

DUNGEONS DRAGONS[®]

FORGOTTEN REALMS[®] CAMPAIGN GUIDE



ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT

Bruce R. Cordell • Ed Greenwood • Chris Sims

Greenwood 06

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CREDITS

Design

**Bruce R. Cordell, Ed Greenwood, Philip Athans,
Richard Baker, Rob Heinsoo, Brian R. James, Chris Sims**

Development

**Stephen Schubert, Peter Schaefer,
Stephen Radney-MacFarland**

Additional Assistance

Gwendolyn F.M. Kestrel, Susan J. Morris

Editing

**Jennifer Clarke Wilkes, Greg Bilsland,
M. Alexander Jurkat, Jean Nelson**

Managing Editing

Kim Mohan

Director of R&D, Roleplaying Games/Book Publishing

Bill Slavicsek

D&D Story Design and Development Manager

Christopher Perkins

D&D System Design and Development Manager

Andy Collins

Art Director

Kate Irwin

Cover Illustration

Michael Komarck

Special Thanks to Brandon Daggerhart, keeper of Shadowfell

Graphic Designer

Emi Tanji

Additional Graphic Design

Leon Cortez, Keven Smith

Interior Illustrations

**Drew Baker, Eric Deschamps, Steve Ellis,
Randy Gallegos, Adam Gillespie, Ron Lemen, Lee Moyer,
William O'Connor, Mark Tedin, Francis Tsai,
Matthew D. Wilson, Sam Wood, Ben Wootten,
Kieran Yanner, James Zhang**

Cartographers

Robert Lazzaretti, Mike Schley

Publishing Production Specialist

Angelika Lokotz

Prepress Manager

Jefferson Dunlap

Imaging Technician

Bob Jordan

Production Manager

Cynda Callaway

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Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Renton WA 98057-0707
+1-800-324-6496

EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS

Hasbro UK Ltd
Caswell Way
Newport, Gwent NP9 0YH
GREAT BRITAIN
Please keep this address for your records

WIZARDS OF THE COAST, BELGIUM

't Hofveld 6D
1702 Groot-Bijgaarden
Belgium
+32 2 467 3360

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INTRODUCTION

Learn ye well the lesson of the pebble that begets a landslide. Likewise a single betrayal unleashed the Spellplague, whose consequences yet dance and stagger across Toril, and beyond.

—Elminster of Shadowdale, Year of the Ageless One (1479 DR)

WELCOME TO a world where adventurers delve into the depths to win great treasures of old, heroes stave off the insidious plots of shadowborn fiends, undead necromancers vie for absolute mastery of life, and voracious dragons hunt. Welcome to a land whose magic-soaked bedrock has spawned millennia of eye-popping wonders and heart-stopping threats.

Here lies great adventure for those who dare much. Intrepid wizards defy warnings scribed in the crumbling stone of ancient barrows. Criminals skulk in the alleys of noble and ignoble cities alike. Priests rally the faithful, calling on divine beneficence to aid companions. Warlocks vie for mastery over ancient pacts whose origins are better left concealed. Warriors swear allegiances of defense against legions of enemies too foul to face the light of day.

But here too, evil plots in the darkness, eager to expand its reach from dripping dungeons, endless

caverns, ruined cities, and the vast wild places of the world. Away from the main roads and the great cities, the countryside is wild and fearsome, hiding roaming gangs of vicious goblins, spying shades from reborn Netheril, and outriders of necromantic Thay, as well as deadly remnants of magical plague.

The world is a place of fey beauty and primeval malice. It is your land to shape, to guide, to defend, to conquer, or to rule.

Welcome to the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting. Heroes needed.

THE WORLD

Toril is the world that hosts the storied continent of Faerûn. Bitter winds sweep the steppes of the Endless Wastes, storm waves crash against the cliffs of the Sword Coast, and in between stretches a vast land of shining kingdoms and primal wilderness. The mysteries, secrets, and stories of Faerûn are virtually limitless.

Abeir is the realm forgotten. A twin to Toril and once joined with it, Abeir went its own way at the dawn of the world. Where gods and their servants oversee Faerûn, the lords of Abeir were towering primordial and elder wyrms, and savagery ruled with them. Now, after long epochs of separation, Abeir has joined with Toril once again, in a return both violent and unlooked-for.

TEN IMPORTANT FACTS

The following points describe the biggest changes to the world of Toril since the previous edition of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*. If you are familiar with the setting, these will summarize the major events in the world since 1374 DR, the Year of Lightning Storms. If you are new to the setting, this information will give you the basic background that most inhabitants know.

1. *Roughly a hundred years have passed in the world since the previous edition of the campaign setting.* The current year is 1479 DR, the Year of the Ageless One.

2. *The Spellplague has drastically altered the cosmos.* The Spellplague broke out in 1385 DR (the Year of Blue Fire), the result of unfettered wild magic on the

NOT “FR”? NO PROBLEM!

You can take advantage of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide* (and its companion volume, the *Player’s Guide*) even if your campaign is not set in the world of Toril.

All of the concepts and details in this book can work just as well in a setting that you have devised yourself. In other words, you can pick and choose, using the parts of this material that you find most interesting or most compatible with your current setting. By doing so, you can inject the wonder and intrigue of Faerûn into your game while keeping all the elements of your existing world that you and your players have become accustomed to.

For example, the realm known as the Underdark had its beginnings in earlier *FORGOTTEN REALMS* products. Since then, that term and all it encompasses have been adopted into the core D&D rules. Although you can certainly create your own Underdark if you want to, there’s a fully developed version of the World Below waiting for you inside these pages.

Remember, your setting is always unique to you. It is what you and your players make it. That’s true whether you use every bit of a book like this one, or whether you use it as seasoning to spice up the world you’ve already made.

death of the goddess Mystra. Whole countries are gone, especially in regions south of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Even familiar lands have become magical and fantastic in appearance. Islands of rock called earthmotes drift through the sky. Weird towers and spires of stone jut from the landscape. Spectacular chasms and waterfalls abound.

All things were sustenance for the Spellplague's insatiable hunger—it assailed and transformed flesh, stone, magic, space, and dimensional walls. Even the cosmos beyond Toril was affected. Some ancient realms returned that had been thought gone forever (such as the Feywild), and entire planes (such as the Abyss) shifted to a new cosmic structure.

3. *Portions of Abeir have fused with Toril.* The Spellplague raged even beyond planar boundaries, and Toril's long-lost twin world, cut off for tens of millennia, was also caught up in the maelstrom. Large parts of Faerûn exchanged places with equivalent land masses on Abeir, bringing their populations with them. Across the Trackless Sea, an entire continent of the lost realm reappeared, now called Returned Abeir.

4. *The number of gods has dropped markedly.* During the last century, even deities succumbed to divine and diabolical plots or to the chaos of the Spellplague. Of those now absent, many died, some left, and a few were revealed to be aspects of already extant gods. Others lost so much power that they became exarchs, lesser divinities who serve the other gods.

5. *The Spellplague left its mark on creatures.* Some effects of the Spellplague persist to this day, especially in the so-called Plaguelands where wild magic yet rages unrestrained. After exposure to the Plaguelands, some creatures exhibit physical marks called spellscars. These spellscarred individuals develop unique abilities, but not without a price.

Victims of the original Spellplague were horribly changed, not simply scarred, their flesh warped in unimaginable ways. The abilities of the spellscarred, though unique, are never as monstrous and powerful as those of plaguechanged creatures. Luckily, such monsters are few, and of those, only a handful are free-willed, mobile threats.

6. *Huge Underdark collapses have changed the surface of Faerûn.* As the earth fell away, the level and position of the Sea of Fallen Stars shifted drastically. An enormous opening into the Underdark has formed south of the Chondalwood. In addition to this country-sized hole in the earth, underground shifting has made the Underdark much more accessible to the surface world.

7. *Thay has become a terrible undead threat.* The former land of the Red Wizards is now under the control of a single power-mad regent: Szass Tam. He nearly succeeded in performing a ritual that would have made him an immortal being. Szass Tam failed,

but in so doing he transformed Thay into a nightmare land of death. Now the regent is intent on expanding Thay's borders so that he can attempt the ritual again.

8. *The ancient empire of Netheril has been restored.* The Twelve Princes of Shade rule from their capital city, Shade Enclave, in a land newly reclaimed from the Anauroch Desert. Netheril is once again a major player and a threat to all the northern realms.

9. *Ancient elven lineages have returned to Faerûn.* With the reappearance of the Feywild, its natives have begun exploring the world again. These fey folk collectively call themselves eladrin, and many Faerûnian elves have also adopted this name for their lineage, though they have not forgotten their traditional cultural distinctions and names. In casual speech, the world "elven" collectively refers to the two branches of this fey people: elves and eladrin.

10. *Most portals no longer work.* The breaking of the Weave destroyed most of the portals that crisscrossed Toril, because it destroyed the hard-won knowledge of arcane casters. Although arcanists have relearned their craft since the Spellplague raged, most portals remain nonfunctional or dangerously malfunctioning, broken relics of a legendary past.

WHAT'S INSIDE

This book provides you, the DM, with information you can use to run adventures in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. You can also use this book to enhance your campaign even if you don't run a FORGOTTEN REALMS game; see the sidebar on page 4 for more explanation.

It starts with a chapter that provides a campaign starting point, the village of Loudwater, complete with a set of encounters to draw a group of player characters into the setting.

Thereafter, the *Campaign Guide* covers the great wide world of Toril, topic by topic. Whether you read the book from start to finish or begin by dipping into the sections that most pique your interest, everything you need to know to bring the setting to life is provided within these pages.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED?

As with any D&D campaign, you'll need a copy of the *Player's Handbook (PH)*, *Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG)*, and *Monster Manual (MM)* to make full use of the material in this book. You and your players also need copies of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide*, which provides regional benefits, feats, new races, a new class, and other information useful for creating and running FORGOTTEN REALMS characters. Words and terms in this book that are detailed in the *Player's Guide* are designated by a ^{PG} symbol.

LOUDWATER

THE TOWN of Loudwater sits at the confluence of the Delimbiyr and Grayflow rivers. The forested shoulders of the Star Mounts rise above the town in the northwestern sky. These cloud-veiled peaks remind the townspeople that beyond the town's walls stretch wild lands, where deadly monsters threaten the unwary.

Merchants, caravan guards, local craftsfolk, hunters, farmers, and retired adventurers treat the Green Tankard Tavern in Loudwater as a second home. In the tavern's common room, talk turns to tales of hostile tribes and barrows glimpsed through mists; folk speak warily of goblins in the Southwood, of the serpent folk of Najara, and of ancient, ruined kingdoms.

The tavern attracts young and old with its warm company and tall tales. But before buying an ale for one of the inn's regulars, a visitor should think carefully. Many adventures have started from stories exchanged over cheap ale and greasy food, but not all have ended with the glorious exploits of which bards sing. An old story or a wrinkled map could be the doorway to adventure—or the path to a quick death.

PREPARE TO PLAY

Help your players create characters appropriate for the *FORGOTTEN REALMS* setting. Before sitting down for your first game session, read through this chapter.

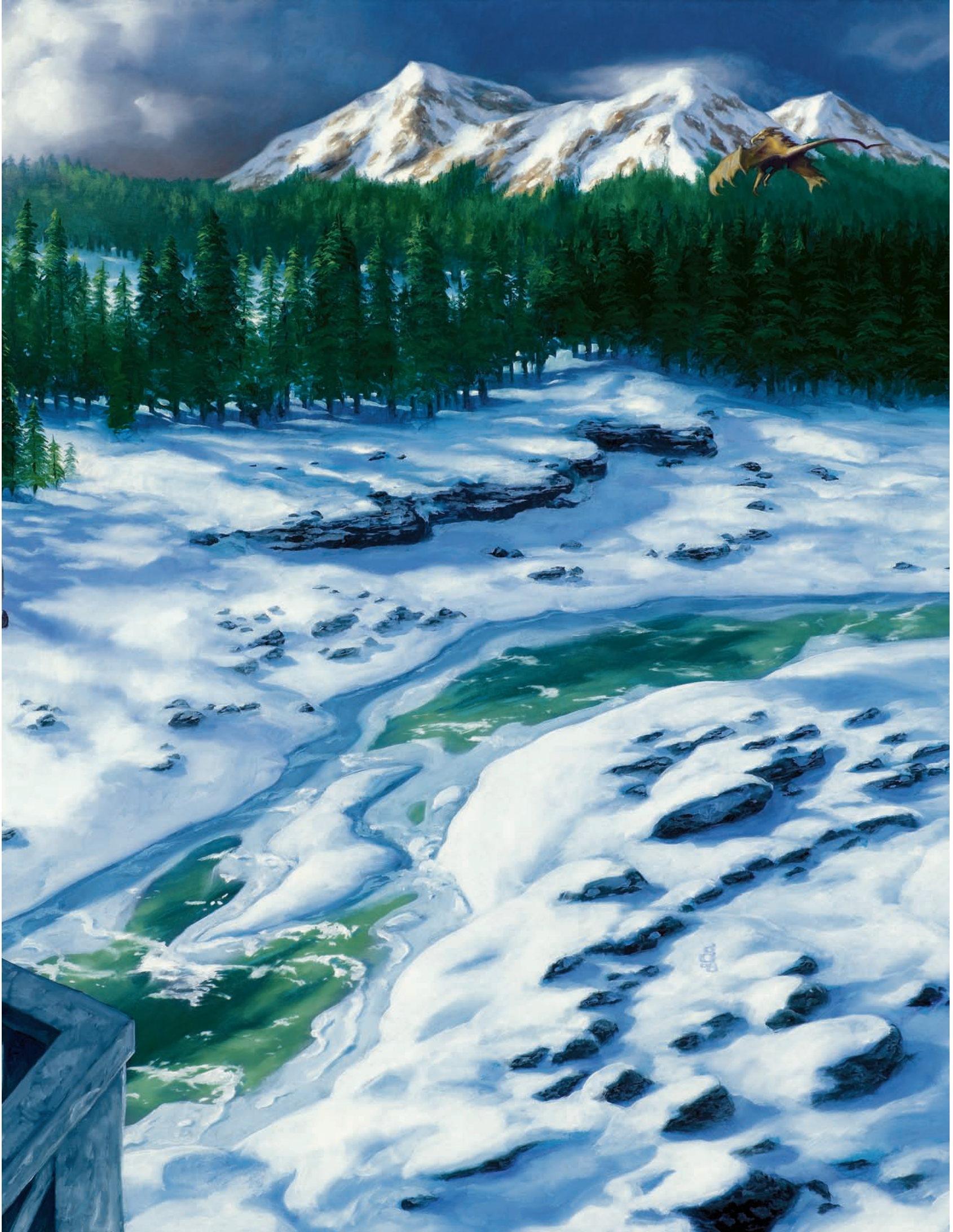
To help your players get a feel for the setting, tell them a little about the town and ask why each of their characters might visit or live in Loudwater. (The Gray Vale entry in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide* offers some potential character backgrounds.)

Once your players have created their characters and you've read through the beginning of the adventure, you're ready to launch a new *FORGOTTEN REALMS* campaign.

The player characters (PCs) are in Loudwater's South Square (area 2 on the Loudwater map on page 13) early in the morning. Perhaps they are looking at the display outside Garwan's Curiosities, leaving Starra's Knives, or merely passing through. As the PCs go about their business, goblin raiders from the Southwood break through Loudwater's southern wall and attack!

RANDY CALLEGOS





RAID ON LOUDWATER

Encounter Level 2 (600 XP)

SETUP

The characters start in Loudwater's South Square. Place miniatures of the townspeople (T) on the battle grid as indicated by the tactical map. Then have players put miniatures of their characters in unoccupied squares on the map.

Next, provide the readaloud text and then ask the players to roll initiative.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

10 goblin cutters (C)

2 goblin warriors (W)

1 goblin hexer (H)

When the goblins attack the South Square, read:

The southern wall suddenly explodes, sending rubble and dust everywhere. Townspeople begin to scream and flee as goblins race forward through the hole in the wall.

If a character starts in a square that is filled with rubble on the tactical map, he or she was standing near the wall when it fell. That character remains in that square but takes 1d10 damage and is knocked prone.

TACTICS

The goblins have a round of surprise and use it to rush into the town. Place their miniatures on the battle grid according to their positions on the tactical map.

Once regular combat begins, the cutters converge on the nearest enemy creatures, whether townspeople or PCs. The goblins swarm around an opponent, cutting off escape. The townspeople have 10 for all their defenses and are killed if hit. The townspeople move away from the goblins in the safest way possible on an initiative count of 10.

The goblin warriors loose their javelins at the closest enemy creatures in sight. They then move toward Garwan's Curiosities in an attempt to fulfill their mission (see "Goblins on a Quest," below). The goblin hexer, meanwhile, uses *stinging hex* on the closest foe or *blinding hex* on the most threatening opponent. The hexer tries to stay within 10 squares of at least one ally and use *incite bravery*.

As soon as the goblins become aware of the danger the PCs represent, they focus their attacks on them. The goblins' ultimate destination is Garwan's Curiosities, and if not stopped, they enter the shop, steal some items, including the *horn totem* (see page 11), and then attempt to retreat back through the hole in

the wall. If the door to Garwan's Curiosities is locked when the goblins arrive, they break the window (as a standard action) and seize the items on display, including the *horn totem*.

GOBLINS ON A QUEST

The goblins are from the Barrow of the Ogre King (see page 18). The goblin raiders seek to recover the *horn totem*, which was stolen from their lair by a Loudwater resident named Curuvar, who later sold it to Garwan's Curiosities.

10 Goblin Cutters (C)		Level 1 Minion
Small natural humanoid		XP 25 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 11		
Speed 6; see also <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⚔ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 4 damage (5 damage if the goblin cutter has combat advantage against the target).		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +5, Thievery +5		
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 8 (-1)	Cha 8 (-1)
Equipment leather armor, short sword		

2 Goblin Warriors (W)		Level 1 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid		XP 100 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision	
HP 29; Bloodied 14		
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12		
Speed 6; see also <i>mobile ranged attack</i> and <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⚔ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.		
✂ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.		
✂ Mobile Ranged Attack (standard; at-will)		
The goblin warrior can move up to half its speed; at any point during that movement, it makes one ranged attack without provoking an opportunity attack.		
Great Position		
If, on its turn, the goblin warrior ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals an extra 1d6 damage on its ranged attacks until the start of its next turn.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10		
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 8 (-1)	Cha 8 (-1)
Equipment leather armor, spear, 5 javelins in sheaf		



One square = 5 feet

Goblin Hexer (H)	Level 3 Controller (Leader)	
Small natural humanoid	XP 150	
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 46; Bloodied 23	AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 16; see also <i>lead from the rear</i>	
Speed 6; see also <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⚔ Hexer Rod (standard; at-will) ⚔ Weapon	+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.	
➤ Blinding Hex (standard; at-will)	Ranged 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).	
➤ Stinging Hex (standard; recharge ☒ ☒)	Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target takes 3d6 + 1 damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).	
✱ Vexing Cloud (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ⚔ Zone	Area burst 3 within 10; automatic hit; all enemies within the zone take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. The zone grants concealment to the goblin hexer and its allies. The goblin hexer can sustain the zone as a minor action, moving it up to 5 squares.	
➤ Incite Bravery (immediate reaction, when an ally uses <i>goblin tactics</i> ; at-will)	Ranged 10; the targeted ally can shift 2 more squares and make an attack.	
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)	The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Lead from the Rear (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a ranged attack; at-will)	The goblin hexer can change the attack's target to an adjacent ally of its level or lower.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 9 (+0)	Cha 18 (+5)
Equipment leather robes, hexer rod		

ROBERT LAZZARETTI

LOUDWATER RESPONSE

The townspeople in the square attempt to flee (speed 6), shifting when necessary to avoid attack. The shop merchants in the area lock their doors at the end of the second round (not including the surprise round). The Loudwater Patrol is capable of dealing with the goblins, but by the time it responds, the creatures will have escaped.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Wall Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Merchant Carts: These squares are difficult terrain.

Well: The well has a small lip to prevent people from falling in. However, a creature that is forced into one of the well's squares might fall the 20 feet to the bottom. (The creature is entitled to a saving throw to avoid falling.) The fall deals 2d10 damage, and the water at the bottom is 5 feet deep. The walls are slick and require a DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

Doors: A DC 20 Strength check is necessary to break down a door. A locked door can be unlocked with a DC 20 Thievery check. Each door has AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, and 20 hit points.

Treasure: The goblin hexer has a message scroll among his possessions (see "Finding the Barrow" on page 18 for the scroll's contents).

Also, if the PCs prevent the goblins from escaping, Garwan offers them the *horn totem* as thanks for protecting his shop.

THE TOWN OF LOUDWATER

Loudwater offers a well-defended rest stop for caravans and riverboats. Nearby communities such as Llorckh and Zelbross lie in ruins, yet Loudwater survives, albeit with a diminished population, which holds steady at about 2,000. To the north stand the brooding trees of the High Forest. To the south is the High Moor, infamous for monsters that lurk in the mists, guarding the ruins of bygone kingdoms. Loudwater feels like a frontier town despite having once boasted a greater population. Its days of boundless prosperity are a century gone, and most of the town's current residents, which include primarily humans and half-elves, are not old enough to recall them. Loudwater never fully recovered from the disruption of trade brought about in the wake of the disastrous Spell-plague, yet unlike many towns, it at least still stands.

1. TOWN GATES

A large gateway leads under a tall wall and opens onto the streets of Loudwater. Several bored-looking guards stand watch at the entrance.

Two iron gates, East Gate and West Gate, comprise the town's primary entrances. These gates stand open during the day, leaving a 20-by-20-foot path that leads through the wall and into the town. A walkway crosses over the opening, connecting either side of the wall. Two towers, which are part of the wall, rise 40 feet above a gate. West Gate and East Gate are closed and locked at night, though they are opened for people leaving the town. Each of the gates is staffed by a group of four guards.

Lone travelers and small groups can enter and exit for free; traders and merchants pay 5 sp per wagon or cart. Monsters and creatures that resemble monsters are refused entry (this prohibition does not include any races from the *Player's Handbook*).

2. SOUTH SQUARE

Carts and tents surround a large communal well in the center of this plaza. The citizens of Loudwater bustle about the area, shopping for food, clothing, and crafts.

Caravanners and river merchants set up carts and tents along the southern wall near the town's permanent shops. Player characters looking for food, supplies, and miscellaneous items might find what they're looking for here.



3. GARWAN'S CURIOSITIES

A sign bearing the image of a unicorn horn, an hourglass, and the words "Garwan's Curiosities" hangs at the front of this store. Windows provide a view of bizarre items, including a shrunken head, candy wrapped in colorful leaves, playing cards, smoking accessories, fancifully decorated tankards, and more.

Locals visit Garwan's to find interesting gifts or to sell off junk in which Garwan sees value. Strange items lie tucked away in the dusty nooks of this shop, though few pieces are of any real value. However, sometimes rare items pass through Garwan's, and a lucky customer comes away with a valuable treasure. Thus, a stop at Garwan's Curiosities remains a favorite diversion among locals, especially Loudwater's youth.

Garwan: Garwan is a white-bearded, wizened dwarf, and he is happy to let customers browse while he sits at the counter puffing on a prodigious pipe.

If asked about a particular item, he remains where he is and points it out from among the clutter. If he doesn't have the item, he shakes his head sadly.

If asked about an item's origin, he tells the inquirer who sold him the piece and any story behind it. If the PCs ask who sold him the *horn totem*, he says that the wizard Curuvar recovered the item from a goblin barrow to the south.

Roleplaying Opportunity: Garwan has a no-account nephew named Zark. Sometimes Zark hangs around his uncle's shop, but the young dwarf never does any work. See page 17 for more information on Zark.

Items of Note: If a PC is looking for something outlandish, Garwan's is the best place to find it. If the item is not particularly rare or valuable, the character should find it for sale at a reasonable price.

Horn Totem: When the campaign begins, the *horn totem* is on display in the window.

Maps: Garwan has several maps of dungeons and ruins, though the pieces are of questionable accuracy. If you want to make a map available to the characters, this is a good place for them to acquire it.

Horn Totem

Level 2

The base of this straight, black horn is wrapped in leather, giving the object the semblance of a crude dagger. Holding the totem makes you feel more capable of facing even formidably sized foes.

Lvl 2 +1 520 gp

Weapon: Dagger

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage

Property: Your attacks with this weapon against a creature larger than you have an additional +1 bonus to damage rolls.

4. STARRA'S KNIVES

This dimly lit shop smells of oil and steel. The southern wall has a large display containing hundreds of different knives and daggers.

No other place in Loudwater offers a better selection of knives, daggers, and other small bladed weapons. Many of the blades on display have accompanying names and stories, though the veracity of these embellishments is doubtful.

Deanna “Starra” Starr: The proprietor of the knife shop is Deanna Starr, though most people just call her “Starra.” Folks say that Starra hails from Tethyr, but they know little else about her. She seems to have a foul memory attached to her homeland, which she won’t reveal. The story of Starra’s origin is left intentionally vague, allowing you to customize her background and statistics as an adventure hook.

Starra prefers to talk about knives—how they’re made, how they feel, and the advantages of one blade over another. In addition to mundane blades, Starra carries a few magic weapons, which the PCs can purchase.

5. GREEN TANKARD TAVERN

A sign with a green-painted tankard of ale proclaims the nature of this establishment. The tavern’s large common room holds a gregarious group that includes townspeople, riverboat folk, merchants, farmers, and one or two individuals wearing the badges of the Loudwater Patrol.

Called simply “the Tankard” by locals, this roomy inn and tavern serves as the public house for the southern portion of Loudwater; the Fisher’s Friend pub (area 15) serves the northern part of the town, including the docks. The Tankard offers beer, spirits, and a variety of expensive wines. Meals are available throughout the day, and rooms can be rented for overnight stays. Regulars and travelers alike gather

each day to drink, gossip, sing, and engage in games of chance.

Marsh Laval: This loud, talkative halfling is the Tankard’s proprietor. He enjoys sitting back to tell a long story, even to the exclusion of other patrons who are waiting for his service.

If asked about a particular NPC, Marsh indicates that person’s location in the tavern if he or she is present or gives the time of day that the person will likely turn up.

Roleplaying Opportunity: Many of the NPCs described in the “Key Personalities” section show up in the Tankard at some point during the day. These NPCs provide opportunities to engage the player characters in one or more adventures.

NPCs who don’t appear in the “Key Personalities” section also frequent the Tankard, including Darden (area 7), Calla Maran (area 6), and Megana Nistral (area 8), all of whom provide additional opportunities for the PCs to interact with Loudwater’s locals.

IMPORTANT NONPLAYER CHARACTERS (NPCS)

This list includes some of the characters with whom the PCs can interact. NPCs are also described under Loudwater’s various locations and within the “Key Personalities” section starting on page 16.

Brosha Manx: Owner of Loudwater Apothecary.

Brother Griffon: Uthgardt foundling and devotee of Silvanus.

Calla Maran: Proprietor of Loudwater’s general store.

Captain Harrowleaf: Head of the Loudwater Patrol.

Curuvar the Brazen: Resident wizard of Loudwater.

Darden, Dred, and Drer: Dwarf brothers and owners of Loudwater’s stable.

Deanna “Starra” Star: Knife shop owner with a hidden past.

Garwan: Owner of the curiosity shop.

Karzon Kul: Ruffian who frequents the Fisher’s Friend Pub.

Lady Moonfire: Town leader more interested in adventure than civic duties.

Marsh Laval: Proprietor of the Green Tankard Tavern.

Megana Nistral: Head of the Loudwater Smithy.

Old Barnaby: Fisherman and teller of tall tales.

Rivermaster Sarl: Overseer of Loudwater’s dock district.

Sunsteen Urbeth: Loudwater citizen and potential sycophant of the PCs.

Zark: Greedy freeloader and slaver.

6. LOUDWATER GENERAL

A hanging sign shows this large building to be Loudwater General. From other signs on the storefront, the place appears to carry everyday goods necessary to those living on the frontier.

A person can purchase tools, clothing, food, drink, simple melee and ranged weapons, ammunition, and adventuring gear at this store. In Loudwater General, characters can find items from the *Player's Handbook* of 30 gp value or less.

Calla Maran: The proprietor, Calla Maran, runs the general store with the help of her stockboy, Raumandar. Raumandar is a foundling discovered on the shores of Highstar Lake who has an eldritch quality to him (see the Highstar Lake adventure site on page 36 for more information). Raumandar is quiet and keeps to himself as he obediently goes about his duties for Calla. When Calla speaks of Raumandar, she lauds him for his strength and his devotion to her store. The middle-aged woman regards him as an adopted son.

If a PC requests an unusual item, Calla says she might be able to obtain the item at a 20 percent premium over the normal price, but only after a tenday or two.

Roleplaying Opportunity: If the PCs have successfully defused the goblin threat, either by heading to the barrow and destroying the creatures or by negotiating with High Shaman Sancossug (see “Barrow of the Ogre King” on page 18), then Calla asks the PCs for help dealing with Loudwater’s local crime gang.

If PCs are amenable to Calla’s plea, then refer to the Lair of Shadows adventure location on page 30.

7. STABLES

The earthy scent of hay and manure is strong in this wide building. The whinny of horses and the snort of oxen indicates that the building houses many beasts of burden. Carts, wagons, and other transports are also parked nearby.

Mounts can be kept here for 2 sp per day. Riding horses can also be bought and sold at the stables.

Darden, Dred, and Drer: These three dwarf brothers own the stables. They are the sons of Garwan, who owns Garwan’s Curiosities. They manage the facility and employ several assistants who feed, water, brush, clean, and care for the animals.

Roleplaying Opportunities: The brothers often grouse about their cousin, Zark. Darden in particular wonders how Zark has come so suddenly into money when he never appears to work and has no skill at cards or luck with dice. Darden expresses concern that Zark has gotten mixed up with Loudwater’s criminals, possibly with the Lady of Shadow’s gang. See page 17 for more information on Zark.

8. LOUDWATER SMITHY

The clank of metal on metal, the hiss of steam, and the roar of flames issues through the open door of this establishment. A hammer and anvil decorate a sign hanging over the door.

Here characters can purchase a variety of metallic wares, including weapons and armor. The smithy doesn’t have any martial weapons in stock, but custom requests can be fulfilled within several days.

