and other spells explode nearby.
- Etc. In short – pandemonium.

Proceed to Conscripted below.

## B. Conscripted (Social)

Pushed further south by the mass of people, you fight your way through streets choked with the dead, dying, and undead in your attempt to seek refuge.

After perhaps an hour, you come upon a battle-weary gnome dressed in bright green armor struggling against a half-dozen Red Wizards.

"Ah! Reinforcements. Ye timing be perfect!" exclaims the gnome. Raising his mithril-clawed staff, the gnome hurls a ball of scorching green flame to detonate in the enemies midst. Suddenly outnumbered by your arrival, the surviving wizards make a hasty retreat.

The gnome introduces himself as the High Harper **Malkyn Fenris** and requests their aid on a mission of extreme urgency.

He casts *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* and beckons the characters to follow him inside, so they

may talk freely. Once inside, he supplies the following information:

- The Red Wizards have been collecting arcane artifacts and relics from all over Faerun and have been transporting them to Mulmaster.
- Among those artifacts are several large pulsating crystals called **Writhing Batteries**, as well as the shattered remains of the **Soulmonger** – the device responsible for the Death Curse.
- Malkyn believes the Red Wizards are using these artifacts to control the Elemental Rifts in Mulmaster, and that combined – they provide Thay with a near limitless source of magical energy.
- It has come to his attention that Szass Tam has come into possession of the research journal of the legendary wizard Karsus.
- Should Szass Tam unlock its arcane secrets, Malkyn fears he will gain enough knowledge to divert the currents of the Weave, cutting off all non-Red Wizards from the source of All Magic. He fears not even Mystra herself may be able to stop him if successful.
- He offers the characters **200pp** in exchange for helping him locate and destroy the *Lost Journal of Karsus*, which he believes is located here, within the Thayvian Embassy.

**Arcana or History.** Characters proficient in Arcana or History and who succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check or Intelligence (History) check recall the history of Karsus (see **The Legend of Karsus** sidebar). Characters proficient in both skills know this information automatically (no check required).

**Insight.** Characters who succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check realize that Malkyn knows more than he is letting on. If questioned, he reveals the following additional information.

- Malkyn recently participated in an expedition to the Glacier of the White Wyrms, in which he stole several tomes (12 total) from an ancient Netherese Catalog.
- While studying these tomes, Malkyn stumbled upon a hidden cipher buried within the texts. A cipher created by none other than Karsus himself.
- The cipher pointed to the location of a secret *demiplane* in which Karsus kept his most valuable possessions, including all of his research. Most intriguing, the coordinates were both spatial, and temporal, revealing the *demiplane's* location during a specific moment in time.

- Malkyn knows for certain that Szass Tam has entered Karsus' hidden *demiplane*, and has recovered the journal – but does not elaborate further how he knows this fact.

### The Legend of Karsus

Karsus was the most powerful wizard in history. A true prodigy, he invented his own school of magic as well as more than a dozen 10<sup>th</sup> level or higher spells. *Karsus' Avatar* is his most infamous spell, and the only 12<sup>th</sup> level spell in existence.

**Karsus' Folly.** In -339 DR, Karsus stole the divinity of Mystryl – goddess of magic, and briefly obtained godhood. This event caused the death of Mystryl, and the destruction of Netheril. Mystra, the reincarnation of Mystryl rewrote the laws of magic and banished all knowledge of the *Karsus' Avatar* spell to the ends of the universe.

**Harpers (Faction Assignment).** Malkyn pulls aside any Harper characters (rank 2 or higher) and makes a personal request. He reveals the following additional information in secret.

- Several **Writhing Batteries** have been recently discovered – at least one of which is in possession of the Red Wizards.
- The Writhing Batteries contain the fragmented essence of the Elder Evil Kyuss – an undead abomination feared by even the gods.
- In an effort to stop the Thayans, Malkyn has been studying a small collection of texts relating to the Writhing Batteries, but his research has come to an impasse.
- Malkyn knows the Thayans possess the remainder of the books on the subject, and asks if the characters find any, that they deliver them to him so he can complete his research. He knows they are located somewhere within the Embassy.
- The books he seeks come in sets of three; are made of metal and stone; and bear a distinctive diamond sigil.
- Malkyn has previously acquired the books for the schools of abjuration, conjuration, transmutation, and the lost school of chronomancy. He seeks the books relating to the remaining five schools (four of which feature in this adventure).

### Faction Assignment: Harpers

To complete their assignment, Harper characters need to provide Malkyn with at least one complete set of books belonging to a single school.





## Malkyn Fenris

### Roleplaying Malkyn Fenris

Male CN. forest gnome **archmage**, 139.

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

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

**Appearance.** The *Necrotic Kiss* has left Malkyn's skin ashen and grey, and his ginger hair and beard streaked with white.

**Quote:** "Care for a wee nip o' fire spirits? I brewed a whole batch!"

### Development

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The characters are safe and may take a short rest if they desire. When they are ready, proceed to Part 2.

## Part 2. Like Rats in a Maze

**Estimated Duration:** 2 hours.

In this section the characters explore the maze-like Embassy in search of the *Lost Journal of Karsus*.

### Pacing and Options

The majority of this adventure takes place within the depths of the Embassy. Allow the characters a few moments to explore the courtyard and outlying buildings, but do your best to shift their direction toward the Mansion itself.

This part is a stealth mission, and characters are encouraged not to linger in any given location longer than necessary.

**Running behind.** As a stealth mission, Part 2 of this adventure is not intended to be combat-heavy. Players who waste time fighting endless waves of red wizards can easily run short on time.

If **90 minutes remain** before the end of the module, and the characters have not yet completed all three required rooms, the gong is silenced suddenly and no further search parties harass the characters. The characters should immediately progress through the remaining required encounters in sequence, and then proceed immediately to Part 3.

## The Thayvian Embassy

After an hour of travel through back alleys and side-roads, the characters reach the Thayvian Embassy without issue.

Surrounded by 15-foot walls of tightly-packed grey stone, the Thayvian Embassy is an impressive compound. Its gates lie open and unmanned, and the courtyard itself is impossibly clean. Arcane sigils dominate the flagstone courtyard, and several small structures flank an opulent white mansion. The mahogany double-doors opposite the gate, are closed.

It is quickly apparent that the smaller structures are sealed tight by magic, and that the mansion itself is your only point of entry.

**Arcana.** A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the entire structure is a modified *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* spell.

**Glyph of Warding.** The arcane runes in the courtyard form a permanent *spell glyph* that makes the mansion and surrounding structures impervious to harm.

**Dispel Magic.** The *glyphs* cannot be *dispelled*.

## Mansion Rooms

Each room of the mansion is a separate *demiplane*, and the mansion itself contains a near-infinite number of them. The rooms should convey a sense of displacement and disjunction, with characters left feeling disorientated while traversing the mansion.

Each room in the mansion has but two functional doors – one entrance and one exit. Others may exist, but they are merely well-made decorations and serve no purpose.

Finally, when all characters leave a room, the door slams shut behind them, and reopening the door connects to a different location instead of the preceding room.

### General Features

Unless otherwise specified, all locations within the Thayvian Embassy have the following general features.

**Size.** Room sizes vary, with most rooms being at least 40-feet on a side.

**Terrain.** The floors and steps are made of fitted stone. Plush crimson carpets. Decorated filigree banisters and railings. Windows are lined with red velvet curtains. The walls, floors, and doors are all constructed of raw planar essence, regardless of description.

**Doors.** Doors are closed but not locked. Most doors appear to be made of fine mahogany, iron, or bronze, and are of standard size, but are actually made of raw planar essence.

**Décor.** Expensive tapestries line the walls. Furniture is of the highest quality wood with plush comfortable cushions. Candelabras, vases, paintings, and other decorative objects.

**Light.** Candles, and ever-burning torches illuminate most rooms with bright light, with dim light in the shadows.

**Smells and Sounds.** As each room is its own separate *demiplane*, sounds do not pass between rooms unless the door is open. Characters listening at doors hear eerie silence. The smell of incense, musty paper, bubbling alchemical brews, and spices.

**Investigation.** Characters who investigate any of the doors can make a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If successful, the character spots dozens of nearly-invisible runes inscribed around each door. These runes form a cipher allowing someone to traverse the mansion with purpose. Learning this cipher is impossible without the use of *wish* however.

### The Space between Spaces

Zulkir Dar'lon Ma took care and spared no expense in the construction of his mansion. Customized versions of *demiplane*, *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*, and other spells. The following rules are in effect while the characters are present in the mansion:

- **Demiplanes & teleportation.** Teleportation effects are limited to the same room only, as each room is in effect its own demiplane. If a door is open and the character can see another room, teleportation effects work within line of sight and all creatures affected by that teleportation effect take 11 (2d10) force damage; a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw reduces this damage by half.
- **Communication.** Most forms of communication – including *telepathy* – are restricted to the affected creatures being on the same plane of existence. As the rooms are each a unique demiplane, this may become important!
- **Time is funny here.** The Red Wizards have been experimenting with chronomancy, and now time behaves oddly. Resting and other physical activities take twice the normal amount of time, but magic operates at twice the normal speed. **For example**, if a spell would last until the caster's next turn, it instead only lasts until the end of the current round; a spell that lasts 1 minute instead lasts ½ a minute (5 rounds); and so on. Additionally, all casting times longer than 1 action are doubled (ex: most rituals would take 20 minutes instead of 10, and the effects only persist for half the normal time).
- **Abnormal building materials.** The walls, floors, ceiling, and doors are all constructed of raw planar essence. Even if described as stone, wood, or something else they cannot be affected by *stone shape*, *passwall* or similar magics. Their described appearance is akin to an illusion, which cannot be bypassed without *truesight* (which is beyond the power of most characters at this level).

Any character that is proficient with the Arcana skill should be aware of the basic elements of the above points without need for an ability check.

### Proceeding through the Mansion

Upon entering the mansion, the characters find themselves in **Area A – The Foyer**.

Each time the party opens a door to a new location, choose one of the following locations (or roll randomly) to determine which room they discover. Excluding the **Chapel of the Dead**, all other locations are repeatable.

#### d12 Room Location

1	Allied Encounter
2	Arcane Repository*
3-5	Chapel of the Dead* (not repeatable)
6	Holding Cells
7	Laboratory
8-9	Mundane Room
11	VIP Prisoners
12	Shattered Battery*

\* **Required encounters.** In order to proceed to part 3, the characters must complete these encounters.

### Bronze Gong

Most rooms contain a conspicuously placed bronze gong. While characters may believe these to be separate gongs, they are actually the same gong which has been magically duplicated throughout the structure. If the gong is rung in one location, it rings in all locations simultaneously, and acts as an alarm system throughout the Embassy.

#### Search Parties

If the alarm is raised, Szass Tam dispatches several dozen search parties to search for the intruders. Each search party consists of **one Red Wizard mage** and **two Thayan Warriors**.

