

A GUIDE TO TYRANNY OF DRAGONS

HOARD OF THE DRAGON QUEEN & RISE OF TIAMAT

BY SEAN MCGOVERN



POWER SCORE RPG



This guide contains notes and information for Dungeon Masters who are running the Tyranny of Dragons path (Hoard of the Dragon Queen and Rise of Tiamat) for Dungeons & Dragons 5th edition. It features links, errata and advice on how to run things most effectively and information to make it easier for you to foreshadow the story and make it feel more fleshed out.

This pdf grew out of my blog:

Power Score RPG

- <http://powerscorerpg.blogspot.com/>
- <http://thecampaign20xx.blogspot.com/>

Who is Galvan?

On page 9 of The Rise of Tiamat, it is mentioned that the blue wyrmspeaker is named Galvan. The PCs will run into every other wyrmspeaker in this storyline, but not Galvan. It is odd because there is art of him and there is even a small article on the wizards site about him. Apparently he is linked to the red wizards.

Basically what you have here is an NPC to use however you like! Maybe you could link him to Lennithon. Or maybe he can harass your PCs from time to time as a recurring villain in the assassination attempts. Give him some spells and lightning powers and you're good to go.

Named Dragons

Having a PC want revenge on a dragon works out well. There are a number of dragons to choose from that the PCs face in this adventure:

- Lennithon: Blue dragon, appears in Hoard episode 1 and then again in Rise episode 7.
- Voaraghamanthar: Black dragon from the Mere of Dead Men, plays a minor role in Hoard Episode 6 (many people have expanded Voaraghamanthar's role) .
- Glazhael the Cloudchaser: A white dragon who lives in Skyreach Castle, is the big encounter in episode 8 of Hoard.
- Arauthator: White dragon of the Sea of Moving Ice is in Rise episode 2. He has a cool story involving his mate, the troubled dragon Arveiaturace.
- Chuth: Green Dragon, raiding settlements in the Misty Forest in Rise episode 4.

Backgrounds

The backgrounds in Hoard of the Dragon Queen are good, but they do not link to Rise of Tiamat much at all. You might want to consider adding to or altering some of them.

Option 6: This can easily be changed to include Rise of Tiamat Wyrmspeakers like Neronvain for an elf PC, or Varram for a dwarf PC.

Option 10: This is awesome. The PC is a former gold dragon of Bahamut in mortal form as a punishment. There is a good chance this PC would at least be aware of the metallic dragons in episode 6 of Rise of Tiamat. It might be interesting to say that the PC knows "Elia" the silver dragon. And you definitely should think about incorporating Protanther, the gold dragon (Rise of Tiamat page 59). Protanther is a former "King of Justice" - royalty among gold dragons.

Cylanestriel the Elf Ranger: She is a somewhat well-known hero that could be linked to a PC's background. She appears in The Rise of Tiamat in one of the drop-in encounters ("Fallen Hero" page 7 of Rise). She is captured by the bad guys and escapes. She plays no major part in anything so you're free to use it how you like.

Elf PCs: Elf characters may want to say that they came from the Misty Forest, as it is featured in Episode 4 of Rise of Tiamat. The forest is being plagued by an evil green dragon called Chuth. King Melandrach rules it (and he joins the Council of Waterdeep in Rise). The King has two sons, Alagarthas and Neronvain (who has gone missing). Roguish types may want to worship Fenmarel Mestarine, elven god of outcasts. There's a small shrine to Fenmarel in Episode 4, and one of my players realized this god is perfect for his character.

Darkhold: If you look on the map of the region on page 4 of Hoard, you'll see a place called Darkhold. It is way down on the bottom right, very close to the Well of Dragons (home of the cult and the location of the finale in Rise of Tiamat).

Darkhold is a castle owned by the Zhentarim. If you have any characters in your campaign in the Zhentarim faction, it would make sense for them to know about Darkhold or maybe they even come from there. Seeing how close this place is to the Well of Dragons, there's a good chance your Zhentarim PCs might go there.

Hoard of the Dragon Queen Notes

Episode 1

Be Careful: The main issue that people seem to have with this episode is that it is too deadly. As written, your players go through a lot of battles with theoretically no rest time. A long rest is out of the question, as this whole thing takes place over a single evening. I'd suggest having the PCs save some clerics of Chauntea (or whatever god you like) among the rescued, who can use their healing magic on the heroes. Also, place some healing potions where it makes sense.

The Blue Dragon Encounter is Tricky: In the battle with Lennithon the blue dragon, many DMs placed a ballista on the wall for the PCs to use to fire on Lennithon. This helps give the PCs incentive to actually engage the dragon. Otherwise they may feel (rightly) that they have no chance against it and will not even try to engage it.

Lennithon appears again in Xonthal's tower in Rise of Tiamat, so note any special scars or moments that occur. The dragon can seek revenge later if a PC shoots it in the eye.

The Duel: In the duel with the half-dragon Langdedrosa, it is not important if the PC wins and kills him. The half-dragon appears again in Episode 3 simply as a monster in a room.

That said, this is a very hard fight. Hoard co-author Steve Winter has basically said that the point of this encounter is for the PC to lose and to be humiliated so that the players truly hate the cult.

Consider your players before choosing to run this. I just skipped it. If you do run it, you may want to warn your PCs as they size him up that he looks extremely tough and possibly unbeatable so that they know going in that defeat is likely. You may also want to consider having Langdedrosa giving the PC a scar - a permanent memento of their fateful encounter.

Episode 2

The Red Wizard: You may want to have Azbara Jos, the Red Wizard, be in the camp. It is mentioned later that he is here. He is a red wizard and a liason to the red wizards. He will later join the caravan in episode 4. It has been noted by the authors online that Azbara hangs out in Rezmir's command tent.

The Leader Tent: The adventure wants you to make it impossible to affect the tent of the leaders which is where Rezmir, Frulam, Langdedrosa and Azbara Jos are. You may just want to not even call attention to it to avoid an awkward situation, if that matters to you. Does it matter if the PCs (somehow) kill these people? Let's see:

- Rezmir: She is the big leader (one of the five Wyrmspeakers), and plays into chapter 6 and chapter 8. She is so powerful that I don't think your PCs can take her down. The PCs might get clever and steal one of her items, like the sword Hazirawn or even the black dragon mask.
- Frulam Mondath: She is a wearer of purple. She is meant to be killed in Chapter 3. It's not the end of the world if she dies here.
- Langdedrosa: He is just a dude in Chapter 3, no big deal if he dies now.
- Azbara Jos: This guy shows up in many future chapters, he's ultimately meant to die in chapter 8. He works for a guy named Rath Modar, a red wizard who wants to use Tiamat for his own nefarious ends.