Megana Nistral: The head smith is a brawny human female as broad as a dwarf. Megana’s hearty laugh competes with the hammering beats of her great mallet. She employs several apprentice smiths who are in awe of the woman’s stature and blacksmithing ability.

Roleplaying Opportunities: When Megana meets the PCs, she sizes them up. She is especially drawn to any male PC whose height is equal to or greater than her own 6 feet, 2 inches. She buys the character drinks, engages him in cards, and seeks ways to express romantic interest.

9. LOUDWATER APOTHECARY

A sign displaying several oddly shaped bottles hangs over the door of this shop. A dozen different scents waft through the doorway, including tangy musk, cinnamon spice, orange peel, baking bread, and gunpowder.

Although the apothecary advertises as a perfumery, the proprietor has recently started selling oddments and charms, much to Garwan’s ire. In the apothecary, one might find powdered unicorn horn, dragon claws, and burnt-out Ioun stones. However, the worth or authenticity of many such products is questionable. The apothecary also carries more mundane products, including herbs, roots, and spices, which are mainstays of Loudwater’s cooks and hedge wizards. You might also choose to make a number of low-level rituals available for purchase here.

Brosha Manx: The apothecary’s proprietor, a half-elf named Brosha Manx, is a thin and listless individual. His face is scarred, and his hands shake from ill-conceived attempts to brew potions in his youth. He is curt and doesn’t enjoy small talk.

Roleplaying Opportunities: Brosha doesn’t pay for protection from the Lady of Shadows (page 28) because he is one of her gang members. If the PCs ask Brosha about Loudwater’s shopkeepers being forced to pay protection money, he shrugs and says some might pay, but not him. He won’t take any action the PCs propose, and he informs the Lady of Shadows that vigilantes could be after her if he suspects that the PCs might take action. See the Lair of Shadows adventure location on page 30 for more information.

TOWN OF LOUDWATER



10. PATROL HEADQUARTERS

The symbol of a crossed sword and axe is blazoned high on this building. The clangs of metal and shouts from within indicate a fight might be underway.

This building is the headquarters for the Loudwater Patrol, and it is where Loudwater's militia comes to train. The members of the militia practice twice per tenday with their fellow volunteers; members of the patrol practice with greater frequency. On average about four Patrol members are on duty at any one time.

Loudwater's patrollers are not well trained. Each patrol is commanded by one of four leaders. All are under the purview of Captain Harrowleaf.

Captain Harrowleaf: The head of the Loudwater Patrol is easygoing and remains calm and confident even in the midst of a crisis.

This elf ranger is among the few residents of Loudwater who dwelled in the town at the time of the Spellplague. He is glad to talk about Loudwater as it once was, and he makes it clear that he views the town's reduction in size as a blessing.

Roleplaying Opportunities: Harrowleaf is unaware of the extent of the Lady of Shadow's crime organization, and thus he has not taken action to stop her. If Harrowleaf learns that the PCs are going after the Lady of Shadows, he provides them with five patrollers. However, if the PCs' actions result in the death of any patrollers, Harrowleaf takes an instant dislike to the characters. Use the same statistics block for the citizen patrollers as is used for the human gang members in the Lair of Shadows encounter on page 30.

If the PCs provide evidence that implicates Zark (see page 17) in a slave ring, Harrowleaf and a patrol arrest the dwarf, who is then exiled.

11. TENEMENTS AND HOMES

These dwellings crowd together within the walls, taking advantage of all available space. The buildings vary in quality; some appear well kept and house only one family, while others contain many families that have squeezed in together.

Hundreds of people live within the protection of Loudwater's walls. Some live in multitenant apartments, while more affluent folk possess small houses. The apartments mostly hold farmers, fishers, laborers, and craftspeople who are too poor to own land.

12. TEMPLE

A temple is separated from the shops, homes, and tenements of Loudwater by a small hedge. The vine-covered walls of the temple rise high above the walls of Loudwater, and the spire's tip appears to reach a full 100 feet above

the ground. The symbol of an oak leaf gleams with its own emerald light above the grand archway leading into the temple.

This temple is sacred to Silvanus the Treefather, though worshipers of other benign faiths are also welcome. The temple is holy ground, and characters might find its quiet interior a calming respite from the cares and concerns of adventuring. The interior walls are painted to resemble the sky, and the main floor is one expansive area dominated by a grassy hill around which a crown of trees gently sways in an endless breeze.

Brother Griffon: The head of the temple is Brother Griffon. He was an Uthgardt founding who, after the destruction of his tribe, was fostered and raised by a Loudwater fisher. His loyalties divided, Griffon bridged the gap by becoming a devotee of Silvanus. Griffon knows Heal- and Religion-based rituals of up to 6th level.

Brother Griffon is a black-haired, blue-eyed, and well-muscled human—with his rustic dress, he is sometimes mistaken for an Uthgardt warrior.

Roleplaying Opportunity: Brother Griffon can be found in the temple at dawn and dusk, but he is otherwise difficult to locate. He spends his days walking the Southwood and occasionally takes longer trips to visit the High Moor and Highstar Lake. If the PCs show interest in the High Moor, Brother Griffon offers to guide them there. Brother Griffon knows most of the stories concerning the High Moor, and he is glad to share his knowledge with the PCs. However, if the PCs do intend to venture into the High Moor, Brother Griffon warns them against going too deep until they are skilled enough to face the deadly creatures that lurk within. See the High Moor adventure location on page 36 for more information.

13. DOCKS GATE

An inner wall, smaller than the walls surrounding Loudwater, separates the town's northern dock district from the rest of the town. The gate between the two areas stands open and unguarded.

This gate remains open unless the town is attacked from the river, in which case it is closed and protected by guards.

14. DOCKS

Several large log structures in the northeast section of Loudwater store the goods of merchants doing business in the town. By day, people bustle about the area, transferring barrels and crates between the storehouses and trade ships. The docks are small and allow only a limited number of ships to moor. Several small fishing boats vie with larger

ships for space along the docks. By night, raucous noises issue from the pub situated along the west wall.

Between the docks, storehouses, boats, and pub, this district is active regardless of the time.

Rivermaster Sarl: The rivermaster sees to it that ships are loaded and unloaded, fees are levied and collected, dock space is reserved and transferred, and the docks are managed efficiently. Sarl is a thin, weathered man who has more gray hair than brown; however, his energy never seems to ebb.

Roleplaying Opportunities: Rivermaster Sarl is quick to notice newcomers to the docks, and he wastes little time in accosting them and asking about their business. Sarl is suspicious of those who don't have jobs, and he doesn't regard "adventuring" as a profession. He sizes up the PCs and offers any strong-looking characters the opportunity to work as dockhands for 6 sp per day.

PCs might also encounter Old Barnaby along the docks. Old Barnaby is an elderly former fisherman who likes to recount tall tales. He often tells stories about the High Forest; in particular, he tells a story about a ring of albino oaks that surrounds an area of blackened, petrified trees. He says that folks call the area the Dire Wood. If the PCs decide to investigate Old Barnaby's story, he can tell them where the Dire Wood is located (see the High Forest adventure location on page 28).

15. FISHER'S FRIEND PUB

The overwhelming odor of spirits and smoke wreathes this tavern. Calloused dockworkers and fishers drink and gamble away their pay. Wizen old men and women sip their ale in silence, waiting for an opportunity to tell a tale of the river.

This pub attracts a rougher crowd than the Green Tankard does. Most folks come to the Fisher's Friend to drink and gamble rather than to socialize.

Roleplaying Opportunity: Bar fights are common in the Fisher's Friend, and characters looking for a brawl don't have to wait long before one sparks up. One particularly notorious brawler, a dwarf named Karzon Kul, might even pick a fight with a PC. Karzon is a crony of the Lady of Shadows, so if the PCs humiliate him in a fight, they could draw unwelcome attention from Loudwater's criminal gang. Karzon has a shaved head and wears tattoos across his body.

Another notable regular of the Fisher's Friend is Kyos, who was a pickpocket before the Lady of Shadows had his eye and hand removed for refusing to join her gang. PCs interested in locating the Lady of Shadows or learning more about her can speak to Kyos. See "Finding the Lady of Shadows" on page 29 for more information on Kyos.

16. MANOR HOUSE

This grand manor house is a jewel of dwarven craftsmanship. The building includes its own stable, buttery, and servants' home. The manor appears to be over two hundred years old, and it looks as though it might weather another two hundred.

Built by a dwarf artisan for a self-styled elf lord, this manor house was the seed from which Loudwater grew. The mansion is currently home to a family of half-elves descended from the original lord.

Lady Moonfire: This half-elf warlock is regarded as the head of the town. Her duties include paying the town officials, collecting property taxes, and overseeing the conduct of the rivermaster and his dockhands. However, Lady Moonfire prefers to leave these obligations to others. She is more interested in throwing grand balls and social events to which she can invite rich merchants, caravan captains, well-to-do Loudwater citizens, and famous visitors.

Roleplaying Opportunity: If PCs defend the town from the goblin raiders, Lady Moonfire soon hears of it and sends invitations to the PCs. On white cards with inlaid gold script, she entreats them to attend the next grand ball, which is to occur in two days. The invitation indicates that the ball is a costume party, and no one will be admitted without a mask.

If PCs take advantage of this invitation, they have the opportunity to mingle with Loudwater's important personages and hear stories of trade, travel, and far off places, such as Waterdeep, Amn, and Netheril. Lady Moonfire makes an effort to speak with the characters, especially if at least one PC is a tiefling. Lady Moonfire is attracted to tieflings, and she might court a tiefling character who at any point succeeds on a DC 15 Diplomacy check while around her.

Lady Moonfire has developed a fascination for the High Forest, and she is seeking a band of explorers to accompany and safeguard her on a trip into the woods. See Lady Moonfire's description on page 17 for more information.

17. RUN-DOWN TENEMENT

This decrepit, abandoned tenement building sits dejectedly in Loudwater's northwestern corner. No doors or windows keep out the elements or the squatters.

Everyone in the neighborhood ignores this building because the abandoned tenement stands over the subterranean lair of the Lady of Shadows. Members of the Loudwater Patrol were bribed to overlook the gang's presence, and the locals have no one to turn to for help. If PCs learn of the Lady of Shadows and come here to investigate, see the Lair of Shadows adventure location on page 30.

KEY PERSONALITIES

About two thousand people live in and around Loudwater. A few particularly interesting NPCs are presented here. Each has information he or she might impart to the PCs.

CURUVAR THE BRAZEN

This middle-aged man looks as though he might have stepped from the pages of an illustrated history of wizards. With a long black beard, a robe stitched with stars and moons, a staff set with a fossilized raven, and a pointed hat, Curuvar would stand out even among other wizards.

Personality Traits: Curuvar is an eccentric wizard who is suspicious of strangers and notoriously close-mouthed. However, once his trust is earned, it becomes clear he is fond of the phrase “by Mystra’s lost spell.”

Favorite Locations: The Green Tankard tavern (area 5).

Motivation: Curuvar seeks information pertaining to the Dire Wood.

Information: Curuvar doesn’t often share what he knows. However, if the PCs press him for information on the Barrow of the Ogre King and the horn totem, he relates to them the directions described under “Barrow of the Ogre King” on page 18. He also relates the following:

“Yes, I did indeed sneak into the barrow.

By Mystra’s lost spell, you wouldn’t believe what a dull race goblins are! My wizardry easily incapacitated them. However, I didn’t find what I wanted. I took the horn totem as a souvenir. Tell you what—if you recover the matching skull totem from the barrow, I’ll tell you the truth about the Ogre King.”

If the PCs enter the Barrow of the Ogre King and return with the skull totem, Curuvar is impressed. He doesn’t want the totem; he wanted only to see if the characters were tough enough to survive the dungeon. When they return, he relates the following:

“Your abilities match your ambitions, it seems. By Mystra’s lost spell, it’s been too long since adventurers explored the secrets in this area. Anyhow, listen well—the so-called Ogre King was no mere ogre—it was a being called an oni, an ogrelike beast with mystical powers. This particular oni inhabited the barrow with a specific purpose in mind—it sought to learn about the Dire Wood. Those silly goblins revere the dead oni like it was some sort of demigod. The goblins never realized the oni was using them as fodder for its explorations. Ridiculous creatures, goblins.”

If the characters tackle the Snake Folk of Najara adventure (see page 32) or the Lair of Shadows adventure (see page 28), then Curuvar is sufficiently impressed to tell them what he knows of the Dire Wood. Until the PCs prove themselves, he remains tight-lipped. Like Lady Moonfire, Curuvar is interested in Draiguroch Tower. See the High Forest adventure location on page 28 for additional information.



SUNSTEEN URBETH

This balding man, probably in his early thirties, is in excellent shape except for his right leg, which is withered and shrunken. He uses a cane to hobble around.

Personality Traits:

Sunsteen is polite and sycophantic, and he ends many of his statements with a second’s pause before saying, “right?”

Spellscar: When Sunsteen becomes agitated, a spellscar visibly manifests (see page 51 in Chapter 3 for some information on spellscars), though it bestows no powers. When his scar activates, it burns with blue fire.

Whenever he feels the scar activating, Sunsteen tries to suppress it, though he doesn’t always succeed. If the spellscar activates, the characters see him collapse to the ground, clutching his thigh as the rest of his leg becomes wreathed in blue flame.

Favorite Locations: South Square (area 2) and the Green Tankard tavern (area 5).

Motivation: Sunsteen is one of the townspeople the PCs save when goblins attack the South Square. Sunsteen is motivated by gratitude, believing that he remains alive only because of the PCs’ heroic actions. After fleeing from the goblins, he seeks out the characters to thank them. He then continues to frequently

find them and express gratitude, hoping to ingratiate himself with the adventurers.

Sunsteen is an assistant to the town's magistrate, and he is happy to vouch for the characters if they have a run-in with the law. He is also aware of the criminal activities around Loudwater, and he divulges his knowledge to characters interested in the information.

Information: In the course of conversation, Sunsteen is likely to share any of the following information with characters.

If the PCs ask about the Zelbross Bandits:

"Brigands attack the caravans that travel west down the Delimbiyr Road . . . right? They live in the ruins of Zelbross. Folks say Zark had a close call a few years ago—the bandits nearly got him." If the characters seek Zark, refer to the next section or to the Snake Folk of Najara adventure location on page 32.

If the PCs ask about Sunsteen's spellscar:

"Yeah, I have a spellscar. First time it manifested, my leg shriveled up. The thing's a curse, not a blessing like some try to tell you . . . right?"

If the PCs ask about the Lady of Shadows:

"We got us a crime lord in Loudwater . . . right? Don't know her real name, but we call her the Lady of Shadows. We think she runs her gang out of a lair hidden somewhere beneath the town. People say she's a shade, so everyone's afraid to take action against her."

ZARK

This young dwarf wears black leathers, sports several tattoos, and wears a belt ostentatiously set with several silver-hilted daggers.

Personality Traits: Zark is moody and cruel, and his favorite phrase is "poxed bastard."

Favorite Locations: Garwan's Curiosities (area 3), the Green Tankard tavern (area 5), and the docks (area 14).

Motivation: Zark is a no-account miscreant who seeks to acquire gold with as little effort as possible. He cares little if his actions result in the injury of another.

Information: Zark needs a few people to help him move cargo arriving at the docks. A ship called the *Pale Minnow* is set to unload barrels of cider during the night, and Zark is the receiver. Zark can't unload the crates alone, and the rivermaster won't assign dockhands to help at such a late hour. Zark pays up to three people 5 gp each for their aid.

The barrels actually contain several children destined to be slaves. These children were kidnapped from outlying farms. The buyer is a lizardfolk from Najara. If the PCs take Zark's job, see "Helping Zark" on page 32.

If the PCs ask about the Zelbross Bandits, Zark gladly tells how he was ambushed while on the road with friends. He was the sole survivor, but he gave as good as he got. He is still angry over the incident and will show the PCs where he was attacked if he can accompany them and get his revenge on the "poxed bastards."

In reality, Zark is conspiring with the Zelbross Bandits, who are part of a slave ring. Zark wants to accompany the PCs so he can keep an eye on his interests.

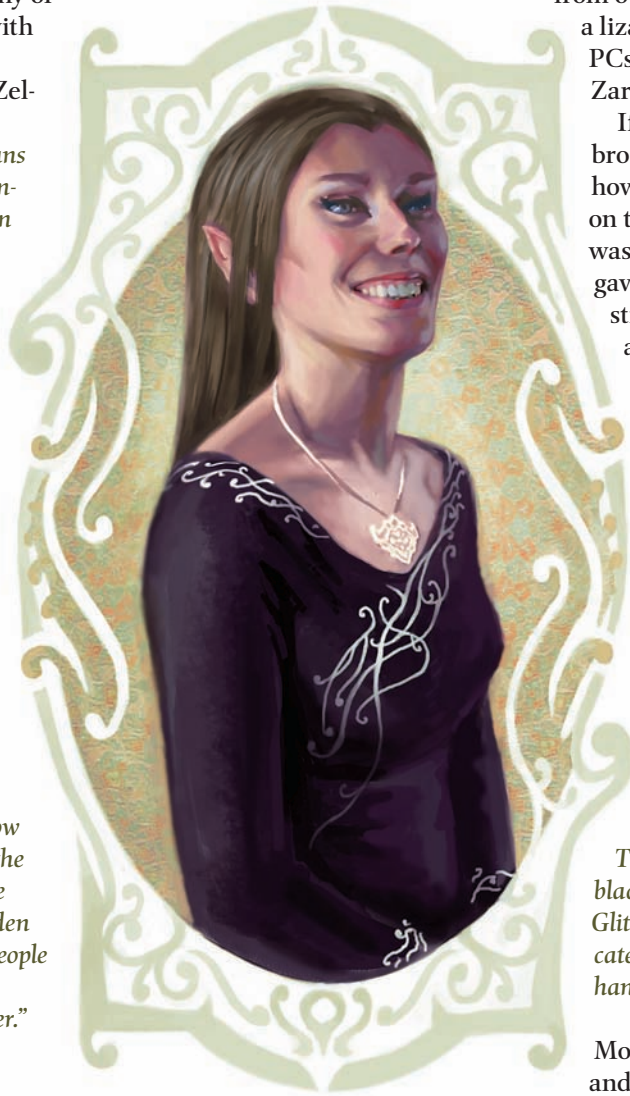
LADY MOONFIRE

This youthful half-elf favors a black gown sewn with silver thread. Glittering rings decorate her delicate fingers, and a silver amulet hangs regally from her neck.

Personality Traits: Lady Moonfire is given to laughter and light-hearted jest. She is likable, though some of the elderly residents in town regard her as flippant and flighty.

Favorite Locations: The Green Tankard tavern (area 5) and her home (area 16).

Motivation: Lady Moonfire is the town leader, though she has little interest in civic duties. She would like to visit the High Forest because she feels it would be a grand adventure. She is also interested in a tower called Draigdurroch, which lies on the edge of the Dire Wood. According to her research, Draigdurroch once held a small library of arcane tomes. If the PCs decide to visit the tower, see the High Forest adventure on page 28.



LOUDWATER ADVENTURES

Several plots, conspiracies, and secret organizations operate beneath Loudwater's surface and just beyond its borders. Each is a potential adventure you can weave into your own campaign. The adventures in and around Loudwater are designed for a range of character levels; if the PCs become involved in an adventure for characters above or below their level, you can adjust the levels of the opponents to compensate.

The *Barrow of the Ogre King* adventure below incorporates the *Raid on Loudwater* encounter at the beginning of this chapter. The adventure includes a set of encounters and a short dungeon. This first adventure is more thorough than the other adventures in this chapter. Some include only one

encounter, and others, such as the High Forest and the High Moor, are merely adventure sites. These locations lack preconstructed encounters, offering instead several interesting places for you to develop full dungeons. Feel free to expand upon this chapter's adventure locations or to add additional encounters.

NPCs described under the Loudwater map locations and within the "Key Personalities" section provide opportunities for characters to learn about the various adventure sites. As the characters advance, you can create additional NPCs with new information to lead them farther and farther beyond the borders of Loudwater and into new, exciting adventures.

BARROW OF THE OGRE KING

Barrow of the Ogre King is designed for five 1st-level adventurers.

For many years, goblins have laired in a nearby dungeon hidden in the boughs of the Southwood. This dungeon is known to some as the Barrow of the Ogre King. The barrow is a remnant of the vanished dwarven kingdom of Ammarindar.

A local wizard named Curuvar recently sold to Garwan's Curiosities a dagger made from the pointed horn of some creature. This dagger is the *horn totem* (see page 11), which Curuvar stole from the Barrow of the Ogre King, prompting the goblins to attack Loudwater.

SYNOPSIS

Goblins lairing in a ruin about ten miles south of Loudwater are agitated by the theft of a relic and attack the town to recover the item. The player characters must then decide whether to deal with the goblins. If the PCs decide to attack the goblins in their home, they must find the Barrow of the Ogre King, face traps and goblins alike, and ultimately enter the ancient catacomb where the goblins interred the Ogre King.

INVOLVING THE PCs

The easiest way to involve the characters in this adventure is to run the *Raid on Loudwater* encounter. You have a couple other options for involving characters in this adventure.

Garwan's Curiosities: Garwan tells characters that other treasures like the *horn totem* (an item on special display in his shop) might be found in the Barrow of the Ogre King. Garwan has no interest in recovering the items himself, for his adventuring days are over, but he encourages the characters to explore the area.

Dead Goblin Shaman: While traveling through the area near Loudwater, the characters chance upon a dead goblin hexer carrying the goblin scroll described below.

FINDING THE BARROW

Several clues and pieces of information can help lead characters to the Barrow of the Ogre King.

The PCs can acquire the goblin scroll upon looting the goblin hexer in the first encounter. Unless circumstances prevent the characters from searching the body, they automatically find the scroll. If characters don't find the scroll on their own, a helpful NPC, such as Sunsteen, might provide it. The scroll has the following message written in Goblin. If no



character speaks Goblin, the PCs can find someone within Loudwater to translate, such as Garwan, Zark, Curuvar, or any other NPC that might reasonably know Goblin.

Kerwig,

I learned through divinations that the totem is in a shop called Garwan's Curiosities in Loudwater. Go and retrieve it. Use the old barrel of alchemist's fire.

You know how important this is. Without the totem, it will be harder to perform the magic. We must get the object back if we are to revive the Ogre King!

Do not fail. I will continue forward with the magic even if every one of you must be sacrificed. We must get back the totem!

High Shaman Sancossug

The goblins were numerous and made no effort to conceal their trail, so any character can follow the path without needing a skill check. Characters can also obtain directions with a DC 15 Streetwise check in Loudwater or by asking Curuvar.

If characters are interested in learning more about the Ogre King, they can make a DC 20 History check or a DC 15 Streetwise check to learn the following information.

The creature later dubbed the Ogre King discovered the ruins of the dwarven kingdom of Ammarindar in the Southwood some eighty years ago. He established a lair and subjugated local goblins. The Ogre King lasted just ten years, during which time his goblins raided far and wide. The ogre was slain by a group of adventurers passing through the area.

GENERAL DETAILS

Doors: The doors in the Barrow of the Ogre King remain in working order. The doors are solid stone set in 3-foot-wide, 6-foot-tall frames. They are about 4 inches thick and extremely heavy; they're built to swivel or pivot in place and are not actually suspended from hinges. The doors are unlocked unless otherwise noted, and they require a DC 25 Strength check to break down. The doors have AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, and 80 hit points.

Illumination: Bright light; goblins have low-light vision and must rely on artificial light in areas where the sun's light doesn't reach. The goblins keep the dungeon illuminated with crude torches. Unless otherwise noted, all areas of the subterranean portion of the Barrow of the Ogre King are illuminated with bright light.

B1. COMMON ENTRANCE

Tucked away under the boughs of the Southwood lies the Barrow of the Ogre King. The barrow consists of

jumbled, overgrown ruins beneath which lies a three-level dungeon.

When the PCs approach, read:

An ill-disguised trail leads through the woods and culminates in a jumble of pale stone ruins. The area is littered with the gnawed bones and visceral remains of various mammals. The trail leads through the mouth of a dwarf's face carved into one of the still-standing stone walls. Beyond the wall is a wide, grassy courtyard.

The trail that leads into the ruins is mostly a ruse. The path leads directly to the overgrown courtyard, which has a trap that deposits ill-prepared wanderers into area B2. The goblins use their own secret entrance (see below).

False-Floor Pit Level 4 Warder Trap XP 175

Stones cover the courtyard, supported by weakened timbers that collapse when just the right amount of weight is applied. The trap covers a 20-by-40-foot area.

Perception

◆ DC 24: The character notices the false stonework.

Trigger

The trap attacks when three Medium creatures occupy the courtyard. A Large creature counts as two Medium creatures, and two Small creatures count as one Medium creature.

Attack

Immediate Reaction Melee

Target: Each creature in the courtyard when the trap is triggered

Attack: +7 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls 20 feet into area B2, takes 2d10 damage, and is knocked prone.

Miss: The target enters the nearest nontrapped square.

Effect: The false floor opens and the pit is no longer hidden.

Countermeasures

- ◆ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 10 Thievery check. The floor falls into the pit.
- ◆ A character can walk around the pit.
- ◆ A character can climb to the bottom of the pit with a DC 15 Athletics check once the trap is sprung.

The secret entrance lies on the opposite side of the courtyard from where the path enters the area. The goblins move around the edge of the courtyard to get there.

The area where the goblins enter is piled with rubble and stone, and the ground is covered with footprints. With a DC 17 Perception check, a character notices that one slab of stone appears loose. This stone can be moved aside, revealing a hole that contains a ladder. The ladder goes down about 20 feet before entering a small room where a secret door (DC 15 Perception check to find) leads south to B2.



B2. SLAUGHTER PIT

If PCs enter this chamber, whether by falling through the false floor or coming down the ladder and through the secret door, the tactical encounter is triggered.

Tactical Encounter: “B2. Slaughter Pit” on page 22.

B3. CONTESTED HALLWAY

This hallway is cordoned off from two other chambers, and it leads northward to a set of stairs that descends farther into the dungeon. The room to the west of the hallway contains zombies, and the room to the east contains two goblins. PCs might attempt to sneak down the hall using Stealth checks. If they do not elect to use Stealth or if a character fails a Stealth check, the encounter is triggered.

Tactical Encounter: “B3. Contested Hallway” on page 24.

B4. UPPER CATACOMB

The stairway at the end of the hall in B3 descends 10 feet and comes to a set of double doors that leads into this room. Several goblins and hobgoblins wait inside. When PCs enter this room, the Upper Catacomb tactical encounter is triggered.

A door in the east leads to area B5; the door is locked and requires a DC 20 Thievery check to open.

In the northwest section of the room, a pit opens into area B6. A stairway descends into the pit.

Tactical Encounter: “B4. Upper Catacomb” on page 26.

B5. GOBLIN WARREN

A short, 10-foot-wide passage provides access to the chamber where most of the goblins in the barrow sleep and eat. This chamber has no tactical encounter because the goblins normally occupying this room are encountered elsewhere in the dungeon.

When the PCs enter the area, read:

This goblin lair is thick with filth and dung. The room includes a few crude trappings, such as piles of hay for bedding and flimsy, makeshift tables. The southern wall is heaped with a pile of junk, including cracked statuary, broken armor, rusted weapons, bits of cloth and leather, rotting furniture, and other detritus.

Treasure: Among the junk and filth of this room are actually a few valuables. A search of the area reveals the following items: two small silver statues worth 50 sp each; three gold, gem-inset rings worth 30 gp each; and a suit of +1 *magic chainmail*. Also among the items are two 50-foot lengths of rope, 15 crude torches, and a supply of stale, moldy food and over-fermented ale and spirits.

B6. ANCIENT CATACOMB

The desiccated remains of long-dead dwarves lie in the recesses of this enormous chamber. The goblins have looted the graves of what few items remained when they moved into the barrow. PCs who attempt to search the recesses find only disintegrating dwarf bones. This chamber has no encounter because the only goblin who enters this area is the high shaman, Sancossug.

When the PCs enter this area, read:

The floor of the upper catacomb opens to reveal a vast underground cavity. The walls are covered with holes and recesses containing the disintegrating bones of dwarves. A stone staircase lit with flaming torches at 30-foot intervals hugs the outer wall of the shaft, leaving areas of intermittent darkness amid the illumination. The spiraling circle of torches appears to descend about 100 feet to the bottom level of the chamber.

The characters need not make any kind of skill check to descend the stairs.

B7. TOMB OF THE OGRE KING

At the bottom of the catacombs, a torchlit corridor leads to the east and opens into a 20-by-20-foot chamber.





When the PCs reach the bottom of the shaft, read:

To the east, a large, dirt-encrusted sarcophagus sits in the center of a 20-by-20-foot recess. A goblin painted with clay and mud stands vigilantly over the sarcophagus.

The goblin standing over the sarcophagus is High Shaman Sancossug. He is waiting for the goblin raiders to return with the *horn totem* so he can perform a ritual that he believes will revive the Ogre King.

Sancossug sees the PCs as soon as they arrive at the bottom of the shaft.

When Sancossug sees the PCs, read:

The goblin's eyes widen and he demands in Common, "How did you get here? What do you want? This is sacred ground and you must leave now!"

The shaman is willing to converse with characters, and he relays the information below based on the questions the PCs ask and the direction the conversation takes. Sancossug is practical and does not throw away his life foolishly. Even if the PCs reveal that they have killed the rest of his tribe, the shaman does not attack, knowing that if these adventurers killed his kin, they might succeed in killing him as well. However, if the characters attempt to disturb the sarcophagus or the tomb in any way, the High Shaman attacks and fights to the death.

Who was the Ogre King?

"The Ogre King was more than an ogre—he was touched by a divine spark. He had great and amazing powers."

How will the Ogre King return?

"I know magic that will revive him, and I pray each day at his side for the strength and faith to perform the necessary magic."

What will he do when he returns?

"He shall reveal his divinity by raising up those of us who kept his memory alive. He shall then lead us to glory!"

Do you need the totems?

"I don't need the totems—faith can bridge all gaps, but the renewal would go better if all the Ogre King's bones were returned to his grave. We will get back what was stolen from us at any cost."

Where is the skull totem?

The shaman's eyes flicker to the sarcophagus. He looks at you and exclaims, "You can't have it. You must leave now!"

Development: Within the sarcophagus lies the Ogre King's mortal remains: the bones of a large humanoid creature. The skull is inscribed with

blood-red filigree and set as the headpiece of a crude mace. One of the skull's horns is missing. The weapon is the *skull totem*.