**Bronze Gong.** The search parties only search locations containing the **Bronze Gong**. If characters linger in such locations, a search party discovers them in 1d4+1 rounds.

**Combat.** The Thayan Warriors use nonlethal attacks when possible, while the mage(s) casts spells as normal. They seek to capture, rather than kill the characters – show little concern for accidental death.

**Reinforcements.** One **Red Wizard mage**, and **two ghouls** arrive every three rounds until the characters flee.

**Pursuit.** The patrols do not prevent characters from fleeing into adjoining rooms, nor do they give pursuit.

#### Actions

With the alarm sounded, all **Red Wizard** NPCs in this adventure gain the following additional action.

**Imprison.** The Red Wizard *plane shifts* one unconscious or dead character to a private cell elsewhere in the Embassy (no save). Award the character the **Prisoner of Thay** story award (see **Player Handout 3**).

- If all characters are imprisoned in this way, the adventure ends in failure. Proceed immediately to the **Prisoners of Thay** (failure) conclusion.

### A. Foyer (Combat)

This entry chamber is well-appointed with mahogany wood paneling, silver and brass candelabra's, and a marble-topped storage cabinet. Plush crimson carpets cover the floors, and an ornate double-door stands closed at the far end of the room. A conspicuously placed bronze gong stands near the far door.

An undulating swarm of maggots near a discarded robe draws your attention. Swiftly, the mass fills the robe, coalescing into a vaguely humanoid form which turns toward you as the door to the courtyard slams shut.

The creature is a **star spawn larva mage**. Knowing it poses extreme danger to the characters, Malkyn urges them to flee through the adjoining room while he fights the abomination.

**Bronze Gong.** The gong stands prominently near the inner door to this room.

### Development

If the characters leave, Malkyn defeats the creature without raising the alarm, but becomes separated from the party and does not return until the adventure's conclusion.

If the characters stay and help fight the creature, Malkyn objects. See **Combat** below.

### Combat

At the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, **two Red Wizard mages – El'vymik** (*CE female human mage, 37*) and **Khulmirr** (*NE male human mage, 44*) investigate the commotion.

**Star-spawn larva mage.** This creature focuses its attacks on Malkyn, deeming him the larger threat. Note that the larva mage is not immune to the effects of Cancerous Magic.

**Alarm raised.** As soon as they discover the characters, the Red Wizards sound the alarm by ringing the bronze gong, before joining the fray. Roll initiative for the mages.

**Red Wizard mages.** The mages hang back and cast damaging area spells at a distance. They are not allied with the larva mage, and seek to include it and Malkyn in the area of effect when possible.

**Malkyn Fenris.** Malkyn uses a green *Bigby's hand* against the larva mage, while *counterspelling* damaging area spells that include two or more characters. Describe the effects of his actions narratively.

**Escape.** After the first search party arrives, Malkyn encourages the characters to escape while he holds off pursuit.

**Victory.** With the alarm raised, Malkyn fears the mission has been compromised. He decides to use himself as bait to draw off pursuit, and no longer accompanies the party.

### Malkyn Fenris (Combat)

As a powerful archmage, Malkyn could easily overshadow the characters in this encounter, making them feel insignificant. As such, it is best to use Malkyn as a plot device, and describe his battle with the larva mage narratively.

**Spellcasting.** Malkyn's complete spell-list is not necessary for this encounter. His favored spells include *counterspell*, *fireball*, *polymorph*, *animate objects*, *Bigby's hand* and *sunbeam*. Choose other spells that seem appropriate. He does not cast 7<sup>th</sup> level or higher spells during this battle.

**For the love of green.** Note that the majority of Malkyn's spells are colored a distinct green. The specific shade and intensity varies by spell.

## B. Allied Encounter (Social, Combat)

If the party has not yet triggered the alarm:

Opening the door, your nostrils are assailed by the smell of freshly cooked venison, spitted pork, and garlic sausages.

If the party has triggered the alarm, read or paraphrase the following:

Steam pours from a recently doused campfire in the center of this room. Four veteran adventurers wearing faction emblems have readied a makeshift barricade near one corner of the room, weapons drawn at the ready. The corpses of two Red Wizards, and three skeletons lie scattered near the figures. Seeing you, they call out for you to join them before reinforcements arrive.

If the party has not triggered the alarm, instead read:

Gathered around a makeshift campfire in the center of this otherwise nondescript room, you are greeted warmly by a party of veteran adventurers as they soothe their aching bones by the fire.

In both cases, the four adventurers introduce themselves as **Talek** (*LG male half-elf cavalier, 214*), **Rhogen** (*NG male dwarf fighter, 72*), **Whistledawn** (*N female tabaxi druid, 36*), and **Molkaar** (*LG male human cleric of Lathander, 27*).

- These adventurers are high ranking members of the Lords Alliance, and the Order of the Gauntlet, and are part of a larger force that has invaded the Thayvian Embassy in search of Szass Tam.
- Their own mission prohibits them from joining the characters on their quest. In compensation, Molkaar offers to cast either *mass cure wounds* or two castings of *greater restoration*, as needed.

**Bronze Gong.** The gong hangs from a peg near the center of the left wall.

**Search parties.** With the veterans' assistance, the characters make short work of any search parties. Narrate these encounters, but do not waste time resolving combat.

**Short Rest.** If the alarm has not been sounded, this location is safe and the characters may take a short

rest which takes 2 hours to complete. The veterans offer them some of their food, and sit with the party for several minutes before departing.

## C. Arcane Repository (Exploration)

Massive wooden shelves line this grand and enormous library from floor to ceiling. Each shelf is dedicated to a different subject, and appears to be arranged in some kind of alpha-numeric catalog.

Large sweeping staircases at regular intervals allow easy access to five separate floors. Large, 15-foot double doors inlaid with bronze stand majestically at either end of the ground floor.

### General Features

**Size.** The central area easily measures 200-feet on a side. Each floor is divided into two or three separate wings, each more than 100-foot x 50-foot, with 20-foot ceilings. Staircases are 10-foot wide and curve gently.

**Contents.** Valuable books on almost every subject. Massive lexicons and librams resting on stone or wooden rostrums. Marble busts of more than a dozen zulkirs. An enormous 30-foot x 60-foot painting of Szass Tam. Magically sealed cabinets containing a multitude of magic items and art objects.

**Doors.** The bronze-inlaid doors are closed but not locked.

**Light.** Bright light that seems to emanate from the walls, and shelves themselves.

**Smells and Sounds.** The smell of aging books, and burning incense. Eerie and unnatural silence.

**Magic Items.** This room contains hundreds of magic items of almost every imaginable type. Magical protections on this room prevent anyone who isn't an NPC Red Wizard from removing them from the room however. Nothing the characters can do can circumvent these wards.

**Stone books.** An entire wing on the third floor of this repository is filled with hundreds of thick, heavy books made of metal and stone. Each book in this section measures 30 inches x 18 inches, is 10 inches thick, and weighs 25 lb.

**Investigation.** Unless the characters know what they are looking for, searching the repository for anything useful would take more time than the characters have.

### Harper Assignment

Harper characters who spend 10 minutes searching the stone books easily locate a shelf marked with the diamond sigil they seek. There are 12 books in total on this shelf, grouped in sets of three (see below).

### Netherese Tomes

The 12 tomes on this shelf are of unusual interest. Made of thin sheets of pressed metal and stone, each tome measures 18 inches x 30 inches, is 10 inches thick, and weighs 25lbs!

- **Arcana.** Characters proficient in arcana notice that each book is arranged in a set of three volumes, with each set bearing the arcane sigil for one of four schools: Divination, enchantment, evocation, and illusion. Books relating to other schools are conspicuously absent.

**Comprehend Languages.** These books are written in ancient netherese. Characters who cast *comprehend languages* learn that the titles of each tome is as follows:

*Adjustments for this School Pre-Battery, Incorporating the Battery, and Post-Battery Findings.*

### The Life and History of Karsus

If the characters have been sent here to learn more about Karsus, read or paraphrase the following:

It takes nearly 10 minutes of searching the 4th floor, but you eventually find the book Goryck described in the eastern wing. The thick, leather-bound tome appears to be in excellent condition given its age.

Written in a flowing, precise script, the book details the complete life and history of Karsus. The author's name has been defaced, but the exquisite detail presented in the book make it quite apparent that the author was intimately familiar with the wizard – perhaps one of his students or acolytes.

The *Life and History of Karsus* is carefully indexed for each period of Karsus' life, and details each of his myriad accomplishments. It does not take long to locate a description of the journal they seek.

*"Karsus keeps all his most valuable research in his personal journal. A massive vellum tome wrapped in the hide of an ancient gold dragon – the book easily measures 5-feet x 3-feet, and is more than 1-foot thick.*

*Many times I sought to peer within its pages and marvel at its secrets. Alas, the day I finally managed – all I found was mundane cooking recipes, and a daily log of his activities. I soon realized that the journal was encrypted, but to my chagrin, I never unlocked its cipher."*

### Treasure

Should the characters take the book, the *Life and History of Karsus* is highly valuable. It can be sold to a collector for 250gp.

## D. Chapel of the Dead (Social, Combat)

You enter what appears to be a chapel. Well over 100 lesser undead are seated in rows of wooden pews facing a central dais. A large bronze door engraved with fantastic beasts sits in an alcove in the center of the right wall.

Leaning heavily behind a wooden lectern, a bedraggled and nearly-comatose wizard wearing filthy red-ropes mumbles nonsense at the assembled crowd. As he drones on, the undead clap and cheer in silent applause.

As the door swings shut behind you, you hear the sound of metal upon metal as a bolt slides into place.

Elated at the prospect of rescue, the mage introduces himself as **Goryck** (*LN male human Red Wizard necromancer, 62*). He provides the following information readily.

- He is a prisoner of Szass Tam. As a cruel joke, Tam has ordered the undead in this chapel to tear him apart if he leaves his podium, or stops talking for more than a few minutes.
- The undead are no threat to the characters as long as he keeps speaking.
- The room is warded against *teleportation* and planar travel.
- It is obvious to Goryck that the characters are here to cause mischief. He has valuable information he is willing to provide if they agree to rescue him.
- He is desperate, and offers the characters a *scroll of animate dead* and a *potion of greater healing* as an incentive to rescue him.

Goryck has no love of Szass Tam, and readily agreed to assist Dar'lon Ma in claiming power. He questions the characters about their mission in the belief that by helping them, he can exact his revenge on the lich.

Throughout the conversation, the characters should learn the following additional information.

- **Navigating the Embassy.** Goryck knows how to navigate the Embassy. He reveals that each door acts as a nexus of inter-connected *demiplane* portals which are controlled by a cipher etched around its frame.
- **Portal Combinations.** Goryck knows the combinations to access the **Arcane Repository**, **Laboratory**, and the **Shattered Battery** and provides these freely.
- **The Secret Project.** Goryck overheard Szass Tam conspiring with Master Cryptographer Thessyl'k

about a secret project. Goryck followed Thessyl'k to the **Shattered Battery** hoping to learn more. Unfortunately, Thessyl'k entered a secured *demiplane*, isolated from the nexus. Without knowing the nature or contents of the *demiplane*, Goryck was unable to follow the cryptographer further.