The Hatchery is Right There: The caves lead to the Hatchery, which is detailed in episode 3. You may want to make sure you are familiar with episode 3 before running this episode, as there is a fair chance your PCs will try to sneak in there. There are guards, but any savvy team can get by that. Episode 2 is extremely short, depending on how your players handle it.

Free That Monk Prisoner: The text notes that Leosin will want to stay a prisoner in the camp. You may want to ignore this. The adventure assumes that he is rescued, and it might be a bit difficult or awkward to work around his absence.

Episode 3

The Dragon Eggs: The PCs may want to keep a dragon egg (there's 3 total, each containing a black dragon). You should decide whether you want to allow that. The adventure states that if the PCs can keep the egg in warm conditions, it will hatch in a week. In my game, the PCs kept one. I ruled that for now the baby dragon can't fly, breathe acid, or do much of anything. The way they treat it will determine whether it grows up to become evil.

Remember that if you are running an Adventurer's League game, this may not be legal. You may want to be clear up front that while you are allowing the dragon at your table, other tables probably won't.

In Rise of Tiamat, there is a paragraph describing how the factions feel about the dragon eggs. Here is what it says:

The fate of the dragon hatchery divides opinion as well. Most delegates respect a decision to destroy the hatchery, accepting that having fewer dragons to deal with later on is an advantage. However, the Harpers would have preferred the eggs to be kept for ransoming back to their parents, potentially keeping those dragons from cooperating with the cult. Dagult would have sold the valuable eggs to "responsible buyers," then used that gold to hire more mercenaries. The Emerald Enclave is firmly against any dragon eggs being destroyed, believing that the chromatic dragons are a part of the natural order and that killing their young upsets balance of that order. Taern Hornblade and Lady Laeral Silverhand think there might have been a way to leverage the eggs as ransom, but both recognize that they would have been dangerous to hold onto - and even more dangerous to return.

Where the eggs came from is never answered. There is a black dragon in the Mere of Dead Men named Voaraghamanthar who is discussed in episode 6. Perhaps he is the father.

The Roper: That roper in the hatchery is very tough! You may want to make it super-obvious that it just wants food. Maybe have it shoot a tentacle into a PCs' backpack to snatch some delicious rations. The roper feels like one fight too many in this dungeon, which will be tough enough without it.

The Harpers: If there are any Harpers in the party, you may want to have Leosin mention to them to keep an eye out for a fellow Harper named Carlon Amofel. He has a tattoo with the Harper symbol hidden in it. In episode 4, the heroes will encounter him buried up to his neck in the road.

Episode 4

Rolls At the Start of the Trip: Don't forget to have the PCs roll charisma checks at the start of the trip as detailed on page 37 in the "Recognized!" section. The person who rolls the lowest will eventually be recognized by a cultist. Also, don't forget to have your PCs try out for a wagon boss. They are really fun and add quite a bit to the trip. Pick your favorite NPCs from the list and run with it!

The Cultists Are Not Detailed At All: Speaking of cultists, you will need to make up details of most of the cultists.

Two Cultists That Become Important: Also, for some reason a few cultists that are on this trip aren't detailed until episode five. This may be to ensure that they survive the journey. You might want to include them now, as it doesn't really make sense otherwise. One is female, and is somehow related or involved with the cultist murdered by Jamna late in this episode. She is a veteran, and she will want revenge on the PC who was blamed for the murder.

Another cultist NPC who is briefly mentioned in episode 5 is a thief named Larion Keenblade. By episode 5, he wants out of the cult altogether. Maybe he befriends your PCs during the trip in episode 4.

Some People Hate this Chapter: From what I have seen, this chapter can ruin your campaign if you are not character. Some groups get stuck playing through each day and they get o sick of it the campaign just ends.

I think you should consider your payers and what they'd enjoy in this chapter. If playing through every single day is something that everyone would enjoy, then do that! But be aware that this chapter can become a real slog.

Additionally, some of the locations that the heroes stop at are barely detailed. I am referring to Trollclaw Ford, Daggerdale, Baldur's Gate and Waterdeep.

You can find information on these places online. Just go to this site and search for each location:

http://forgottenrealms.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page

Additionally, most of these locations are detailed heavily in older adventures that you can buy on the DMs Guild site. You could come up with all sorts of fun scenarios in each location if you like, or you could just handwave the whole thing. I think at the very least, you should cook up shops, inns and places to eat for each location.

Outline: Speaking of the trip, the caravan stops off in many iconic locations along the way. What follows is my outline on what happens when. It's just how I ran it, feel free to take it or leave it. I had to eyeball the distance between locations in some cases. I have included links to information on each of the settlements in case you want to flesh them out.

The Schedule: The trip is 750 miles long, 15 miles per day. 60 days total. The caravan travels for 8 hours a day and camps at night. The wagons stop every 6 days to let the animals rest.

- Start at Baldur's Gate
- Day 1: Everything Has a Price (I used Losvius Longnose for this)
- Day 3: The caravan begins passing through the Fields of the Dead
- Day 5: Animal Abuse
- Day 6: Bane of the Mountains
- Day 8: Stranded
- Days 9-12: Lots of rain and thunder to set up the fungus...
- Day 13: Fungus Humongous
- Day 16: Trollclaw Ford
- Day 20: Roadside Hospitality
- Day 23: The Golden Stag
- Day 28: Dragonspear
- Day 32: No Room at the Inn: The assassins are ridiculously powerful. This was an error in the adventure, due to the stats of assassins changing during the creation process. You might want to use different stats.
- Day 38: Contraband
- Day 43: Payback
- Day 45: Adventuring Life
- Day 47: Spider Woods
- Day 49: Recognized! (refer to the lowest PC Charisma check rolled at the beginning of the trip)
- Day 51: Gillian's Hill: This place is not on the Hoard map, but it is on the Scourge of the Sword Coast Map. The Forgotten Realms wiki has details.
- Day 52: Daggerford: You may want to mention Duke Maldwyn Daggerford and his magic blade Lawflame, NPCs from Scourge of the Sword Coast, a D&D Next adventure. You could also have the heroes meet Sir Isteval, who is part of the Council in Rise of Tiamat. Azbara Jos and Jamna Gleamsilver sign on to the caravan.
- Day 53: Unwanted Attention
- Day 56: Who's Your Friend?
- Day 58: Murder Most Foul
- Day 60: Waterdeep

You'll want to place the hobgoblin encounter from "Stranded" within the first 14 days or so, as that is when the caravan will pass through the Fields of the Dead.