The High Shaman allows the PCs to leave if they give him the *horn totem*. He vows the goblins won't trouble Loudwater further. If the PCs broker this deal instead of fighting, award each of them 250 XP. If the PCs reveal that they have the *horn totem* or if a character is wielding it but refuses to give it to Sancossug, then he attacks.

If the PCs are concerned that the goblin might succeed in reviving the Ogre King, they might inquire as to the ritual Sancossug intends to perform. Sancossug gladly tells them about the ritual, and a DC 10 Religion or Arcana check allows a character to realize that it is not a legitimate ritual and will have no effect.

High Shaman Sancossug		Level 3 Solo Controller
Small natural humanoid, goblin		XP 750
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 230; Bloodied 115		
AC 22; Fortitude 17, Reflex 20, Will 22		
Saving Throws +5		
Speed 6		
Action Points 2		
⚔ Shaman Rod (standard; at will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage		
⚡ Fire Cloud (standard; recharge ⚡) ♦ Fire		
Close burst 3 within 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 1 fire damage.		
⚡ Blinding Cloud (standard; recharge ⚡)		
Close burst 3 within 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of its next turn.		
⚡ Stinging Cloud (standard; recharge ⚡)		
Close burst 3 within 10; +7 vs. Will; 3d6 + 1 damage.		
Misdirection (immediate reaction, when targeted by a ranged attack; at will)		
Change the attack's target to an adjacent foe.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The shaman shifts 1 square.		
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 9 (+0)	Cha 18 (+5)
Equipment leather armor, shaman rod		

Skull Totem

Level 2

Elaborate trceries cover this large humanoid skull. It has two horns, though one is broken off at the base. The skull is bound to a leather-wrapped haft, giving the object the shape and appearance of a mace.

Lvl 2 +1 520 gp

Weapon: Mace

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage

Property: Your attacks with this weapon against a creature larger than you have an additional +1 bonus to damage rolls.



B2. SLAUGHTER PIT

Encounter Level 4 (850 XP)

SETUP

A group of goblins occupies this room, keeping guard. The PCs enter the area either through the secret door to the north or from the pit trap in B1.

Starved dogs are kept in a hidden pit trap at the upper area of the room.

This encounter includes the following trap and creatures:

- 2 goblin warriors (W)
- 2 goblin skullcleavers (S)
- 1 goblin hexer (H)
- 4 starved dogs (D)
- 1 false-floor pit (T)

When one or more PCs fall into this room, read:

The ground suddenly falls away. You plummet for a moment and then slam into the ground in a large, torchlit room.

Then, regardless of the direction from which the PCs enter the room, read:

The chamber ascends steeply to the west. Goblins stand at the top of the slope, partly obscured by intervening statues of dwarves in armor. The goblins instantly raise their javelins.

2 Goblin Warriors (W)		Level 1 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid XP 100 each		
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision	
HP 29; Bloodied 14		
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12		
Speed 6; see also <i>mobile ranged attack</i> and <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⚔ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.		
☞ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.		
☞ Mobile Ranged Attack (standard; at-will)		
The goblin warrior can move up to half its speed; at any point during that movement, it makes one ranged attack without provoking an opportunity attack.		
Great Position		
If, on its turn, a goblin warrior ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals an extra 1d6 damage on its ranged attacks until the start of its next turn.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10		
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 8 (-1)	Cha 8 (-1)
Equipment leather armor, spear, 5 javelins in sheaf		

2 Goblin Skullcleavers (S)		Level 3 Brute
Small natural humanoid XP 150 each		
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 53; Bloodied 26; see also <i>bloodied rage</i>		
AC 16; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 5; see also <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⚔ Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, or 2d10 + 5 while bloodied.		
Bloodied Rage (while bloodied)		
The goblin skullcleaver loses the ability to use <i>goblin tactics</i> and can do nothing but attack the nearest enemy, charging when possible.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +9, Thievery +9		
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 8 (+0)	Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment chainmail, battleaxe		

Goblin Hexer (H)		Level 3 Controller (Leader)
Small natural humanoid XP 150		
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 46; Bloodied 23		
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 16; see also <i>lead from the rear</i>		
Speed 6; see also <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⚔ Hexer Rod (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.		
☞ Blinding Hex (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).		
☞ Stinging Hex (standard; recharge ☞ ☞)		
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target takes 3d6 + 1 damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).		
☞ Vexing Cloud (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ Zone		
Area burst 3 within 10; automatic hit; all enemies within the zone take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. The zone grants concealment to the goblin hexer and its allies. The goblin hexer can sustain the zone as a minor action, moving it up to 5 squares.		
☞ Incite Bravery (immediate reaction, when an ally uses <i>goblin tactics</i> ; at-will)		
Ranged 10; the targeted ally can shift 2 more squares and make an attack.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Lead from the Rear (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a ranged attack; at-will)		
The goblin hexer can change the attack's target to an adjacent ally of its level or lower.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 9 (+0)	Cha 18 (+5)
Equipment leather robes, hexer rod		



4 Starved Dogs (D)		Level 1 Minion
Small natural beast		XP 25 each
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +6; low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 15; Fortitude 10, Reflex 13, Will 11		
Speed 6		
⊕ Bite (standard; at will)		
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage		
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 15 (+2)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 3 (-4)	Cha 8 (-1)

TACTICS

In the first round, the goblin warriors loose their javelins, both aiming at the closest PC they can see. The two goblin skullcleavers delay, but they take an action to charge as soon as a PC makes it up the slope. The hexer readies a ranged attack against the first PC to appear.

STEPPING DISK

With a successful DC 20 History check, a character knows that the Ammarindar dwarves were rumored to be able to cross their empire instantaneously. The secret of using the stepping disks is lost to time, though. You might choose to base an adventure on the stepping disks by creating a dungeon in deeper, more dangerous Ammarindar ruins. The disk weighs 100 pounds and is movable if any PC wants to transport it for later study.

ROBERT LAZZARETTI

When one or more PCs make it to the top of the slope, the goblin warriors retreat and let the skullcleavers fight in melee. All the goblins move along the edge of the trap, trying to lure PCs into the area. The dogs attack any creature that falls into the pit.

False-Floor Pit (T) Level 1 Warder Trap XP 100

A covered pit is hidden near the center of the room. A cunning network of weak timber covered with thin flagstone is rigged to drop a creature into a 10-foot-deep pit.

Perception

◆ DC 23: The character notices the false stonework.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a character enters one of the squares containing the trap.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +4 vs. Reflex

Hit: Target falls 10 feet into the pit, takes 1d10 damage, and is knocked prone.

Miss: Target returns to the last square it occupied, and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: The false floor opens and the pit is no longer hidden.

Countermeasures

◆ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 5 Thievery check. The floor falls into the pit.

◆ A character can climb out of the pit with a DC 20 Athletics check.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Rubble: Broken stones cover the floor of the lower area of B2, making the squares difficult terrain.

Sloped Floor: These squares are difficult terrain when ascending (moving west). The terrain is not difficult for those descending the slope or remaining at the same level (moving north, south, or east).

Secret Door: Characters can locate this secret door with a DC 15 Perception check. The passage leads into a small chamber and from there up a ladder to B1.

Stepping Disk: This disk is shaped like a plug and is inscribed with Davek letters forming nonsensical words. A creature that steps in the square containing the disk is attacked (+5 vs. Will). On a successful attack, the creature disappears, arriving in a silvery space that appears to have no end.

Each round, the vanished creature is attacked again. When an attack fails, the creature reappears on the disk and must step off or else be subject to another attack in the following round. If a creature or object occupies the space in which a character would appear, the character appears in the nearest available square.

Moving a disk causes its magic to lapse and any creatures currently under the disk's effect to immediately reappear. The magic returns once the disk is placed on a flat surface and left undisturbed for one day.

B2. SLAUGHTER PIT

B3. CONTESTED HALLWAY

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

SETUP

Goblins occupy the shrine to the east, while zombies shuffle around in the crypt to the west. Characters might attempt to sneak down the hall and past the rooms, but each must make a DC 12 Stealth check for every 2 squares moved (DC 17 if moving more than 2 squares in a single move). If characters enter either of the side chambers, or if they fail their Stealth checks, the creatures become aware of them and attack. The zombies are controlled by High Shaman Sancossug and ignore the goblins.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

5 zombie rotters (R)

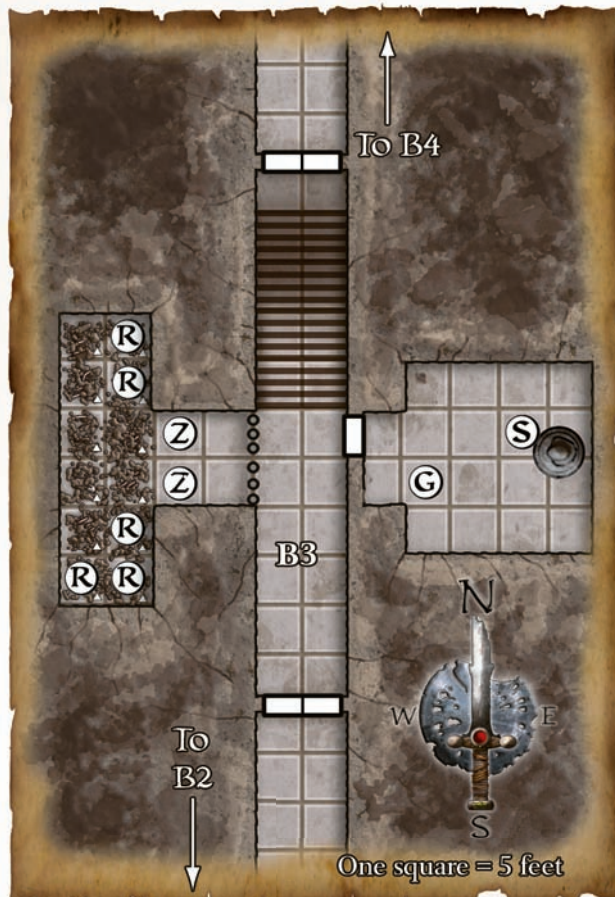
2 zombies (Z)

1 goblin skullcleaver (S)

1 goblin blackblade (G)

When the PCs first enter the hallway, read:

This 10-foot-wide flagstone hallway abruptly drops away into a set of stairs to the north. The putrid scent of death wafts from a closed portcullis on the west side of the passage. A closed stone door seals a chamber on the east.



Perception Check

DC 12 *Faint shuffling sounds emerge from the west.*

DC 17 *The sound of at least one creature's raspy breathing emanates from beneath the eastern door.*

If the PCs do not move using Stealth, then as soon as they are 6 squares into the corridor, the creatures in the side chambers become aware of them and attack.

When the creatures attack, read:

From the west, dwarflike zombies shuffle forward, mouths open with hunger. To the east, a hulking, hair-covered goblin charges out, roaring with fury. Behind it, a smaller goblin darts among the shadows.

TACTICS

The two zombies move forward first, one using a minor action to open the portcullis. They move adjacent to the nearest PC and attack. The rotters then shuffle forward into any other available squares and join the attack.

The goblin skullcleaver rushes through the doorway and attacks the closest PC he can see. The goblin blackblade uses *sneaky* to negotiate the hallway and find an opportunity to gain combat advantage.

5 Zombie Rotters (R)		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 25 each
Initiative -2	Senses Perception -1; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 9, Will 10		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 4		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 5 damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 6 (-2)	Wis 8 (-1)
Con 10 (+0)	Int 1 (-5)	Cha 3 (-4)

2 Zombies (Z)		Level 2 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 125 each
Initiative -1	Senses Perception +0; darkvision	
HP 40; Bloodied 20; see also <i>zombie weakness</i>		
AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 9, Will 10		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 4		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage.		
⊕ Zombie Grab (standard; at-will)		
+4 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed (until escape). Checks made to escape the zombie's grab take a -5 penalty.		
Zombie Weakness		
Any critical hit to a zombie reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 6 (-1)	Wis 8 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 1 (-4)	Cha 3 (-3)

Goblin Skullcleaver (S)		Level 3 Brute
Small natural humanoid		XP 150
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +2; low-light vision		
HP 53; Bloodied 26; see also <i>bloodied rage</i>		
AC 16; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 5; see also <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⊕ Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, or 2d10 + 5 while bloodied.		
Bloodied Rage (while bloodied)		
The goblin skullcleaver loses the ability to use <i>goblin tactics</i> and can do nothing but attack the nearest enemy, charging when possible.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +9, Thievery +9		
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 8 (+0)	Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment chainmail, battleaxe		

Goblin Blackblade (G)		Level 1 Lurker
Small natural humanoid		XP 100
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +1; low-light vision		
HP 25; Bloodied 12		
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 11		
Speed 6; see also <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⊕ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.		
Combat Advantage		
A goblin blackblade deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Sneaky		
When shifting, a goblin blackblade can move into a space occupied by an ally of its level or lower. The ally shifts into the blackblade's previous space as a free action.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10		
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 8 (-1)	Cha 8 (-1)
Equipment leather armor, short sword		

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Varies; torches in the hallway and shrine keep that area illuminated with bright light. However, the northern and southern alcoves of the crypt are not illuminated by the torchlight and are dark.

Crypt: The floor of the room that contains the zombies is slick with mold and covered in bones and refuse. Squares in this area are difficult terrain for any creatures that are not undead. Among the bones and detritus are a few valuables (see *Treasure*, below).

Northern Doors: The creatures in area B4 hear any conflict in the hallway, but they remain in their area, preparing to fight. They prefer to fight in a larger area where they can take advantage of their numbers.



B3. CONTESTED HALLWAY

Shrine: The chamber to the east contains no features except for a 7-foot-tall stone statue standing on a short marble podium. Dirt and clay caked the statue's surface, blurring its features and making it impossible to identify. Characters might recognize this fact as a sign that the statue was recently unearthed and placed in this chamber.

Scratched into the hardened clay are words in Goblin meaning "Ogre King." If characters take a moment to clean off the statue, what initially resembled a large humanoid is actually revealed to be a sculpture of a burly ogre wielding a battleaxe.

The goblins have placed several offerings at the base of the statue (see *Treasure*, below).

Stairs: A creature that falls prone while occupying a square that contains stairs risks tumbling to the base of the stairway. A creature knocked prone on the stairs must succeed on a DC 15 Acrobatics check or else slide to the bottom of the staircase, remain prone, and take 1d10 damage.

Treasure: Both rooms contain a few pieces of treasure. A character can make a DC 15 Perception check in the crypt to locate 20 gp and one ruby worth 100 gp. Characters in the shrine find a cache on the marble base of the statue containing one *potion of healing* and 117 gp.

B4. UPPER CATABOMB

Encounter Level 3 (700 XP)

SETUP

When the characters initially see this area, only the goblin hexer and the hobgoblin archer are visible. The hobgoblin soldiers hide out of sight at the entrance, and the goblin warrior lingers in the nether space of the stepping disk.

If the PCs managed to bypass the previous encounter using Stealth, the creatures in this room might be less prepared for a fight. You should rearrange the starting positions of the creatures as appropriate.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- 2 hobgoblin soldiers (S)
- 1 goblin hexer (H)
- 1 hobgoblin archer (A)
- 1 goblin warrior (see Tactics for starting position)

When the PCs open the door to this area, read:

Double doors open into a wide chamber with a tiled floor. The northwest corner of the room falls away into darkness, though a staircase appears to descend into the pit. South of the hole is a rune-inscribed disk, and to the east of the hole is a fountain. Several goblins in the chamber are poised for action.

Goblin Warrior		Level 1 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid		
Initiative +5		Senses Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 29; Bloodied 14		
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12		
Speed 6; see also <i>mobile ranged attack</i> and <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⚔ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.		
↘ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.		
↘ Mobile Ranged Attack (standard; at-will)		
The goblin warrior can move up to half its speed; at any point during that movement, it makes one ranged attack without provoking an opportunity attack.		
Great Position		
If, on its turn, a goblin warrior ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals an extra 1d6 damage on its ranged attacks until the start of its next turn.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Alignment	Evil	
Languages	Common, Goblin	
Skills	Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str	14 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3)
Con	13 (+1)	Int 8 (-1)
Wis	12 (+1)	
Cha	8 (-1)	
Equipment	leather armor, spear, 5 javelins in sheaf	

Goblin Hexer (H)		Level 3 Controller (Leader)
Small natural humanoid		
Initiative +3		Senses Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 46; Bloodied 23		
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 16; see also <i>lead from the rear</i>		
Speed 6; see also <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⚔ Hexer Rod (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.		
↘ Blinding Hex (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).		
↘ Stinging Hex (standard; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓜ)		
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target takes 3d6 + 1 damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).		
✦ Vexing Cloud (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ Zone		
Area burst 3 within 10; automatic hit; all enemies within the zone take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. The zone grants concealment to the goblin hexer and its allies. The goblin hexer can sustain the zone as a minor action, moving it up to 5 squares.		
↘ Incite Bravery (immediate reaction, when an ally uses <i>goblin tactics</i> ; at-will)		
Ranged 10; the targeted ally can shift 2 more squares and make an attack.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Lead from the Rear (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a ranged attack; at-will)		
The goblin hexer can change the attack's target to an adjacent ally of its level or lower.		
Alignment	Evil	
Languages	Common, Goblin	
Skills	Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str	10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3)
Con	14 (+3)	Int 9 (+0)
Wis	13 (+2)	
Cha	18 (+5)	
Equipment	leather robes, hexer rod	

Hobgoblin Archer (A)		Level 3 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (goblin)		
Initiative +7		Senses Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 39; Bloodied 19		
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 13		
Speed 6		
⚔ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.		
↘ Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 20/40; +9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin archer grants an ally within 5 squares of it a +2 bonus to its next ranged attack roll against the same target.		
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin archer suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)		
The hobgoblin archer rolls a saving throw against the effect.		
Alignment	Evil	
Languages	Common, Goblin	
Skills	Athletics +5, History +6	
Str	14 (+3)	Dex 19 (+5)
Con	15 (+3)	Int 11 (+1)
Wis	14 (+3)	
Cha	10 (+1)	
Equipment	leather armor, longsword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows	

2 Hobgoblin Soldiers (S)		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (goblin)		XP 150 each
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +3; low-light vision	
HP 47; Bloodied 23		
AC 20 (22 with <i>phalanx soldier</i>); Fortitude 18, Reflex 16, Will 16		
Speed 5		
⬇ Flail (standard; at-will) ⬆ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked and slowed until the end of the hobgoblin soldier's next turn.		
⬇ Formation Strike (standard; at-will) ⬆ Weapon		
Requires flail; +7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin soldier shifts 1 square provided it ends in a space adjacent to another hobgoblin.		
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin soldier suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter) The hobgoblin soldier rolls a saving throw against the effect.		
Phalanx Soldier A hobgoblin soldier gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Athletics +10, History +8		
Str 19 (+5)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 11 (+1)	Cha 10 (+1)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail		

TACTICS

The goblin hexer looses *vexing cloud* on the PCs as soon as they enter, attempting to aid the hobgoblin soldiers' attacks against them. The hobgoblin archer attacks any PC who attempts to approach it or the hexer. The hobgoblin soldiers attack any character who moves into the room, attempting to slow their progress.

The goblin hexer has gained a rudimentary understanding of the stepping disk, so on his turn, he also spends a minor action to use a command word and summon the goblin warrior, which can then roll initiative. The goblin warrior engages any PCs who slip past the two soldiers. The creatures here fight to the death.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Eastern Door: The door is locked and requires a DC 20 Thievery check or the key in the goblin hexer's possession to open.

Fountain: The squares that the fountain occupies are difficult terrain.

A DC 20 History check reveals that the fountain dates back to the dwarven kingdom of Ammarindar.

A DC 20 Arcana check reveals that magic is the source of the water's ongoing flow.

Hole: This gap opens into a 100-foot drop to the floor of B6. The enemies in this area don't actively try to knock characters in, but if a PC ends his or her move adjacent to the hole, then an enemy lined up for a bull rush attempts to push the character in. A creature that falls down the hole takes 10d10 damage

and is knocked prone. A falling character can attempt a DC 20 Athletics check to catch hold of the stone for each 10-foot increment he or she falls. However, a character can only make three such attempts.

Stairway: A slender stairway begins along the north wall and circles down to the lowest level of the catacombs (see B7 on page 20).

Stepping Disk: This disk is shaped like a plug and is inscribed with Davek letters forming nonsensical words. A creature that steps in the square containing the disk is attacked (+5 vs. Will). On a successful attack, the creature disappears, arriving in a silvery space that appears to have no end.

Each round, the vanished creature is attacked again. When an attack fails, the creature reappears on the disk and must step off or else take another attack in the following round. If a creature or object occupies the space in which a character would appear, the character appears in the nearest available square.

Moving a disk causes its magic to lapse and any creatures currently under the disk's effect to immediately reappear. The magic returns once the disk is placed on a flat surface and left undisturbed for one day.

B4. UPPER CATACOMB



HIGH FOREST

Folk in Loudwater tell tales of the High Forest and of the adventure opportunities within. This section presents potential adventure locations within the High Forest, though it leaves the specific dungeons and encounters for you to determine.

ADVENTURE SITES

The High Forest contains esoteric secrets, ancient ruins, and deadly perils.

Endless Caverns: Due south of the Star Mounts, a branch of the Unicorn Run flows into a network of underground limestone caverns that stretches for miles. Most of the passages are natural, but a few are hewn, and many of the branches connect to the Underdark. The caverns are older than the fallen elven realm of Eaerlann, and they have served as lairs for various creatures throughout the ages. The caves have housed several now-dead dragons, drow slavers, and most recently, a colony of azers and fire giants.

Dire Wood: The Dire Wood is a circle of forest bordered by a ring of albino oaks. The outer ring is 60 miles in circumference, and just inside the circle

of albino oaks is a ring of blackened, petrified trees. Within both rings are miles of broken hills that lie under a canopy of living and petrified trees. At the heart of this eldritch woodland is a great butte. A game trail winds up to a warped rock formation on the butte's face. Green crystals, said to be the hearts of devils, protrude from the ground along this trail. Many speculate that at the heart of the butte lies the petrified remains of Karsus. Karsus was a failed deity whose remains are said to mark the ruins of Karse, an ancient Netheril city.

Draigdurroch Tower: About a mile east of the Dire Wood is a tower sealed beneath a layer of magic ice. Beneath its frozen cocoon, the tower stands three stories tall and is capped by a windowless spire. At night, witchlights sometimes dance above the tower, accompanied by delicate lyre notes. A warlock named Draigdurroch built the tower thirty years ago on the edge of the Dire Wood, hoping to enhance his own magic by studying the strange phenomena of the forest. Draigdurroch amassed a personal library of rituals and lore and was said to have forged a warlock pact of mysterious origin. Before he finished his studies, magical weather boiled out of the Dire Wood and sealed his tower in a layer of ice. None have seen him since.

LAIR OF SHADOWS

This adventure is suitable for five characters of between 1st and 3rd level. This section contains only one tactical encounter, but you should feel free to expand upon the material to create a full-fledged adventure.

Even a town as small as Loudwater has problems with crime. Lately, criminals of the town have had to pledge themselves to the mysterious Lady of Shadows. Criminals who refuse to pledge their loyalty are found without heads outside the Loudwater walls.

Few clandestine activities occur without the knowledge of the Lady of Shadows. She runs a protection racket that involves nearly all the shopowners in town, and she bribes members of the Loudwater Patrol to look the other way.

SYNOPSIS

Characters in the northwest corner of Loudwater (near area 17) who are looking for the Lady's gang notice a suspicious building. Inside, the PCs discover that the lair is defended by both a trap and guards. Characters who pass the trapped entryway and overcome the guards can face the Lady of Shadows, who is in reality a dark creeper. If the PCs succeed, they not only put an end to the criminal abuses of the gang but might also find evidence of the slave ring in which Zark and the Zebross Bandits are involved.

INVOLVING THE PCs

You have a couple of options for involving characters in this adventure.

Loudwater's General Store: If the PCs meet Calla in the general store or the Tankard, she asks for their help. If they are interested, she explains the situation:

"For a few tendays now, a tiefling named Narrows has shown up in my store and told me that if I don't accept the 'protection' of the Lady of Shadows, something bad could happen, like my shop being burned down or my knees being broken. I haven't buckled under his threats, but I'm

LADY OF SHADOWS BACKGROUND

The Lady of Shadows is a dark creeper named Dara, one of the lesser creatures that came with Shade Enclave from the Shadowfell when the Shadovar returned to Faerûn. Many of these shadow creatures dispersed across Faerûn, some content to linger in the darkness and others determined to play a central role in the world. The Lady of Shadows spent decades hunting and stealing by night in Loudwater before finally deciding to gain power in the town.

afraid what might happen if I don't. Raumandar, my stock boy, is a capable enough fighter, but he might not be able to protect me or the store all the time."

Calla believes that all the other storeowners in Loudwater have accepted the protection of the Lady of Shadows except for Brosha Manx of the Loudwater Apothecary. Calla regards Brosha as a comrade in arms in this struggle despite his sour persona.

Tavern Talk: The PCs hear talk of the Lady of Shadows in the Fisher's Friend, the Tankard, or any other place where Loudwater's citizens gather. Most people know only the name of the leader, that the group is responsible for several murders, and that the organization forces hired "protection" onto Loudwater's shopkeepers.

FINDING THE LADY OF SHADOWS

Once the characters are aware of the crime gang, they can seek out the Lady of Shadows and deal with her.

Loudwater's citizens are aware of the gang, but they're too afraid to address the threat. They are unwilling to go to the patrol because most people believe the guards are in the Lady's pocket. Characters can attempt to glean additional information about the Lady of Shadows with a DC 15 Streetwise check. A successful check leads characters either to the northwest corner of town (area 17) or to Kyos, who is known widely to have had a run-in with the Lady's gang.

Kyos is a male human who spends his days in the Fisher's Friend Pub. He is a former pickpocket and has a hook in place of one hand and an eyepatch covering one eye. If a PC makes a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check, Kyos relates the following information.

"The Lady of Shadows? That she-dog near killed me when I wouldn't join her little pack! As it is, she left me crippled, like you see me now, and she threatened to take my other hand and eye if she ever catches me thieving without her say-so!"

Kyos has never met the Lady of Shadows personally, so he can't provide a description. He believes that the gang lairs in the run-down tenement located in the northwest corner of Loudwater (area 17). PCs who talk to Kyos learn enough to find the lair.

Some characters might decide to wait for Narrows to show up and collect his protection money. The PCs can follow Narrows back to the lair undetected with successful DC 13 Stealth checks (each character must succeed). Failure means Narrows notices them and runs to try to lose the group or else fights (see his statistics on page 31) if only one or two PCs are following him. If he is captured, he gives up the location of the lair, knowing that the trap will warn other gang members of the PCs' approach.

FEATURES OF THE LAIR

The lair occupies part of an old catacomb and chapel that served Loudwater when the city was larger.

Illumination: Bright light; although the Lady of Shadows has darkvision and needs no light, the gang's other members require bright light to see. The gang keeps the lair well lit with lanterns and torches.

Doors: The doors in the Lady of Shadow's lair are heavy oak reinforced with rusted iron. The doors are unlocked and require a DC 20 Strength check to break down. They have AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, and 40 hit points.

ENTRYWAY

If the characters investigate the building in the northwest corner of Loudwater (area 17), they find it is an empty shell. A stairway littered with garbage leads down into the building's cellar.

Before the characters enter the Lair of Shadows where the tactical encounter takes place, they must first traverse the entryway, which contains a trap. Refer to the tactical map on page 31 for the location of the trap. After the PCs descend the stairs from the building above and open the first door to the corridor leading to the Lair of Shadows, read:

The door opens to reveal a passage 40 feet long and 10 feet wide. The passageway has several torches providing illumination but otherwise appears neglected. Dust and cobwebs fill the corners. At the end of the corridor, a set of double doors leads to the west.

Acid Trap

Level 2 Obstacle Trap XP 125

A 10-by-20-foot section of the floor drops away on hinges to a 10-foot-deep pit filled up to ankle height with diluted acid.

Perception

- ◆ DC 22: The character notices that the floor could fall away.
- ◆ DC 25: The character notices the hidden control panel.

Trigger

When a creature moves into the trapped area.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10 damage plus ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends), and the target is knocked prone. A character cannot succeed on a saving throw against the acid until he or she is out of the acid.

Countermeasures

- ◆ A character adjacent to the trap can disable it with a DC 22 Thievery check. A character who has located the control panel can disable the trap with a DC 15 Thievery check.
- ◆ A character can climb out of the pit with a DC 15 Athletics check.
- ◆ A character can attack the false floor or the control panel (AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, 20 hit points). Destroying the false floor or control panel causes the trap to spring.

LAIR OF SHADOWS

Encounter Level 3 (725 XP)

SETUP

If the PCs spring the trap, then the creatures in the next room hear the commotion and are prepared. If the PCs don't enter after 10 rounds have passed since they sprang the trap, the human gang members enter the eastern hallway to investigate.

If the characters manage to disable or bypass the acid trap (T) without springing it, and if they are able to move beyond the trap while succeeding on DC 15 Stealth checks, then the PCs might gain a round of surprise on the room's occupants. No matter what, the enemies occupy the indicated positions when the encounter starts.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

10 human gang members (G)

1 elf archer (A)

Narrows (N)

Lady of Shadows (L)

If the characters have already captured or killed Narrows, you can elect to have another tiefling with identical statistics present. You can also use a different creature altogether or simply have no creature present in Narrows' place. Decide how to vary the encounter's creatures based on the party's expected level.

When PCs open the double door to the lair, read:

Torches line the walls of this large chamber, yet shadows seem to leap to life in the gaps between the light. At the room's western end, a fountain pours darkness that flows like water. A few humanoid figures are scattered throughout the chamber.

Perception Check

DC 23 A small feminine figure by the shadow fountain is shrouded in gloom and black garments. Her face bears entirely white eyes, a large nose, and a wide mouth full of uneven teeth.

TACTICS

The elf archer remains at the back of the room, moving back and forth to gain the attack bonus from *archer's mobility*. The archer tries to avoid melee, using *not so close* to keep away from enemy combatants while taking advantage of the expansive area and opportunities for cover. Narrows and the Lady of Shadows dart off to one side after the gang members swarm the PCs. They look for opportunities to gain combat advantage while still remaining safely behind the melee combatants.