- **The Journal of Karsus.** If the characters tell Goryck they are searching for the journal, his eyes widen at its mention. He is certain that the secret project involves the journal, but does not know what it looks like.
- **The Life and History of Karsus.** He suggests the characters search the 4th floor of the **Arcane Repository** for the *Life and History of Karsus*. He believes it should contain the information they seek.

### Goryck

Goryck cannot be saved in this encounter, regardless of the characters actions.

**Slay the Wizard.** In his weakened condition, if the characters attack Goryck, they slay him without effort (do not resolve combat).

**Solve the Puzzle.** Should the characters solve the puzzle below, the entire undead swarm stands up immediately and swarms Goryck before he has a chance to react – tearing him to pieces.

**Rescue Goryck.** All attempts to rescue Goryck fail, causing the undead to swarm him before he can escape. Treat the entire swarm as having Readied an action to attack Goryck if any of their trigger conditions are met.

**Goryck's Death.** As soon as Goryck dies, the door to the room swings open (even if the puzzle has yet to be solved). The swarm completes their meal in 1 round. Then, 120 pairs of eyes swivel to stare malevolently at the characters. They attack any character who lingers in the room, but do not pursue them to the adjoining location.

### Roleplaying Goryck

Goryck has been driven half-mad with fatigue, and is barely able to keep his eyes open. He is desperate for rescue, and terrified of the party abandoning him to his plight.

Goryck is quick to lose his train of thought, and frequently falls asleep mid-sentence, startling awake moments later.

**Quote:** "Hrrmm...(yawns). What was I saying again?"

## Undead

The undead are under Szass Tam's personal control, and are immune to being turned.

**Turn Undead.** The undead in this encounter are immune to Turn Undead. If any character attempts to turn the congregation, a skeleton turns to face the character, raises a finger to its mouth and shushes them. It then returns back to face the podium.

**Area Damaging Spells.** Seated undead are immune to damage. Spells appear to destroy them, but they simply reform in irritation moments later.

**Surreal behavior.** Highlight the odd and unnatural behavior of the undead. Characters should feel threatened and uncertain what to expect.

**Goryck.** The undead swarm Goryck if he leaves the podium, stops speaking for more than 10 minutes, or if he is slain. They consume his corpse in as little as 1 round, after which 120 pairs of eyes turn and stare malevolently at the characters.

## Development

To escape this room, the characters must either solve the puzzle on the bronze door, or kill Goryck.

If the characters approach the door, give them

**Player Handout 1** and read or paraphrase the following:

This bronze door features eight removable cubes surrounding a central button. Made of bronze, each cube is carved with the image of a different fantastic beast: A froghemoth, dragon, chimera, hydra, aboleth, beholder, gorgon, and an earth elemental. It is obvious that the position of the cubes form some kind of combination lock.

**Combination Lock.** To solve the puzzle, the characters must re-order the cubes alphabetically in a counter-clockwise fashion starting with the top-left slot. (See **sidebar** for solution).

**Button.** Pressing the central button causes all cubes in the correct positions to glow faintly. If all cubes are in the correct position, the bronze door swings open silently, causing the undead to swarm Goryck – tearing him to pieces.

**Trap.** The bronze door is trapped. Pressing the button triggers a permanent *spell glyph* on each of the eight cubes.

### Combination Lock (Solution)

**Top Row:** Aboleth, Hydra, Gorgon

**Middle Row:** Beholder, Button, Froghemoth

**Bottom Row:** Chimera, Dragon, Elemental

## Spell Glyphs

Each cube has a modified *spell glyph* on one of its faces. These *glyphs* are triggered whenever the button on the bronze door is pressed, and activate a *dominate monster* effect targeting one (or more) undead in the congregation. All *glyphs* are triggered simultaneously.

**Correct Position.** For each cube in the correct position, one skeleton swivels its head to face the characters ominously. It remains seated, but no longer applauds Goryck.

**Incorrect Position.** Count the number of cubes incorrectly positioned and find that number on the table below. The indicated undead stand, draw their weapons (if any), and attack the character who triggered the *glyphs*.

Number of Cubes	Undead
1-2	1 <b>beholder zombie</b> , or 2 <b>wights</b> .
3-4	1 <b>wight</b> , 2 <b>ogre zombies</b> , or 4 <b>ghouls</b> .
5-6	1 <b>ogre zombie</b> , or 2 <b>ghouls</b>
7-8	1 <b>ghoul</b> , or 4 <b>skeletons</b> or <b>zombies</b> .

**Arcana.** Characters searching for traps can make a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If successful, they spot the nearly invisible *spell glyph* on one of the face of one of the cubes. Investigating the remaining cubes finds the *spell glyph* on a random face of each cube.

**Offer clues.** While this is a simple logic puzzle, if the characters struggle, feel free to offer the characters a clue of they succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Insight) check.

**Dispel Magic.** The *spell glyphs* can be temporarily dispelled with a *dispel magic* or similar effect (DC 18). Each round, one of the *spell glyphs* reactivates. While disabled, cubes in the correct positions do not glow.

## Combat

If combat occurs, consider the following. (See **Appendix. Map –The Chapel of the Dead**).

**Use Object.** During combat, characters may swap the position of any two cubes as a Use Object action. The character may also press the button as part of the same action.

**Undead.** The undead focus their attacks on whichever character triggered the *glyph* this round. If no character triggered the *glyph* this round, or the creature is unable to reach the target, they attack the closest character instead. The undead do not attack unconscious or dying creatures.

**Compounding Failure.** Individually, the undead pose little threat to the characters. However, successive failures may result in the characters being overwhelmed.

## Treasure

If the characters agree to rescue Goryck, he gives them the promised *scroll of animate dead* and *potion of greater healing* up front, in the hopes that the characters will honor their end of the bargain.

## XP Reward

If the characters solve the puzzle-lock without assistance, award each character 500 XP. Characters who bypass the puzzle by slaying Goryck do not receive this XP.

## E. Holding Cells (Exploration, Combat)

Dozens of small iron-barred cells line this chamber which has been enchanted with a permanent *silence* effect. More than three dozen civilians of all ages are held within the cells.

An iron-bound door stands closed at both ends of this 30-foot hall.

**Bronze gong.** The gong hangs on a wall at the far end of the room. If the alarm is triggered, the gong in this room vibrates silently.

**Search parties.** Red wizards that enter this room are unable to cast any of their spells. Characters which are knocked unconscious are dragged from the room into an adjoining chamber before being *plane shifted* to their magical prison.

**Perception.** Characters with passive Wisdom (Perception) of 15 or higher notice the gong ringing silently. Characters who look directly at the gong after the alarm sounds notice this automatically (no check required).

**Locked.** The doors to each cell are locked and trapped. Characters can pick the lock with a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check.

**Trap.** If the door of any cell is opened without the correct key, it triggers the alarm. This trap cannot be *dispelled*, or bypassed in any way.

**Investigation.** Characters searching for traps find no visible clues that would reveal the trap, however a *detect magic* spell reveals that the cell doors are enchanted with weak abjuration magic.

## F. Laboratory (Exploration, Combat)

This large 40-foot square chamber is made of fitted stone. Beakers of acrid liquid bubble on wrought iron workbenches, and large 5-foot diameter vats of fat, and other fluids line the walls. A censer of incense burns quietly upon one desk – no doubt to mask the fetid smell. Small stone windows adorn the far wall, but do not provide a point of egress.

An iron-bound crimson door in the far wall provides the only other exit from this room.

**Bronze Gong.** This room contains the bronze gong, which rests against one corner of the room.

**Corrosive.** The beakers and vats are filled with a variety of corrosive substances.

**Acid.** Any creature exposed to these liquids must make a DC 15 Dexterity Saving Throw, or take 22 (4d10) acid damage on a failed save, and half-damage on a successful save.

## Treasure

Characters who investigate the room locate a detailed book of human, animal and fey anatomy worth 50 gp. The book contains detailed sketches of dissections, and other experiments.

**Medicine.** Characters who spend at least an hour reading the book gain advantage on all Wisdom (Medicine) checks until their next long rest. Characters may choose to keep this book for use in future adventures.

## G. Mundane Room (Exploration)

The characters stumble across one of the countless mundane utility rooms scattered throughout the Embassy.

**Bronze gong.** Each of these mundane rooms contains the bronze gong, somewhere prominently.

**Occupied.** The rooms may be occupied or unoccupied. Occupied rooms usually contain servants, slaves, or mindless undead pursuing menial tasks. None of these figures raises the alarm.

Consider the following examples:

**Wizards Quarters:** You come upon a private sleeping chamber, or common room for lower ranking Red Wizards. Characters who explore the room may find trinkets and other personal effects of no monetary value.

**Galley Kitchen:** A well-stocked kitchen and larder with all manner of herbs, cheese, dry goods, and hanging meat.

**Mess Hall:** A long dining hall with several mahogany long-tables resting on plush crimson carpets. Brass candelabras, and crystal chandeliers provide ample light.

**Utility Closet:** A simple utility closet with buckets, mops, and other janitorial supplies.

**Barracks:** A military-style barracks. Footlockers containing personal effects and other trinkets, decorative weapons, and practice dummies line the room.



## H. VIP Prisoners (Exploration, Combat)

Fitted, grey stone blocks line the walls of this small immaculate dungeon. Instead of doors, narrow bars of force line the front of each cell. These act as a modified *wall of force*, and allow small objects to be passed through the bars.

**Captured.** Any characters who are captured by the Red Wizards (see **Bronze gong sidebar**) are *plane shifted* to their own private cell in this chamber.

**NPC Prisoners.** Several NPC faction members occupy cells in this room. They offer little in the way of useful information, and ask the characters about how the war is progressing.

**Bronze gong.** The bronze gong stands near one of the two iron-bound doors in this room.

**Explosive Runes.** A *glyph of warding* is inscribed upon the floor of this room. It triggers if any character who isn't an NPC Red Wizard casts *dispel magic* in this room. All characters must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 25 (5d8) thunder damage on a failed save, and half-as much damage on a successful save. This triggers the alarm. The *glyph* resets automatically after 10 minutes.

**Time moves swiftly.** Time moves faster in this location.

Characters who were captured have experienced several weeks of torture prior to the characters arrival, and have already obtained the **Prisoner of Thay** story award.

## Escape

This location primarily serves to allow characters who were captured by the Red Wizards to have an opportunity to escape and continue the adventure.

DMs are encouraged to reward creativity in this encounter. Any reasonable idea should be sufficient to allow characters to escape. Consider the following examples as suggestions:

**Dispel magic.** A single *dispel magic* can suppress (but not dispel) one, or all of the *walls of force* in this room for 1 minute but triggers the *glyph of warding* (see above).