Episode 5

When the heroes of my campaign arrived in Waterdeep, I added in a meeting to introduce NPCs that become important in Rise of Tiamat. I had Carlon Amofel bring the heroes to The Yawning Portal (a famous bar in Waterdeep that has an entrance to the legendary dungeon Undermountain in it). Carlon introduced the heroes to:

- Remallia Haventree: A moon elf harper who will represent the Harpers in the council at the start of Rise of Tiamat.
- "Elia": A mysterious silver-haired woman, friend of Remallia. She is a silver dragon assuming human form. This is a good chance for her to take stock of the heroes. She will end up taking the heroes to meet with the metallic dragons in Rise of Tiamat.

This is it for Jamna Gleamsilver: Jamna has no further role in this storyline, so do whatever you want. You might want to link her to Rian Nightshade in The Rise of Tiamat, or actually you could make her the Zhent agent who steals the white dragon mask in Rise episode 3. It is noted that the Zhents communicate through winged snakes who carry scrolls to each other, so maybe you can work that in somehow.

Episode 6

You Can Flesh out the Mere: You should read up on The Mere of Dead Men. Ed Greenwood wrote this great article which gives out a ton of detail on the mere and the dragon in the mere: <http://archive.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/wn/20040310a>

"Twisted trees, vines, and thick vegetation cloak the mist-shrouded surface of the cold saltwater swamp. Its air is foul with rotting stench, and its water is black and opaque. Visibility, given fogs and rolling topography, is rarely more than half a mile."

"For flightless creatures, travel in the Mere is slow and dangerous. Its dark waters are deep enough to permit a flat-bottomed skiff to pass, but many small islands rise from the swamp islands tangled with strange vegetation. The overgrown bones of long-fallen creatures lie everywhere. Quicksand is rare but mud all too common. Given the thick growth and frequent need to wade (and flounder), skiff-borne travelers can cover about eight miles in 10 hours."

"The Mere of Dead Men is known for its monstrous denizens. Travelers on the High Road skirting its eastern verges often travel for three days and nights without stopping, to avoid camping within reach of "dark, wet, clutching things raiding out of the swamp." Bobbing will-o'-wisps are common night sights from the road. Sword Coast lore speaks vividly of floating islands moving in the Mere, lizardfolk commanded by liches, a penanggalan of monstrous size, drowned ships swarming with sea zombies, gigantic darktentacles, yuan-ti

slavers, temples to inhuman gods, giant leeches with bullywug riders, a huge will-o'-wisp that pulses with dark energy, and many other horrors. "

I was able to flesh out the trip to Castle Naerytar with this material and it went extremely well.

A Castle Naerytar Map Handout is Extremely Helpful: You might want to grab a player's version of this map online from Mike Schley. The group is going to need some kind of visual representation of the place, as it is quite complex.

Castle Naerytar Requires Careful Planning: When preparing Castle Naerytar - it is a lot to digest. The main gist of this episode is that there is a portal that the PCs will want to go through (it leads to the lodge in episode 7). The magic pass phrase for the portal is on the top floor of the castle. The cultists here have allied themselves with bullywugs and lizardfolk. The lizardfolk hate the brutish bullywugs, who killed their leader.

The adventure seems to want your heroes to pretend to be cultists and infiltrate the castle. It also suggests that your PCs convince the lizardfolk to turn on the bullywugs, so that the exploration of the castle is done while lizardfolk hack bullywugs to pieces. You are going to need to have a good handle on this place. Think in advance on how you will handle it if the PCs want to lead 100 lizardfolk in an assault on the castle!

Remember that the PCs are assumed by everyone to be cultists until they reveal otherwise.

6. Main Gate: In the errata it is noted that this is an error on the map. "5" is supposed to be the moat, and "6" is supposed to be the gate. But on the published map, "5" is at the gate and "6" is missing entirely. The gate doors hang on their hinges.

The portcullis is always up and won't lower more than a couple feet. In other words, the entrance is wide open and can't be closed off by doors or portcullis.

1B. The Causeway: This is an area where our heroes can get slaughtered. The bullywugs up in 2A. can make range attacks while the monsters from 1C. and 1I. can swarm them. They could also use the...

10. Archer's Gallery: This area has holes for archers to fire on the causeway. While it has gone unused in the keep, in the face of an assault you may decide to have your monsters use it to teach your PCs a lesson.

2A. Upper Barbican: The second floor has an open roof. The nine bullywugs can chuck rocks and use their drum to put the castle on alert. Remember, underneath this is 1A., where another ten bullywugs and d6 giant frogs lurk.

3U. Observatory: These gargoyles will not join a fight unless PCs entered the observatory. I put this on my map because it came up in my game. There's this magic telescope in here called the Farseer of Illusk. Rezmir uses it to spy on the black dragon in the swamp. If a PC peers through it, they can watch the dragon Voaraghamanthar and learn its secret (discussed below). Also keep in mind that if you do like I did and let the PCs visit the dragon, it is possible that Rezmir will see this meeting through the device!

The Black Dragon: The adventure tells us point blank that the PCs should not go face-to-face with the dragon Voaraghamanthar and notes that the PCs will likely encounter this dragon in The Rise of Tiamat. Voaraghamanthar is not used again in either book. It would make sense for him to be there, but it's up to you to work out the details..

I like the idea of the PCs fighting each type of the chromatic dragons over the course of this story. I ended up using a red dragon in one of the "assassination" encounters in Rise of Tiamat. And I am thinking that this black dragon (and its secret buddy) can fight the heroes during chapter 6 in Rise, when the PCs are flying on the silver dragon.

In Rise, the chromatic dragons are flying to the Draakhorn throughout the adventure, so we can say that the black dragons are answering the call and happened to spot the silver dragon flying through the sky.

Major NPCs Are Here: Also in this dungeon is the main villain, Rezmir, and the red wizard Azbara Jos. The adventure tells us that the bad guys should escape, but that it is not the end of the world if they are slain. If your PCs do catch a glimpse of Rezmir, make sure to point out her cool sword (Hazirawn) and she might be wearing her onyx black dragon mask.

The Mask: The masks are what this adventure is all about. The black dragon mask is the only mask that the PCs have an actual chance of obtaining. Remember that the mask and sword both require attunement, which takes a short rest.

There are two other villains who are meant to be slain - the bullywug leader Pharblex Splattergoo (great name) and a snooty elf named Dralmorrer whose ultimate goal is for all non-elves to die. Dralmorrer is in charge of Castle Naerytar.

If Your PCs Are Defeated: You might decide that they are taken prisoner and placed in room 7 (page 60) in the dungeon to be questioned by Dralmorrer, Pharblex and maybe Azbara Jos.