Even if it seems that the PCs will emerge victorious, the Lady of Shadows fights on until slain.

Lady of Shadows (L) Level 4 Skirmisher XP 175

Small shadow humanoid
Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27; see also *killing dark*
AC 18 (see also *dark step*); **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15
Speed 6

⚔ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.

↘ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.

⚡ **Killing Dark** (when reduced to 0 hit points)
Close burst 1, targets enemies; the Lady of Shadows explodes in a spout of darkness; each target is blinded (save ends).

Combat Advantage
The Lady deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target she has combat advantage against.

Dark Step (move; at-will)
The Lady moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that she ends her move adjacent to.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +11, Thievery +11
Str 11 (+2) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 13 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+3)

Equipment black garments, 5 daggers

Elf Archer (A) Level 2 Artillery XP 125

Medium fey humanoid
Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +11; low-light vision
Group Awareness aura 5; non-elf allies in the aura gain a +1 racial bonus to Perception checks.

HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 15; **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12
Speed 7; see also *wild step*

⚔ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

↘ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage; see also *archer's mobility*.

Archer's Mobility
If an elf archer moves at least 4 squares from its original position, it gains a +2 bonus to ranged attack rolls until the start of its next turn.

Elven Accuracy (free; encounter)
An elf can reroll an attack roll. It must use the second roll, even if it's lower.

Not So Close (immediate reaction, when an enemy makes a melee attack against the elf archer; encounter)
The elf archer shifts 1 square and makes a ranged attack against the enemy.

Wild Step
The elf ignores difficult terrain when it shifts.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Nature +11, Stealth +10
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 16 (+4)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, short sword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows

Narrows (N)	Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling	XP 175
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 56; Bloodied 28	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 15	
Resist fire 9	
Speed 6	
⊕ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC (+11 against a bloodied target); 1d4 + 1 damage.	
Combat Advantage	
Narrows deals an extra 2d6 damage on melee attacks against any target he has combat advantage against.	
Cloak of Shadows (immediate interrupt, when an enemy makes an opportunity attack against Narrows; at-will)	
Attacker is blinded (save ends).	
Infernal Wrath (minor; encounter)	
Narrows gains a +1 bonus to his next attack roll against an enemy that hit him since Narrows's last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, he deals an extra 2 damage.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Supernal
Skills Acrobatics +11, Bluff +11, Stealth +13	
Str 13 (+3)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 10 (+2) Cha 14 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, dagger	

10 Human Gang Members (G)	Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 25 each
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +0
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 14; Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will 11; see also <i>mob rule</i>	
Speed 6	
⊕ Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.	
Mob Rule	
A human gang member gains a +2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other human gang members are within 5 squares of it.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0) Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1) Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, club	

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Cots and Desk: Squares that the cots and desk occupy are difficult terrain.

Rune Floor: The Lady of Shadow brought the tiles in the niche in the southern side room from a ruined fortress in the Graypeak Mountains. They glow with a shadowy gray light when stepped upon. The Lady was experimenting with them, for she believed that if stepped upon in the proper sequence, the tiles would open a portal to the ruins where she found them. A DC 25 Arcana check reveals that the tiles are indeed used for the conjuration of portals. The tiles weigh 50 pounds each, and a character interested in deciphering the mystery of the tiles can carry them away for further arcane study. You can decide whether a character can unlock the sequence, possibly opening up a new avenue for adventures.

Shadow Font: The squares that the fountain occupies are difficult terrain.



Shadows flow and spray in this basin just like water. A character touching the substance discovers that it feels like cold water. In reality, the object is a normal fountain enchanted to make its water appear like liquid shadow. A character realizes this fact with a DC 20 Arcana check.

Slave Cage: This cage is open and empty except for a few pieces of cast-off clothing, bits of food, and the smell of blood, sweat, and excrement. A character more thoroughly investigating the cage might notice (with a DC 10 Perception check) a scrawl that reads, “Save us, please. We are being sold as slaves to snake men! They say they are bringing us to the Zelbross Bandits.”

The Lady of Shadows has recently begun to kidnap children from outlying farms and sell them to the Zelbross Bandits. Her operation is independent of Zark’s; the dwarf tried to conceal his activity from the Lady so he didn’t have to split the profits.

Stairs: These old stairs connect to a catacomb, where a narrow tunnel leads west and emerges in a cave about half a mile outside Loudwater.

Treasure: The Lady of Shadow’s gang members have a total of 89 gp and 213 sp on them.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs defeat the Lady of Shadows, each gains 150 quest XP and the accolades of the shopkeepers in town.

SNAKE FOLK OF NAJARA

This adventure is suitable for five characters of between 2nd and 5th level. This section contains only one tactical encounter, but you can expand upon the material to create a full-fledged adventure.

A slave trade has started to trickle through Loudwater, though few people in the town are involved. The dwarf Zark receives the slaves in Loudwater, transfers them to wagons, and then takes the group to the bandit hideout west of town. From there, they are sold to representatives of Najara. The Lady of Shadows has also joined in the business; members of her gang kidnap children from outlying farms and then sell them to the bandits.

SYNOPSIS

The PCs learn of the Zelbross Bandits and their disreputable activities. They speak to people in town, possibly enlisting the help of Zark or forcing him to confess what he knows about the bandits. One way or another, the characters make their way to a former temple of Tyr in Zelbross. There, the PCs take on the members of the bandit group as well as a representative from Najara that has come to purchase the group of children as slaves.

INVOLVING THE PCs

You have a couple options for involving characters in this adventure.

Lair of Shadows: If the PCs dealt with the Lady of Shadows and explored her lair, they might have discovered the message a child scrawled within the cage: “Save us, please. We are being sold as slaves to snake men! They say they are bringing us to the Zelbross Bandits.”

This might be cause enough to send the PCs searching for information on the bandits.

Helping Zark: If the characters have met Zark, it could be that one or more of the PCs agreed to help the dwarf unload cargo. While they are aiding Zark, they might discover that the cargo contains live children bound for the Zelbross Bandits.

Each PC who helps move barrels must succeed on a single DC 12 Strength check. A character failing the check drops one of the barrels during the course of transferring the cargo. If a barrel is dropped, read:

The wood splinters, and the metal rings pop off the barrel. Lying amid the splintered planks is a scattering of white stuffing and a gagged and bound child, eyes wide and face tear-streaked.

Zark takes one look at the child, looks at you, and then turns to run.

The PCs can attempt to chase down and subdue Zark, though he does fight if cornered and begs for mercy only if he is about to die. He admits everything if they promise to spare his life.

Zark explains that he is indeed a member of a slave ring, but he emphasizes that his part is small: He delivers barrels from the *Pale Minnow* to the bandits in Zelbross. He agreed to help them because when he was ambushed a while back, the bandits' leader gave him a choice: Act as their agent in Loudwater or die. Zark doesn't know the names of anyone involved.

He knows that the Lady of Shadows has begun to cut into his business, kidnapping children from outlying farms and then selling them. Zark is not aware of Najara's involvement in the slave trade.

Talk of Bandits: Around town, the PCs hear gossip about bandits on the western road or of children disappearing. The townsfolk believe that the bandits are hiding out in the ruins of Zelbross and think they might be responsible for the disappearances.

Character Background: The PCs might become involved in this adventure through an incident that occurred in a character's background. A character who has lived in the area for a few years might have had a run-in with the bandits several years back. Perhaps the character survived the attack but was accompanied by a friend or relative who perished in the fight. Now that the character has gained some expertise in combat (perhaps by dealing with the barrow goblins or the Lady of Shadows), he or she might decide the time is right to deal with the bandits.



Zark the Dwarf		Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf		XP 175
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +8; low-light vision	
HP 46; Bloodied 23		
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 14		
Saving Throws +5 against poison		
Speed 5		
⊕	Warhammer (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 2 damage.		
↘	Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.		
Aimed Shot		
Zark gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals an extra 1d6 damage with ranged attacks against creatures that don't have cover.		
Stand Your Ground		
When an effect forces Zark to move—through a pull, a push, or a slide—he moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. When an attack would knock Zark prone, he gains an immediate saving throw to avoid falling prone.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Dwarven	
Skills Bluff +7, Dungeoneering +10, Endurance +7		
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 11 (+2)	Cha 10 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, warhammer, crossbow with 20 bolts		

FINDING THE BANDITS

Once the characters are aware of the Zelbross Bandits, they can seek them out and try to put an end to their crimes.

If the PCs ask around town, they learn that the bandits are reportedly living in the old ruins of Zelbross, about 25 miles west of Loudwater. The PCs are also told that Zark nearly died at their hands not long ago. The characters are encouraged to talk to Zark to learn more about the bandits and to potentially gain an ally if they intend to take on the bandits.

Characters might head directly for Zelbross upon learning the bandits are there. In this case, simply refer to the tactical encounter on page 34. On the other hand, if the PCs seek out Zark (see Zark's entry on page 17), then he gladly recounts his story of the bandit attack:

"I was ambushed by bandits outside Zelbross. I was accompanying a caravan out of Loudwater when they attacked. They killed everyone but me. I survived because as I was fighting 'em off, I tripped and fell back into a gully and was knocked out. Anyway, if you're going after the bandits, I'll guide you to their place. It's about time someone did something about them. I want to get my revenge against those poxed bastards."

Zark wants to direct the PCs to the hideout so he can aid the bandits in fighting the characters. A character can notice that Zark has ulterior motives by making a DC 17 Insight check.

If Zark admits his guilt to the PCs either because they catch him in a lie or because the characters discover the child cargo coming from the *Pale Minnow*, he explains to them where to find the bandit hideout.

"You can't miss it. When you head along the west road for about 25 miles, a path cuts north through the forest and comes to the ruins of Zelbross. There's a temple in the ruins that still bears the symbol of the old god Tyr. You'll find the poxed bastards there."

PCs can punish Zark themselves or tell the Loudwater authorities, who promptly exile Zark. The *Pale Minnow's* captain and crew are aware of the nature of the cargo they transport; however, at the first sign of trouble, the ship sets off. If the PCs manage somehow to detain the captain and crew, they plead ignorance and claim to have had no hand in loading or unloading the cargo. Loudwater's magistrate believes there's not enough evidence to condemn them, but he does insist that they not return to Loudwater's docks.

GENERAL DETAILS

The bandit hideout is a temple in the ruined town of Zelbross. The temple was once devoted to the god Tyr.

Illumination: Varies; bright light illuminates the whole area if the characters come during the day. If the characters come at night, the area outside the temple is dark, while torches provide bright light inside the temple.

Doors: The doors in the temple are rotted wood reinforced with rusted iron. The doors are unlocked and require a DC 13 Strength check to break down. The doors have AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 8, and 20 hit points.

APPROACHING THE HIDEOUT

Although the bandits keep watch for caravans, they aren't expecting an attack, and the PCs might manage to sneak past and surprise them. PCs moving slowly (2 squares per move action) must succeed on DC 11 Stealth checks to approach the ruined temple unnoticed. You can determine at what distance from the temple the characters must begin making these checks.

When the PCs approach Zelbross, read:

The remains of a small village stand on either side of the rocky, overgrown road. Half-collapsed wooden and stone structures hint that the place once contained two hundred or three hundred people. Those people are gone now, and their old homes and shops play host only to the wind and rain.

You notice that the ruts in the road diverge and lead to a large building that seems in good condition compared to its counterparts.

BANDIT HIDEOUT

Encounter Level 5 (1,025 XP)

SETUP

Two human bandits are posted as sentries and keep watch outside. They notice the PCs approach unless characters succeed on DC 11 Stealth checks. The surrounding ruins provide plenty of cover for characters to hide behind. As soon as an enemy becomes aware of the PCs, it shouts out, raising the alarm.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- 5 human bandits (B)
- 1 bandit leader (L)
- 1 greenscale marsh mystic (G)

If the PCs come at night, two bandits remain outside on guard duty, while all the other creatures are located inside near the well. Adjust the starting positions of creatures as appropriate. Characters must still succeed on Stealth checks to approach the temple without alerting the sentries.

When PCs enter the area, read:

An old yet remarkably intact structure rises up above the overgrown brush and weeds. Stone columns stand in the courtyard and to the left of the building, each bearing a scarred hammer and balance symbol.

Perception Check

DC 19 A couple of humanoid figures hide among the buildings and columns surrounding the structure.

5 Human Bandits (B)	Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 125 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1
HP 37 each; Bloodied 18	
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12	
Speed 6	
⚔ Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the bandit shifts 1 square.	
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.	
⚔ Dazing Strike (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Requires mace; +4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the bandit's next turn, and the bandit shifts 1 square.	
Combat Advantage	
A bandit deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 daggers	

Bandit Leader (L)	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 150
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +6
HP 47; Bloodied 23	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14	
Speed 5	
⚔ Longspear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the leader's next turn.	
⚔ Sweeping Strike (standard; recharge ⏳) ♦ Weapon	
Requires longspear; reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⚔ Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common
Skills Streetwise +7, Thievery +8	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 14 (+3) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, longspear, 20 bolts, key to vault and chests	

Greenscale Marsh Mystic (G)	Level 6 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 250
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +7
Marsh Blessing (Healing) aura 5; allies that start their turns in the aura regain 3 hit points.	
HP 70; Bloodied 35	
AC 19; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 19	
Speed 6 (swamp walk)	
⚔ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.	
⚔ Swamp's Grasp (standard; encounter) ♦ Zone	
Area burst 2 within 10; +9 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends). The zone is difficult swamp terrain until the end of the encounter.	
⚔ Bog Cloud (standard; recharge ⏳) ♦ Poison	
Area burst 2 within 10; +9 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 poison damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the marsh mystic's next turn.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Draconic
Skills Athletics +10, Nature +12	
Str 15 (+5)	Dex 13 (+4) Wis 19 (+7)
Con 14 (+5)	Int 10 (+3) Cha 12 (+4)
Equipment spear, bone breastplate (hide armor)	

TACTICS

Once a creature raises the alarm, all the human bandits head toward combat and attempt to surround and subdue one PC. When the bandit leader joins the battle, a couple of bandits break off their attack and try to reach the weaker, less armored characters. The bandit leader moves straight into melee, attacking with his crossbow only if necessary. The greenscale marsh mystic lurks at the edge of combat, attempting to catch two or more characters with its area powers. The group fights until only two creatures remain and both are bloodied, at which point these survivors attempt to flee.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Captive Cage: Seven children, ages 8 to 13, are caged here, bound for Najara. The cage is locked, but a successful DC 22 Thievery check opens the lock; a DC 15 Strength check breaks the cage door.

Rubble: Two entrances to the temple are littered with broken statuary; this area is difficult terrain.

Vault: The iron-reinforced doors to this chamber are locked and require the key carried by the bandit leader. A character can also make a DC 22 Thievery check or DC 25 Strength check to open the vault. Inside the vault are crates, barrels, boxes, sacks, and a few chests (see *Treasure*, below).

Well: The well has a 3-foot-high lip around it. A creature that is forced into one of the well's squares might fall 30 feet to the bottom. The fall deals 1d10 damage, and the water at the bottom is 10 feet deep. The walls are slick and require a DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

Treasure: The containers in the vault hold grain, wool, flour, and other staples stolen from caravans, worth a total of 200 sp. A chest of coins requires the bandit leader's key to open, or a character can make a DC 25 Thievery check to unlock it or a DC 19 Strength check to break it. The chest contains 200 gp and *gauntlets of ogre power*.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs defeat the bandits and see to the children's needs, they each gain 200 quest XP. The children come from the area around Loudwater and from communities along the Delimbiyr River. Some of the children were brought by boat and transported in barrels. They say the barrels smelled like apple cider, which might be enough of a hint to lead the characters to Zark if they have not already dealt with the dwarf. The other children describe their capture by men who took them to the "Shadow Lady." The Loudwater Patrol ensures that each child finds his or her home. The PCs are hailed by the townsfolk as heroes.

The slavers' involvement with Najara is left intentionally ambiguous so you can expand on this encounter and build a campaign involving Najara. If you want the characters to have the opportunity to track down the slavers, have the PCs discover a document on the greenscale marsh mystic that outlines an exchange of 25 gp per child the bandits provide. To offer additional incentive to the characters, the note might outline that this is the second or third such exchange they've made and that the previous slaves are working out well. See the Najara location on page 158 for information useful in setting a campaign there.

HIGH MOOR

The High Moor is a perilous span of swamplands to the south of Loudwater where few townspeople dare go. This section presents potential adventure locations within the High Moor, though it leaves the specific dungeons and encounters for you to determine.

ADVENTURE SITES

The High Moor is notorious for cold, choking mists that conceal a rocky wilderness rife with trolls, goblinoids, and humanoid tribes, including centaurs, lizardfolk, lycanthropes, and yuan-ti.

These craggy lands hide the ruins of more than one fallen kingdom. Bardic songs often refer to the High Moor as a place of “the bones and thrones of lost lands.” One of the oldest kingdoms associated with the area is the elven realm of Miyeritar. It was destroyed by terrible magic that slew every elf in the kingdom and left behind the blasted lands of the High Moor. Adventurers can be certain to find a supply of ruined castles, derelict tombs, and deep caverns, many of which remain unexplored.

Court of Meiriona: About sixty years ago, one of the ancient ruins near the southern tip of the High Moor was transformed. One day, the place was razed and abandoned, and the next, it was a walled keep built entirely of ice.

A self-styled queen named Meiriona rules over the rebuilt court. Meiriona is an eladrin noble exiled from the Feywild for acts of cruelty. Her skin has a translucent, slimy membrane, perhaps due to an alliance with the Abolethic Sovereignty. Adventuring companies who have sought to explore the court claim that the keep is guarded by an unfettered kraken (page 174) that has a body consisting of ice instead of flesh.

Halls of the Hammer: In the northeastern High Moor, due east of Highstar Lake, is a long-abandoned mine that connects to the remnants of a dwarven hall. The area has drawn countless adventuring companies over the last couple of centuries. About forty years ago, one group managed to destroy the flying, animated warhammer that guarded the complex. Upon its destruction, the entire area quaked, and the underground complex became dislodged from the subterranean shelf on which it had been situated. The ruins settled hundreds of feet deeper into the earth. However, the mines are vast, and a route might still exist that connects to the hall. The treasures of long-dead dwarves lie here, no longer guarded by the animated warhammer but instead warded by an ancient atrocity—marked by the hundreds of chained

human corpses that dangle like jungle vines from the ceiling at the hall’s entrance.

Dragonspear Castle: This ruined castle held a shrine to Tempus and a small force of mercenaries to guard the castle. However, these forces were insufficient to resist the undead that rose up from the Nepenthe River, which flows beneath the castle. The undead slew the castle’s occupants and destroyed the shrine to Tempus. The castle now lies behind a permanent fog, and though other creatures have tried to claim the castle, the undead have rebuffed them. The creature claiming the castle is called Born, and he is utilizing the graves of the High Moor’s lost civilizations to create an undead army.

Highstar Lake: Locals tell tales of the vast mysteries that lie beneath Highstar Lake, from drowned temples of forgotten gods, to sunken Netherese airships, to lost civilizations. And while most stories are false, a splinter of truth might lie within some of the tales.

Beneath the lake’s legendary reflective surface lives a strange creature whose appearance varies according to the season: sometimes a beautiful water nymph, other times a scaled, fishlike monstrosity. Men are sometimes taken to the lair of this “lady in the lake” only to awaken three days later with no memory of the previous days. However, they always find their coin purses bulging with gold of ancient elven mint, so they are content to go about their business.

Sometimes foundlings are discovered near the lake with no memory of their past. Woodsfolk bring these young boys and girls, which are human in appearance, back to Loudwater. Many believe these foundlings to be the half-blood children of the lady

HIDDEN CITY OF HOPE, RHYMANTHIIN

The secret history of the Miyeritar Towers is known to a select few. On the Feast of the Moon in 1374 DR, the High Moor’s malignant influence was cleansed southwest of Highstar Lake by a cabal of legendary figures, including Khelben “Blackstaff” Arunsun, Elminster, and Laeral Silverhand. Faer’tel’miir, the ancient Library City of Miyeritar, was restored in the process and renamed Rhymanthiin, the Hidden City of Hope. However, the act of restoring the city and the cleansing of the moor came at a price, for Khelben sacrificed himself during the high magic ritual to ensure its success. Those participating in the ritual hoped that the city might one day bring hope back to the High Moor, a land drowned in corruption and peril.

Rhymanthiin remains hidden and holds a secret strength against corrupt magic. Those with malice in their hearts are unable to find it.



of the lake, though few express such thoughts openly. Regardless of their origin, most agree there is a strange, fey quality about the children.

Mishka's Warren: A small clan of hobgoblins called the Urshani has domesticated a vicious pack of worgs. The matron worg is called Mishka, and she is a ferocious, cruel beast. The clan of hobgoblins is located in an old ruin in the northwestern portion of the High Moor. The hobgoblins live with the worgs and have no fear of their savage, demonic ways. In fact, the Urshani have become unusually feral and bestial as a result of their close connection to the worgs.

The Urshani and the worgs sometimes range beyond the moor and across the Delimbiyr River in search of fresh prey. The city of Secomber, just west of the High Moor, has become a recent target of raids. The constant attacks have turned a city once renowned for its friendly atmosphere into a walled encampment of frightened and desperate people. Many adventurers have promised to clean out Mishka's Warren, but all the village has received in return are retaliatory raids in which the hobgoblins leave behind the heads of the adventurers.

The villagers of Secomber now leave regular tribute at the edge of the High Moor as an appeasement to the Urshani. This generally works as an effective deterrent, but the worgs and hobgoblins still sometimes attack.

Miyeritar Towers: Southwest of Highstar Lake stands a tower first discovered in the mid 1370s. Later explorers found that the tower was one of nine similar towers that encompass an area nearly 50 miles in diameter. The towers are separated enough that no two are ever visible at the same time. Within the towers' circumscribed area, the poisonous soil of the High Moor is fresh and fertile. Savannah grass has sprouted in the area, and centaur tribes inhabit the land. A few accounts even suggest that elves are living in the area.

Tavern tales claim that the lone spires are the sentry towers of a hidden city that lies partly in the Feywild. Some even believe that the city is a remnant of Miyeritar returned to Faerûn from the Feywild. However, no city has been discovered thus far. Perhaps the city holds magical strength in reserve, preparing to resist a yet unknown evil.

ADVENTURING

THE WORLD of the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting is filled with many wondrous nations, fantastic races, and powerful magic. The new age introduces an even greater element of the incredible to this vibrant, ever-changing world.

Toril is a living, growing world, home to many thousands of intelligent beings with their own names and deeds, natures and histories. Mighty heroes stride across the landscape, forging new legends with their bravery and determination. Stalwart halfling warriors battle against the demons infesting the Gate of Iron Fangs in Dambrath. Genasi sorcerers from wondrous Akanûl study the secret arts of wild magic. Quick-witted Chessentan ruffians skulk in the alleyways and bazaars of Luthcheq, the City of Madness. In a world of heroes both light and dark, you must choose where you will stand in the struggle to come.

Over the past twenty years, many rules and ideas have been presented in game supplements, novels, comics, and video games, and that glut of information can be quite daunting at first. The key to running a successful FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign is to start small. Each campaign should be unique, reflecting the personality and gaming needs of the players and the Dungeon Master. Try not to get caught up in what is or is not “official.” Toril is a very large place, with more than enough room for characters and campaigns to develop beyond what is presented in this book and other FORGOTTEN REALMS sources.

This chapter contains the following sections.

- ◆ **Your Campaign in 1479 DR:** For DMs who have ongoing campaigns, this section offers ideas for moving a game into the current year.
- ◆ **Traveling the World:** The Spellplague and its aftermath have made travel more dangerous. Here are some of the safer ways to get around.
- ◆ **History:** A brief overview of major periods in Toril’s history, up to the present day.
- ◆ **Treasures:** Art objects and other valuable items to inject a bit of FORGOTTEN REALMS flavor into a treasure hoard.
- ◆ **Glossary:** Special words and terms to add detail and realism to your game.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR





YOUR CAMPAIGN IN 1479 DR

Since the previous release of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*, the timeline has advanced about one hundred years. That's quite a jump, but one that was necessary to widen the lens on a brand-new vista of potential stories and adventures in Toril, and beyond.

This is a big adjustment, but DMs and players who are deeply invested in their campaigns and their characters don't have to throw out their current games. You can incorporate the new ideas in this edition of the campaign setting by planning for change.

If you have an active campaign that follows the timeline of the previous edition, you can advance your game a hundred years fairly easily with a few adjustments. Here are some suggestions for handling the timeline change in your game.

ADVANCING THE TIMELINE

The easiest way to adjust your campaign is not to change it at all at once. Continue your game's events in 1375 DR and beyond if you wish, perhaps using some of the events described in Chapter 6 and in *Grand History of the Realms* to introduce the "future history" of the setting into your campaign. Once you reach a natural stopping point, you can start a new campaign in the Year of the Ageless One. (Starting a new campaign is also the easiest way to transition to the 4th Edition *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* rules.)

The Spellplague of 1385 DR is an exciting, apocalyptic event that can be a great way to wind up your current campaign. Include your players' characters in the story somehow, in a way that mirrors (or is woven directly into) the murder of Mystra by Cyric, as abetted by Shar. Perhaps the events that lead up to the Spellplague foreshadow a dungeon, event, or story element of your new campaign.

ADVANCING THE CHARACTERS

If your players don't want to create new characters, bring the PCs forward into the new timeline. One way to accomplish this task is to use the Spellplague itself. Instead of being destroyed, the PCs are encased in a timeless magical matrix, like insects in amber. The chrysalis finally dissolves or is broken by external forces in the Year of the Ageless One. The player characters emerge, blinking and dusting themselves off, none the worse for wear (though perhaps some of them have gained a spellscar in the meantime).

Another way to move your characters ahead is a slowtime portal. Portals are all over Toril, and many of them behave unpredictably. Any portal can displace a character in space, but as the sages know, time and space are two sides of the same coin. A malfunction in a portal's normal operation could cause the PCs to emerge a century into the future. The characters might even know full well that the portal's destination is unmoored in time, but they choose to enter because they are on the trail of a villain they've long sought and are pledged to bring to justice.

You can also advance characters in time by proxy. Instead of moving the original characters in the new timeline, your players take the roles of descendants of their current characters, pledged by family honor to wield the weapons of their ancestors and to finish the quests they left to their heirs. The characters can retain their concepts and general power level but use the 4th Edition D&D rules.

TRAVELING THE WORLD

The continent of Faerûn in 1479 DR is not the cosmopolitan grid of trade routes it was of old. Disasters, rampaging monsters, and the rise of evil empires have changed the landscape. Many roads have fallen into disrepair, several ports are high and dry, and numerous once-vital cities are now empty shells or drowned ruins.

But to the bold, venturing into the darkness between points of light remains an exciting and rewarding enterprise. Traveling cross-country is dangerous and often difficult—the following means of transportation are safer and easier.

Roads: Some roads remain in good condition, requiring only sturdy boots or a mount to make good, if slow, headway.

Caravans: Trade caravans travel both on and off road, and those wishing to travel long distances should consider signing on. Characters might be able to hire on as guards for the journey.

Ships: Travel by water remains popular between cities with river or sea ports.

Portals: Few portals still function, and only the very lucky ever stumble upon those. However, spellcasters can perform rituals that allow quick travel between widely separated places.

Flight: Some nations have aerial transport, including High Imaskar, Tymander, and Netheril, but such conveyances are rarely available for the use of adventuring companies.

Planewalking: The planes of the Shadowfell and the Feywild conform somewhat to Toril's geography, allowing travelers to bypass something untoward in the world by moving into one of those other planes for a bit. Special rituals allow a planar shortcut for quicker travel. (Of course, the other planes have hazards of their own.)

ADVENTURING AND THE LAW

By definition, adventurers are well armed and magically capable beings. They are incredibly dangerous to their enemies—and not always healthy even for their friends to be around. Still, most residents of the Heartlands and the North are well disposed toward adventurers of good intent. They know that such people live daily with risks they would never be willing to face themselves.

Adventurers who pledge allegiance to a ruler or country whose attitudes coincide with their own can gain an adventuring charter that grants legitimacy and the protection of a powerful patron. Chartered adventurers are considered officers of the realm they serve, given some powers of arrest, and granted protection against the interference of local lords, as guaranteed by the terms of their charter.

ROYAL CHARTER OF CORMYR

In Cormyr, it's not just advisable to obtain a charter—it's the law. The kingdom keeps close tabs on those who travel the countryside bearing arms and who seemingly have no higher purpose than to seek adventure. Without a charter, adventurers can be apprehended by any force representing the king, including the Purple Dragons and local militia.

A charter can be obtained through the Lord Commander of Castle High Horn, the Warden of the Eastern Marches in Castle Crag, or the Lord High Marshal at the Royal Court in Suzail. Basic charters have an annual cost of 25 gp but are not always a guarantee of free passage, since they can be forged fairly easily. Hand-lettered, gold-foil charters personally signed by Cormyr's ruler cost 1,000 gp, with an annual renewal fee of 300 gp.

AMNIAN WRIT OF MARQUE

Adventurers, especially spellcasters, are outlawed in Amn unless they are licensed by the Council of Five. A legal writ of marque issued in Athkatla authorizes the holder to draw swords, cast magic, and attack sea vessels free from persecution and under the full protection of the Five Houses. Foreigners view adventurers carrying an Amnian writ of marque as little more than pirates and treasure hunters.

The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is rich in lore and history. Like our own world, Toril has been sculpted and shaped by the merciless winds of history and time. Ancient wars, terrible catastrophes, personal tragedies, and great triumphs have all given rise to consequences that in turn caused other wars and disasters. Thus has the endless cycle of cause and effect been propagated across thousands of years and hundreds of cities and kingdoms.

The most common account of Toril's prehistory traces its roots back to ancient Netheril. This popular human myth recounts the creation of the universe by Lord Ao and the epic struggle between the gods of light and darkness that followed. Only recently have other, more ancient legends come to light, recounted by the sarrukh of Okoth and echoed by the dragonborn of Returned Abeir. By combining common threads from both accounts, backed by diligent fact-finding missions, scholars and historians of today have gained a clearer understanding of the creation of the universe.