**Teleportation.** This location is not warded to prevent teleportation spells or effects. A simple *misty step* is an easy means of escaping through the *wall of force*.

**Polymorph.** The bars of force are too closely spaced to allow small or larger creatures to pass. They are large enough to allow small objects, and tiny creatures to pass unhindered.

**Portable Hole.** Characters can easily pass a folded *portable hole* through the narrow bars, allowing a trapped prisoner to climb inside the hole. The *portable hole* can then be retrieved, rescuing the character.

## I. Shattered Battery (Combat, Dilemma)

A massive, pulsating shard of crystal floats near the center of this room. Six stone workbenches etched with arcane runes encircle the gem. Six children bound to the tables writhe in silent agony as their bodies are slowly consumed by glowing arcane webs.

A hulking creature made from the skeletons of more than a dozen creatures stands motionless near the bronze gong at the far end of the room.

Echoing throughout the chamber, an ominous rhythmic thumping beats in time with the crystal, making your skin crawl.

The only other exit from this room is to your left, up a short flight of stairs.

The creature is a **bone golem**, tasked to ensure that the transformation ritual is not disturbed. (See **Appendix. Map – The Shattered Battery Bronze Gong**). The bronze gong stands against the back wall within arms-reach of the golem.

**Writhing Battery.** Characters who have previously played *DDAL00-01 Window to the Past* immediately recognize the floating crystal as a large piece of a broken **Writhing Battery** – the prisons that contain the fragmented essence of Kyuss; the Worm That Walks.

**Arcana.** Characters who are proficient in Arcana, and who attempt to determine the purpose of the experiment can make a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If successful, the character realizes that the broken crystal is draining the children's life-force, and converting their very souls into raw magical energy.

**Medicine.** Characters who approach the stone tables and assess the children's condition can make a DC 20 Intelligence (Medicine) check. If successful, they discover that the children are beyond saving, and are being artificially sustained beyond their body's natural limits by magic. In the character's medical assessment, the children should already be dead.

### To Rescue, or Not? That is the Question.

This encounter is intended to present a moral challenge to the party. The plight of the helpless children being tortured by the Red Wizards is intended to evoke moral outrage, and disgust.

Consider the following suggestions:

**Rescue the Children.** Any attempt to rescue the children is doomed to failure. Children that are removed from the magical field surrounding them die within moments, choking on their own blood and vital fluids as their organs had already liquefied prior to the characters arrival.

**Mercy Killing.** Some characters may determine the best course of action is to end the children’s suffering. Mercy killing each child takes one action, but is automatically successful.

**There is no “Wrong” Choice.** Regardless of alignment, all choices (including ones in which the party abandons the children to their fate) are valid options in this encounter. Players should not feel punished in their decision beyond the golem responding to their actions (or not).

**The Choice is Difficult.** Elaborate on the suffering of the children, and try to make certain the players struggle with their decision. Be careful not to overdo it however, or you risk forcing the outcome.

**Reward Moral Indecision.** Characters who struggle with the moral dilemma should be rewarded with inspiration. This encounter is intended to force characters to make tough moral choices, and that difficulty should be rewarded.

## Development

The **bone golem** ignores the characters unless they attempt to kill or rescue the prisoners, cast any hostile spells, or attack the golem or crystal. If a battle occurs, consider the following:

**Bone Golem.** The golem rings the gong before striding forth to attack the closest threat. It does not make opportunity attacks or prevent characters from leaving the area. It obeys the spoken command of all enemy Red Wizards.

**Search parties.** Red wizards can spend a bonus action to command the bone golem. Otherwise, the golem attacks the closest threat.

**Attacking the Crystal.** The crystal has 100 Hit points, and AC 15. It is immune to psychic, and poison damage; and bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage from non-magical weapons. It has vulnerability to bludgeoning damage from magical weapons, however. If shattered, the magic sustaining the children falters, and they die in horrible agony.

## XP Reward

If the party leaves the prisoners to their fate, award each character 200 XP.

Characters who struggle with the moral decision earn an additional 300 XP, regardless of outcome.

## Development – Exiting the Maze

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The **Shattered Battery** provides the exit to Part 3. In order to exit the maze from this location, the characters must accomplish the following:

### **Speak with Goryck (Chapel of the Dead).**

- During the conversation, characters learn that Thessyl’k entered a secured *demiplane* from this

location. This requires the characters to know the nature and contents of the *demiplane* itself.

### **Read the book (Arcane Repository).**

- Characters who have read the *Life and History of Karsus* discover a detailed description of the object they seek. Without a proper description, the characters are unable to properly visualize the journal, and cannot access the secured *demiplane*.

## Exiting the Maze

**Captured.** If any characters were captured by the Red Wizards, and the characters have not yet visited the **VIP Prisoners** location, DMs are strongly encouraged to complete that encounter before proceeding to Part 3.

Otherwise, characters who have completed both tasks may proceed to Part 3 through either door of the **Shattered Battery**.

## XP Reward

If the characters successfully exit the maze without triggering the alarm, award each character 1,500 XP.

## Part 3. Journal of a Mad Mage

**Estimated Duration:** 1 hour.

The characters must defeat Thessyl'k and his servants in order to recover, and destroy the *Lost Journal of Karsus*.

### A. The Master Cryptographer (Combat)

The characters arrive just as Master Thessyl'k completes a conversation with Szass Tam.

The door to this chamber opens upon an ornate study. Bookshelves, paintings and expensive tapestries line the walls. Marble busts rest on pedestals, and an ornate mahogany desk occupies the room.

From behind a nearby bookcase, you hear a sepulchral voice filled with scorn.

"Thessyl'k! I grow tired of your incompetence. The *Journal of Karsus* cannot be so difficult to decipher as you make out. The partial translation you sent me is the only reason you still breathe!"

From their vantage point, the characters are unable to see the figures, or the larger portion of the room.

When the characters approach the edge of the bookshelf, read or paraphrase the following:

Peering around the corner, a marble plinth dominates the center of the chamber. Surrounded by motes of arcane light, the *Lost Journal of Karsus* lies open on a large stone rostrum.

Kneeling prostrate near this enormous book, a visibly shaken wizard dressed in ornate crimson robes pleads for mercy from the ghostly image of Szass Tam himself. Two bronze statues stand motionless in front of the plinth.

Glowing in fury, the image of Szass Tam looks up, as if listening to a distant sound.

"Bother me no longer. I have guests arriving, and must prepare the dragon".

Moments later, the ghostly image fades and Thessyl'k rises to his feet, still shaking from the ordeal and returns to his work deciphering the journal.

**Thessyl'k** (*CE m. human Red Wizard, 58*). Thessyl'k is a master cryptographer and skilled enchanter, well on his way to becoming a Zulkir in his own right.

The bronze statues are actually **two bronze guardians** created by Thessyl'k and which act as his personal bodyguard.

### The Journal of Karsus

This heavy, dragon-leather tome weighs over 600 lbs. Karsus has enchanted the journal with numerous spells, making it incredibly durable and difficult to destroy.

**Hit points.** The journal of Karsus has 150 hit points.

**Armor Class.** The journal has an AC of 10.

**Immunities.** Psychic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage from non-magical weapons.

**Resistances.** All damage.

**Spell immunity.** The journal is immune to *disintegrate*. A *dispel magic* spell can suppress this effect for 1 minute with a successful DC 20 spellcasting ability check.

**Arcana or History.** Characters who succeed at a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (History) check know that Mystra historically banishes all of Karsus' research from the universe. The journal's existence in the present is a paradox, and that there must be some method by which history can be corrected.

**Portable Hole.** While exceedingly heavy and difficult to move, characters who have the ingenious idea to put the journal into a *portable hole* succeed in removing it from the protective enchantments keeping it in the present. As the journal is placed within the *portable hole*, it disappears – returning to its original point in space-time.

### Arcane Wards

Etched around the circumference of the plinth, are a network of arcane sigils made from powdered silver and ruby dust. Complex geometric shapes crisscross the center of the plinth. Potent abjurations have been woven into the marble dais, protecting the journal from harm. The following spells protect the journal from harm:

**Globe of Invulnerability.** A permanent *globe of invulnerability* is etched into the 20-foot diameter plinth. This spell is cast at its normal level and blocks spells of 5<sup>th</sup> level or lower.

**Time Stop.** Szass Tam has enchanted the tome with a modified *time stop* and *planar binding* spell in order to anchor the journal in the present, but only while the tome remains within the area of the *globe of invulnerability*. If the journal is removed from this area, the spells unravel – and the journal snaps back to its location in the past.

### Development

While combat is inevitable, Thessyl'k is in no rush to kill the intruders, and is more than willing to speak to the characters.

**Conversation.** If the party speaks with the cryptographer, Thessyl'k is drunk on his own power and ego, and willingly reveals the following:

- The characters are too late. Szass Tam has already received a *full* and *complete* translation of the

journal. Characters who succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check with advantage, know this to be a half-truth, based on the overheard conversation between Thessyl'k and Szass Tam.

- Through their mastery of Chronomancy, the Red Wizards were able to summon the *Lost Journal of Karsus* from a hidden demiplane, lost in the distant past, bringing the journal to the present to be studied.
- The journal is held in *temporal stasis* by a modified *time stop* spell, and without such powerful magic – the journal would instantly return to its original point in space, and time.
- If this occurs, Karsus will eventually use the tome to steal the divinity of Mystryl, resulting in his well-documented folly.

### Roleplaying Thessyl'k

Thessyl'k is a cunning, and shrewd wizard. More than willing to supplicate himself to get ahead, this conniving wizard has wormed his way into Szass Tam's inner circle through guile, wit, and considerable arcane talent. He believes his act has convinced Szass Tam that he poses no threat to the Zulkir.

**Quote:** "No please! I beg you. I can be useful..... Fool! Did you honestly believe me?"

### Combat

Regardless of outcome, combat is inevitable. (See **Appendix. Map – The Journal of Karsus**.)

**Thessyl'k.** Thessyl'k looks for opportunities to use his *tattoos of absorption*, but does not hesitate to enter the *globe of invulnerability* in order to protect the journal. Thessyl'k *counterspells* damaging area spells, and spells that directly or indirectly target the journal. If his *stoneskin* fails, he casts *illusory dragon* or *dominate person* at his next opportunity, relying mostly on his damaging spells. He considers his bronze guardians expendable.

**Bronze guardians.** These creatures are based on gnomish designs, and act as Thessyl'k's personal guard. They remain close at his side, and use their **Intercept Attack** ability to defend Thessyl'k from attack. The bronze guardians obey Thessyl'k's spoken commands.

### Thessyl'k, Master Cryptographer (Red Wizard)

*CE male human, 58.* Except where noted, Thessyl'k has the statistics of a **Red Wizard zulkir**.

**Hit Points:** 144 (18d8 + 18).

**Languages.** Add Ancient Netherese.

**Damage resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical weapons (from *stoneskin*).

**Cryptography.** Thessyl'k is a master cryptographer, and gains advantage on any Intelligence check to decipher codes, or

iphers. Through raw skill alone, Thessyl'k can parse the meaning of written words as if he was under the effect of a permanent *comprehend languages* spell.