The Basement Dungeon: There isn't too much to this dungeon. There's a bunch of bullywugs and giant frogs, and that's about it. The only interesting part is the trapped chest, where clay pots fall and cause hallucinogenic gas to spread. The gas causes every PC in the room to roll a die each round. An odd number means they jump into water and swim at full move. Even means they go nuts and attack. This lasts for 10 minutes.

Episode 7

Clunky Start: This chapter kicks off in a very disorganized fashion. When the heroes first activate the portal, you'll want to read them the flavor on page 63 ("Through the Gate") and then flip to Area 1 on page 64 for a description of the portal stone. Note that it is specifically stated on page 71 that the perytons have a clear view of the portal. Your PCs might be very injured coming through the portal so you might want to say that the creatures are out hunting.

There's a Lot of Stuff Outside the Lodge: Be aware of all the things out there:

- Three other portals
- A kennel that holds ambush drakes
- Perytons on the roof of the lodge
- A patrol of two trolls and three ambush drakes.

Your heroes will likely need a rest, so they may want to go out in the woods to camp. The perytons might be spotted flying around, or the 4-armed troll named Trepsin may decide to go out hunting. Your poor PCs might get attacked while resting. If this concerns you, maybe have them stumble on a secret little cave behind a waterfall or something which would be perfect for resting in safely.

The Empty Wyvern Stable: Area 3 is an empty stable that held wyverns. You should provide clues so the PCs know there were wyverns here. Let them say, "Man, how cool would that have been if we could have stolen their wyvern mounts?" In the next chapter, the PCs will have the opportunity to do exactly that. This will be a nice tease for later.

The Portals: There's also some discussion about three other portals located here. Each goes to a different place! The PCs will need to figure out how to activate them, but Talis can certainly help them with that.

This could be fun or a disaster, depending on what your PCs do. You might want to just get rid of these portals completely if you are worried your heroes will insist on activating one and going through. If you are OK with that, definitely plan out what happens if they use one.

The Magic Tapestry in Room 6: Expect your PCs to take this thing. If hung on a wall, you can walk through it and appear in a random location within 5 miles. Parnast is 5 miles away, so this could be a convenient way for the heroes to go there if things fall off the rails (they could appear in a forest and see a huge ice castle not far in the distance). Remember - it's a one-way trip!

Fighting Talis: Get a load of this. If a fight breaks out, she calls for help. Our heroes could potentially have to fight: Talis, a dragonclaw, 2 veterans, 2 gargoyles, a helmed horror, 24 kobolds (!), as well as Trepstin and his 6 ambush drakes. If you're not the TPK type, you can have the heroes taken prisoner and thrown down in room 9. You could do a Metal Gear Solid-style torture/interrogation scene, maybe with Talis using inflict wounds on our poor PC.

Place Notes in Room 18: As suggested at the end of the chapter, you might want to place notes in Talis's room about the flying castle in nearby Parnast as well as probably some fan-fiction about the white dragon Glazhael the Cloudchaser.

Episode 8

Parnast: There is not much going on in Parnast. The people are scared and some of the villagers are cult spies. There's one sympathetic NPC - Gundalin the Wheelwright. He'll whisper information to the PCs if given the opportunity.

The Castle is on the Ground: You have a tricky situation here. The adventure wants the castle in the air, but starts it on the ground. If your heroes approach the castle, they'll have to deal with 6 ogres on battlements who will quickly call on Rezmir and her drakes. You could end up in a scenario where the heroes slay Rezmir a bit early. If it is night time, they'll also have to contend with the vampire Sandesyl.

Flying in on Wyverns: If the castle takes off, the PCs can fly on the wyverns (though there are only two of them - and only two medium-sized PCs will fit on each of them). You may want to say there are three or four wyverns in the stable. Remember that if the PCs don't have a banner like the one in room 15 of the hunting lodge, they will be considered enemies when approaching the castle on the wyverns.

Sneaking in: The adventure also clearly likes the option of the PCs sneaking in while the castle is on the ground. There's cultists who bring supply carts full of treasure chests into the cave each hour or two during the day. The PCs could disguise themselves as cultists (though they'll need to learn the password, but that's not too difficult). Or they could hide somehow in crates. The stuff is brought to the kitchen, and then is meant to be carried down to room 25 - the lair of the white dragon! Lots of awesome potential there.

Glazhael the Cloudchaser: The white dragon's lair is really odd. The dragon hangs from the ceiling. As far as I can see, there is no exact ceiling height given. The heroes might enter the area through room 25, which is an adjoining room that is higher up. Basically, the PCs will be on a ledge with a clear view of the dragon hanging on the ceiling. The dragon is dumb, and the adventure says that it can be lured into a tunnel so the PCs can melee it. It flees once reduced to 40 hit points.

What Happens to the Castle Matters: What happens to Skyreach Castle really matters in The Rise of Tiamat. It is powered by the spirit of Blagothkus' wife, and Blagothkus steers it. The heroes have a few options:

- Kill Blagothkus: If this happens, his spirit takes over the castle and crashes it into The Spine of the World.
- Befriend Blagothkus: The giant has this odd plan of bringing Tiamat to the world to unite the giants to kill her. If the PCs talk him out of this, the giants can become faction allies in The Rise of Tiamat.

Keeping the Castle: The PCs may want to keep the castle. If they try to make it their home, remember that in the beginning of The Rise of Tiamat, the Draakhorn sounds. This sends all chromatic dragons into the sky, to fly towards the cult's home. That means that there will be all these evil dragons in the air, flying around. They will spot this castle and most likely investigate.

Additionally, having the castle will cause the PCs to miss a pretty cool section of Rise episode 2 in the Sea of Moving Ice, where the heroes sail a ship through the sea in search of another white dragon's lair.

Also, in The Rise of Tiamat on page 11 it is explained that if the PCs keep the castle, a frost giant named Harshnag comes to the council to demand the citadel's return so he can use it to rally the giants against the dragons.

Harshnag is featured in Storm King's Thunder, which follows up on the events of this path. Definitely play him up if you can.

If You Are Going to Run Frozen Castle: Frozen Castle is a "bonus chapter" by the authors of this adventure on the DMs Guild. If you are going to run it, you are probably going to want to make sure the castle crashes in the Spine of the World. That adventure accounts for the possibility that Glazhael and Blagothkus (?) survive.

The Rise of Tiamat

Episode 1

The Draakhorn: Our heroes are requested to meet with a council in Waterdeep to discuss the Cult of the Dragon. When the PCs arrive in Waterdeep, the Draakhorn sounds. Remember, if your PCs hatched a dragon from the hatchery like mine did, your little baby dragon will feel drawn to answer the call, which could make for all sorts of interesting possibilities.