THE CREATION

In the beginning existed a misty realm of timeless nothingness, crafted by Ao the Hidden One from the raw elemental bedlam of the Phlogiston. Within this dim sphere, several worlds drifted upon the Sea of Night. Though the worlds were lifeless and barren at this time, powerful beings of manifest entropy and

SUNDERED ABEIR

In the final days of the batrachi civilization (c. -31,000 DR), an unimaginable catastrophe struck Toril. It is said that the amphiboids were waging a losing war against the titan armies of Annam's brood. In their desperation, the batrachi performed an epic ritual of summoning that released several primordials from their imprisonment. The gods quickly moved against their ancient foes, resulting in terrible earthquakes, fires, and windstorms that swept across the planet. During the tumult, a primordial calling herself Asgoroth the World Shaper even hurled an ice moon at Toril, intent on destroying the world she couldn't claim as her own. Yet before the world was torn completely asunder, the Hidden One intervened. Lord Ao created a twin of the planet, granting the primordials dominion over the new world of Abeir and the gods control over the original world of Toril. Ancient sarrukh accounts remark on the "changing of the stars," but until the Spellplague and the return of Abeir, very few paid these legends any heed.

elemental might coveted them. The name of their kind has been lost to the ages; the few sages who today know of their existence refer to them simply as the primordials.

Unknown to the primordials, detritus remaining from its creation coalesced around the universe as an ocean of silvery liquid. From this glittering realm of starlight formed beautiful twin beings, polar opposites of each other, one dark and one light. The twin goddesses birthed of the Astral Sea quickly moved to defend the virgin worlds from the destructive primordials. Other gods were created from the residue of the deific battles or summoned from other dimensions to aid in the fight against the primordials and their monstrous servants.

SHADOW EPOCH

While the gods and primordials contested for ages, life struggled into existence on the worlds they coveted. The blue jewel Toril sparkled brightest of them all, home to a race of sea creatures that huddled in the depths of the world's single vast ocean. This Blue Age came to a sudden and chilling end when Toril was inexplicably plunged into darkness, its sun snatched from the sky by a sinister primordial

CALENDARS AND TIMEKEEPING

Almost every land and race has its own preferred system for marking the passing years. The folk of the Moonshaes mark the ascendancy of Cymrych Hugh to the throne of the High King thirteen centuries ago as the start of their calendar. Waterdhavians reckon years from the date Ahghairon became first Lord of Waterdeep almost 500 years ago.

The calendar used in this tome is Dalereckoning (DR). The year 1 DR was marked by the first raising of the Standing Stone and the pact between the elves of Cormanthor and the first human settlers of the Dalelands almost 1,500 years ago.

Very few common folk bother with musty calendars and meaningless numbers. Instead, years are known by names. For example, 1479 DR—the current year—is called the Year of the Ageless One.

Most folk use the Calendar of Harptos to mark the passage of days. Each year of 365 days is divided into 12 months of 30 days. Five special days fall between months, marking the seasons or the changing of seasons. Once every four years, Shieldmeet is added to the calendar as a leap day, immediately following Midsummer night.

The words “hour” and “minute” are creeping into use in the world. “Sandglasses” (hourglasses of various sizes) are known in most houses and shops. Sundials and water-clocks exist but seldom tell time accurately for more than about a third of a day, so they are considered mere fripperies or curiosities for nobles and temples.

known as the Night Serpent. Global temperatures plummeted, and soon, most life on the planet became extinct.

Little is known of this Shadow Epoch, but sar-rukh myths and legends speak of climactic battles throughout this age between the primordials and the Elder Gods led by Ouroboros the World Serpent. Ultimately, the tide was turned when the primordials were betrayed by one of their own. Ubtao the Deceiver assisted the elder gods in slaying, imprisoning, or driving away the remaining primordials.

DAYS OF THUNDER

-35,000 DR to -30,000 DR

Eons passed before sunlight warmed the world once more. Oceans thawed, then receded, allowing dry land to rise above the frigid water. In this ancient time, much of Toril's landmass was a single supercontinent named Merrouroboros.

The creator races each dominated Merrouroboros in turn, creating or producing as offspring a host of lesser races. The noble fey never dominated the continent; they chose instead to rule the Feywild, an otherworldly realm loosely connected to Toril. These ancient peoples were known to later races, including elves and humans, by the Elven name *iqua Tel'Quessir*, or the Creator Races.

DAWN AGES

-30,000 DR to -24,000 DR

The empires of the Creator Races faded into memory, ushering in the Time of Dragons and Giants. Individual dragons and dragon clans ruled large swaths of territory and battled with their rivals for control of the land, seas, and skies. During this period of devastating warfare among the dragons, isolated pockets of formerly dragon-ruled territory came under giant control. Over time, such giant-ruled kingdoms threatened the hegemony of dragonkind, leading to great battles. Severely weakened after a thousand years of war, the giants were saved from annihilation when fey high magic sent the wyrms into a suicidal paroxysm of rage and destruction.

THE FIRST FLOWERING

-24,000 DR to -12,000 DR

The great elven civilizations of Aryvandaar, Illefarn, Miyeritar, Shantel Othreier, and Keltormir reached their peak during this age. As a result of the elves' success against orc hordes, dragons, and giants, other races (including humans) thrived in safety and began the slow climb to civilization.

This age also witnessed the unbridled fury of the Sundering, a disastrous invocation of high magic that cracked Merrouroboros asunder, creating

the disparate continents of Faerûn, Maztica, and Katashaka. Among the turbulent waters of the newly formed ocean later known as the Trackless Sea rose the Green Isle of Evermeet, thought to be a piece of Arvandor and a bridge between worlds.

THE CROWN WARS

-12,000 DR to -9000 DR

Many nations in the south fell during this terrible time, including Thearnytaar, Eiellûr, Syorpiir, and Orishaar. The Dark Disaster (-10,500 DR) utterly destroyed the forest realm of Miyeritar, leaving the blasted plains known today as the High Moor. Perhaps due to the savagery of the Crown Wars or other factors long lost to time, the dark elves became corrupt during this era. They broke away from their kinfolk, and after much warfare and cruelty, they were banished beneath the world's surface to become the drow (*dhaeraow* or "traitor" in Elven).

THE FOUNDING TIME

-9000 DR to -3000 DR

Also known as the Age of Proud Peoples, this era signaled the rise of many humanoid civilizations in a time when the dragons and giants had been long overthrown and the elves' wars no longer threatened everyone. Dwarven civilization in particular blossomed; the dwarves founded the kingdoms of Shanatar, Sarphil, Oghrann, Haunghdannar, Ghauraghaur, Besilmer, Ammarindar, and Delzoun during this era. The fey realms of Siluvanede, Sharrven, Eaerlann, and Evereska were established at this time, as were the mighty human nations of Calimshan and Jhaamdath.

AGE OF HUMANITY

-3000 DR to 1358 DR

With the elven and dwarven empires in decline, this era marked a dramatic increase in human expansion on Toril. The mighty human empires of Netheril, Imaskar, Mulhorand, Unther, Narfell, and Raumathar arose during this period. Great human nations developed in lands beyond Faerûn as well,



ranging from the far eastern realms of Wa and Shou Lung in Kara-Tur, through Zakhara, to the distant shores of Maztica.

ERA OF UPHEAVAL

1358 DR to Present

Scholars today mark the calamitous events of the Avatar Crisis in the Year of Shadows (1358 DR) as the start of the Era of Upheaval. Few in those early days could have possibly predicted that the physical and magical chaos of the Time of Troubles was merely a prelude to the Spellplague and the cataclysmic merging of two worlds that would follow. Though the union with Abeir was brief, its mark on Toril was significant and enduring. Even the gods themselves know fear for the first time in eons, for their numbers are diminished and the long-banished primordials have returned to oppose them and sow chaos throughout the cosmos.

GRAND HISTORY OF THE REALMS

Dungeon Masters who are interested in the definitive history of the FORGOTTEN REALMS world are encouraged to review the *Grand History of the Realms* supplement. In addition, updates to the *Grand History's* extensive and comprehensive timeline will periodically be made available online at D&D Insider (<http://www.dndinsider.com>).

TREASURES

As described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, treasures discovered at various levels add up to certain ranges of value (250 gp to 1,500 gp at the heroic tier, 2,500 gp to 7,500 gp at the paragon tier, and 15,000 gp to 50,000 gp at the epic tier). Sometimes several items of lesser value make up appropriate treasures at each tier.

The art objects and other items in this section can add a level of detail to small finds and provide useful and unique rewards for characters in lieu of mere coin. None of these items are magical. Their value is derived from their components and the rarity of each object. Many of these items are one of a kind and would be highly prized by nobles or collectors.



HEROIC TIER TREASURES

- 50 gp:** A 1-inch cube of beaten gold stamped with holes for the pips of a 6-sided die.
- 50 gp:** A deck of Talis cards, consisting of four 12-card elemental suits (stones, waves, winds, and flames) and the traditional 22-card major arcana (Sun, Moon, Star, Comet, Throne, Key, Night, and so on).
- 50 gp:** A magnificent dragon marionette puppet made of Shou silk from Nathlan.
- 55 gp:** A silver aspergillum consecrated to the dead god Helm. Its chamber can hold up to 1 pint of holy water.
- 65 gp:** A pear-shaped lute with four sets of paired strings that produce rich tones, made of fine Vundwood, red-brown in color, and smelling rather like cinnamon.

- 75 gp:** A mirror made of reflective, polished electrum, set in a silver frame. The back panel of the mirror has a design of a smiling, female fey face.
- 90 gp:** A basinet helm, polished and in pristine condition, adorned with a brilliant red plume and etched with the signature rune of former First Lord Maalthiir of Hillsfar.
- 100 gp:** A large bowl in good condition, made of hammered gold, worked in a design of leaping dragons fighting warriors armed with spears.
- 100 gp:** A Netherese armillary sphere providing a near-flawless model of Toril and the principal celestial circles of the stars above.
- 100 gp:** A quill pen case made of gold, held shut by a clasp. Carved into the case is a scene of a scribe writing in a tome, sitting on a stool amid stacks of parchment; the symbol of Deneir is engraved on the opposite side.
- 100 gp:** A solid bronze astrolabe, crafted in Sembia and useful for tracking the sun, planets, and stars across the Sea of Night.
- 100 gp:** A copper chamber pot, embossed with the design of a rampant, stylized dragon.
- 250 gp:** A delicate gold-plated clockwork toy made in the image of a cockatrice and crafted by Gondsmen, retrieved from Lantan's Rest.
- 260 gp:** A small, ornate bronze brazier with inset gems mined from the Underchasm, 18 inches in diameter.
- 500 gp:** A Cormyrian velvet doublet, fronted by a row of amethyst buttons.
- 500 gp:** A fine black marble pestle and mortar of Rashemi make, once owned by Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun.
- 1,000 gp:** A gorget, crescent-shaped and sans strap, made of steel plated with mirror-smooth silver, slightly tarnished. It bears a fine line-cut design of a star set with a brilliant emerald.
- 1,000 gp:** A monocle made from a polished diamond lens in a gold frame, with hooked and pierced side-handle, but without a ribbon or cord.
- 1,000 gp:** A platinum belt buckle with a crescent moon insignia in black pearl.
- 1,000 gp:** A sava set, containing a game board and finely carved alexandrite figurines representing the armies of Calim and Memnon during the Second Era of Skyfire.
- 1,000 gp:** An hourglass, the base and top of which were ornately painted in Calimshan and filled with precise measures of ground gem dust in Waterdeep.

1,000 gp: A bottle of Evermead from the Green Isle (vintage 1123 DR).

1,500 gp: A bottle of Berduskan Dark (vintage 1385 DR).

PARAGON TIER TREASURES

2,500 gp: A scroll made of precious Ra-khati vellum recovered from the rubble of the Shou Embassy in Elversult following its destruction in 1373 DR; the face of the scroll bears the seal of First Emperor Chin of the Ho Dynasty.

2,500 gp: A glaur horn, valved and plated in electrum, said to have been winded by Torm himself. Its curved shape of Elturgard design makes its tone a brash, metallic roar that other trumpets cannot begin to match.

2,500 gp: A merchant's wagon filled with several dozen casks of Luiren's Best stout.

2,600 gp: Five well-preserved Nexalan tobacco cigars stored in a small humidor crafted of fine phandar wood.

2,700 gp: A large (6 feet wide by 12 feet long) tapestry of spun silver with some gold. It depicts three gowned maidens standing in a moonlit garden beneath seven stars.

3,000 gp: 10 pounds of Maztican chili peppers, dried and perfectly preserved (rare and getting rarer each year).

3,000 gp: A solid gold corkscrew with a fire opal set into each tip of the handle.

4,000 gp: Perfume in a cut ruby bottle sealed with wax and stamped with the royal device of the Grand Caliph of Zakhara (c. 1372 DR).

5,000 gp: A Thayan ornamental skullcap of beaten gold, cut in the shape of thorny vines meeting, curling away, and meeting again, with a jacinth on the brow.

5,000 gp: A singular, hand-lettered book with platinum-edged, beaten gold covers, titled *Triumph Exemplar* and written in Loross. The book is a chronicle of the wars of Netheril published in 221 DR.

6,000 gp: A flagon carved of diamond, polished glass-smooth.

7,500 gp: A pair of bracers made of platinum and worked in mock scales with four circular bosses about each one, the center of each boss being a claw holding a small ruby.

EPIC TIER TREASURES

15,000 gp: A Nar death mask, forged of Imaskari steel and studded with astral diamonds, in mint condition.

20,000 gp: An astonishingly accurate copy of the *Crown of Narfell*, given to the first Nentyarch by the demon lord Orcus.

20,000 gp: A half-mask of black bone backed by leather, its lower edge trimmed with tiny black diamonds, worn by Szass Tam for over a decade.

23,000 gp: An oak staff, once wielded by Amator, shod with astral diamonds at the base. The head of the staff is an astral diamond carved in the shape of a flaring sun.

30,000 gp: A drow lantern that sheds darkness.

33,000 gp: A silver bust, fashioned in the shape of the head of Asmodeus (side view, facing right) with a fire opal set as the eye. The statue is rumored to sometimes speak secrets of Hellish origin.

45,000 gp: A silver hair comb, its handle carved into a dragon's head with a ruby set as an eye; said to be a gift from vanished Mystra to Syluné Silverhand.

50,000 gp: A strand of Mystra's hair wound about a gold pin.

50,000 gp: A black iron key said to be one of the seven required to unlock Cyric's shackles on the Supreme Throne.

COINAGE AND CURRENCY

Coins come in a bewildering variety of shapes, sizes, and materials, minted all over the world. Because such a variety of coins are in circulation, most people simply use whatever coinage passes by.

A coin's value is expressed in the weight of the precious metal of which it is made. The current standard is: 10 copper pieces (cp) = 1 silver piece (sp); 10 silvers or 100 coppers = 1 gold piece (gp); and 10 gold pieces = 1 platinum piece (pp).

In Waterdeep, copper pieces are called nibs, silver pieces are shards, gold pieces are dragons, and platinum pieces are suns. In Sembia, iron steelpence replace copper coins; silver pieces are ravens, and gold pieces are nobles. In lieu of platinum pieces, Sembia mints electrum pieces (ep) known as blue-eyes, each equal in value to 5 gp.

Coins are not the only form of hard currency. Many merchants prefer to use trade bars, which are ingots of precious metals and alloys stamped or graven with the symbol of the trading coster or government that crafted them. A one-pound trade bar of gold is valued at 50 gp, and heavier bars are worth proportionately more.

GLOSSARY

Language is a living, changing thing. Using some of the following words during play is a great way to add color to roleplaying. This section is a crash course on how to use “Realmspeak.”

These words can help set the mood during encounters, but there’s no need to try all of them, or use any that seem to break the mood. Overuse of dialect or invented words is clumsy, but you can bring the setting to life by sprinkling in isolated words and phrases from those below, or by inventing words whose context makes their meanings clear.

Most of these terms and expressions are in Common. Those from other languages are so identified.

DESCRIPTIVE TERMS

Art: All magic not bestowed by the gods (arcane power) The word is always capitalized; “art” refers to painting, carving, sculpting, and composing (performance isn’t considered art, which is something you can see and touch).

Bedine: The name of a tribe that used to roam the former Anauroch Desert (now Netheril). In the present day, still used as a tribal name—but now many Bedine are city-dwellers, and others are separatists who oppose the Netherese.

changelands: A generic term for a piece of terrain that clearly doesn’t fit in with the surrounding terrain, likely due to the Spellplague.

earthmote: A floating chunk of landscape hanging in the sky.

earth node: A place where magical power is concentrated.

Ffolk: One of two groups of people (the other being the Northlanders) who inhabit the Moonshae Isles.

genasi: Humanoids of elemental heritage, native to Abeir but numerous in many places across Faerûn as well.

gulletfire: bad beer or wine.

hawksnarl: A man who’s always yelling or blustering, or is nastier or more aggressive than prudent or necessary (more strongly: “a real hawksnarl”).

highsun: Noon, technically the moment the sun is at its highest point. Most folk use the term to mean midday, the two hours or so around noon.

kell: Try. The word is used only when what’s being attempted is dangerous, unfinished, tricky, or doubtful. “Kell” doesn’t change with tense, and it sometimes is used in place of “done,” as in, “You’re not going to kell stealing *that*, are you?” and “Kell such feats often, have you?” The word is not used

in polite conversation but left for cynical, disbelieving, or openly derisive speech. (“Kings always say they’ll clean all monsters out of the woods. Oh, and they kell, too, for a tenday, sometimes sending more than one knight to do it, too!”)

mythal: A permanent, site-based enchantment of powerful fey magic.

Nentyarch: The title that the druids of the Great Dale use to identify their leader.

noble fey, the: Powerful eladrin of the Feywild.

plaguechanged: The term for creatures touched by the first wave of Spellplague in the Year of Blue Fire; usually horrible monsters.

plagueland: A generic term describing anyplace where active Spellplague yet burns.

Plaguerought Land, the: A specific location, the largest plagueland in Faerûn.

portal: A magical “doorway” that permits instantaneous travel between two distant locations. Many of the portals on Faerûn were destroyed or warped by the Spellplague.

Returned Abeir: The continent that was fused to Toril west of the Trackless Sea during the events of the Year of Blue Fire.

rivvim: Smitten (as in “I’m fair rivvim when I look upon her”); the term is polite and used of both genders.

scorchkettle: A woman who delivers impressively blistering words to someone in public; see also “hawksnarl.”

sellsword: A well-established or veteran mercenary, or one of impressive reputation.

Spellplague, the: The event in 1385 DR resulting from Mystra’s death that altered magic and the world forever. Also used to refer to the effect or substance left behind in places where the event occurred.

spellscar: A brand of blue fire that grants an ability, usually beneficial but with some negative aspect.

spellscarred: The term for a creature (usually humanoid) touched by later, less virulent strains of the Spellplague and possessing a spellscar.

spurnarmor: A well-endowed man or woman (as in “Galad! What a spurnarmor!”).

tenday: Literally, ten consecutive days, used where real-world speakers would say “week.”

throatslake: Anything drinkable that takes care of thirst and doesn’t cause illness in doing so, but isn’t particularly pleasant.

Uthgardt: The name shared by several tribes of human nomads that occupy wilderness areas within Luruar and the High Forest, referred to by others as “Uthgardt barbarians.”

Weave, the: A term for magic; once used to mean magic mediated by Mystra.

GREETINGS AND PARTINGS

Alae (ah-lay): “Fortunate meeting.” A contraction of an old Elven phrase, used as a general greeting and reassurance of peaceful intent.

Durgos (dur-ghosz): “Peace.” A corruption of the orcs’ *durgreos* (see below), used by dragonborn, many traders, sailors of all races, and almost all slave traders.

Durgreos (dur-gree-ohzz): “No quarrel.” A greeting and parting response used by orcs.

Hykyath (hik-ah-yath): “Prance!” Once a satyr parting, but now used by half-elves and elves (and even, sarcastically, to mean “Look lively!” by sailors, warriors, and orcs).

Lammath drios (lham-math dree-ohs): “Fortune find you.” A parting used all around the Sea of Fallen Stars but not favored in Sembia, where it’s thought to be “low” speech, fit only for bumpkins and country dung carters.

Rhambukkya (ram-bookh-yah): “Ride high.” Used as both greeting and parting in Elfharrow and all lands east and south.

Sabbas (sab-bas): “Run free.” A parting used by centaurs, and increasingly by nomads and riders of other races.

Stettar voh (stet-tar voh): “Gods-power keep you well.” A formal, peaceful greeting and parting among merchants in southern Faerûn and in Returned Abeir.

Tantam (tan-tam): “Hello.” Peaceful way-greeting across northern Faerûn.

Uluvathae (oo-loo-vaw-thay): “Fortune bring you joy.” A friendly, informal greeting and parting used by elves and half-elves to others of any race whose company they welcome; between close friends, it is a neutral greeting, or a warning: “Say nothing; we’re being listened to.”

Vlandranna (vlan-dranna): “Gods grant,” meaning may that which is spoken of occur by their will. An old, corrupted Dwarven word now used by all races around the Inner Sea and lands east and north of there.

FORMS OF ADDRESS

In most cities, a male stranger is politely addressed as “goodsir” and a female as “goodwoman” or sometimes “fairlady.” Known nobles and officials are “Lord” and “Lady,” with “milord” and “milady” used (to be safe) when addressing a person who seems grand, wealthy, or important, but whose precise rank is uncertain.

When formally addressing a known, specific person (male or female), either in writing or an official speech, his or her title is used (even a workaday title such as Guildmaster or Master Mason). If a man lacks such a designation, he is referred to not as “goodsir” but as “Goodman” (“Goodman Draekur of Thistle Lane”). A woman in such circumstances is always styled “Goodwoman.” When the person being described is known not to be human, “Goodfaer” is used, regardless of gender.

RACIAL AND COLLECTIVE TERMS

Racial terms aren’t always disparagements, or taken that way. However, care should be taken when using some of the following expressions.

beast-men: Ogres (formerly used only by humans, now also used by gnomes and halflings). Uncomplimentary, but ogres are generally hostile anyway.

brittlebones: humans (used only by orcs).

Fair Folk, the: Elves and eladrin (elves use this only to mean eladrin).

Free Folk, the: Satyrs (a human term now used by all races, including satyrs).

hin: Halflings (informal but polite; everyday usage among halflings).

hurbryn: Humans (a term among satyrs and dryads meaning “heavy-footed ones,” now used by halflings and creeping into usage by other races).

manyhanded, the: Humans (derived from “the Manyhanded Curse,” an old elven insult).

meat: All intelligent prey (used only by orcs).

Mighty, the: Orcs (used only by orcs to speak of their own race).

oroosh: Humans (used by treants, this literally means “never-stopping talkers”).

People, the: Elves (used only by elves).

Proud Peoples, the: Dwarves and elves, collectively (used only by humans, and becoming archaic).

Quick Folk, the: Halflings (considered complimentary, and often used by halflings to refer to themselves).

Quiet Folk, the: Gnomes.

Sly Folk, the: Halflings (mainly used by dwarves and humans).

sorn: Drow (used only by eladrin, elves, half-elves, and drow themselves).

Stout Folk, the: Dwarves.

worms: Goblins and small or puny orcs (used only by orcs). Insulting.

MAGIC

TORIL IS infused with magical power. Arcane secrets whisper to those with the ears to hear: in the eons-long movement of the continents, in rushing river rapids, in every breath of beasts great and small, and in the sighing cries of the wind. Raw magic is the stuff of creation itself, suffusing every bit of matter and every manifestation of energy.

Characters call on magical power to perform mighty rituals, enforce pacts with enigmatic entities, or accomplish wondrous feats. Dangerous monsters, too, use magic to accomplish their ends. Aberrations spawned by ancient power seethe and hunger below and above the earth. Dragons' blood runs with magic so potent that even gods fear to face the most ancient of these mighty beings. Undead fuel their minds and protect their corpses from dissolution through powerful necromantic rituals—especially lichs, whose never-ending acquisition of arcane knowledge has propelled some into contention with the gods themselves.

Magic is so close to every surface that Toril is rife with fantastic landscapes. Great motes of free-floating earth balance on nothing but air, and the unleashed power of the Spellplague has twisted once-familiar terrain into weird new shapes.

This chapter contains the following sections.

- ◆ **The Spellplague:** The Weave collapsed in a moment with the murder of Mystra, unleashing catastrophe across the world. This section describes the effects of that magical disaster on the lands and creatures of Toril.
- ◆ **Fantastic Features:** This section provides information about the most common of Toril's wondrous features, both natural and artificial.
- ◆ **Magic Items:** Here you'll find details about storied items and minor artifacts unique to this setting.
- ◆ **Rituals:** Some mighty rituals are beyond the reach of the characters, or are so drenched in evil that they threaten the existence of the world. This section describes some example rituals that can be used as story elements.



RANDY GALLEGOS



THE SPELLPLAGUE

In the Year of Blue Fire (1385 DR), a magical disaster called the Spellplague changed the face of Toril, its lost sibling Abeir, and even the planes themselves. Flesh, stone, magic, space, and perhaps even the flow of time were infected and changed.

Most scholars believe that the Spellplague was the direct result of the murder of the goddess Mystra at the hands of Cyric, which Shar engineered. This popular theory holds that magic was bound so long in Mystra's Weave that, when the goddess died, it spontaneously and ruinously burst its bonds. Areas of wild magic, already outside the constraints of the Weave, touched off first, but the plague raged on and on in ever-widening spirals, devastating some places and leaving others untouched. It even tore through the realms of demons, gods, and lost souls before the end.

Ancient realms that had passed beyond easy reach of the world were pulled back, such as the Feywild (called Faerie in ancient days). The Abyss, home of demons, fell through the planes, unleashing swarming evil before finding its new home at the bottom of the Elemental Chaos. Even the long-forgotten sibling world Abeir burned in the plague of magic, despite having been cut off from Toril for tens of millennia. Portions of Abeir's landscape were transposed with areas of Toril in the disaster. Such landscapes included their living populations, bringing realms such as Akanûl and Tymather to Faerûn's face. Across the Trackless Sea, an entire continent of the lost world reappeared.

The Spellplague was a potent agent of change, but it also set off a whole string of secondary catastrophes.

EFFECTS ON MAGIC ITEMS AND SPELLS

Most items that permanently store magic, such as weapons, armor, cloaks, and boots, survived the Spellplague and continue to function normally. Even though their creation used the Weave, permanent access to magic was built into such items when they were created. However, some items created prior to the Spellplague temporarily stored "charges" of

THE WEAVE

For eons, magic in Toril was focused through the Weave, controlled by the goddess Mystra. Although Netherese wizards of ancient days learned the truth, most people believed that magic would not be possible without the deity's existence. However, the death of Mystra gave the lie to that belief. Now the term "Weave" is just another name for magic, if it is used at all.

magic, such as wands and staffs. Such items either no longer work or don't function the same way they used to.

Many creatures that had been able to cast spells and channel magic through the Weave found themselves powerless in the Spellplague's wake. Some never regained their abilities. Others attuned themselves to the new magical environment, aided by a diversity of talents, a process that took days for some and years for others. Still others took shortcuts to arcane power by swearing pacts to enigmatic beings.

EFFECTS ON THE LANDSCAPE

The Spellplague ate through stone and earth as readily as flesh and magic. Broad portions of the continent of Faerûn collapsed into the Underdark, partially draining the Sea of Fallen Stars into the Glimmersea far below and leaving behind a gigantic pit called the Underchasm. The event splintered the Old Empires south of the drained sea into a wildscape of towering mesas, bottomless ravines, and cloud-scraping spires. Of those ancient lands, the most changed by the Spellplague were Mulhorand, Unther, and Chondath, as well as portions of Aglarond, the shores of the Sea of Fallen Stars, and the Shaar. What was once called Halruaa was destroyed in a great holocaust, as if every spell held there had loosed its power simultaneously. The land bridge between Chult and the Shining South was sunk; now only a scattered archipelago remains.

Tendrils of the Spellplague reached to many other corners of Toril, sometimes bypassing great swaths of land by infecting both sides of the many portals that dotted the world. Such an effect might have been responsible for drawing portions of lost Abeir into Toril. Some sages suggest that the two worlds

THE SHADOW WEAVE

Just as Mystra controlled the Weave, the goddess Shar created and maintained the Shadow Weave as an alternative conduit to magic. Not satisfied with her portion, Shar plotted to seize control of both when Cyric murdered Mystra. She miscalculated. The Weave collapsed so completely that Shar not only failed to gather up its fraying threads, she also lost control over the Shadow Weave.

Just as magic persists without Mystra, so does the power of shadow endure without Shar's intercession. Powerful necromancers have developed their own unique methods for harnessing the dark energy of the Shadowfell.

have undergone periodic conjunctions ever since they diverged, but that these were too subtle for most creatures to notice. By an accident of timing, the Spellplague occurred during just such a conjunction, which caused the briefly overlapping lands to run athwart each other instead of passing in the night as before.

Pockets of active Spellplague still exist today, most notoriously in the Plagueland. Each of these plaguelands is strange and dangerous. No two possess the exact same landscape or features, but entering any of them could lead to infection by the Spellplague. Luckily for the world, the remaining plaguelands possess only a small fraction of the Spellplague's initial vigor and are in hard-to-reach locales, often surrounded by twisted devastation. Most lands of Faerûn and Returned Abeir are entirely free of such pockets, though the plaguechanged and spellscarred (see below) might appear in any land.

EFFECTS ON CREATURES

A creature, object, or spell touched by the Spellplague usually dissolved into glowing, dissipating ash. Places hit in the first few hours of the disaster twisted into mad nightmares: delicate structures of mind-skewing dimensions, half-melted cities, and shattered physical and magical laws. Sometimes living creatures survived but were hideously mutated. In the worst cases, they were altered, twisted, or fused to other creatures (regardless of species) or even to portions of the landscape. Most such mewling horrors perished within a few days.

A few things changed by the Spellplague survived only by accepting the new reality. Living creatures

PLAGUECHANGED THREATS

Some plaguechanged creatures are unique threats. Such a horror can form the nucleus of an adventure or an entire campaign.

The Virushead: This creature sheds a hundred lethal diseases each day from its rotting skin and phlegmy exhalations. The Virushead was captured by the genasi of Akanûl and encapsulated in magical stasis as a potential weapon against the Abolethic Sovereignty. Others in Akanûl argue that the monster is too dangerous to use and is better left in permanent stasis, lest the weapon turn unexpectedly in the hand of its wielder.