**Spell Secrets.** Thessyl'k lacks this ability.

**Tattoos of Absorption.** Thessyl'k can only absorb 10 spell levels at a time.

**Foresight (Spell).** Thessyl'k has advantage on attack rolls, ability checks and saving throws. All other creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls made against him.

**Spellcasting.** Replace the zulkir's spell list with the following: Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, fire bolt, friends, light, Toll the Dead*<sup>XGE</sup>

1st level (4 slots): *cause fear*<sup>XGE</sup>, *charm person, detect magic, mage armor*\*

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

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, sickening radiance*<sup>XGE</sup>, *stoneskin*\*

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

6th level (1 slot): *true seeing*\*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*

8th level (1 slot): *Illusory Dragon*<sup>XGE</sup>

9th level (1 slot): *foresight*\*

XGE: Spell comes from Xanathar's Guide to Everything. DMs who lack this book may instead use spells from the Red Wizard zulkir instead.

\*Thessyl'k casts *mage armor, foresight, stoneskin, and true seeing* on himself before combat. Thessyl'k does not possess a *simulacrum*.

### Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative:

**Very Weak.** Thessyl'k has 99 hit points, and uses the **archmage** stat-block (except where noted above). Note the absence of *legendary resistance* and *legendary actions*.

**Weak.** Thessyl'k has 99 hit points, and does not possess the *Tattoos of absorption* ability.

**Strong.** The **bronze guardians** have 20 AC, and 77 HP each.

### Treasure.

Thessyl'k wears a *thayvian mantle of spell resistance* (see **Player Handout 4**). His black, leather spellbook can be found on a nearby shelf, containing each of his prepared spells (see **Player Handout 6**).

### Development

This adventure has several distinct endings. Proceed to Conclusion below, and read (or paraphrase) any of the conclusions that apply.

## Conclusion

### Prisoners of Thay (Failure)

If the entire party is captured by the Red Wizards:

Despite being warned, you drew the attention of the Red Wizards. Staying and fighting when you should have fled, one by one you became Szass Tam's *guests of honor*. Before long, a bruised and bloodied Malkyn materializes in an empty cell, shaking his head in dismay.

Several hours pass before the ruler of Thay graces you with his presence.

"That was a pathetic showing. I honeyed the trap, and you entered willingly. I sent my agents to herd you deeper within, and in your hubris you challenged them. Did you honestly think you could win? I have an army within these *demiplanes* and you are but a band of fools!

"Fear not – I shall put the *Journal of Karsus* to excellent use. You should feel honored. You will be the first test subjects in my latest experiment."

### Szass Tam Ascendant (Failure)

If the characters fail to destroy the journal, or return it to the past for any reason (such as by being captured, or failing to defeat Thessyl'k):

Months pass, and Szass Tam gains great magical power and insight through his studies of the *Lost Journal of Karsus*. With newfound power, Szass Tam revels in his ascendancy as the fate of Faerun grows darker.

### The Paradox Resolved (Success)

If the characters defeat Thessyl'k and destroy the journal in the present:

Destroying the journal in the present sends ripples throughout history changing events in minor ways. Finding his journal absent from its resting place, Karsus uses his cipher and steps backward in time.

Arriving in his *demiplane* simultaneously with Szass Tam, the two wage a bitter magical duel that goes on for several hours, leaving both weakened and injured. Victorious, Karsus retrieves his journal and other belongings, and collapses the *demiplane*, and destroys all copies of his cipher. History returns to the one people remember.

Fleeing to the present, Szass Tam is infuriated that Karsus seemingly pre-empted his arrival – Szass Tam plots his next move. Changes in the timeline robbing him of even the partial translation he possessed in an alternate timeline.

### A Wrinkle in Time (Partial Success)

If the characters defeats Thessyl'k but return the Journal to the past:

Returning the *Lost Journal of Karsus* to the past restores the timeline and resolves the paradox – or so it seems. With Karsus unaware that his *demiplane* has been discovered in a future time, it remains intact – and continues to pose a great threat.

Angered at the theft of the journal, Szass Tam knows he cannot risk another trip into the past for fear of conflict with his past self. Retreating to his sanctuary, Szass Tam glances down at the partial translation waiting to be studied. What foul secrets will Szass Tam learn only time will tell.

### Zhentil Keep (Success, Continued)

If the characters achieve either victory conclusion:

Your mission a success, your thoughts turn to escape before you face the wrath of Szass Tam himself. You don't have long to ponder this before the magics holding this labyrinthine pocket dimension unravel in destructive, yet cinematic fashion.

Blinking in sunlight, you find yourself standing in the remains of a stronghold near Zhentil Keep, far to the west of Mulmaster. More than a dozen Faction heroes stand in the courtyard, looking bewildered. Among them – Malkyn can be seen cheerfully waving in your direction.

The *demiplanes* unraveled at the precise moment that other brave heroes (elsewhere in the Embassy) struck their final blow against Szass Tam.

**Mulmaster.** Mulmaster is devastated once more and the remaining population has turned against the Factions, siding with Thay out of fear more than loyalty. Hundreds of refugees flood south from the city, bitter at the Factions for drawing them into this conflict.

**Story Award:** Each character earns the **Favor of the Harpers** story award (see **Player Handout 2**).

### Treasure

If the characters succeed in defeating Thessyl'k – Malkyn pays them 200 pp as promised.

## Rewards

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

### Experience (Min/Max XP: 6,750/9,000 Ea.)

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character.

#### Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Archmage	8,400
Red Wizard Zulkir	8,400
Red Wizard Evoker	5,000
Red Wizard Mage	2,300
Thayan Warrior	450
Bronze Guardian	1,100
Bone Golem	5,900
Skeleton	50
Zombie	50
Ogre Zombie	450
Beholder Zombie	1,800
Ghoul	200
Wight	700

As a result of Malkyn's assistance, the Star Spawn Larva Mage or its resulting swarm of insects does not grant XP.

#### Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Puzzle Lock	500
Abandon Prisoners	200
Struggle with Moral Dilemma	300
Never triggered Alarm	1,500

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 6,750 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 9,000 **experience points**.

## Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for

sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

#### Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Malkyn's Reward	2,000
Thayan Patrol Coins & Gems	200
The Life and History of Karsus	250
Anatomy Book	50

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

**Permanent magic items** are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

#### Thayvian Mantle of Spell Resistance

*Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)*

You have advantage on Saving Throws against Spells while you wear this cloak.

This crimson cloak is embroidered with golden sigils of Thay. When the wearer of this cloak is presented with an opportunity to act in a selfish or malevolent way, this item heightens the bearer's urge to do so.

This item can be found in **Player Handout 4**.

#### Potion of Greater Healing

*Potion, uncommon*

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

#### Scroll of Animate Dead

*Scroll, uncommon*

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## Story Awards

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During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story awards:

***Favor of the Harpers.*** You have earned the personal debt of a High Harper. The next time you visit Phlan, Malkyn invites you to a banquet in your honor at his estate.

In addition, Malkyn gifts you with a letter of introduction, marking you as an honored ally of the Harpers, which may aid you in future interactions with the Harper Faction. More information can be found in **Player Handout 2**.

***Prisoner of Thay.*** Captured by the enemy, you were subjected to horrific magical experiments that have left you branded with arcane runes, and small throbbing shards of crystal embedded in your flesh.

If you are hiding, these crystals alert NPC Red Wizards within 10 feet of your location to detect you automatically (as if they had succeeded on their Perception checks).

You can spend 10 downtime days to have the pulsating crystal shards removed. Removing the crystals in this way removes the ability for Red Wizards to detect your presence, but leaves you with small superficial scars that cannot be healed, or disguised even by *disguise self* or similar spells. More information can be found in **Player Handout 3**.

## Renown

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Each character receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

**Members of Harpers (rank 2 or higher)** that retrieve one or more sets of books from the Arcane Repository belonging to a single school, and return them to Malkyn earn **one additional renown point**.

## DM Reward

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In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* (ALDMG).

## Appendix. Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

**Malkyn Fenris (MAL-kin FEN-ris).** One of the founding members of the Open Harper movement, Malkyn is a major figure in the Red War having been a signatory of the *Harper Declaration of Support*, and delegate at the Stillwater Summit of the Five Factions. As an Open Harper, Malkyn considers it his duty to protect his fellow Harpers by using himself as leprechaun bait – in an effort to fracture and fragment the forces of Thay.

Malkyn is a friendly, gregarious wizard with an obsession with the color green. While a brilliant tactician and shrewd judge of character, Malkyn is peculiar, and has numerous quirks. He considers himself to be a leprechaun despite all evidence to the contrary.

He speaks in a pitched lilting accent, peppered with contractions that sometimes makes him hard to understand. He is obsessed with the color green. When not dressed for battle, he wears a tailored green suit complete with tails and top hat and carries his signature *staff of power*.

Malkyn is hedonistic, and extremely narcissistic. He is aromantic, and asexual, never having shown any interest in pursuing such relations despite his hedonism.

**Karsus (CAR-sus).** The legendary Netherese Wizard who invented the first (and only) 12<sup>th</sup> level spell – *Karsus' Avatar*. This same spell was responsible for the destruction of Netheril and the death of Mystryl. His personal research journal has fallen into the hands of Szass Tam, and serves as the focal point of this adventure.

**Szass Tam (ZASS TAM).** The ruthless, and tyrannical ruler of Thay. After numerous defeats, Szass Tam has set his sights on conquering Mulmaster. It is his current goal to simultaneously crush the upstart rebellion lead by Malkyn Fenris, Tick Tary Tanner, and the other Faction Leaders as well as deal with his rebellious underling Dar'lon Ma who sought to usurp his authority.

**Thessyl'k (THES-ilk).** While not yet a Zulkir, Thessyl'k is a powerful archmage, enchanter, and master cryptographer. It is his duty to translate the *Lost Journal of Karsus*, sparing Szass Tam the tedium of doing it himself. Portraying himself as a sibilant and obedient sycophant, this is merely an act intended to make him appear nonthreatening so that he avoids unwanted attention. Calculated, and deliberate, Thessyl'k takes after his former master

Dar'lon Ma, and has goals of standing as one of the eight zulkir's of Thay.

**Dar'lon Ma (DAR-lon MA).** *LE male human Red Wizard zulkir.* Dar'lon Ma is the zulkir of enchantment, and the one responsible for the construction of the Thayvian Embassy. It was his intention to use the Writhing Batteries in combination with the Elemental Rifts to somehow usurp Szass Tam. His plans were dashed by the Red War, and the arrival of Szass Tam in Mulmaster.

**Kyuss (KEE-oos).** In a time of antiquity, the mortal Kyuss transformed himself into an undead abomination comprised of a shifting mass of maggots and worms. As a semi-divine being, the Worm that Walks threatened the privileged positions of the gods, who rallied together to defeat him, trapping him within a powerful artifact called the Dark Obelisk. The artifact was then shattered, and its many fragments were scattered across all the known worlds.