The First Council Meeting

Meeting the Council: I am thinking of making a little precursor moment before the council meets, where the PCs split up and meet with their respective factions. This way, the PCs can buddy up with their faction NPCs and get a sense of what their faction's goals are.

The section on factions is fairly massive. Here is a concise outline:

Harpers: Secret band of heroes

- **Remallia Haventree**: A moon elf whose husband, a Masked Lord of Waterdeep, is killed by the cult "off-camera" (see page 20). She wants revenge, and is one of the major council NPCs.
- **Leosin Erlanthar**: The monk our heroes met way back in chapter 2 of Hoard.

Order of the Gauntlet: Holy warriors

- **Ontharr Frume**: Friendly, hot-tempered paladin

Emerald Enclave: Nature lovers

- **Delaan Winterhound**: A ranger with a winter wolf that patrols outside the city

Lords Alliance: Leaders and nobles from many different cities.

- **Lady Laeral Silverhand**: (Waterdeep) Has great arcane power. She is one of The Seven Sisters.
- **Lord Dagult Neverember**: (Neverwinter) Manipulative, ends up at odds with Silverhand.
- **Ambassador Connerad Brawnnavil**: (Mithral Hall) Dwarf who is hesitant.
- **Marshall Ulder Ravengard**: (Baldur's Gate) Leads the Flaming Fist, likes the PCs.
- **King Melendrach**: (Misty Forest) Very cautious until certain events unfold.
- **Taern Hornblade**: (Silvermoon) Silvermoon has wards against dragons.
- **Sir Isteval**: (Daggerford) An elderly paladin with a cane.

Zhentarim: Shady mercenaries who want to secretly rule the world.

- **Rian Nightshade**: She wants the wyrmspeakers dead.

Get Your Council Scorecard Out: In the council meetings, you track the PCs' accomplishments and how the various factions feel about them. Make sure to read up on how the scorecard works on page 23. Basically, a "+" means plus one point to the final total. "+/+" means plus two points to the final total.

The First Meeting Goes Like This:

1. Lord Neverember runs down what we know so far, holding his wine glass. Remember that he will lose Waterdeep to Lady Silverhand the second meeting and will not be happy about it.
2. The council asks the PCs to speak of their adventures and what they know about the cult.
3. The factions discuss the dragon hatchery from episode 3 in Hoard and what should be/should have been done with the dragon eggs.
4. The council gives the PCs a writ, giving them "emergency investigative powers" but also gives the council "oversight" over their activities.
5. A noble named Dala Silmerhelve has a lot to say, and for some reason her boxed texts are spread all over a series of pages. She talks about the Draakhorn and Maccath the Crimson. Use the flavor text on pages 20, 24 and 25.
6. Leosin has located Varram the White, wearer of the white dragon mask.

Episode 3 is First? The adventure gives us a bit of leeway as to which scenario to tackle first. Going by the outline on page 6, it seems like the adventure wants our heroes to tackle Varram in chapter 3 first. Most people just run episode 2 first.

Episode 2: The Sea of Moving Ice

Frostskimmer and the 40 Guards: Your PCs sail the sea on a boat searching for the dragon's iceberg lair. There's likely to be some encounters: 5 merrow, a few sea trolls (permitting me to use one of my favorite minis - the Pathfinder Sea Troll!) and a few squids. Think about the fact that you have 40 guards on the ship with an AC of 16, 11 hit points and a +3 to hit. Wouldn't they slaughter any of these monsters? Do you want to say they are all cowards, or that they are doing essential ship duties that prohibit them from fighting right away? Remember that according to the DMG, if NPCs join your PCs in a battle, they get an equal share of the XP.

Falling in the Water: The cold water is bad news! Don't forget! DC 12 CON save, fail means the PC is on the exhaustion track (which is a neat little table in the PH on page 291).

The Dungeon Floor is Icy: The slippery ice gimmick adds a lot to the dungeon, especially the upward and downward sloping that is all over the map. PCs will actually be glad they have climbers kits. Prepare yourself for a night full of people saying the word: "crampon."

Maccath the Crimson: Our mission is to snatch this wizard, Maccath the Crimson. She's found fairly early in the dungeon. She wants the PCs to steal some books for her down below before leaving, but your PCs might just knock her out, charm her, or whatever. The adventure says that if the PCs snatch her and sail away on the boat, the dragon flies after them and that the PCs are pretty much sitting ducks on that boat against the dragon with its breath weapon that does 54 cold damage! Plan for the various outcomes. Maybe foreshadow the doom by having the PCs pass by a ship sunk by the dragon or something.

Arauthator: The dragon has appeared in other products. The adventure alludes to the fact that it can cast spells, but does not give the dragon any spellcasting abilities. The mighty Ed Greenwood has a great write-up on Arauthator online. I think you should consider using Arauthator's spells. At the very least, it will help differentiate this white dragon from the one the heroes fought at the end of Hoard. Arauthator's spells:

- Frost Vortex: A snowflake that explodes into a cold vortex, doing fireball-type damage.
- Icemelt: A spell that makes tunnels and rooms out of ice with no melting or runoff.
- Wingbind: A net of force that targets one creature and prevents them from flying.

The Battle: The adventure says that the white dragon flees once it is dropped to 100 hit points. If your group is given the arrows of dragon slaying, those alone will do a good bit of damage.

Episode 3: Death to the Wyrmspeakers (Varram)

The Trip from Waterdeep: Yep, we're headed back down that caravan road again. You're looking at a few weeks of travel. Boareskyr Bridge is down by Soubar on your map. Take a look at page 181 in the Player's Handbook. PCs traveling at a normal pace can cover 24 miles a day. We're looking at about 2-3 weeks to go from Waterdeep to Boareskyr. Then it is a few days from Boareskyr to the Serpent Hills.

Power of the Cult: We'd better start cycling in the bonus encounters from page 6, right? Why not? I am going to have this one occur on the journey, where a bunch of cultists are hassling a caravan or something. I am thinking that maybe on the way back, if the PCs stop in the tent town at Boareskyr Bridge, I might run the first cultist assassin encounter from episode 5.

The Statues: The statues are awesome but the presentation is a little scattered.

- Left Colossus: Face smashed, balance in right hand, left hand up in warning.
- Right Colossus: Young human male, left side of face cracked off, left hand holds a shepherd's crook, right hand up in warning.