The Plaguechanged Thing: A blob of rippling protoplasm fills more than a mile of caverns below the city of Westgate. The Plaguechanged Thing was once a dwarf excavator, but its extreme physical alteration has wiped away all vestiges of its former shape. The creature's mind has vastly expanded, giving it impressive psionic abilities, but its bulk is far too large for it to extricate itself or to affect things beyond its lair.

so affected are differentiated into two broad groups: plaguechanged and spellscarred.

PLAGUECHANGED

A massive change in body and mind marks a creature that has survived contact with the original wave of the Spellplague. Such survivors are called the plaguechanged. Few of their descendants survive today—the initial plague was so virulent, and the changes wrought were so extreme. As well, many decades have passed since the Spellplague's end, and old age claimed most of the plaguechanged. A few of the horrifying things bred true, though.

Plaguechanged creatures are monsters, whatever their original race, driven insane by their dreadful metamorphosis. Even the least of them display potent abilities. Luckily, few of these creatures leave the plaguelands.

SPELLSCARRED

Spellscars are usually gained when creatures come too close to a plagueland, though sometimes they afflict beings who have never had any contact with rampant magic. Sometimes a spellscar is a physical abnormality, but more often it is an intangible mark that appears only when its power is activated. An active spellscar might appear as jagged cracks of blue light racing across the forearms and hands, a corona of cerulean flame, a blazing blue glyph on the forehead, or perhaps even wings of cobalt flame. In all instances, blue fire is a sure indicator of a spellscar.

A creature can learn to master its spellscar through a variety of methods. (The *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide* has more information.) Some beings travel to plaguelands in hopes of gaining a spellscar; such "scar pilgrimages" are encouraged by an organization called the Order of Blue Flame.

FANTASTIC FEATURES

Toril is not only home to strange beings, but it also sports wondrous features. Some of these are natural, others created, and still others aftereffects of cataclysms, earthly or otherwise.

EARTH NODES

Streams of invisible power run beneath the earth, occasionally crossing and collecting in a single spot like river flowing into a lake. Such rare collection points are called earth nodes.

FEATURES

An earth node's power isn't visible to the naked eye, but such points are often eerily beautiful or bizarre.

A giant geode or a teardrop-shaped, smooth-sided cavern might hold an earth node, as might any other wondrous subterranean shape. Such a sight isn't always present, though, and the node's power doesn't respect physical boundaries. Some nodes even extend to the surface world.

The most common nodes are fairly small and weak. The exact size of a node and its field of power varies from as wide as half a mile to about 30 feet across. Powerful nodes are rare and can radiate their influence over a greater distance, but the strength of the effect doesn't always correlate to a wider field.

A few nodes have concentrations of active Spellplague. These horrifying places are essentially small, underground plaguelands called plaguecaves.

SENSING A NODE

Anyone who approaches within 30 feet of the edge of an earth node's power is entitled to a DC 20 passive Arcana check. (The check can also be made by a creature who is searching for the phenomenon.) Success reveals the presence of the node to that individual. Anyone who senses the node's power can use that sense to map its boundaries, but doing so takes time, requiring physical travel and observation.

USE

An earth node focuses magic, allowing the following uses.

- ◆ A node can be used as if it were a permanent teleportation circle (see the Linked Portal ritual, PH 307). Those who use the node as a destination arrive at its center, so the node's physical dimensions might limit the number of travelers who can arrive at once.
- ◆ An arcane caster in the node's power field can tap into its magic by making a DC 25 Arcana check as a standard action. On a successful check, that creature gains a +1 bonus to any one d20 roll each round, as well as a +1 bonus to damage rolls with all arcane attack powers.
- ◆ An earth node might have a specific ritual or rituals tied to it. Those within the node gain access to those rituals' effects, even if they do not have the Ritual Caster feat. Most often, a node allows the use of a Linked Portal ritual to travel to one or more nearby nodes as if they were known permanent teleportation circles. Other nodes allow the activation of a Planar Portal ritual, most commonly to destinations in the Elemental Chaos and the Feywild. Many nodes include a variant of Leomund's Secret Chest that allows the caster to store items in a hidden, immovable demiplane connected to the node's center. In any case, the node's

user must still be of the appropriate level to use the node's rituals.

- ◆ A node can be incorporated into a living space. One or more creatures trained in Arcana and Dungeoneering must oversee such modifications. Each overseer engages in a skill challenge (DMG 72) over the course of the building by making DC 25 checks each week of ongoing construction around the node. If at any time the number of failures outnumbers the number of successes, the node is destroyed by the work. The magical nexus usually reconstitutes in another area within 1 mile of the original node.

EARTHOTES

Earthmotes are free-floating bits of landscape that defy gravity to hover in the sky. Despite their appearance, these islands in the sky are as stable and durable as if they rested on the ground. Earthmotes are common along the edges of regions where portions of Abeir replaced Toril's landscape, as if marking an imperfect seam between the fused worlds. Two or more earthmotes might be found together—in some places, small clusters of floating islands hang like eternal clouds. However, they can be found nearly anywhere, and lone earthmotes (often called simply motes) have become familiar features in even the most staid lands.

FEATURES

Earthmotes vary widely in size and altitude. Most are level on top, like ledges atop sheer cliffs, and taper to a point underneath so that they resemble upside-down mountain peaks. Thus, climbing to the top of a mote is difficult.

A few earthmotes move like clouds made of stone, but most are stationary. They usually hang between 500 and 1,000 feet over the landscape, but some motes hover lower or even abut an earthbound feature. Disruptions, whether natural or magical, on or near an earthmote have no apparent effect on its ability to float.

ECOLOGY

Nearly all earthmotes support life and seem to reflect the natural landscape over or through which they float. Motes are often named according to the type of terrain they support—forestmotes, hillmotes, junglemotes, and prairiemotes are most common. Sometimes spectacular cataracts pour from watermotes. These falls never run dry, suggesting a connection with the Elemental Chaos. Certainly, similar features exist on that plane.

Some earthmotes are settled. They are highly defensible and often rich in resources, making them



highly sought after. Like any valuable territory, motes are sometimes the objects of war and conquest.

FEY SITES

Inscribed, lintel-capped monoliths rise spontaneously from the earth, forming the supporting pillars of a trilithon. Circles of mushrooms surround a low hillock above which dance sparkles of light in the darkest hour of night. Such fey sites are common throughout Faerûn, and more so in the Feywild. Fey guardians watch over many such sites, defending against interlopers.

FEY CROSSROADS

A fey crossroads is an entry to the Feywild. Countless such ways are scattered across Toril. In some cases, a fey crossroads resembles an arch, marked by a pair of rune-scribed standing stones far enough apart to form a door. Sometimes a lintel caps two monoliths, and other times they stand like posts. Many fey crossroads are hidden from immediate view and require the Walk Crossroads^{PG} ritual to discern. Such openings vary widely in size, but most are large enough to allow a Huge creature to squeeze through.

A fey crossroads functions like a portal (page 54), transporting a user to another such point elsewhere in the world or a specific place in the Feywild. Like portals, fey crossroads can be keyed, restricted, and variable—often they deposit travelers in strange places

somewhere near the destination. In the wake of the Spellplague, they can even be malfunctioning.

The Analyze Portal^{PG} ritual doesn't always work on a fey crossroads. Increase the Arcana check DC by 5; if the check result is less than 20, the caster gains no information. Some folk, known as fey guides, make a living by helping travelers use nearby crossroads. Such individuals are also valuable sources of lore and rumors about local fey activity.

FEY MOUNDS

Fey mounds are the hidden burial grounds of wild fey. When such a creature dies, its companions bring it to a mound and cover the body loosely with earth, branches, and leaves, sometimes even leaving its belongings behind. The body quickly decomposes, burying items and adding another fine layer to the heap. Mushrooms surround such mounds, though they are not always obvious. Lights, ghostly giggling, and fey apparitions are common near and on them.

Fey mounds can be sensed by those using Arcana to detect magic (DC 27). In addition to the treasure they're known to store, their soil is held to be a powerful component in rituals to ensure the fertility of a field. Some mounds function as fey crossroads or have specific rituals tied to them like earth nodes.

Those who would trespass on fey mounds should beware. Some are potent traps with innate powers tied to them, such as sleep, illusion, and charm effects. Living fey safeguard mounds and punish any who profane these sacred sites. Such a guard receives a +1 bonus to any one d20 roll each round while performing its duty.

MYTHALS

Mythals are enormous, layered magic constructions created by extensive and unique group rituals. Such constructs protect Evermeet, Myth Drannor, Evereska, Myth Nantar, and several other locations.

Although all mythals were buffeted by the Spellplague, many of them survived the catastrophe. Most of those that shattered, such as the one that once sheltered Silverymoon, spared their lands from the worst of the Blue Fire in so doing. The ancient high mages wove mythals so well that their defenses adapted even to the sundering of the Weave.

FEATURES

During Mystra's existence, mythals were tailored to provide magical support to citizens and allies of the enspelled area. Now they have lost much of their potency, becoming protective fields that hinder enemies while helping allies.

A mythal might have some or all of the following common effects within its area.



- ◆ Evil or chaotic evil creatures take a -2 penalty to attack rolls, checks, and saving throws.
- ◆ Evil or chaotic evil creatures can't use effects that have the teleportation keyword.
- ◆ Allied creatures gain a +2 bonus to saving throws.
- ◆ Any creature that activates a spellscar is affected by the mythal for the rest of that day as if it were evil.
- ◆ All attempts to teleport into the mythal's area alert wizards who are linked to it; such attempts fail unless they are specifically allowed. Those permitted to enter arrive inside a heavily guarded and magically warded area.

VARIANTS

Some mythals have unique effects, and you can tailor each one to be an effective storytelling device as much as a defense. For instance, you could decide that Myth Drannor's mythal also blocks all portals and prevents travel between planes, and that Evermeet's allows residents to walk on any surface regardless of gravity.

PLAGUELANDS

Plaguelands are regions where the Spellplague still runs amok, changing everything it contacts.

FEATURES

Most plaguelands share common features, though exceptions exist among these anarchic regions. From a distance, the affected landscape seems to be shrouded in a thick, luminous blue fog. Up closer, the area seems to be bounded by a standing liquid. Everything outside the boundary is sharp-edged and clear; everything inside is blurred and wavering, as if seen through blue fire. Shapes writhe within, but from outside their nature is impossible to determine.

Inside the boundary, the very land is mutable, slowly sliding and flowing like boiling mud. Rivulets of blue fire, foliage, and even the sky itself slowly mix with the land in a great churn whose edges are the horizon.

NAVIGATION

Despite a plagueland's amorphous appearance, the swirling landscape supports travelers just as normal ground does. As with travel across ordinary lands, a plagueland's mountains, rivers, and abysses can present danger. Sometimes the moving land can propel a careless visitor into a chasm.

Some plaguelands are inhabited by plaguechanged creatures, especially swarms of plaguechanged giberlings (page 257).

EFFECTS ON VISITORS

Within a plagueland, the wild magic of the Spellplague still runs rampant. Each hour that a creature not already spellscarred or plaguechanged spends in a plagueland subjects it to the terrible affliction.

A character who takes an extended rest in a plagueland takes a -1 penalty to Fortitude defense and loses one healing surge. Healing surges lost to this effect can be regained only outside a plagueland. The Fortitude penalty stacks, and it disappears as soon as a character takes an extended rest outside a plagueland. If this effect reduces a character's Fortitude defense to 0, the character immediately dies in an explosion of blue flame.

Characters who survive 24 or more consecutive hours in a plagueland might qualify to choose a spellscar, at the DM's discretion. (See the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide* for more information about spellscars.)

PORTALS

On Toril, magic portals link diverse places in various ways. Most portals are simple teleportation devices that whisk travelers between distant locales, possibly even on other planes. Others allow or limit passage based on the designer's criteria. All portals are created for a reason, but they often last longer than their creators, so a portal's purpose can be lost to time.

FEATURES

A portal is an immovable magical surface of a size and shape determined by its creator. This surface is often situated in a physical frame, such as an arch or doorway, that stands free rather than inside a wall. This feature is the first clue to a portal's magical nature. A portal often allows those looking at it to view the distant destination on the other side. Characters trained in Arcana can detect the magic of a portal (DC 24) and use the Analyze Portal^{PG} ritual to learn more about it.

OPERATION

The most common type of portal allows those passing through its surface to travel to a set destination, with some limitations.

Putting any significant part of an object or body, such as part of an arm or one's head, through the portal's surface transports the whole object or creature to the destination. If a solid object blocks the destination





space, the portal doesn't function. If a creature occupies the destination space, the traveler is instead shunted to the nearest open and safe space at the destination. Only if such a space doesn't exist does the portal fail to operate.

A wholly unattended object, such as a flying arrow, can't pass through a portal by itself—it simply bounces off. Powers and rituals used on one side don't automatically affect the other, unless the portal was created with that function.

Unless the portal has specific limitations, any creature or object that can fit within its physical dimensions can pass through it. Any number of travelers can enter at one time, as long as the portal's size can accommodate their passage.

Keyed Portals: A portal's creator can set extra limitations on the portal's use. Such limitations vary widely, but the most common requirement is a key. Such a key might be a physical object, but it could also be a specific time, a password, a ritual, a sort of creature, or a particular power used on the portal. Two or more of these keys might be linked; for example, a portal might require the use of a physical key at sunset.

A keyed portal might open for a set amount of time when the key is used, or it might allow passage to only one creature at a time that uses the proper key.

Restricted Portals: A restricted portal allows only specified creatures or objects through. It might allow only creatures to pass, leaving objects behind, or send creatures to one place and objects to another. It could admit only creatures that have a particular origin or keyword, or even a single named individual. Some restricted portals permit only light and air in from the other side, forbidding passage to all creatures and objects. Others allow communication between two points, but no travel.

Variable Portals: A portal can have multiple preset destinations. Such a portal might allow the user to select from among them, or it might determine the destination based on the key used. Some such portals send travelers to a location randomly chosen from several possibilities.

MALFUNCTIONS

Even magic wanes or changes with time, and cataclysmic events, notably the Spellplague, also affect how a portal functions. Such portals effectively become traps, hindering or harming travelers. Most of Toril's existing portals are now malfunctioning.

The most common malfunction is an unintended or random destination. A malfunctioning portal can also give off strange supernatural effects, even changing the flow of time or pulling in curious explorers from a distance. Numerous malfunctioning portals connect to plaguelands across Faerûn, and a few even allowed the Spellplague to travel between distant territories, creating plaguelands where few would expect them.

MAGIC ITEMS

Each magic item is a legacy of someone's specific purpose and exceptional skill. Although most folk have seen trinkets that keep a house clean or a room cool, such conveniences are not typically what is meant by the term. Truly potent objects, such as those that great heroes use, are found only in the possession of the mighty.

Money can purchase minor items, but more powerful magic is not usually found in shops. The treasuries of fallen empires, as well as those of great persons and monsters, are the most common sources of potent magic items. Exceptional individuals, such as PCs, can also make magic items for themselves.

STORIED ITEMS

A rich campaign setting makes it easy to tie even basic magic items to the world. Their stories endure, and they become legendary. Rather than finding a standard head-slot item, for example, a character might come upon a fabled *Crown of Whispers*. An object related to the world makes the campaign more enjoyable and immersive for a player, even if the generic item is more powerful. And as the PCs travel through the campaign world, they meet and interact with NPCs who recognize legendary objects they carry.

The storied items presented here are examples. You can bring your world to life by creating others that fit your own campaign's history.

CROWN OF WHISPERS

Crafted in the year of the Fearless Peasant (926 DR) were these twin crowns for the coronation of Princess Aliia and her Cormyrian consort, Rhiigard. They ended up at the bottom of the Inner Sea when *Nadyra's Glory*, the ship carrying the princess, sank.





The succubus Soneillon, the so-called Queen of Whispers, is reputed to have sunk the ship and claimed the crowns for her domain in the Giant-spire Mountains. Though Soneillon is gone, the crowns remain in the hands

of her former servants, the hobgoblins of the Giant-spire Gap (page 161).

Crown of Whispers Level 10

This gold circlet rises to points above the temples and the center of the brow. Three star rubies decorate the front.

Item Slot: Head 5,000 gp

Property: Gain a +2 item bonus to Diplomacy and Insight checks.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. You gain a +2 item bonus to attack rolls with a Charisma-based power you use before the end of your turn. This bonus increases to +3 if the power has the charm keyword.

GREATSWORD OF IMPILTUR

This weapon was forged by the dwarves of the Earthfast Mountains as a ceremonial blade for the monarchs of Impiltur. Only twenty-five years after its creation, the *Greatsword of Impiltur* was stolen from the royal vaults, probably by fiendish agents. It was recovered almost a century later by the Horned Ranger, Eljak Ferenfal, who returned it to King Halanter II of Impiltur. It later sank in the Inner Sea with the ship *Nadyra's Glory*, where Soneillon recovered it. It eventually passed into the hands of her death knight consort, Imbrar Heltharn. Soneillon and her consort were torn from the world during the Spellplague, leaving their worldly possessions behind. Now the blade is held by the hobgoblin champions of the Giantspires.



Greatsword of Impiltur Level 15

This greatsword is forged of black iron engraved with dead and wailing demons. Its dark pommel and guard look like a balor impaled on the sword's blade. Dark energy plays like lightning over the weapon.

Lvl 15 +3 25,000 gp

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +3d10 damage

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with this weapon. The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

GOBLIN TOTEM

Goblins make weapons out of the bones of powerful creatures. Two such items, the *horn totem* and the *skull totem*, are described in the adventure in Chapter 1.

Goblin Totem Level 2+

This crude weapon is carved from bone, its handle wrapped in leather. Holding the totem makes you feel more capable of facing even formidably sized foes.

Lvl 2	+1	520 gp	Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp
Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp

Weapon: Any

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Property: Your attacks with this weapon against a creature larger than you have an additional bonus to damage rolls equal to the weapon's enhancement bonus.

MINOR ARTIFACTS

Minor artifacts are storied items, but they are more powerful and legendary than most. Such an item is usually in the possession of a mighty creature, often the one who created it.

Unlike true artifacts such as those described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, a minor artifact is not sentient and does not have a goal. However, it bestows a number of properties and powers on its wielder. Minor artifacts usually have strange quirks resulting from their potent magic or the circumstances of their creation.

CROWN JEWEL OF CHESENTA

Once a terrifying item known as a *sphere of annihilation* and venerated as part of the Cult of Entropy, the *Crown Jewel of Chessenta* was changed by the Spellplague. See the "Chessenta" section in Chapter 6 for more on this item.

Crown Jewel of Chessenta Level 15

This fist-sized sphere of unfathomable blackness slowly orbits about you, radiating menace.

Wondrous Item

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to all defenses.

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws.

Property: The *Crown Jewel* cannot be damaged by any attack. The damage that would be dealt is redirected to the attacker as an equal amount of force damage.

Power (At-Will): Move Action. You can make the *Crown Jewel* fly at a speed of 8.

Power (At-Will ♦ Force, Healing): Standard Action. You can direct the *Crown Jewel* to attack an enemy adjacent to it. The attack uses your Charisma modifier vs. Fortitude, with a +1 bonus to the attack roll per five levels you possess, and deals 2d10 + Charisma modifier force damage per five levels you possess. A creature that is reduced to 0 hit points by this attack is utterly destroyed, and you regain 15 hit points.

Quirks: You must use a minor action each round to maintain or to regain control over the *Crown Jewel*. If not so controlled, the *Crown Jewel* stays within 8 squares of you and orbits around your space at a fly speed of 4.

Potential users can attune to the *Crown Jewel* by spending 24 hours with the item and succeeding on a DC 30 Arcana check. An attuned user can control the *Crown Jewel*. If two or more attuned users try to control the item at one time, those users make opposed Charisma checks, the winner gaining control of the item for 1 round.

The leader of the Karanok family can control the *Crown Jewel* without attuning to it and without having to beat other attuned users in an opposed Charisma check.

MANSHOON'S BLOODMASK

The vampire wizard Manshoon prefers to keep his visage covered, so few know what he actually looks like. To this end, he created a mask that covers most of his head and grants him special protections. See “Zhentarim” in Chapter 7 for more about Manshoon.

Manshoon's Bloodmask (+6)

Level 30

This full-face mask of rich, dark cloth reveals only the wearer's eyes.

Item Slots: Head and neck

Enhancement Bonus: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: You gain a +6 item bonus to saving throws against charm effects.

Property: You gain a +6 item bonus to Insight checks.

Property: You gain resist 10 to damage from all ranged attacks.

Property: You can see invisible creatures as though they were visible.

Property: You can understand any language, even if you can't speak it.

Property: If you are undead, your vulnerability to radiant damage is negated while wearing the *bloodmask*.

Property: If you are a vampire, you can regenerate even while exposed to sunlight.

Power (At-Will): Free Action. You can use the *feather fall* power (wizard 2). You are cloaked in a cloud of shadowy bat forms as you fall.

Quirks: If you are not undead, you spend two healing surges when donning the *bloodmask* for the first time during a day or at the beginning of any day in which the mask is already worn.

You can regain healing surges lost to the *bloodmask* by killing a sentient living creature and drinking its blood. You can drink through the *bloodmask*, even though it covers your mouth.

Undead sense the value of the *bloodmask* and gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls against a living creature that wears it.

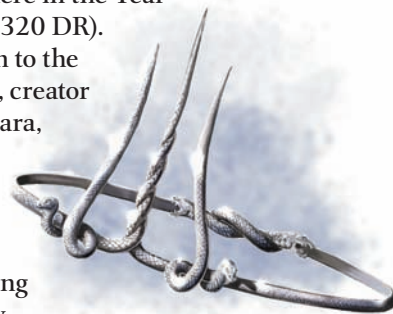
HIGH MAGIC

Only elf and eladrin wizards of prodigious power and prestige learn the secrets of high magic. These rituals require dozens or hundreds of casters and can affect vast areas. High magic can heal hundreds or lay waste to an entire region. The most famous examples of its use are the mythals that protect many fey lands to this day.

MARLSPIRE OF NAJARA

One of the fabled *naga* crowns created by the yuan-ti, the Marlspire of Najara is the royal crown of that nation. Members of the Hss'tafi tribe of yuan-ti brought the crown to Najara (page 158) when they were transported there in the Year of Netted Dreams (-320 DR).

They gave the crown to the great naga Terpenzi, creator and first king of Najara, as an offering of fealty. Since then, the *Marlspire* has been the crown of state in Najara, resting on the brow of every naga King of Snakes, up to and including Jarant (page 158).



Marlspire of Najara

Level 28

This simple circlet of silvery metal has three long spines over the brow and is engraved with a snake motif.

Item Slot: Head

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to Will defense.

Property: If you have the reptile keyword, creatures that have the reptile keyword take a -3 penalty to attack rolls against you.

Property: Allies within 10 squares of you that have the reptile keyword gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls.

Power (Daily): Minor action. You can see invisible creatures as though they were visible until the end of the encounter.

Power (Daily ♦ Charm): Standard Action. Close burst 20, affects only beasts that have the reptile keyword; +34 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends; the target takes a -8 penalty to the saving throw).

Quirks: If you don't have the reptile keyword, creatures that do have the reptile keyword gain a +2 bonus to all defenses against you while you wear the *Marlspire*.

If you don't have the reptile keyword, creatures that have the reptile keyword gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls against you while you wear the *Marlspire*. This bonus increases to +4 for creatures of 11th level or higher, and to +6 for creatures of 21st level or higher.

SCEPTER OF THE CHOSEN TYRANT

Fzoul Chembryl, with the help of Teldorn Darkhope, once made a powerful relic of the Banite faith—the *Scepter of the Tyrant's Eye*. That weapon was destroyed when Netheril attacked Zhentil Keep and killed Fzoul. Upon Fzoul's ascension, Bane gave him a similar item, both as a tool and as a reminder of what Fzoul lost to the Shadovar.

Scepter of the Chosen Tyrant (+6) Level 28

This impressive morningstar is studded with cruel barbs.

Enhancement Bonus: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +6d10 damage

Property: You cannot be disarmed of or drop the *Scepter* unless you choose to do so.

Property: When Fzoul Chembryl wields the *Scepter*, it deals an additional ongoing 10 psychic damage to targets hit by its melee or ranged attack.

Power (Daily): Move Action. You gain a fly speed of 8 until the end of your next turn. If you haven't landed by that time, you float safely to the ground.

Power (At-will • Force): Standard Action. You can make a basic ranged attack with the *Scepter*: range 20; Dexterity vs. AC. This attack deals the same amount of damage as a melee attack would, but it is force damage instead.

Quirks: If you don't serve Bane as your patron deity, you take a -1 penalty to Will defense while you carry and use the *Scepter*. If you're good or lawful good, this penalty is -2.

Bane's servants of 21st level and higher know when a nonbeliever carries the *Scepter*. They can track the item's location without fail and receive a +1 bonus to attack rolls against the carrier and all of that creature's allies.

THAKORSIL'S SEAT

The archmage Thakorsil and his allies created this item to yoke the devil Orlex, who ruled the kingdom of Yhalvia (part of ancient Narfell).



Thakorsil succeeded in seizing Yhalvia from Orlex, but the wizard became almost as depraved as the devil and was eventually overthrown.

Through unknown means, the ancient Netherese lich Larloch acquired the throne. Without using the *Seat*, he stored it in his ancient hold in the Troll Hills, War-

lock's Crypt. There it stayed for many years.

Then Szass Tam, in yet another of his gambits, braved Larloch's home and managed to meet the ancient lich. Only they know what they discussed. Tam soon returned to his homeland, accompanied by odd hooded companions and carrying many items, *Thakorsil's Seat* among them.

Szass Tam returned to Thay and freed Eltab, a demon lord imprisoned beneath Eltabbar in Thay. The Thayan archmage tried to use the *Seat* and the associated Ritual of Twin Burnings (page 59) to permanently enslave Eltab. A group of adventurers foiled the plot, and the *Seat* was buried in the subsequent destruction.

Tam later recovered the artifact. He keeps it still in the Citadel on Thaymount.

Thakorsil's Seat Level 30

This massive throne of dark, veined stone is elaborately carved. Each arm looks like the head and neck of a snarling dragon, and each of its four feet is like a draconic claw grasping a sphere.

Wondrous Item

Property: A creature seated in the throne is attacked each round: +38 vs. Will; the target is restrained and dominated until the end of its next turn. If a creature sits in *Thakorsil's Seat* willingly, the attack automatically hits. The creature can take no action other than to stay seated, although it can speak and think. While in the *Seat*, the creature cannot be located by powers or rituals used by a caster of lower than 30th level.

RITUALS

As described in the *Player's Handbook*, rituals are magical workings that produce useful and impressive effects. They also make great story devices in an adventure or campaign setting. In Faerûn, rituals have existed since the beginning of recorded time, some so impressive that they could weave protections over entire nations. Rituals dedicated to gods and other powerful beings provide benefits to their devotees, and mighty archmages use them to weave effects that can even transcend space and time. Villains use terrible rituals to bring about great evil—if stalwart heroes don't stop them.

CIRCLE MAGIC

Circle magic is most widespread in Faerûn's eastern reaches, among the Rashemi and Thayans, but it's found all over Toril among those who wield divine and arcane power. Circle magic shapes daily attack powers into rituals useful for large, long-range effects on the battlefield.

War Spells: Circle members can perform a ritual to cast a war spell (a collaborative version of a ranged or area attack power). The performance of the ritual requires 1 minute per participant. Each participant must know the attack power to be used and must expend that power on completing the ritual. Increase the power's range by 1 square, the radius of its area of effect (if any) by 1 square, and damage dice by 1 for each participant.

Example: Six circle members, all wizards, get together to produce a war spell version of the wizard power *fireball*. They spend 6 minutes performing the ritual, after which time the power of the *fireball* flares forth. The war spell affects a burst 9 within 26 squares, counting from the space of the wizard designated as the caster. The power uses the Intelligence modifier of the caster for its attack roll, and it deals damage equal to 9d6 + the caster's Intelligence modifier to each target in the area that is hit by the attack.

PACT OF THE IRON RING

You present the symbol of membership in the Warlock Knights. A dark glow tinged with violet surrounds the rings of those who swear the oath with you.

Level: 10
Category: Binding
Time: 1 hour
Duration: Permanent until the oath required by the pact is fulfilled
Component Cost: 400 gp, plus a Warlock Knight iron ring as a focus
Market Price: 1,000 gp
Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

This brief ritual reinforces the bond between the Warlock Knights of Vaasa (page 276). Willing participants swear loyalty to one another or pledge to accomplish some task.

During the ritual, you hold forth your iron ring for all to see and focus upon. Participants who swear the oath required by the pact are bound by their word. Not all participants in the ritual need swear the oath—it can bind some and not others. You can secretly exclude any participant, including yourself, even if he or she appears to swear the oath. However, even someone who is coerced or charmed into swearing the oath is still bound by it.

Those who forge such a pact are bound for all time. Any who fail to uphold the bargain are cursed for the rest of their days, considered pactbroken by their peers (see “Pactbroken Curse,” below). The Remove Affliction ritual ends the effects of the Pact of the Iron Ring, before or after a creature breaks the pact. A ritual caster gains a +2 bonus to Heal checks when lifting the curse from one who was magically compelled to swear the pact.

SARRUKH SHAPING

The terrible sarrukh used ritual magic to create a large number of reptilian creatures. (See the “Reptile Kingdoms” section of Chapter 7 for more about this serpentine race.) Their vile rites can still shape creatures into other forms, reptilian or not, bending both mind and body to create a wholly new being. Yuan-ti use similar rituals, no doubt learned long ago from the sarrukh, to permanently mold their cultists and slaves into more pleasing ophidian shapes.

Resolving the effects of this curse uses the rules for disease (DMG 49), but the afflicted creature makes a Wisdom check rather than an Endurance check to determine if his or her condition improves or worsens. The level of this curse is equal to the level of the ritual caster. The curse has no final state and cannot be cured naturally; it continues to worsen until it kills its victim, and a creature cannot be free of it without magic.

RITUAL OF TWIN BURNINGS

Striking with the sacrificial knife, you intone words of dark terror. The victim is utterly consumed, and a crystal pane inscribed with a jagged rune appears.

Level: 26
Category: Binding
Time: 2 hours
Duration: Permanent
Component Cost: 50,000 gp, plus special
Market Price: –
Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

This complicated and deeply evil ritual must be performed a total of nine times to subjugate the will of a creature held in *Thakorsil's Seat* (page 58). Each performance has the following requirements.