Each fragment of the Dark Obelisk contained a single aspect of Kyuss, which railed against its imprisonment. Over time, these fragments became known as the Writhing Batteries due to their rhythmic thumping, and the intense arcane energies they possessed.

While most of these Writhing batteries are lost to time, several have been discovered in recent years – and shattered – releasing the aspects of Kyuss into the world.

**MuLen Xiph (MOO-len ZIFF).** MuLen is a moderately successful evoker, whose success has allowed them to slowly but surely climb the ranks of the Red Wizards to a place of minor value and importance. They are accompanied by their subordinates who act as their personal servants, and bodyguards.



# Appendix. Monster/NPC Statistics

## Archmage

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 99 (18d8+18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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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; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks (from *stoneskin*)

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** any six languages

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** The archmage 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*, *shield*, *mage armor*\*,  
*magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *mirror image*,  
*misty step*

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

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

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

6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning*

7th level (1 slot): *teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *mind blank*\*

9th level (1 slot): *meteor swarm*

\*The archmage casts *mind blank*, *mage armor*, and *stoneskin* on itself before combat.

## Actions

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**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.

## Bone Golem (Stone Golem)

Large construct, unaligned

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 178 (17d10+85)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

---

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine.

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

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands Common, Thayan, Draconic, Infernal, Abyssal, Celestial but can't speak.

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**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

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**Multiaction.** The golem makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8+6) bludgeoning damage.

**Slow (Recharge 5 – 6).** The golem targets one or more creatures it can see within 10 feet of it. Each target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic. On a failed save, a target can't use reactions, its speed is halved, and it can't make more than one attack on its turn. In addition, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. These effects last for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## Bronze Guardian (Stone Defender)

Medium construct, unaligned

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (7d8+21)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

---

**Damage Immunities** poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

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

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands Ancient Netherese but can't speak

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the stone defender remains motionless against an uneven earthen or stone surface, it is indistinguishable from that surface.

**Magic Resistance.** The stone defender has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### Actions

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**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, it is knocked prone.

### Reactions

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**Intercept Attack.** In response to another creature within 5 feet of it being hit by an attack roll, the stone defender gives that creature a +5 bonus to its AC against that attack, potentially causing a miss. To use this ability, the stone defender must be able to see the creature and the attacker.

## Ghoul

Medium undead, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

---

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### Actions

---

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4+2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## Red Wizard Evoker

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 66 (12d8+12)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Saving Throws** Int +7, Wis +5

**Skills** Arcana +7, History +7

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

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Thayan, Draconic, Ignan

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The evoker is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The evoker has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*<sup>E</sup>, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*<sup>E</sup>

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*<sup>E</sup>, *mage armor*<sup>\*</sup>, *magic missile*<sup>E</sup>

2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image*, *misty step*, *shatter*<sup>E</sup>

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*<sup>E</sup>, *lightning bolt*<sup>E</sup>

4th level (3 slots): *ice storm*<sup>E</sup>, *stoneskin*<sup>\*</sup>

5th level (3 slots): *Bigby's hand*<sup>E</sup>, *cone of cold*<sup>E</sup>

6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning*<sup>E</sup>, *wall of ice*<sup>E</sup>

<sup>E</sup>Evocation spell.

\*The evoker casts *mage armor*, and *stoneskin* on itself before combat.

**Sculpt Spells.** When the evoker casts an evocation spell that forces other creatures it can see, it can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. These creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell. If a successful save means a chosen creature would take half damage from the spell, it instead takes no damage from it.

### Actions

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

## Red Wizard 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** Common, Thayan, Draconic, Elvish

**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): *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*<sup>\*</sup>, *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 (3 slots): *cone of cold*

\*The mage casts *mage armor* 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.

## Red Wizard Zulkir

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

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Thayan, Draconic, Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

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

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If a zulkir fails a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead.

**Spell Secrets.** When a zulkir casts a spell with a spell slot that deals acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, radiant, or thunder damage, the zulkir can substitute that damage type with one other type from that list.

**Spellcasting.** The zulkir 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*, *shield*, *mage armor*\*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

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

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

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

6th level (1 slot): *true seeing*\*

7th level (1 slot): *simulacrum*\*

8th level (1 slot): *mind blank*\*

9th level (1 slot): *meteor swarm*

\*The zulkir casts *mage armor*, *mirror image*, *true seeing*, *simulacrum*, and *mind blank* 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.

## Reactions

**Tattoos of Absorption.** A Red Wizard zulkir can use a reaction to absorb a spell that is targeting only the zulkir and not with an area of effect. The absorbed spell's effect is canceled, and the spell's energy – not the spell itself – is stored in the zulkir's magical tattoos. The energy has the same level as the spell when it was cast. The magical tattoos can store up to 20 levels. The zulkir's can cast spells using spell levels stored in this way.

## Legendary Actions

The Red Wizard zulkir 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 Red Wizard zulkir regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Cantrip (Costs 1 Action).** The zulkir casts a cantrip.

**First-level spell (Costs 1 Action).** The zulkir casts a first-level spell.

**Second-level spell (Costs 2 Actions).** The zulkir casts a second-level spell.

**Third-level spell (Costs 3 Actions).** The zulkir casts a third-level spell.

## Skeleton

Medium undead, lawful evil

**Armor Class** 13 (armor scraps)

**Hit Points** 13 (2d8+4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak.

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

## Actions

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 +2)

## Star Spawn Larva Mage

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 168 (16d8 + 96)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	23 (+6)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Wis +6, Cha +8

**Skills** Perception +6

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nongmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Thayan

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

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

At Will: *eldritch blast* (3 beams, +3 bonus to each damage roll), *minor illusion*

3/day: *dominate monster*

1/day: *circle of death*

**Return to Worms.** When the larva mage is reduced to 0 hit points, it breaks apart into a **swarm of insects** in the same space. Unless the swarm is destroyed, the larva mage reforms from it 24 hours later.

### Actions

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of its next turn.

**Plague of Worms (Recharge 6).** Each creature other than a star spawn within 10 feet of the larva mage must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (5d8) necrotic damage and be blinded and restrained by masses of warming worms. The affected creature takes 22 (5d8) necrotic damage at the start of each of the larva mage's turns. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

### Reactions

**Feed on Weakness.** When a creature within 20 feet of the larva mage fails a saving throw, the larva mage gains 10 temporary hit points.

### Legendary Actions

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

**Cantrip (Costs 2 Actions).** The larva mage casts one cantrip.

**Slam (Costs 2 Actions).** The larva mage makes one slam attack.

**Feed (Costs 3 Actions).** Each creature restrained by the larva mage's Plague of Worms takes 13 (3d8) necrotic damage, and the larva mage gains 6 temporary hit points.

## Swarm of Insects (Star Spawn Larva Mage)

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, Chaotic Evil

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** –

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Swarm.** The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

### Actions

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

## Thayan Warrior

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

**Armor Class** 16 (chain shirt, shield)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d8+16)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Thayan

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Pack Tactics.** The warrior has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the warrior's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The warrior makes two melee attacks.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 +3) piercing damage.

## Wight

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 14 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 45 (6d10+18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered.

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** the languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

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

### Actions

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

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

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

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

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

## Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 22 (3d8+9)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

**Saving Throws** Wis +0

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak.

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

### Actions

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage.

## Zombie (Beholder Zombie)

Large Undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 93 (11d10+33)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

---

**Saving Throws** Wis +2

**Damage Immunities** poisoned

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** understands Deep Speech and Undercommon but cannot speak.

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

### Actions

---

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage.

**Eye Ray.** The zombie uses a random magical eye ray, choosing a target that it can see within 60 feet of it.

1. **Paralyzing Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

2. **Fear Ray.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

3. **Enervation Ray.** The targeted creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

4. **Disintegration Ray.** If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 45 (10d8) force damage. If this damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, its body becomes a pile of fine grey dust.

If the target is a Large or smaller nonmagical object or creation of magical force, it is disintegrated without a saving throw. If the target is a Huge or larger nonmagical object or creation of magical force, the ray disintegrates a 10-foot cube of it.

## Zombie (Ogre Zombie)

Large undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 85 (9d10+36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

---

**Saving Throws** Wis +0

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** understands Common and Giant but can't speak.

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

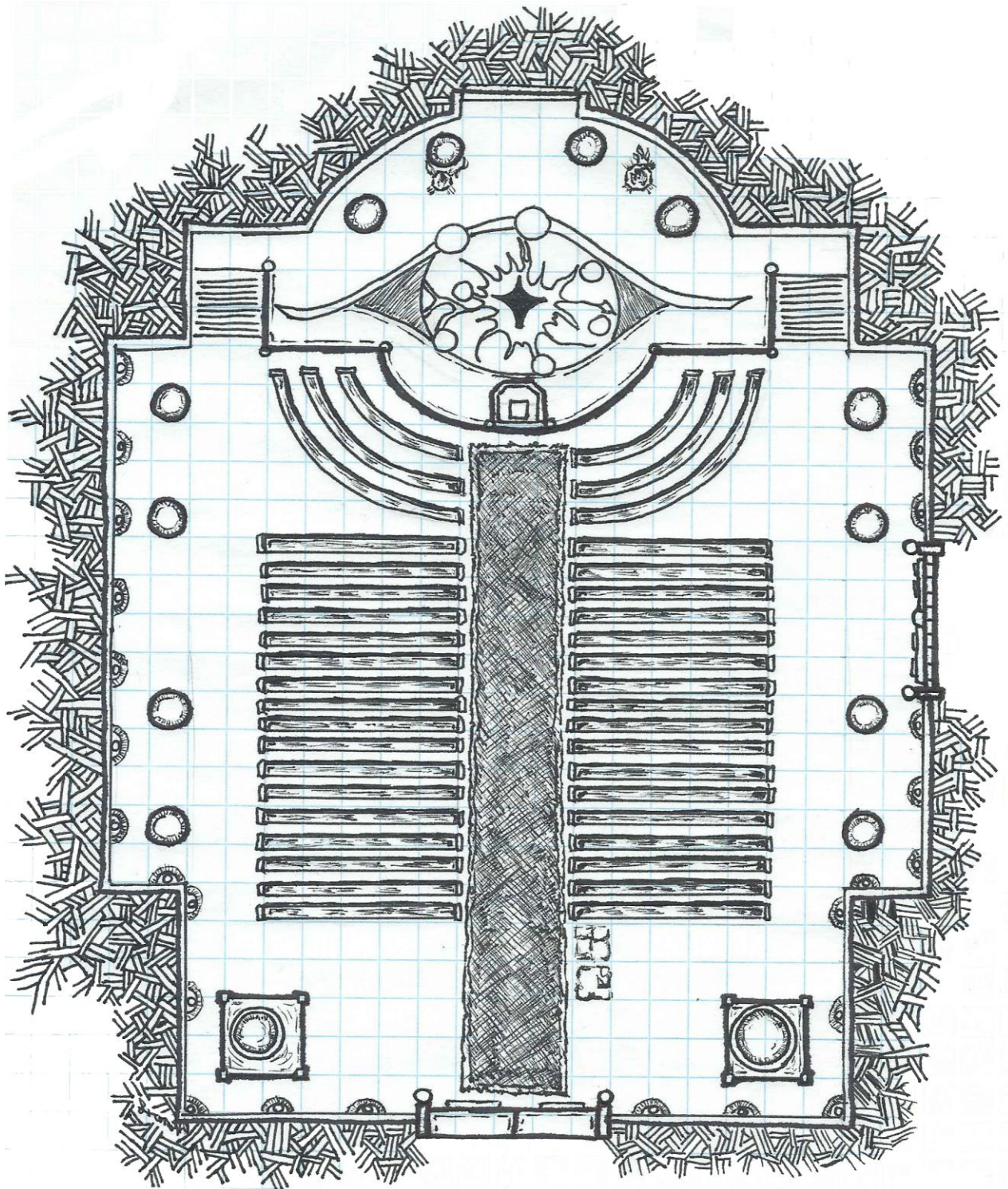
**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