The Carved Relief Scenes: The adventure says to make up some cool carvings in the walls that Diderius saw in his divination pool. Here's some scenes from old adventures I am using:

- A massive lightning hand reaches down from the clouds to pluck a pillar from a desert (this is a scene from an old Al Qadim adventure).
- A mile-long manta-ray ship with a city on its back flying through space (this is The Spelljammer)
- A massive statue of a demon lord buried under a lake, a dungeon built inside it (This is the setting of Monte Cook's "Demon God's Fane" adventure.

The Ghost in Room 9: When roleplaying the ghost encounter, it is helpful to have a couple of her powers handy. When they first encounter her and they say something that makes her wail in torment, maybe unleash this:

- Horrifying Visage: All in 60 feet make a WIS save or be frightened for one minute (can't move closer, disadvantage on attack rolls and skill checks) and if they roll bad they may age d4x10 years!

If she wants someone to feel her pain, use:

- Possession: One creature makes a CHA save or they are possessed. The possession lasts until the ghost chooses to end it, or the body drops to 0 hit points.

Scrolls: Your heroes will find some scrolls in this place. I find scrolls to be a little confusing. The rules are hard to find in the DMG. There are two types of scrolls:

- Scrolls of Protection (DMG page 199): Anyone can use these. It gives that character a personal barrier of protection against a certain type of monster for an hour. The monster can try to break through it with a DC 15 CHA check.
- Spell Scrolls (DMG page 200): The general rules for scrolls are in the DMG index, but this entry is not. You can cast a spell off of a scroll if it is on your spell list and of a level you can cast. You can try to cast a spell off of a scroll that is higher level than you can cast, but you have to make an INT (arcana) check. Succeed or fail, the scroll is destroyed.

No White Dragon Mask: The heroes came here searching for Varram and his White Dragon Mask. Unfortunately, there is no chance of getting the mask. Varram lost it (stolen by the Zhentarim?). As far as I can tell, the cult got it back. Your PCs will have to figure out what to do with Varram. Kill him? Take him captive? He claims to know about cult spies in the council (maybe you can tie this in with the succubus encounter on page 7, "Death at the Council").

Episode 5: The Cult Strikes Back (Encounter One)

I have placed the first of these three encounters here. The initial assassination attempt will take place as the PCs journey home from the Serpent Hills. The heroes come back from the Tomb of Diderius to Boareskyr Bridge and I've cooked up an encounter that I am sharing here just as an example of what you can do, or as inspiration for you to make your own.

These encounters in the book are incredibly vague. Basically, the module tells you to do whatever you want and gives a list of possible monsters that the cult would send after the heroes. It suggests everything from minor cultists to a young blue dragon.

Short Version: The heroes party in Bolo's Tentside Inn. The cultists put some explosive barrels in there. They signal a red dragon, who flies over Boareskyr and breathes fire on Bolo's, igniting the barrels and creating a massive explosion that kills the PCs.

Long Version: The heroes return to Bolo's Tentside Inn at Boareskyr Bridge. The citizens end up listening to the PCs' stories, buying them drinks, playing cards with them and sharing their tales of woe. I figure that many citizens whose homes were destroyed by the cult have ended up living in this tent city. Makes sense, right? Here's three NPCs and their sob stories:

- **Cirnac Nirthau of Iriabor:** Halfling Merchant whose home was destroyed during the cult raids by the blue dragon Lennithon. It breathed lightning on his home and the whole place collapsed.
- **Old Man Jarlew of Easting:** He says that during the attacks, a woman in purple robes with short black hair (Frulam Mondath) used magic to freeze him in place (hold person). Then, kobolds gleefully stole everything off his person and pushed him over.
- **Javessla** of Berdusk: Her husband was captain of the guard. He was slain by a "blue dragon man" in one-on-one combat (Langdedrossa in another one of his duels).

The idea here is to make the PCs feel they are in the middle of something big that is affecting the entire world. Also, to get the PCs to like them so that when the danger is apparent, the heroes might want to save these people from the dragon.

As the villagers try to buy the PCs drinks and swap stories, there is a delivery. A few barrels of alcohol have arrived. The owner haggles the price with the delivery guy (who is actually a cultist in disguise). A PC could help haggle with a charisma check. The delivery dude is impressed by the hero and will give a generous discount. The owner is thrilled and thanks the PCs immensely.

Here's the deal: Those barrels are full of oil, or elemental fire, or some other flammable concoction. The cultists have been lurking at Boareskyr incognito, waiting for the PCs to return. They deliver these barrels and go outside toward the river and fire some flaming arrows high in the sky. This alerts the red dragon in the distance that it is time.

The dragon, Thraxata the Flame Fiend, flies down and breathes fire on the tent, igniting the explosives and possibly killing everyone.

The key here is to give the PCs time and clues to notice that something's not right. Maybe the barrels smell funny. Maybe the PCs notice the flaming arrows. Maybe they hear the beating of the dragon's wings as it flies down to the tent. But there should probably be a slow motion run-from-the-explosion moment happening here.

The heroes can then battle the young red dragon, who will flee when its hit points drop to around 40. Boareskyr Bridge is guarded by paladins, so they will come to the aid of the PCs probably within a minute. But that's ten rounds of combat.

Episode 4: Death to the Wyrmspeakers (Neronvain)

The Second Council of Waterdeep

Lord Neverember has lost control of Neverwinter to Lady Laeral Silverhand, so she's running the council. He's sulky. Here's how this meeting goes:

- Report on what happened with Varram the White.
- Report on The Sea of Moving Ice and perhaps announce that the Arcane Brotherhood are joining the cause.
- The Emerald Enclave wants the group to check out dragon attacks in the Misty Forest. This will lead to the revelation that King Melandrach's missing son is now a bad guy, so foreshadow that here if you can.
- "Elia" aka the silver dragon Otaarliakkarnos wants the group to meet with metallic dragons.. soon. You know, once they've been to the Misty Forest.

It's so awkward to be given two missions at once, but that's how it is. It's hard for the leaders to all convene at the same place and time. If it feels too weird to you, you can always have Elia approach the group once their mission in the Misty Forest is done.

The Journey: The Misty Forest is not actually labelled on the map in Hoard. The Misty Forest is near Daggerford. From what I can guesstimate, it's around 180 miles from Waterdeep to the forest. If your PCs travel 24 miles per day, it's about a week-long journey. Shorter if you decide to have teleportation circles involved. I don't see why Lady Laeral Silverhand wouldn't use her great magic to speed our PCs along. She could teleport them to Daggerford, and then Duke Maldwyn can give them some horses.

Alagarthas: King Melandrach has two sons, Neronvain (the bad guy in this episode) and Alagarthas. Alagarthas appears in Ghosts of Dragonspear Castle. He is described in that adventure as being unhappy that the elves live only in the forest, and that he wants to spread the elves into civilized lands. He's a pretty testy fellow.