It must be performed during a full moon within 20 feet of *Thakorsil's Seat*.

It requires the sacrifice of a good-aligned creature of at least paragon tier. That creature dies at the last second of the performance, when its body and spirit are utterly destroyed—hence “twin burnings.”

If the performance is successful, it creates a triangular crystalline pane etched with a rune of chaos. The pane appears near the *Seat*. Any damage destroys a pane, but only missing panes must be replaced in further performance.

If an individual performance is interrupted, it fails. Panes already created remain, though, and the overarching ritual can continue from that point.

If nine performances are successfully completed, a nine-sided crystal pyramid encloses *Thakorsil's Seat*. The occupant of the artifact can then physically leave the *Seat* but is permanently and totally enslaved to the one who completed the ritual.

Pactbroken Curse

Curse, level variable

This minuscule, wormlike parasite concludes its adult life in a victim's brain.

Attack: +17 vs. Fortitude

Wisdom improve DC 18 + one-half level, maintain DC 14 + one-half level, worsen DC 13 + one-half level or lower

The target is cured.

◀ **Initial Effect** The target loses one healing surge that it cannot regain until cured. Also until cured, the target suffers a penalty to all d20 rolls equal to the number of healing surges lost to this curse.

◀▶ The target loses another healing surge that it cannot regain until cured. If this loss reduces the target to zero healing surges, the target dies, disintegrating into dark iron dust with a faint violet sheen.

▶ The target loses another healing surge that it cannot regain until cured. If this loss reduces the target to zero healing surges, the target dies, disintegrating into dark iron dust with a faint violet sheen.

COSMOLOGY

TORIL AND Abeir, held together in the natural world, are situated amid other planes of existence. Most theoreticians place the Astral Sea, domain of the gods and resting place of their dominions, above the world. A mixture of energy and elements exists below in the Elemental Chaos; at its bottom, the Abyss roils with demonic malice. Alongside the world are its reflections: the mystical Feywild, a place of boisterous life and magic, and the gloomy Shadowfell, a dim realm of decay and apathy.

The Spellplague began, for all intents and purposes, in the dominions of the gods. Cyric murdered Mystra, unraveling magic in the cosmos and destroying her dominion. At the same time, Abeir and Toril happened into alignment. This cataclysmic coincidence led to upheaval, shaking apart the primeval order, opening up holes in defenses, and reshaping elements. When it was over, a realignment of power had brought forth a new order—the cosmos as it exists today.

In many ways, the planes are easier to explore than they were before. Although many otherworldly locales are hostile and no place for any sensible mortal, few places have features that kill a visitor outright. Those who have the power can travel the dimensions to whatever end they desire.

This chapter is a gazetteer of the cosmos, describing realms outside Toril. Both heroes and villains can explore beyond the world and involve themselves with mighty otherworldly beings.

This chapter contains the following sections.

- ◆ **The Astral Sea:** The home of the gods, this plane is a realm of pure thought and creativity. This section describes the major dominions and their inhabitants.
- ◆ **The Elemental Chaos:** The primordials dwell in this roiling storm of raw creation. This section offers a brief tour of major primordial realms.
- ◆ **The Feywild:** The world's bright reflection, this plane is home to noble fey and to terrible monsters.
- ◆ **The Shadowfell:** A dreary echo of the world, this is the land of lost souls and of creatures that haunt the darkness.





THE ASTRAL SEA

The province of mind and spirit, the Astral Sea is where pure imagination can become real. This great silvery void contains the dominions of the gods.

TRAVEL

Traveling to the Astral Sea requires only the proper ritual, or passage through pathways found in the world, the Feywild, and especially the Shadowfell. Traveling in the Astral Sea is as easy as flying. Mortal creatures that have the ability to travel the planes can journey to, traverse, and even inhabit the Sea's dominions. Some dominions are inhospitable, however, and few deities take kindly to the intrusion of mortals who come uninvited.

DOMINIONS

Once arranged like a tree, the divine dominions have begun drifting in the Astral Sea since the Spellplague. During the Spellplague, old dominions fell, were merged, or disappeared entirely, and new ones arose. Each dominion is a vast but finite space, home of one or more gods who use their divine power to maintain its structure.

Traits: Dominions have traits dictated by the powerful entities who inhabit them. A dominion might have an alignment, derived primarily from the greater god that controls it and secondarily from the other divinities that share the place. Dominions can also have connections to various locales within the cosmos—other dominions, other planes, or realms in the Elemental Chaos. These links are forged by agreements among deities and other entities.

Each dominion is controlled by a greater god, but other gods often share it, though they don't necessarily work with the primary divinity. Lesser divine beings called exarchs also inhabit each dominion and serve one or more of the gods.

ARVANDOR

Arvandor is a place of natural beauty and magic even greater than that of the Feywild. The deities that share Arvandor claim separate areas, but few acknowledge precise borders. All agree that Arvandor centers on Corellon's palace, Crescent Grove, where he lives with his queen, Angharradh.

Scattered throughout Arvandor are seven vast and rolling hills covered with beautiful golden grass. The Seven Golden Hills are primarily gnome realms, though the gnome divinities live and wander where they wish.

Alignment: Good.

Connections: Deep Wilds, the Feywild, Gates of the Moon, Sky Home.

Primary Residents: Corellon (greater god) and his exarchs Deep Sashelas, Erevan, Fenmarel, Labelas, Shevarash, and Solonor; Angharradh (goddess); Garl Glittergold (god) and his exarchs Baervan, Baravar, and Callarduran.

BANEHOLD

From his Black Bastion, Bane rules supreme in this dominion, his consort Loviatar at his side. Under an oppressive sky lit by baleful green light, Banehold is divided into fiefs held by the Black Lord's divine vassals. These lands are bleak and plagued by constant strife.

An outlying desolation still holds ruined citadels and blasted landscapes of rock, obsidian, sand, and pitted iron. Over this hangs a red sky broken by black stormclouds. These areas serve as warnings to those beings that Bane subjugated during the Spellplague. In these outlands, Bane's servant Tiamat lurks and plots in the various lairs that Bane allowed her to build.

Alignment: Evil.

Connections: None.

Primary Residents: Bane (greater god) and his exarchs Abbathor, Fzoul Chembryl, Hoar, Hruggek, and Maglubiyet; Loviatar (goddess); Tiamat (goddess).

CELESTIA

An enormous mountain ringed by three smaller peaks floats through the Astral Sea. The summit emits silver light, illuminating all. Wondrous life is abundant, and pure water flows freely. Near the mountain's top is a ringing city, known as the True Court, where Torm rules from a palace called the High Seat.

On one of Celestia's lesser peaks is Ilmater's domain, Martyrdom. An idyllic place where none can suffer, Martyrdom centers on an open-air temple with rows of white pillars. At the heart of this sanctuary is a plinth of white stone into which the longsword *Justicar* is plunged. Inscribed on the stone are a stylized scale and the words "Justice endures."

Alignment: Lawful good.

Connections: Dwarfhome, Eternal Sun.

Primary Residents: Torm (greater god); Ilmater (god); Bahamut (god).

CYNOSURE

As a neutral meeting ground for the gods, Cynosure is usually closed and uninhabited. It is a stately meeting chamber full of high pillars, decorated with portraits of divinities living and dead, and open to the star-filled expanse of the Astral Sea. Travel to Cynosure

can be accomplished only by divine beings by means of dedicated portals in their dominions.

Connections: Cynosure connects to every other dominion, but the portal can be opened only by, or with the permission of, the appropriate deity.

THE DEEP WILDS

Silvanus's dominion is a vast expanse of untamed wilderness. It contains every imaginable kind of earthly terrain, including a dark and foreboding ocean. Within, no solid building spoils the wildness of the place, though the inhabitants clothe themselves and use tools appropriate to their sensibilities. Auril's Winter Hall, built only of wind and ice, moves slowly across the dominion, bringing winter where it goes.

Alignment: Unaligned.

Connections: Arvandor, the Dismal Caverns, the Elemental Chaos, Eternal Sun, the Feywild, Gates of the Moon.

Primary Residents: Silvanus (greater god) and his exarch Malar; Auril (goddess); Mielikki (goddess) and her exarch Shiallia; Umberlee (goddess).

THE DEMONWEB PITS

Loth and the foul entities that serve her call the Demonweb Pits home. At the center of this immense darkness of woven planar matter, the Demon Queen of Spiders sits within an iron fortress shaped like a vast arachnid.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Connection: The Abyss (in the Elemental Chaos).

Primary Resident: Loth (greater goddess).

THE DISMAL CAVERNS

This great subterranean maze of natural caverns is illuminated only by phosphorescent fungi and flows of lava. The Dismal Caverns is the dominion of the mysterious deity called Ghaunadaur. Other powerful entities share the desolate gloom, and foul and fiendish creatures abound, but any that wish to survive either serve or avoid the master of the Dismal Caverns.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Connections: The Abyss (in the Elemental Chaos), the Deep Wilds, Root Hold (in the Elemental Chaos).

Primary Resident: Ghaunadaur (greater god).

DWARFHOMES

Moradin's wondrous kingdom glorifies the ideals of craft, labor, and wealth. Its surface is a stretch of beautiful crags that teem with life. Upon and underneath these mountains, the dwarven deities live and work. At the heart of it all is the great hall of Moradin and his wife Berronar, called Erackinor, where rests Moradin's Soul Forge.

Alignment: Lawful good.

Connections: Celestia, Root Hold (in the Elemental Chaos).

Primary Residents: Moradin (greater god) and his exarchs Clangeddin, Dugmaren, Marthammor, Thard, and Vergadain; Berronar (goddess).

ETERNAL SUN

The Palace of the Four Suns is a luminous citadel, located amid the shining, thriving lands and seas of Eternal Sun. Here dwells Amaunator, Keeper of the Golden Sun. Surrounding the golden city's central castle is Waukeen's Marketplace Eternal, where business and the laws of trade take precedence.

Alignment: Lawful good.

Connections: Celestia, the Deep Wilds.

Primary Residents: Amaunator (greater god) and his exarch Siamorphe; Waukeen (goddess).

THE FUGUE PLANE

The Crystal Spire, a tower of glittering transparent rock, watches over the City of Judgment, a gray metropolis of the dead, in the otherwise flat and featureless Fugue Plane. From the Crystal Spire, Kelemvor and his seneschal, Jergal, judge the dead.

Alignment: Unaligned.

Connections: Shadowfell; the Fugue Plane has connections to all other dominions as well, but the use of such links is limited to those collecting and transporting the dead to the afterlife.

Primary Residents: Kelemvor (greater god) and his exarch Jergal.

GATES OF THE MOON

Rocky islands float on and above a silvery sea. The moon waxes and wanes, often as visible during the bright sunlight hours as it is at night. Natural beauty fills each island, along with elegant buildings that range from quaint cottages to elegant manors.

Gates of the Moon is a place of beauty and joy, centered on Selûne's shining hall, Argentil. Surrounding Argentil's island is Sune's romantic city, Brightwater. The Great Wheel—seven earthmotes connected by lofty bridges—is Tymora's realm.

Alignment: Good.

Connections: The mysterious Infinite Staircase in Argentil has portals to cities in every part of the cosmos. Most of these are one-way passages. Selûne also maintains openings to Arvandor, the Deep Wilds, the Feywild, and the Green Fields.

Primary Residents: Selûne (greater goddess); Sune (greater goddess) and her exarchs Lliira and Sharess; Tymora (goddess).



GREEN FIELDS

An idyllic realm of verdant hills, great rolling plains, and lush river valleys, the Green Fields is a place of well-being and rest. Within it is the wondrous Mother's Garden of Chauntea, where food-bearing plants grow wild and in great abundance. Itinerant as their likenesses in the world, the halfling divinities move from place to place, living for a time in one location before moving on to explore the marvelous and ever-changing landscape.

Alignment: Good.

Connection: Gates of the Moon.

Primary Residents: Chauntea (greater goddess); Sheela (goddess) and her exarchs Arvoreen, Brando-baris, and Cyrrollalee.

HOUSE OF KNOWLEDGE

The House of Knowledge is an ancient and tamed wood of towering oaks and clear, fresh lakes and springs. It is a place full of music, stories, and secrets. The Library of All Knowledge is a series of buildings throughout the dominion, within which all the secrets of the universe are said to lie. The divine residents of this dominion share the buildings, though Gond prefers a part of the library known as Wonderhome.

Alignment: Unaligned.

Connections: None.

Primary Residents: Oghma (greater god) and his exarch Milil; Gond (god).

THE NINE HELLS

Ruled by the god-killer Asmodeus from Malsheem, the Citadel of Hell, this vast dominion is the realm of

devils. Eight other archfiends rule an equal number of territories as vassals of Asmodeus.

A waterway called the River of Blood, or River Styx, flows in the Nine Hells. It washes through the Hells and into the Astral Sea, polluting the surrounding area with fiendish corruption.

Alignment: Evil.

Connections: None.

Primary Residents: Asmodeus (greater god) and the archdevils Baalzebul, Bel, Belial, Dispater, Glasya, Levistus, Mammon, and Mephistopheles.

NISHREK

Nishrek is a natural setting warped to orc ideals and ravaged by eternal war, a dark reflection of Warrior's Rest. Black seas and dark rivers punctuate tangled forests, jagged badlands, and burning deserts.

Gruumsh, attended by Baghtru and Obould, watches over his dominion from the Iron Fortress. His mate, Luthic, lives in the caverns beneath the citadel. Shargaas and Vaprak lurk in dark holds elsewhere within Nishrek.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Connection: The Abyss (in the Elemental Chaos).

Primary Residents: Gruumsh (greater god) and his exarchs Bahgtru, Obould, Shargaas, and Vaprak; Luthic (goddess)

THE SUPREME THRONE

Wind howls through the blasted landscape of the Supreme Throne. The only standing structure is the Shattered Castle, a crumbling stronghold that was once Cyric's seat of power. It now serves as his prison,

DEMIPLANES

Within the Astral Sea, a strong will focused on a particular idea can carve out and hold a small space apart from other dominions. This realm can be as big as the power used to create it allows, but it is always limited and smaller than the dominion of a deity. Most demiplanes form as the result of deliberate creation, but a few simply exist as folds or pockets in the planar arrangement.

A demiplane has any trait its creator sets. It might have no gravity, an inhospitable environment, or a landscape that can be molded at a thought, and it might combine several traits. Most demiplanes exist for a purpose, however, and their form follows their function.

Similarly, a demiplane is usually tied to a specific place on another plane or dominion. The demiplane's use determines its location and access points. How the demiplane is used can affect how it changes and what happens there.

Many demiplanes already exist, created by magic and later abandoned.

THE FAR REALM

Outside the known cosmos is a realm where the laws of the reality that most beings recognize have no hold. Few aside from scholars even know that this maddening dimension exists. The learned can only speculate what the Far Realm truly is and what it contains. By most accounts, this alien place lies beyond matter, spirit, and sanity.

Where the Far Realm touches the world, its insanity seeps in. This influence can be as simple as regular nightmares afflicting the residents of a town, or as involved as a significant warping of the environment and its inhabitants. Strange creatures sometimes emerge from such a tainted landscape, usually fading from existence as the barrier between reality and the Far Realm again strengthens.

Bizarre creatures such as mind flayers, aboleths, destrachans, and foulspawn are all progeny of the Far Realm's mixing with other realities. They seek to turn the world to something more in accord with their utterly alien mindset. The greater god Ghaunadaur is the mightiest of all entities that are thought to be touched by the Far Realm.

and if the other deities have their way, it will do so for centuries more.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Connection: No connections exist between other planar locations and the Supreme Throne. Furthermore, this place is sealed against any comings and goings.

Primary Resident: Cyric (greater god).

TOWERS OF NIGHT

This benighted dominion is vaster than any other in the Astral Sea. It is a dark wasteland full of craggy reaches and deserts of black sand. Sinister seas and rivers, as well as terrifying forests and bogs, dot the landscape.

Forbidding citadels rise in the starless dark here. The largest of these is the Palace of Loss, Shar's circular abode, resting in the dominion's highest peak. Within the Slithering Jungle, the principal forest in the dominion, Sseth's City of Serpents rises, centered on a black pyramid. Far away, deep in the most treacherous disease-ridden swamp of the dominion, another black pyramid squats—Talona's Plague Palace. Not far from Talona's palace, the interloper Zehir occupies a many-tunneled escarpment protruding from the Sea of Poison.

Alignment: Evil.

Connection: The Shadowfell.

Primary Residents: Shar (greater goddess); Sseth (god); Talona (goddess); Zehir (god).

WARRIOR'S REST

Tempus's dominion, Warrior's Rest is a rocky, arid landscape that changes unpredictably and recovers quickly from the wars that rage across it. Most of it is relatively flat, with towering mesas suddenly rising out of the plains. Here, war is a sport played by those who cannot die.

Tempus wanders Warrior's Rest, moving among the countless halls where victorious factions are welcome to revel as long as they can hold the grounds.

Tempus can sometimes be found within the single granite tower on Blood Tor, where his lover Beshaba dwells. He also visits the Red Knight, whom he treats as a daughter, in her Red Tower. Tempus's other exarchs maintain their own realms.

Alignment: Unaligned.

Primary Residents: Tempus (greater god) and his exarchs Garagos, the Red Knight, Uthgar, and Valkur; Beshaba (goddess).

LOST DOMINIONS

In the history of Toril, numerous deities have died by various means. Others have changed allegiances or suffered from the effects of the Spellplague. A few disappeared into Abeir. Indeed, whole pantheons have left Faerûn or have been destroyed.

When a dominion is abandoned or destroyed, it largely fades from existence or breaks apart. However, remnants of it sometimes persist in the Astral Sea. The same is true for the corpses of slain deities—some remain intact, some leave signs behind, and others simply disappear.

Other astral entities sometimes inhabit these fragments. It is possible to draw power from such astral flotsam, so finding one can be tremendously beneficial. Of all astral entities, the githyanki are best at accumulating such valuable assets.

THE AFTERLIFE

The souls of those who die travel through the Shadowfell to the Fugue Plane. There they await judgment. Some pass out of creation before any ruling comes, others after. Where these souls go not even the gods know. One that has strong faith and capabilities might be taken to the dominion of its deity, to serve him or her beyond life. Others remain on the Fugue Plane as aides to the god of death. A few cling to the Shadowfell or to the world, continuing on as ghosts or other insubstantial undead.



THE ELEMENTAL CHAOS

Mingling and clashing types of energy, firmament and earth, fire and water—all make up the reality of the Elemental Chaos. Shaped of disparate elemental dimensions that were once native to Toril, together with a plane that once existed as a cosmological relative of Abeir, the Chaos is where the elements frolic and fight without the overarching control of morality or reason. One element might even act like another—earth swirling like water or floating like air, or fire falling like rain. Specific locales within the Chaos might seem normal or pleasant by worldly standards, but otherworldly displays and threats are commonplace. The only constant is change.

TRAVEL

Getting to the Elemental Chaos usually requires a ritual. Still, places where the Chaos touches the world are numerous, and through these a creature might pass from one realm to the other. The lands of the Chaos can be harsh, desolate, or both, but traveling upon them is otherwise as easy as traversing a similar worldly landscape.

REALMS

Much of the Elemental Chaos is dangerous wilderness, full of wondrous sights and unpredictable inhabitants. Great primordial beings of elemental

THE ABYSS

At the bottom of the Elemental Chaos seethes the Abyss, a hideously corrupt reflection of the pure entropy that caps it. Black chasms connect the Abyss to the rest of the Chaos, and these places threaten both body and mind of any who dare to approach.

The Abyss teems with demons that answer to no authority except that wielded through might and fear. The strong bully the weaker. The most powerful demons lord over whole realms.

The features and realms within the Abyss are uncountable. They move and change with no explanation. Only a demon lord can maintain a region in accord with its warped standards, carving a meaningless empire out of the pervading ruin. Twisting through the insanity of the plane is the roiling River Styx, its waters poison and its course inconstant.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Connections: The Demonweb Pits, the Dismal Caverns, Nishrek (all in the Astral Sea).

Primary Residents: Demon lords such as Baphomet, Dagon, Demogorgon, Graz'zt, Kostchtchie, Orcus, and Yeenoghu.

nature lord over realms within the Chaos. As the deities maintain their dominions in the Astral Sea, so do primordials keep their realms here.

Traits: A mighty enough creature can organize the Elemental Chaos to its liking, imposing an order of sorts in a limited area. A great fire being covers its realm in fire, while a creature of frost makes ice dominant. In such realms, the entropy of the Elemental Chaos is quelled by the shaping will. A realm can have an alignment matching that of its primordial master.

Realms here can have connections like those of dominions in the Astral Sea. The Elemental Chaos has strong ties to the world and to the astral dominion known as the Deep Wilds. Individual elemental realms connect to dominions where ties remain strong between primordials that were once thought to be gods and those that still are.

CRESTING SPIRES

Water surges upward here, constantly refreshing its substance from a larger body below. This steady motion creates a structure made literally of flowing water. Istishia allows his home to flow across the waters of the Elemental Chaos.

Alignment: Unaligned.

Connections: None.

Primary Resident: Istishia (primordial).

ROOT HOLD

Vast subterranean halls make up Grumbar's Root Hold. Tunnels connect some areas; others are accessible only to those who can pass through stone. All the riches that the earth offers are found in Root Hold in raw form, alongside all the dangers.

Alignment: Unaligned.

Connections: The Dismal Caverns, Dwarfhome (both in the Astral Sea).

Primary Resident: Grumbar (primordial).

SKY HOME

Sky Home is a broad realm of rolling clouds and breezes, dark storms and roaring winds. Air flows in patterns coherent enough to hold weight and form structures. Within are chambers where Akadi rests from time to time. Usually, however, the Queen of the Air is off roving the Chaos or some other plane.

Alignment: Unaligned.

Connection: Arvandor (in the Astral Sea).

Primary Resident: Akadi (primordial).

THE UNDYING PYRE

Volcanic glass, smoke thick enough to walk on, and searing flame make up the tower where Kossuth dwells. The Undying Pyre moves at Kossuth's will, and an area known as the Burning Lands surrounds

it. Kossuth moves his realm constantly in order to bring renewing fire to all reaches of the Elemental Chaos. He pauses to treat with worthy fiery creatures, such as the efreet of the City of Brass and Surtr of Muspelheim.

Alignment: Unaligned.

Connections: None.

Resident: Kossuth (primordial).

TITAN REALMS

The largest and most powerful titans have realms within the Elemental Chaos. However, Skoraecus, strongest among stone giants, instead wanders the plane's ever-changing mountainous regions.

Fimbulwinter: From his stronghold and grim festhall, Nyfholl, Thrym rules a vast tundra lit by glittering icefalls.

Hidden Realm: All titans pay homage to the mightiest among them—the mysterious Annam, whose lonely Hidden Realm is nearly impossible to find.

Muspelheim: Greatest within this fiery realm is Surtr, who controls his volcanic land from a citadel called the Iron Mountain.

Steading: In rolling terrain full of outsized creatures and plants stands the Steading, a wooden hall where Grolantor bullies his lessers.

Thraotor: Floating in the skies within an eternal storm is Thraotor, fortress of Memnor.

OTHER REALMS

Many other creatures, great and small, call the Elemental Chaos home. Some of these have carved out homes and kingdoms amid the maelstrom.

City of Brass: Efreet of the Elemental Chaos divide many fiery realms among themselves, forming a feudal hierarchy wherein lesser fire beings serve them. Their chief holding is the City of Brass, an ancient metropolis kept tolerable to various life forms so planar travelers can gather and trade.

Djinn Motes: Clannish djinns congregate under tribal leaders on chunks of earth floating high above the Chaos's roiling landscape. These beings of air move their holdings to make war on efreet and titans alike.

Githzerai Monasteries: The githzerai have settlements in the Elemental Chaos. Inside they hone their bodies and minds to perfection.



STEVE ELLIS

THE FEYWILD

The Feywild is a magical and mysterious echo of the world. Called Faerie in ancient texts and Elven works, the Feywild is home to countless fey, and the origin of Toril's elves and eladrin and their deities. Its relationship to the world has waxed and waned over the millennia. During bygone times, eladrin built secret realms in Faerûn more closely connected to the Feywild than was the case in the rest of the world. Perhaps through these connections, the Spellplague pulled the Feywild back into Toril's proximity.

The Feywild is a twilight realm of stunning natural beauty and raw magic. Its landscapes are full of splendor and danger foreign to the mortal world. Many of its creatures have existed in the world for ages, but not in so terrible and organized a form as they do in the Feywild. Some correspondence exists between worldly terrain and the fey lands. Although not every feature of Toril has a twin in the Feywild, many do.

TRAVEL

The Feywild is easy to reach, since the barrier between it and the world is often quite thin. The world and the Feywild occasionally converge, allowing whole realms to exist in both planes or pass between the two. In some places, a traveler doesn't need a ritual to cross and might even stumble into the Feywild unawares. In other places, fey crossroads (see page 53) allow access to those who know the proper rites. The Feywild is so walled off from the world in certain places, however, that powerful magic is required to cross the boundary.

The Feywild is at once indescribably beautiful and darkly perilous. Traveling there is like moving about the world, but magic and fey creatures run riot on this enchanted plane. The needs of creatures from the world are seldom considered, and more than a few fey are actively malicious.

Connections: Travel to astral dominions is possible through the Feywild. Arvandor, the Deep Wilds, and Gates of the Moon all have direct connections that allow easy access to places in the Feywild. The reverse is also true, although planar crossings are usually dangerous or well guarded.

TERRITORIES

Originally home to the elves and eladrin, the Feywild is also the motherland of all fey. It includes the ruins of destroyed and abandoned elven and eladrin territories. It also contains grand kingdoms of eladrin that never came to Toril, as well as the sinister domains of fomorian lords and their lackeys, the cyclopes. Neither force can be relied upon to be good, as the

word is conventionally used, but the fomorians are certainly the more wicked. In between these major forces, other fey kingdoms and holdings exist.

Fey dominate the Feywild, and their power extends into worldly places such as the Forest of Amtar (Dambrath), the Curna Mountains (Estagund), the Forest of Lethyr (Great Dale), Gulthandor (Dragon Coast), the High Forest (Luruar), the Horde-lands, Rashemen, the Yuirwood (Aglarond), and other wild regions of Faerûn. Elven and eladrin holdings, such as Elfharrow, Evereska, the Moonshaes, Shilmista (Tethyr), and the Wealdath (Tethyr), have strong ties to the Feywild.

MAG TUREAH

Hate festers within the Feywild's subterranean lands, which are known as the Feydark. In those dim depths lies the Fortress of Mag Tureah, home of the great fomorian king Bres.

Mag Tureah's iron towers stand inside a realm-sized cavern. Onyx dotted with glowing gems and crystal makes up the cavern's vault. It looks, for all intents, like the world's night sky, with the light sometimes even waxing to a misty, illusory twilight. Sculpted black stone adorns the great grotto, forming curtains and pillars that seem to disappear into the false sky.

Within, Mag Tureah is a maze of iron and stone unlike other fomorian holds. It holds abundant portals to and from Toril, all of which open and collapse unpredictably. More than one unlucky mortal has stumbled from an ancient worldly ruin into Bres's realm, only to be enslaved by the fomorian's servants. Bres sits inside on an iron throne, plotting how to put the fortress's erratic gateways to wicked use.

SILDËYUIR

Sildëyuir was once a demiplane connecting to Aglarond's Yuirwood. The eladrin of Yuireshanyaar (sometimes referred to as star elves) created it to escape human incursions into their realm.

Sildëyuir is located at the same place in the Feywild as the Yuirwood in the world. Because the Yuirwood is rife with Spellplague, though, no portal allows passage between the two. Even so, the Sildëyuir fey risk opening ways into the Yuirwood from time to time. Since the leaders of Myth Drannor learned of Sildëyuir, many of Faerûn's fey have departed for the settlements that make up this Feywild realm.

Under a twilight sky filled with stars, elegant glass citadels rise above Sildëyuir's wondrous silver trees. Eladrin, elves, and their kin have settled here sparsely. Despite recent influxes of population, the holds of Sildëyuir are usually far apart. Its leaders meet only rarely, and its untamed areas teem with fey creatures.

THE SHADOWFELL

A gloomy echo of Toril, the Shadowfell is at once ancient and new. The dark goddess Shar reshaped what was then known as the Plane of Shadow during the years of chaos following the Spellplague. In her craft, she folded in the energy of death that didn't make the transition to the Elemental Chaos. She renamed her creation the Shadowfell, which became its common name among mortals, though some still refer to it simply as "Shadow."

The Shadowfell is a dim, eerie place. Where the Feywild reflects the world in breathtaking ways, the Shadowfell reveals a decaying, nightmare landscape of dull colors. A brooding half-light replaces the Feywild's fanciful twilight, and every feature of the place seems macabre and threatening. Fields of necrotic energy, usually too weak to do more than unnerve the living, wander across the baleful shadowscape.

TRAVEL

Crossing into the Shadowfell is harder than crossing to the Feywild. Merely stumbling into Shadow is fairly uncommon. Still, places within the world connect to the Shadowfell through a thin veil. These portals are easy to spot and are common in the deep Underdark, miles below the surface.

Native creatures stalk travelers here. So do the restless dead, the souls of those who pass into Shadow but refuse to move on. Humanoids of the Shadowfell are at least as bad as fey. Worse still, creatures that serve Shar, Sseth, Talona, and Orcus make their way into the Shadowfell for various nefarious purposes. True safety is hard to come by in these dark lands.

Connections: The Shadowfell connects to the Fugue Plane and the Towers of Night. The dead travel through the Shadowfell on their journey to the afterlife, although some remain in the world or the Shadowfell, afraid or unable to cross into the hereafter.

TERRITORIES

Large parts of the Shadowfell are bleak and monster-haunted reflections of the world. Such places are rarely settled, except by ghosts, specters, and other undead. Small communities of dark ones (humans descended from the Netherese of old), shadar-kai, the more social undead, or a mix of these types offer a semblance of shelter. Any such place is only slightly preferable to the Shadowfell's wilds, however.

Death giants and nightwalkers, some of which serve Shar, control parts of the Shadowfell. Devotees of dark deities and demons set up shrines, temples, and domains within Shadow. Necromancers situate their labs in, or connected to, the Shadowfell to study

its part in undeath. Some powerful undead also live within the Shadowfell, taking advantage of the shelter it provides from a hostile world. Those not native to Shadow often maintain a means of passage back to Toril.