### Actions

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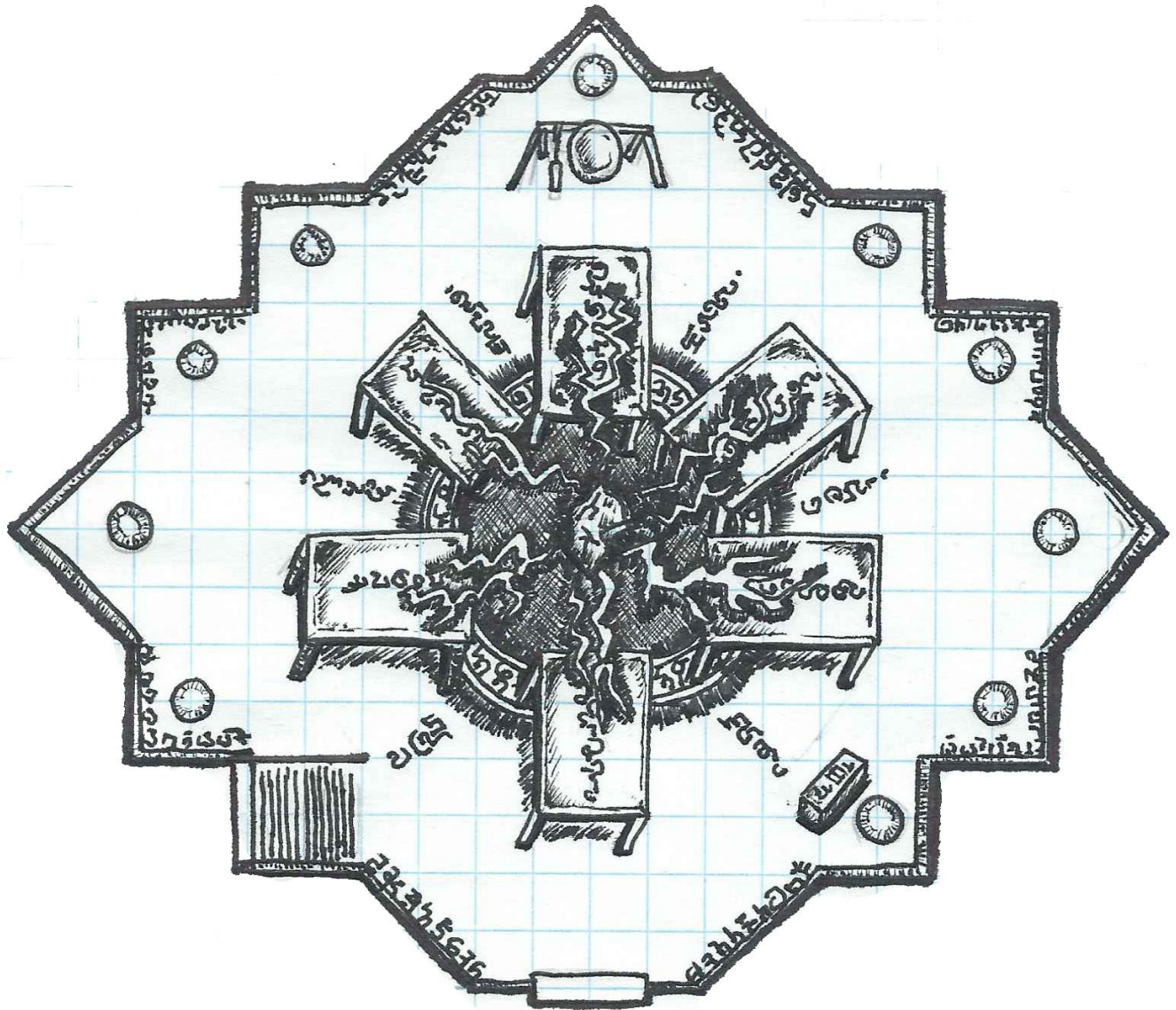
**Morningstar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning damage.

## Appendix. Map – The Chapel of the Dead

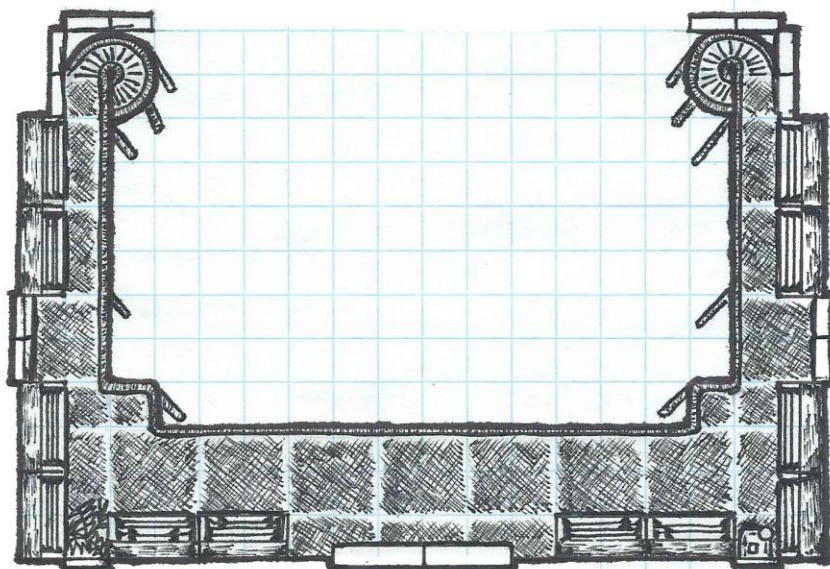
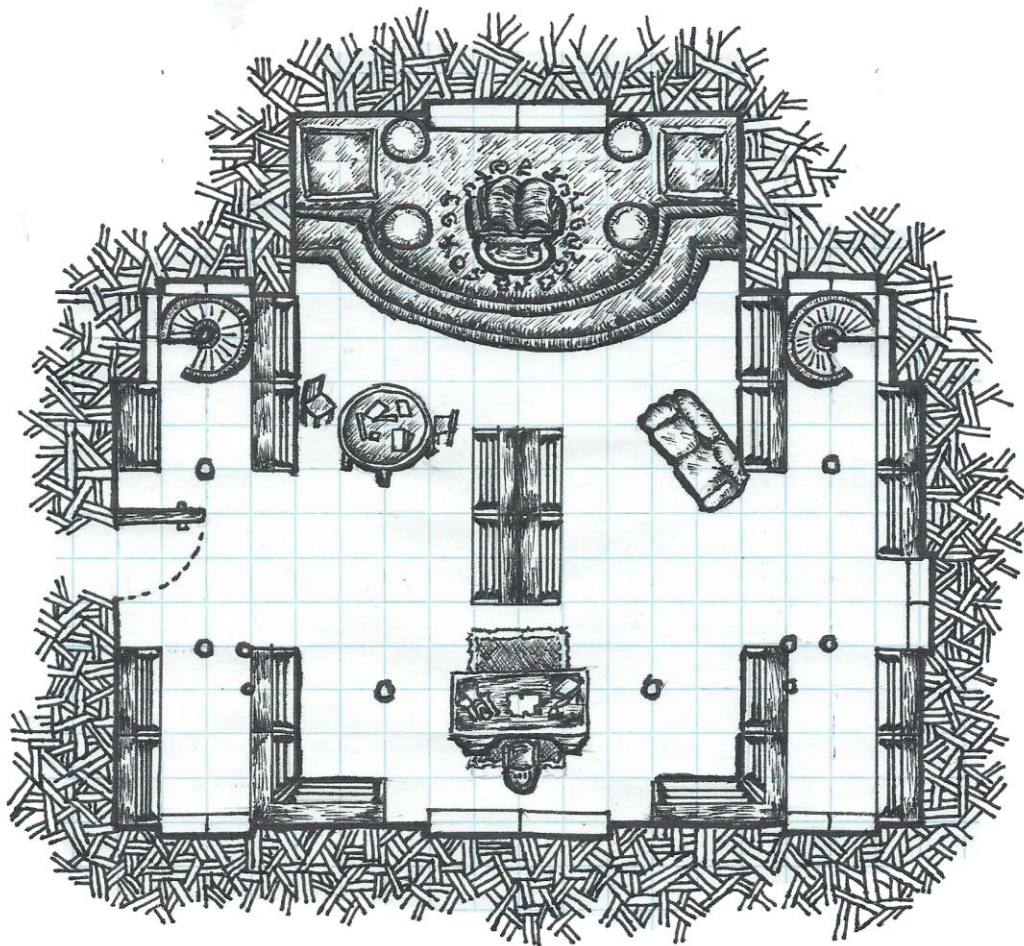




# Appendix. Map - The Shattered Battery



## Appendix. Map – The Journal of Karsus



## Appendix. DM Handout. 1

This handout compiles various sidebars and other information required for the following NPC, and is intended for ease of use:

### MuLen Xiph (MOO-len ZIFF)

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*LE non-binary human* **Red Wizard evoker**, 29.

MuLen is a moderately successful evoker, whose success has allowed them to slowly but surely climb the ranks of the Red Wizards to a place of minor value and importance. They are accompanied by their subordinates who act as their personal servants, and bodyguards.

#### Roleplaying MuLen Xiph

The following information is intended to help DMs roleplay this NPC.

**Personality.** MuLen is quiet, soft-spoken and incredibly perceptive and insightful. They like to collect facts about those around them, and ask leading questions to ferret out information, while revealing as little about themselves as possible.

**Appearance.** MuLen wears a non-descript red robe, numerous pouches, and a hooded mantle that is drawn up over their bald head. Blue tattoos that glow softly can be seen on their forehead, and shaven scalp.