The Trip to Neronvain's Lair: Along the way to the lair, a druid will test the PCs to see if they are worthy of her aid. She has an "awakened tree" lie on her and she calls for help, claiming the tree fell on her. My players smelled a trap and left her there!

If the PCs help her, she gives them garlands that protect the heroes from Chuth's spies. All of the animals near Chuth's lairs are his spies. Without the garlands, the animals will go and warn Chuth that they are coming. So, you might want to have the animals in the forests act strangely and keep in mind your PCs may have the ability to talk to the animals.

Chuth: Chuth, "The Emerald Assassin" is in the D&D Next adventure Ghosts of Dragonspear Castle. In that adventure, the dragon can turn invisible and likes to eat elves. The PCs fight it in the rain. It's invisible, but with all of the water running off of it, it can be seen. It tries to kill or snatch an elf, and then fly off. It hunts elves of royal blood for sport. It can cast feather fall, shield, invisibility (twice per day).

In The Rise of Tiamat, if the PCs don't have the garlands, Chuth swoops out of the waterfall, breathes on the party, then goes back behind the waterfall to see what they do (its blindsight allows it to see the PCs through the waterfall). I ended up just having an epic dragon fight outside the lair, and it was awesome.

Episode 5: The Cult Strikes Back (Encounter Two)

The book again gives a number of broad suggestions and a list of monsters. The idea here is that the cult assassins try to take out the PCs in a public place. One scenario involves the heroes being in a building when a black dragon tears the roof off and attacks! Pretty cool.

I decided instead to use the yugoloths in the description. My PCs were in Waterdeep, doing a lot of shopping. Leosin (the monk harper) and Ontharr Frume (of the Order of the Gauntlet) were with them, talking about what the heroes had learned from their latest mission. I also had Elia, the silver dragon in human form, watching from a crowd.

A cultist disguised as a beggar approached the heroes, begged for money, then used a "red wizard consumable charm" to summon four mezzoloths and one nycaloth. The adventure says that the yugoloths are mercenaries and can be bought off. My idea was to have a chaotic, fun fight in the Waterdeep marketplace, with NPCs helping out.

About These Encounters: When I ran this adventure, I ended up not being happy about how these assassin encounters went. I felt like they weren't as exciting as they could have been.

If I could do it again, I'd have Galvan (the mysterious blue wyrmspeaker who's barely in these books) be in charge of killing the heroes. I'd have him watch from afar for the first two attacks. He'd be far enough away that hopefully the group can't get to him, but close enough for them to see him so we can build up anticipation for a final showdown with Galvan soon.

I'd have him use dragons each time. Probably blue ones, obviously. One nasty idea is to have him try to trick the heroes into jumping into a river or lake, and then hitting the lake with lightning.

Episode 6: Metallic Dragons, Arise!

The Journey to the Nether Mountains: The silver dragon Elia flies our heroes to meet with dragon leaders. The heroes will have to convince/cajole the dragons into joining the council of Waterdeep. Remember, Elia is a member of the council herself, so the PCs behavior could impact her decision.

Ardeep Forest: I started reading up on the locations that the PCs will fly near during this trip, and it's like this bottomless pit of realmslore. The more you read, the more there is to read. The heroes fly close to Ardeep Forest, a magic place protected by The Ladystone. The Ladystone is a magic device that protects the forest from invaders. This obviously screams out for a scenario where the cult is trying to raid the forest and the stone is taxed to the limit and our heroes need to save it.

Dragon Fight: Somehow, all of our heroes fit on Elia's back. She must be bigger than normal. My plan is to have our heroes flying along, when two chromatic dragons swoop toward her and attack! I just like the idea of having a combat where the PCs are fighting a dragon while they are on the back of a silver dragon high in the air. I am going to use Chuth (he got away in episode 4) and Arveiatrace, the mate of Arauthator, because my players thought she sounded really cool. Elia will battle Chuth, while our heroes will deal with Arveiatrace.

Rest on the Star Mounts: The trip takes two days, so I figure the heroes can safely rest on a cave high up in the Star Mounts, which is about halfway to the Nether Mountains. I will have Elia's ally Aerosclugh protect them while they sleep.

The Meeting With the Dragons: This is another of those scenarios in the adventure where you need to do a lot of "unpacking." The whole thing is very loose. The PCs must convince the dragons to join up with the council. The dragons want certain concessions, things that will make the council of Waterdeep very upset.

The Dracorage Myth: There's one in particular that I didn't know anything about. A dragon wants the elves to apologize for the Dracorage Myth. What the heck is that? According to the forgotten realms wikia, this was a 250,000 mile zone that, when a certain star was in the right alignment, caused dragons to become violent for ten days. From what I can tell, the Dracorage was created so that the dragons would fight each other and keep them from working together to rule the world.

The Third Council of Waterdeep

This meeting goes down like this:

- Zhent **Rian Nightshade** is now sitting next to Lord Neverember. Council doesn't like it.
- If Neronvain is dead, **King Melandrach** is full of "cold fury."
- There are piles of repercussions to the concessions that may have been made to the metallic dragons. **Connerad Brawnnavil** and King Melandrach in particular may be outraged.
- Allocate the dragons (see below).
- Mission - go to Xonthal's tower to extract a cult defector and his dragon mask. Be sure to use the flavor text from page 63 here! Iskander has sent a note to the Council.
- Mission - go to Thay to maybe recruit some Red Wizards. Red Wizard Nyh Illmych (fun name to say out loud) wants the PCs to come to Thay (see page 75 for details).

Allocating the Dragons: There is a paragraph on page 20 that says the PCs should decide what to do with the metallic dragons at their disposal. But the book does not say how many dragons they have, or what types they are.

I decided to give the PCs five metallic dragons - one of each color. Simple enough to start with, right? The PCs will have to figure out which factions to help out. Each dragon can protect a 100 mile radius area that they are assigned to. The needs/wants goes like this:

- Lords' Alliance: Each member wants a dragon for his/her city.
- Harpers: Want a dragon for intelligence gathering (scouting out the Well of Dragons?)
- Order of the Gauntlet: Want a dragon to guard Elturel.
- Emerald Enclave: Want a dragon to protect an ancient treant known as The Grandfather Tree.

Episode 7: Xonthal's Tower

The tower is in the Greypeak Mountains to the east. It is actually very close to Parnast. It looks like it is around 500 miles from Waterdeep.

The Hedge Maze: As the PCs enter the maze, be sure to read them the flavor on page 64, where Iskander shouts to them from the tower. It's easy to forget, and it is very important.

Flying: Basically, if the PCs try to fly or climb over the walls, they enter thick, impassable brambles. If the PCs somehow "cheat" to get to the tower, it has no entrances - just smooth impassable stone.

The Sundial: This maze is all about the Sundial. The PCs must figure out which of the eight paths to take on five separate occasions. The sundial offers a different clue with its shadow each time. You should probably print out a map of the sundial area, or draw one. This area can be very frustrating for the players, as the solution doesn't really make a lot of sense. You might want to have an NPC sidekick around to steer the PCs when if they start to get bogged down.

The Monsters are a Bit Weak: Taking a wrong path leads to an encounter area. The only way to get back to a sundial is to find a hidden gem in the area. Some of these areas are very cool. The monsters weren't much of a challenge for my PCs. You might want to use two gorgons instead of one. You also might want to overhaul the Carnivorous Garden, as it is a bit of a drag. Area 6 is particularly easy.. the animated armor is no match for your high-level PCs. You might want to change it to a trap area.

The Tower: How do you get in? The tower is a little confusing. There's a teleport circle at the base of the tower that the PCs use to get inside.

Using the Teleport Circles: Getting from area to area in the tower requires the use of a teleport circle and a wall panel with buttons. You might want to draw the panel on a piece of paper. All of the symbols are easy to draw and it should only take you a couple minutes to do.

The deal here is that the PCs need to get the hourglass key off of Jorgen Pawl. They can touch the key to the hourglass button on the panel. That will take them to the dungeon level, where Iskander is (spoiler alert: He's dead and his mask turns out to be a fake. Not cool.)

Cosmic Hallway: Read up on this one carefully, as your PCs will likely love it and experiment with it quite a bit. It is a very cool area.

Taraz the Fair: This fire genie is tricky to run. He just wants to be free. PCs may haggle for wishes. You may want to invoke the clause that all fire genie wishes later come under review from the Grand Caliph of the City of Brass as a way for Taraz to help the PCs understand why he can't just throw around wishes willy-nilly.

You may want to expand on the concept of Taraz playing chess, too. My PCs were quite eager to play him in chess (and even let him win). They seemed to like the idea that Taraz needed to win a chess game to be free, so maybe you could do something with that.

The Return of Lennithon: When the PCs finish the tower, they see the blue dragon from Hoard episode 1 attacking the village. He wants the blue dragon mask. Remember that discovering that the mask is a fake will take a while, so the PCs shouldn't know it isn't real.

Episode 8: Mission to Thay

This chapter is ridiculously short. Basically, the heroes go there, have a meal, have a short meeting, and go to sleep. Some of the PCs have dreams that they may not remember (it's a tough save with disadvantage). If they do remember, they had a dream they were interrogated by the red wizards. Remember that this doesn't work on elves. Most of my party was elves, so it was pretty amusing.

This is a Good Area for Information: I used this episode to give the PCs details on Severin, the big bad guy running the Cult of the Dragon. You might also want to detail the blue wyrmspeaker Galvan if you decide to use him, as he has links to the Red Wizards. They can also provide piles of details on Rath Modar if he is still running around in your game. Basically, Rath is trying to buddy up to Tiamat in the hopes that she'll overthrow Szass Tam and install him as the new leader of the Red Wizards.

The Fourth Council of Waterdeep

- **Rian Nightshade**, the Zhentarim, pulls the PCs aside and tries to get the hourglass key from Xonthal's Tower. She offers money.
- The other factions ask for the key shortly thereafter. The PCs get to decide what to do with it, if anything.
- The heroes get to tell the council whether they've made an alliance with the Red Wizards.
- And now it is time to tally up your council scorecard! It is pretty easy to get almost all of the factions to join up in the fight against the cult. Check out page 86 for a rundown of the factions and what they offer.

Episode 9: Tiamat's Return

This episode details Tiamat's Temple and the Well of Dragons. The bulk of this episode details getting through the caldera to the temple as a massive battle rages. The dungeon, in my opinion, is very bland. There's a lot of fights with dragonsouls and guard drakes.

I ditched the dungeon. I kept the material on the Draakhorn and the treasure (both on page 82) and placed them elsewhere.

I ran a bunch of encounters outside, in the middle of the epic was with the cult. I had my PCs face cultists, Naergoth Bladelord (page 81), a dragon, a pit fiend and Rath Modar (who was by the Draakhorn). Each round I'd have something chaotic happen, like a chromatic dragon flying down to breathe on the PCs, or Leosin the Monk running up and kidney-punching a bad guy, or a frost giant ally pummeling a dragon, whatever.

The Temple: Tiamat's hell temple is in the center of the caldera. Inside, there's about eleven red wizards enacting the ritual to summon her. Some red wizards are floating 50 feet in the air. Severin is floating even higher up.

There are notes on battling Tiamat as the ritual is disrupted on page 87. Tiamat slowly emerges from the "whorl" of swirling energy in the center of the place as the temple collapses in "ash and bone."

Tiamat's Stats: There's been quite a bit of talk online about Tiamat's stats and whether she is too powerful for any party to handle. The adventure provides notes on de-powering her. The idea is that as the PCs shut down five different altars, Tiamat becomes weaker.

I ran my own version of this encounter, with 5 altars, red wizards, Severin and Galvan. A note on Severin: Use hellish chains! It is very effective in preventing a PC from getting to an altar and raises the tension considerably. Once the PCs shut down the five altars, Tiamat tries to push through the portal as it begins to fade. The PCs must do a certain amount of damage to prevent her from coming through.

In my Tiamat fight, she was still too deadly. Here's some notes:

- I gave her 315 hit points (once she was at 0 HP, she was sent back to hell). This felt like just the right amount.
- She had +14 to hit. You could get away with using her max static damage I think.
- I gave her 3 legendary actions instead of 5, as a single breath weapon utterly decimated my party.

Tiamat is interesting, as she is scarier when it is not her turn! She can do so much at the end of other people's turns.

Finishing Up: There are a few notes on the aftermath. Enjoy the fruits of your labor! You finished a massive campaign, it is time to bask in the afterglow and.. err... start working on the next one. Thanks for reading!

Acknowledgments

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Power Score RPG

- <http://powerscorerpg.blogspot.com/>
- <http://thecampaign20xx.blogspot.com/>

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THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO HELP DUNGEON MASTERS PLAN AND PREPARE BOTH HOARD OF THE DRAGON QUEEN AND RISE OF TIAMAT.

INSIDE, YOU WILL FIND NOTES ON EVERY CHAPTER, DETAILED BREAKDOWNS OF COMPLICATED SECTIONS, AND LISTS THAT HELP MAKE SENSE OF THE COUNCIL OF WATERDEEP.