**Quote:** “That is most fascinating. Please go on.”

#### Statistics

MuLen has the statistics of **Red Wizard evoker**.

**Weak/Very Weak.** If the party is weak (or very weak), MuLen has the statistics of a **Red Wizard mage** instead, and lacks the ability to cast 6th level spells.

#### Spellcasting

MuLen has the following spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *chill touch*, *firebolt\**, *light\**, *Toll the Dead*<sup>XGE</sup>

**1st level (3 slots):** *burning hands\**, *mage armor*, *magic missile\**

**2nd level (3 slots):** *scorching ray\**, *mirror image*, *shatter\**

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

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

**5th level (2 slots):** *Bigby’s Hand\**, *enervation*<sup>XGE</sup>

**6th level (1 slot):** *chain lightning\**, *globe of invulnerability*

\* Evocation Spell

**XGE:** Spell comes from Xanathar’s Guide to Everything. DMs who lack this book may replace these spells with equivalent spells from the *player’s handbook*.

## Appendix. DM Handout 2

This handout compiles various sidebars and other information required for the following NPC, and is intended for ease of use:

### Thessyl'k (THES-ilk)

*CE male human Red Wizard zulkir, 58.*

While not yet a Zulkir, Thessyl'k is a powerful archmage, enchanter, and master cryptographer. It is his duty to translate the *Lost Journal of Karsus*, sparing Szass Tam the tedium of doing it himself. Portraying himself as a sibilant and obedient sycophant, this is merely an act intended to make him appear nonthreatening so that he avoids unwanted attention. Calculated, and deliberate, Thessyl'k takes after his former master Dar'lon Ma, and has goals of standing as one of the eight zulkir's of Thay.

### Roleplaying Thessyl'k

Thessyl'k is a cunning, and shrewd wizard. More than willing to supplicate himself to get ahead, this conniving wizard has wormed his way into Szass Tam's inner circle through guile, wit, and considerable arcane talent. He believes his act has convinced Szass Tam that he poses no threat to the Zulkir.

**Quote:** "No please! I beg you. I can be useful..... Fool! Did you honestly believe me?"

### Statistics

Thessyl'k has the statistics of a **Red Wizard zulkir** except where noted below.

**Very Weak.** If the party is very weak, Thessyl'k has the statistics of a **Red Wizard archmage** instead.

**Hit points.** 144 (18d8+18). If the party is **weak** or **very weak** Thessyl'k has 99 hit points instead.

**Languages.** Add ancient netherese.

**Damage resistances.** Bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical weapons (from *stoneskin*).

**Cryptography.** Thessyl'k is a master cryptographer, and gains advantage on any Intelligence check to decipher codes, or ciphers. Through raw skill alone, Thessyl'k can parse the meaning of written words as if he was under the effect of a permanent *comprehend languages* spell.

**Spell Secrets.** Thessyl'k lacks this ability.

**Tattoos of Absorption.** Thessyl'k can only absorb 10 spell levels at a time. If the party is **weak** or **very weak**, Thessyl'k lacks this ability.

**Foresight (Spell).** Thessyl'k has advantage on attack rolls, ability checks and saving throws. All other creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls made against him.

### Spellcasting

Thessyl'k has the following spells prepared, regardless of stat-block.

**Cantrips (at will):** *chill touch, fire bolt, friends, light, Toll the Dead*<sup>XGE</sup>

**1st level (4 slots):** *cause fear*<sup>XGE</sup>, *charm person, detect magic, mage armor*\*

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

**3rd level (3 slots):** *counterspell, dispel magic, fireball*

**4th level (3 slots):** *greater invisibility, sickening radiance*<sup>XGE</sup>, *stoneskin*\*

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

**6th level (1 slot):** *true seeing*\*

**7th level (1 slot):** *finger of death*

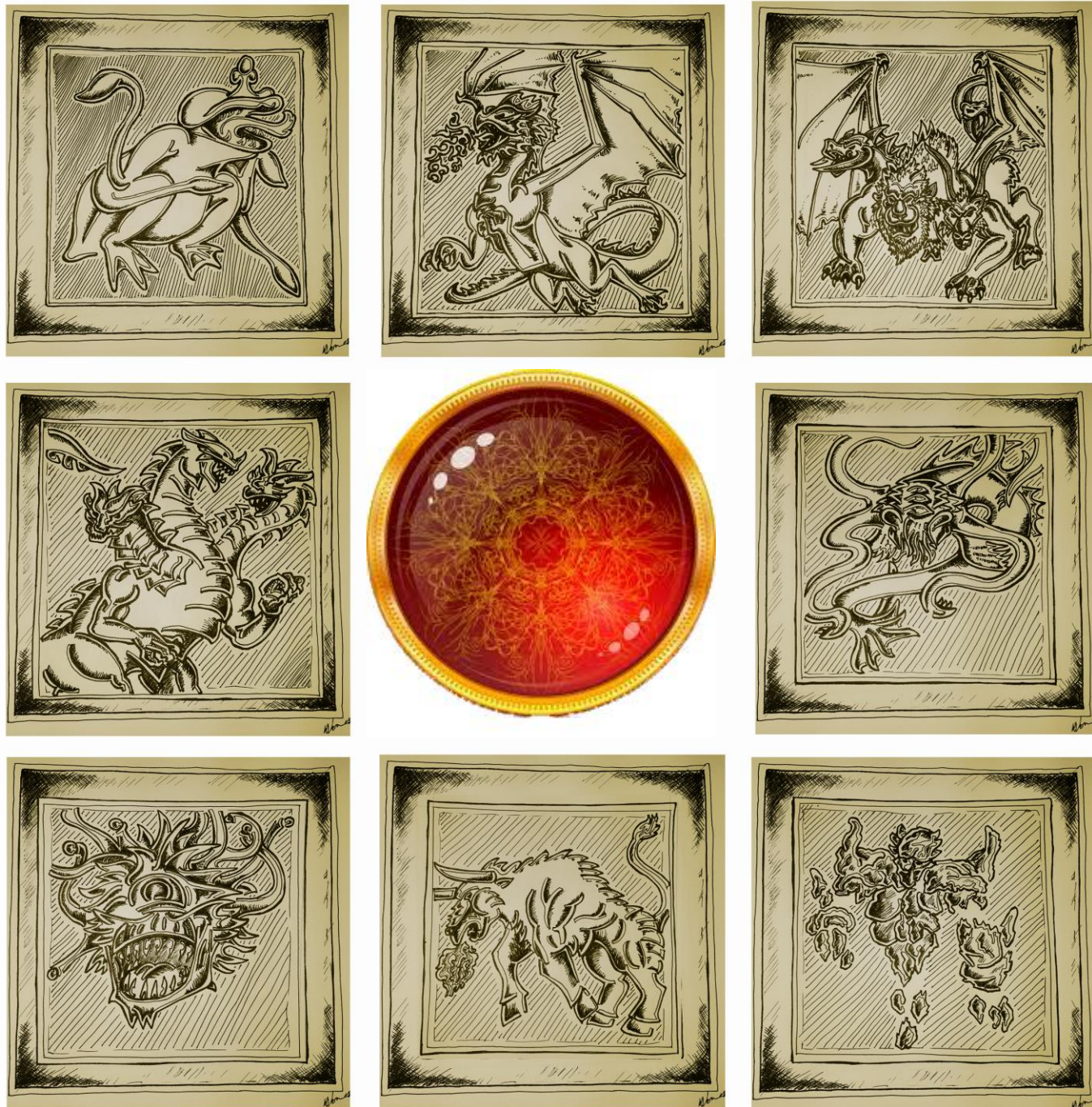
**8th level (1 slot):** *Illusory Dragon*<sup>XGE</sup>

**9th level (1 slot):** *foresight*\*

XGE: Spell comes from Xanathar's Guide to Everything. DMs who lack this book may instead use spells from the Red Wizard zulkir instead.

\*Thessyl'k casts *mage armor, foresight, stoneskin*, and *true seeing* on himself before combat. Thessyl'k does not possess a *simulacrum*.

# Player Handout 1. – Bronze Door Puzzle



## Player Handout 2. Story Award

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

### Favor of the Harpers

---

You have earned the personal debt of a High Harper. The next time you visit Phlan, Malkyn invites you to a banquet in your honor at his estate.

In addition, Malkyn gifts you with a letter of introduction, marking you as an honored ally of the Harpers, which may aid you in future interactions with the Harper Faction.

## Player Handout 3. Story Award

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

### Prisoner of Thay

---

Captured by the enemy, you were subjected to horrific magical experiments that left you branded with arcane runes, and small throbbing shards of crystal embedded in your flesh.

If you are hiding, these crystals alert NPC Red Wizards within 10 feet of your location to detect you automatically (as if they had succeeded on their Perception checks).

You can spend 10 downtime days to have the pulsating crystal shards removed. Removing the crystals in this way removes the ability for Red Wizards to detect your presence, but leaves you with small superficial scars that cannot be healed, or disguised even by *disguise self* or similar spells.

## Player Handout 4. Magic Item

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

### Thayvian Mantle of Spell Resistance

---

*Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement).*

You have advantage on Saving Throws against Spells while you wear this cloak.

This crimson cloak is embroidered with golden sigils of Thay. When the wearer of this cloak is presented with an opportunity to act in a selfish or malevolent way, this item heightens the bearer's urge to do so.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.



## Player Handout 5. Spellbook

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following spellbook:

### MuLen's Travelling Spellbook

---

This crimson, leather spellbook has seen better days. Dog-eared, stained, and with the binding starting to go, it is obvious that MuLen has been less than careful with this spellbook.

MuLen's travelling spellbook contains the following spells.

**1st level (3 slots):** *burning hands, mage armor, magic missile*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *scorching ray, mirror image, shatter*

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

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

**5th level (2 slots):** *Bigby's Hand, enervation*<sup>XGE</sup>

**6th level (1 slot):** *chain lightning, globe of invulnerability*

XGE: Spell comes from Xanathar's Guide to Everything. DMs who lack this book may instead use spells from the Red Wizard zulkir instead.

## Player Handout 6. Spellbook

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following spellbook:

### Spellbook of Thessyl'k

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This black, leather spellbook is exquisitely crafted. A large oval topaz has been affixed to the center of the cover, which is decorated with silver scrollwork. A decorated silver clasp holds the cover closed.

The spellbook of Thessyl'k contains the following spells:

**1st level (4 slots):** *cause fear*<sup>XGE</sup>, *charm person*, *detect magic*, *mage armor*

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

**3rd level (3 slots):** *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*

**4th level (3 slots):** *greater invisibility*, *sickening radiance*<sup>XGE</sup>, *stoneskin*

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

**6th level (1 slot):** *true seeing*

**7th level (1 slot):** *finger of death*

**8th level (1 slot):** *Illusory Dragon*<sup>XGE</sup>

**9th level (1 slot):** *foresight*

XGE: Spell comes from Xanathar's Guide to Everything. DMs who lack this book may instead use spells from the Red Wizard zulkir instead.