FOUNDATION OF LOSS

A deep, black well, like an inverted tower, marks the place where Shar once lived. Her home now stands in the astral dominion of the Towers of Night, but the Mistress of the Night once all but ruled Shadow. Foundation of Loss is a reminder of that truth and a doorway to Shar's new home. Palpable grief pervades the area, as if the site mourns her departure.

Bleak tales suggest that only Shar's faithful can manage to visit the place and return. In fact, some take it upon themselves to find the Foundation in an unholy pilgrimage. Therefore, foul dangers and evil beings devoted to darkness surround the location. Unkindnesses of shadowravens emerge from the deep to harry and hunt the unwary.

Some say that secrets of creation and unmaking can be learned within the Foundation itself. Sorrow-sworn birthed in the darkness guard those secrets, challenging all who seek their destiny within the hollow well.

SHADOW KEEP

Hidden within the bleak landscape of the Shadowfell is the abode of a god gone missing sometime before or during the Spellplague. All but forgotten now, the Master of All Thieves, Mask, kept a citadel built totally of shadow. He used it as a hideout when he tired of his wanderings and mischief among the planes. Since Mask's disappearance, his Chosen sometimes occupy the keep.

Shadow Keep is barely visible in the gloom of the Shadowfell, and before noticing it as more than a deeper shadow, one can walk directly into its walls. Those walls are nonetheless solid. Mask's old lair hasn't crumbled despite the absence of its master.

Long ago, a portion of the keep was transformed into the legendary Fane of Shadows, a temple that travels worlds and planes serving the inscrutable agendas of the various gods and goddesses of shadows, twilight, and darkness. It is said that Mask manipulated the other deities so that he was able to appoint the guardian of the Fane, a being of unknown identity. Mask's Shadow Keep is one of the anchor points for the Fane. It returns from time to time, materializing from the darkness and reattaching to the keep.

The keep and the Fane no doubt hold vast treasures and artifacts Mask pilfered from the farthest reaches of the cosmos. Both edifices also contain other fearsome caretakers and traps set to ensnare or kill the unwelcome.



PANTHEON

THE WORLD of Toril is full of powerful beings and their servants. Competing sects of the same deity might fight deadly wars against each other, or could come together to work mighty rituals.

The Faerûnian pantheon is dominated by the greater gods, masters of their own domains and allied with or served by ranks of other gods, exarchs (divine beings of extraordinary power), and other extraplanar servitors. Much like their mortal worshipers, the gods seek and break alliances, fight, love, hate, and even kill, absorb, or resurrect each other.

The gods take an active interest in the affairs of Toril, exerting pressures both subtle and overt primarily through the actions of their mortal servants. Priests in thousands of different sects gain access to divine magic in exchange for their investiture in their church. They are the primary instruments of a church's mission in the world, and the only manifestation of divine power that the average mortal ever encounters.

This chapter contains the following sections.

- ◆ **The Greater Gods:** Eighteen greater gods control dominions in the Astral Sea. Each entry gives a god's title and alignment, and summarizes his or her area of interest (sphere). Holy days and religious practices are also described.
- ◆ **The Gods:** A number of the greater gods share their realms with deities only slightly less powerful. This brief section presents an example of a god, Umberlee.
- ◆ **Exarchs:** A summary of the role of these divine servants of the gods.
- ◆ **The Primordials:** Five primordials lord over realms in the Elemental Chaos. This section notes them and their areas of influence.
- ◆ **Archdevils:** These powerful fiends are almost as powerful as gods within their own levels of the Nine Hells.



GREATER GODS

The roles of the deities and the hierarchy they inhabit have changed many times over the millennia. The only certainty is that they will change again. The gods of Faerûn come in many forms and varying degrees of power and influence, but certain restrictions apply to all. Eighteen greater gods compete for the attention of worshipers.

Here you'll find brief descriptions of the powerful beings, both divine and primordial, who lord over the cosmos. Noteworthy information is summarized in tables at the end of the chapter.

LIFE AND DEATH

Though deities are immortal, they can be killed, and though they are eternal, they can be created. Over the long history of the cosmos, many beings have ascended to godhood, and just as many have fallen away from the memory of mortals.

Other deities, such as Lolth, have undergone extraordinary transformations, changing their own nature, the nature of their home plane, and the fabric of their worship.

AVATARS

It's exceedingly rare for gods to physically manifest. Still, they can appear in the world as avatars and thereby interact—often in disguise—with their mortal followers.

A deity can take whatever form is desired. He or she might appear as a human to humans, an elf to elves, and so on, even taking on a completely separate persona to worshipers of different races. Still, most gods have favored personas that remain relatively constant.

DIVINE SERVITORS

In addition to the more powerful exarchs, gods and greater gods are served by any number of extraplanar creatures. Most priests never speak directly to their deities, but they might have frequent contact with a servant of the divine hierarchy. Here are a few examples.

Angels: Most deities have angel servants. These semi-autonomous beings are created by deities, have free will, and can “fall from grace.”

Ghaunadans: These amorphous creatures of primeval ooze possess a wicked intelligence and serve Ghaunadaur.

Yochlols: These demonic handmaidens of the greater goddess Lolth are hideous creatures with razor-sharp teeth whose flesh drips like wax.

PRIESTS AND LAY WORSHIPERS

Priests are mortals who have dedicated their lives to the service of a specific deity. They tend to share an alignment with their god, but that isn't required. Priests sometimes adjust their devotion as they grow more powerful. They worship an exarch at heroic levels, a god at paragon levels, and a greater god at epic levels. Others gravitate to a greater god, or serve deities that have no exarchs at all.

Lay worshipers can swear fealty to a patron deity, and some Faerûnians do so for selfish ends (merchants who worship Waukeen, for instance, or sages who revere Oghma). Most common folk, however, are more egalitarian in their faith. They invoke several different divine beings over the course of a day, asking Tymora for luck, beseeching Auril for a break in a blizzard, or seeking Sune's favor with a matter of the heart.

AMAUNATOR

The Keeper of the Yellow Sun Lawful Good Greater God

Amaunator is the reincarnated deity of the sun, the timekeeper of the gods. Though some say he died, he actually transformed into Lathander, and was worshiped under that name for centuries before finally reclaiming both his name and his mission. He causes the sun to burn and sets its course across the sky, giving rise to the celestial clock by which all time is measured.



THE CHOSEN

A deity can touch a mortal worshiper with a sliver of divine grace, creating a Chosen as an instrument in the mortal world. The powers and missions of the Chosen vary from god to god.

A Chosen might ascend to the rank of exarch, which was the case for the likes of Clangeddin Silverbeard and Obould. Some, such as Lolth's Lady Penitent, Halistra Melarn, are created for a particular purpose, then discarded.

The post-Spellplague world includes no Chosen who are not exarchs.

All who benefit from the accurate keeping of clocks and calendars—such as farmers, merchants, and nomads who follow the seasons—revere Amaunator. He is also favored by those mortals who respect the law and find comfort in predictability.

Amaunatori are rigid and traditional in the worship of their deity, and little variety exists between different sects. His priests, the sunlords, offer their services as judges and administrators. Their most solemn observances are reserved for the day of the summer solstice.

ASMODEUS

Supreme Master of the Nine Hells
Evil Greater God

An ancient deity turned archdevil, the Lord of Nessus longed for untold millennia to reclaim his godhood. The destruction of Dweomerheart sent the dying Azuth (a patron deity of mages) into Asmodeus's fiery domain. The archdevil killed him and consumed his divine essence. He then ended the Blood War by pushing the Abyss to the bottom of the Elemental Chaos.

Asmodeus is the unquestioned master of the Nine Hells, served by the eight archdevils, armies upon armies of lesser devils, and an ever-growing cadre of mortal worshippers.

Priests who serve Asmodeus, known as the mordai, seek to pervert anyone who succumbs to greed and impatience. His sect observes no holy days; service is expected on a continuous basis.

Asmodeus can be a charismatic and generous deity, quick to reward anyone who is willing to sign away his soul. After death, the damned are enslaved for eternity to their fiendish god's dark designs.

BANE

The Black Lord
Evil Greater God

Thought to have been destroyed forever during the Time of Troubles, Bane returned to life in 1372 DR and continued his mission to dominate every mortal soul on Toril. The Black Lord of Banehold is the embodiment of tyranny.



Bane's lust for power doesn't stop at the mystical walls that separate the world from the heartless gray hellscape of Banehold. Bane also seeks lordship over other deities, and he has killed and absorbed the essence and followers of numerous divine beings. He has drawn others into his command, including the goblin deities Maglubiyet and Hruggek and his consort, the twisted goddess Loviatar.

Banite priests are expected to strive constantly for dominance over those around them. No holy days are observed in Bane's name, and the god scorns invocations that are not accompanied by proof of temporal power over others. When a mortal swears fealty to Bane, that service is absolute.

CHAUNTEA

The Great Mother
Lawful Good Greater Goddess

Chauntea is among the oldest of the deities, having been present at the creation of Abeir-Toril, infusing the twin worlds with the essence of life. She holds sway not so much over the natural world, but over the way in which sentient mortals interact with the world.

The Great Mother is revered by any who depend on the land for their livelihood. A kindly mistress, she ensures healthy harvests to those who treat the tilled earth with the respect she demands.

Chauntean priests pray to the Great Mother at sunset. For her favor, she asks that her faithful spend every effort preserving the natural cycle of growth and harvest. The devoted are divided into two sects: the pastorals, who minister to farmers and villagers, and the true shapers, solitary druids who find truth in the wild lands yet to be tamed.



CORELLON

First of the Seldarine
Good Greater God

Legends of the epic battles between Corellon (sometimes called Corellon Larethian) and Gruumsh are the most repeated in the history of Toril. During that great struggle, the eladrin were born of Corellon's blood. He is the benevolent ruler of Arvandor and the leader of the Seldarine ("the fellowship of brothers and



sisters of the wood”), god and exarchs who embody the eladrin’s proud and ancient traditions.

Though he is a skilled warrior, it is his love of the eladrin and their great works of magic and beauty that inspires Corellon. That inspiration is returned to his people a thousandfold.

Corellon’s feywardens are charged with protecting the traditions and works of their race. They turn aside political power, acting as advisors to the kings and queens of the elven realms.

The holiest day for Corellites is Shieldmeet, but every month they gather under the crescent moon to observe *Lateuquor*, the Forest Communion of the Crescent Moon, praising their deity with a multitude of beautiful works.

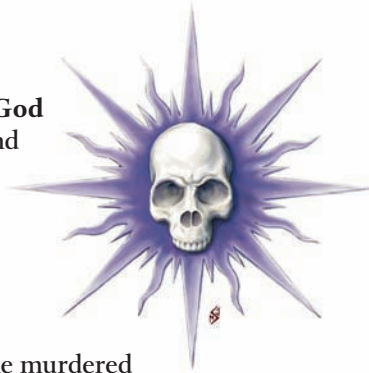
CYRIC

Prince of Lies

Chaotic Evil Greater God

The mad god of strife and lies, Cyric is chaos incarnate. He is reviled by his fellow deities, who have time and again intervened to stop his destructive flights of fancy. When he murdered Mystra in the Year of Blue Fire (1385 DR), the entire plane of Dweomerheart exploded, and the resulting Spellplague ravaged the cosmos. Tyr, Lathander, and Sune united to imprison him in his nightmarish playhouse of a plane, the Supreme Throne, where he remains to this day, alone and increasingly insane.

Cyricists, inspired by the lunatic clergy who call themselves strifeleaders, spread chaos, destruction, and insanity wherever they go. Few can understand what vile disease of the mind could bring a mortal to serve such a deity in the first place, but where his



worship takes hold, only misery follows. His wild rantings are inscribed in *The Cyrinishad*, a tome of ever-changing text that drives any who read it hopelessly mad.

GHAUNADAUR

That Which Lurks

Chaotic Evil Greater God

Ghaunadaur was once worshiped by drow and coexisted with Lolth when the Abyss held the Demonweb Pits. Not long after the Spider Queen transformed into a greater god, she arranged for Ghaunadaur’s drow followers to forget him.

That Which Lurks, having watched the rest of the drow deities die in their struggle against Lolth, knew enough to slink away into the darkest corner of the cosmos he could find. In the Dismal Caverns, Ghaunadaur’s power grew. He has come to rule the lowest forms of sentience: the oozes, slimes, and abominations.

Ghaunadaur revels in the suffering of all forms of life, and in the feel of flesh consumed by acid. He is revered by incredibly ancient creatures, including the terrifying abominations of the Abolethic Sovereignty. His priests are unbound by holy days or scripture, compelled only to destroy and consume in the name of their hateful master.



GRUUMSH

The One-Eyed God

Chaotic Evil Greater God

Gruumsh’s influence has flourished in recent decades with the growth of the orc population, and as other humanoids have come under his sway. His recent triumphs include putting the orc pantheon and other minor deities of the savage races under his thumb.

Though Gruumans maintain that their god was born with one eye, the eladrin assert that he lost an eye in combat with Corellon. The two divine powers have fought countless times, and they remain the bitterest of enemies.

Gruumsh is a god of conquest, driving his savage multitudes to expand their power by whatever brutal means they wish. His



AO

The Hidden One

Standing outside the divine hierarchy, and outside the cosmos, is the mysterious Ao. Thought by some to be the creator of the cosmos, his might is unimaginable. He is the judge of the deities, and the one power whom even the greater gods fear.

Ao exists beyond the concept of alignment or worship. He serves no one, and no one serves him. Instead he watches all, sees all, and judges all.

No mortal worships Ao. Any sects that spring up, based on fragmented legends and unreliable lore, disappear quickly. No legitimate priests of Ao exist in Toril.

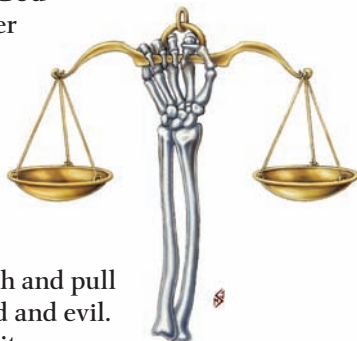
shamans advise chiefs and warmongers to raid, kill, and conquer.

The last day of Marpenoth, which Gruumans call *Gharfek'taaz* ("Feast of the Bloodied Stones"), commemorates Gruumsh's ascendancy as the master of Nishrek. On this day, new shamans are ordained in a bloody orgy of torture and sacrifice.

KELEMVOR

Lord of the Dead Unaligned Greater God

Kelemvor presides over the passage from life to death with a firm hand and a steady grace. He is deeply earnest in his role as the Judge of the Damned, having set himself above the push and pull of law and chaos, good and evil. He takes each soul as it comes, preaching only the natural inevitability of its transition from one world to the next.



Because of Kelemvor's deep respect for both life and death, the undead enrage him. His priests are tireless opponents of the necromantic arts. Families who lose a loved one are comforted by Kelemvor's doomguides, who counsel the bereaved with a gentle understanding and a simple philosophy that with light there must be darkness, with day there must be night, with life there must be death.

Shieldmeet and the Feast of the Moon are set aside as days of remembrance, when doomguides seek the counsel of the dead.

LOLTH

Queen of the Demonweb Pits Chaotic Evil Greater Goddess

The Spider Queen sits alone in the Demonweb Pits, presiding over the drow and their manifold schemes and betrayals. She revels in blood, hungers for sacrifice, and toys with worshipers and victims alike. Hers is a cold cruelty born of the blackest pits in the endless Abyss.

Lolth exists on her home plane in the form of seven monstrous spiders and one beautiful drow maiden. She took these forms when, through the force of her own



horrific will, she transformed into the greater goddess she is today.

Lolth appears to her worshipers from time to time, but never because she is summoned. Lolth serves no one, and she demands absolute fealty from all drow, though only females can serve her as arachne. Males are considered unclean, if occasionally necessary. Still, if one turns his back on her, she takes vengeful notice.

MORADIN

The Soul Forger Lawful Good Greater God

The All-Father forged the dwarf people from gems and precious metals in a furnace at the heart of the world, and imbued them with unflagging courage and a tireless work ethic. He is the undisputed King of Dwarfhome, where he leads the Moradinsamman, a fiercely loyal cadre of gods and exarchs. His faithful wife Berronar Truesilver is most often found at his side.



Virtually incapable of compromise, stern and unforgiving, Moradin is a tireless champion of dwarven values, unafraid even in the face of other deities. More than once the Moradinsamman have marched across the cosmos at the command of their king.

Priests of Moradin are drawn from the finest dwarven clans. They inspire their comrades to stand firm against insurmountable odds. Their ability to invoke a battle frenzy in their fellow dwarves is renowned.

Different clans develop their own traditions and days of holy obligation. When dwarves take to their "holy water" (what a human would call a very good pint of beer), drunken arguments over who's more in their deity's favor invariably lead to a little good-natured brawling.

OGHMA

The Binder of What Is Known Unaligned Greater God

The deity of knowledge is the judge of ideas and innovations, deciding what will be passed down and what will be forgotten. This is a responsibility that Oghma takes seriously, despite his outwardly carefree demeanor.

Oghma thrives on ideas. He cannot abide the stifling of an original thought, no matter what might come of it, good or ill. It is for him to decide if a





concept is carried forward from its originator, and he is protective of that power.

When Oghma's Chosen, Grand Patriarch Cullen Kordamant, disappeared more than 120 years ago, his faith was split between two major factions—Procampur's Orthodox Church of Oghma and the Oghmanyte Church in Exile, formerly of Sembia but now Cormyrian.

Orthodox priests are known as lorekeepers; the Oghmanytes call themselves namers. Both maintain expansive libraries and greedily pursue written texts and oral histories from across Toril.

SELÛNE

The Moonmaiden Good Greater Goddess

Together with her sister Shar, Selûne created Abeir-Toril from the cosmic ether and assisted Chauntea as she blessed the twin worlds with life. She has infused her spirit into the moon and forever looks down on the world she helped create.

Selûne's influence on Toril is felt in the ebb and flow of the tides and in the comforting silver glow of a moonlit night. She brings light to darkness, holding back the tide of evil embodied by her shadowy sister.

Mostly female, the Selûnite priests known as silverstars administer to their flocks with patience and compassion, letting all know that "anywhere the full moon shines is the place for Selûne."

Silverstars are particularly interested in combating the dark side of lycanthropy. They wander Toril in search of werereatures, hoping to aid them in maintaining or regaining control, or destroying those who have allowed their humanity to be overwhelmed by their affliction.



SHAR

Mistress of the Night Evil Greater Goddess

As old as the cosmos, Shar is one of the twin deities who created the world, bringing order out of Ao's primordial chaos. The balance to her sister's loving grace, Shar resides in the deepest shadows, nurturing the secret hatreds, the unnatural desires, and the lust for revenge that reside in the black corners of the mortal heart.

Her worshipers wield great power over other mortals and have worked their way into the highest governing ranks of countless realms. In the Empire of Netheril, allegiance to Shar, and Shar alone, carries the weight of law.

Her nightcloaks form their own cells from what scraps of secret lore they can find. Temples of Shar practice devotion to her in wildly varying ways. Often the presence of a temple is revealed only to a small inner circle of lay initiates who are tasked with spreading Shar's whispered dogma in their own way.



SILVANUS

The Forest Father Unaligned Greater God

The protector of the wild places, Silvanus is often seen as the deity of angry and vengeful druids who value the life of a tree over the life of a person. In fact, Silvanus teaches his followers to value all life. Still, his influence can be properly interpreted either as a wholesome respect for the natural world, or as a threat to the livelihood of expanding civilizations.

Druids of Silvanus say their prayers at sundown and set aside the days of Greengrass, Midsummer, and High-harvestide for meditation and communion with their deity and his affiliated powers. Seemingly at whim, Silvanus brings the natural world to sentient life, with streams finding their own courses and trees uprooting to walk around. This event, known as the Night the Forest Walks, can be localized or global in effect, entirely dependent on the unknowable desires of the Treefather.

Silvanus teaches his druids to watch from the protection of the woods, not to judge too quickly, and to preserve the balance of life and death, growth and decay.



SUNE

The Lady of Love Good Greater Goddess

The deity of love takes many forms, including that of Hanali Celanil, long worshiped as a goddess by the eladrin. She is the mistress of all that is beautiful and thrives on the most tender of emotions. Many deities, from Amaunator to Torm, have become smitten with the goddess of love, but she remains aloof (though flirtatious), reserving her love for the mortals who revere her name.



The worship of Sune is prevalent in cities and among the aristocracy, where people have the time to give proper attention to values such as romantic love and the preservation of beauty.

Numbering eight females for every male, Sune's heartwarders are among the most beautiful humans, eladrin, and half-elves on Toril. Their informal hierarchy is loosely controlled by the most charismatic of the local priests. Her temples are monuments to the architectural arts, and her followers are asked to demonstrate love through an unselfish act every day.

TEMPUS

The Foehammer Unaligned Greater God

The Lord of Warrior's Rest favors both sides in any conflict with equal measure as long as both are sworn to victory. He is the patron of warriors of all stripes—from the lowliest man-at-arms to the mightiest commander. For Tempus, war is a force of nature that must be respected for its power to remake civilizations.



Hardly a soldier on the face of Toril fails to lift his or her voice in prayer to Tempus on the eve of battle. Given the war-ravaged history of the world, Tempus has gained extraordinary power from such constant and fervent prayer.

His battleguards counsel generals on the rules of engagement and inspire courage in combatants by blessing their weapons in the name of Tempus. The Tempuran faith is scattered throughout the world, wherever arms are taken up, and his priests come

from all walks of life, from the soldiery of the civilized nations to the savage tribes of the frozen North.

TORM

The Loyal Fury Lawful Good Greater God

Torm became the master of Celestia after the heroic self-sacrifice of the legendary Tyr (who perished decades ago when defending the upper realms against an overwhelming demonic incursion). He now shines as the beacon of pure law in the cosmos, and stands as the most civilized and civilizing force in the pantheon. Truth, loyalty, and a steadfast devotion to a righteous cause are his gifts to his mortal followers, and he is an inspiration to many of his fellow deities as well.



The Tormish church includes the greatest number of paladins of any religious organization in the world, and his priests, known as holy champions, are accomplished warriors, ready to defend the principles of law and order.

His temples take the form of mighty citadels, their imposing architecture a symbol of Torm's earnest stability in the face of chaos. From these edifices, Tormish priests and paladins are sent out into the world to root out corruption in any form, often imposing their own sets of laws and procedures on nations they feel are too open to lawlessness.

The faithful celebrate two important holy days. The Divine Death (13 Marpenoth) commemorates the day when Torm and Bane destroyed each other during the Time of Troubles; the True Resurrection two days later honors Torm's return to life, while Bane (at least temporarily) still lay dead.

THE GODS

Most of the greater gods are served by one or more less powerful gods that share their basic principles and inhabit their home planes. Gods have mortal worshipers of their own, often with rich and complex faiths as varied as those of the greater gods. Many lay worshipers, in fact, are unaware of the distinction.

Nineteen gods are worshiped in Faerûn, spread across all alignments and holding mastery over a wide range of spheres. Gods usually act independently of the greater god of their planes, though some deities, such as Bane, hold sway over all the divine inhabitants of their realms.

Umberlee is an example of such a god. She dwells in the Deep Wilds of Silvanus, along with Auril and Mielikki.

UMBERLEE

The Bitch Queen

Chaotic Evil Goddess of the Deep Wilds

The Queen of the Deeps is a harsh mistress, largely uncaring of her mortal worshipers' pleas for mercy when one of her storms whips the seas of Toril into a killing frenzy. Still, hardly a soul steps aboard a ship who doesn't whisper at least a cursory appeal to her in the hope that her random mercies fall their way.

Her waveservants rely on the scattered alms of terrified sailors for a minimal living, preaching the majesty of the uncaring ocean and the inherent hopelessness of anyone who dares set to sea.

EXARCHS

Exarchs are often referred to as demigods. Many are ascended mortal servants of greater gods, brought up from the world to serve as agents of their divine masters. Some attract worshipers of their own, but they are more often simply conduits that serve to connect the mortal world with the attention of the higher deities.

Exarchs are incapable of forming planes of their own. They occasionally maintain smaller pocket universes or independent fiefdoms on their home planes.

Marthammor Duin is an example of an exarch. He serves Moradin, along with four other exarchs and the goddess Berronar, in the halls of Dwarfhome.

MARTHAMMOR DUIN

The Finder of Trails

Good Exarch of Dwarfhome

The volamtar, priests of Marthammor Duin, are the most commonly encountered dwarf clergy in the civilized surface realms of the North. Dwarves who leave the safety of their clanholds to explore the wider world pray to Marthammor for safety.

THE PRIMORDIALS

The Elemental Chaos provides essential building blocks for all matter in the cosmos, the primordial seed of all that is. The gods fear this wild plane of unimaginable extremes, and they respect the primordials that call it home.

The few primordials that remained in Toril when Abeir split away never fought the gods as their fellows did. These primordials are sometimes worshiped as deities despite their elemental origin.

THE ELEMENTAL LORDS

Five primordials rule realms within the Elemental Chaos. All but the chaotic evil Bazim-Gorag are unaligned.

Akadi: The Queen of the Air is the mistress of flying creatures and all that takes to the thin air. Her airwalkers teach that wisdom can be found only in

THE PANDEMONIUM STONE

The Pandemonium Stone isn't a permanent feature of the Elemental Chaos. This rough spire of various materials, ever-changing and immense, features carvings that come alive with elemental forces, undulate, then die down again. The massive stone manifests at random in place and time.

When it appears, the spire calls to the slaads, and they gather to bathe in its energy. The greatest of them, including Bazim-Gorag the Firebringer, eventually come to the Pandemonium Stone if the pinnacle stays long enough in one place. Tracing the movements of the stone, if possible, is likely the easiest way to find and attack the great slaad.

Stories differ as to what the stone is. Some suggest that it is a sleeping and immensely powerful slaad lord. Others speculate that it's a batrachi artifact, and that studying it could prove decisively whether slaads descend from that amphibious progenitor race.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Connections: None.

Primary Resident: Bazim-Gorag (primordial).

trial and error, a foundation for faith as thin as the air that their mistress embodies.

Bazim-Gorag: The Lord of the Pandemonium Stone (see the sidebar) is an ascended batrachi dedicated to pure chaos. He is chance incarnate, invoked by the powerless, the gamblers, and anyone who has lost hope in anything but an impossible twist of fate.

Grumbar: The Lord of the Earth is a being of stone and dirt, the foundation upon which all else is built. The earth makes no choices—it simply is. His earthwalkers resist change in any form.

Istishia: The Lord of Water is the embodiment of the constantly mutable nature of water. Not interested in Umberlee's storms or Valkur's sailors, he is an aloof and uncaring being.

Kossuth: The firewalkers who revere the Lord of Fire espouse the cleansing properties of flame and its role in the renewal of life. Kossuth is most often appealed to by lay folk as they watch their homes burn to the ground. They find him entirely uninterested.

Seven Lost Gods: This term has been used to describe different groups of powerful entities at different times, sowing confusion even among learned sages. Some of these so-called “lost gods” might have been primordials. One group of beings that could fit this designation includes Dendar the Night Serpent, Kezef the Chaos Hound, and Borem of the Boiling Mud.

ARCHDEVILS

The most powerful forces for pure evil in the cosmos are the combined hosts of the Nine Hells. They became the greatest single threat to the forces of good when the most ancient of them, Asmodeus, ascended to greater godhood.

Each archdevil commands a circle of the Nine Hells. A multitude of fiends serve the archdevils without question in their endless plotting and conquest. Mephistopheles might be the most powerful of them.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Lord of the Eighth

Evil Archdevil of the Nine Hells

The Duke of Cania embodies the casually cunning evil of the Nine Hells. From a labyrinthine citadel on the frozen hellscape of the Eighth Circle, Mephistopheles reaches out to the world, fomenting sin, and even siring children in the pursuit of his own unspeakable ends.

DEVIL WORSHIP

Pockets of misguided people have occasionally fallen into the worship of one or more archdevils. Lured by grandiose promises, those who worship devils soon come to realize that the ceremonies and rituals associated with devil worship are among the most despicable acts one could ever imagine committing. Thus, such cults are not common, but where they do exist, the inner circle of devil worshipers willingly exchange the eventual fate of their souls for immediate power.

The worship of Asmodeus is also considered devil worship, and mordai priests conduct many foul rites in his name. However, because the Lord of the Ninth is a true god, his worshipers are not necessarily required to conduct vile rituals to channel divine power. Not so for those who have fallen into worship of one of the lesser lords of hell.

The number of devil-worshiping cells is not specifically known; however, one of the most liberal assessments of that number comes from Elturgard. The High Justiciar of Torm believes that each of the Nine Lords supports at least one secret cell of celebrants, one perhaps as close as Cormyr.

However, the only confirmed cell lies in High Imaskar, somewhere within the cityspire of Skyclave. There, a self-proclaimed child of Mephistopheles has risen to the notice of the Empress, who has assigned more than one vengeance-taker to remove this presumed pretender. To date, all have failed either to find the location of the cell or, if they did, to return with that knowledge.

PANTHEONS OF THE WORLD

The following tables summarize the main facts about the various powerful beings described in this chapter.

A deity's sphere of influence can be a physical process or object such as the sun or fire, or a concept such as luck or courage. It might be a philosophy such as law or chaos, a vocation such as thievery or

mining, a skill such as archery or hunting, or a race such as drow or orcs. However a deity's sphere is articulated by mortals, the true agendas of the gods are rarely known in any detail by the beings who serve them.

GREATER GODS

Name	Alignment	Gender	Sphere	Dominion	Priests	Adjective
Amaunator	Lawful good	male	Sun	Eternal Sun	sunlords	Amaunatori
Asmodeus	Evil	male	Sin	Nine Hells	mordai	Asmodean
Bane	Evil	male	Tyranny	Banehold	dreadmasters	Banite
Chauntea	Lawful good	female	Life	Green Fields	druids	Chauntean
Corellon	Good	male	Fey	Arvandor	feywardens	Corellite
Cyric	Chaotic evil	male	Strife	Supreme Throne	strifeleaders	Cyricist
Ghaunadaur	Chaotic evil	male	Abominations	Dismal Caverns	amorphites	Ghaunadauran
Gruumsh	Chaotic evil	male	Savagery	Nishrek	shamans	Gruuman
Kelemvor	Unaligned	male	Death	Fugue Plane	doomguides	Kelemvorite
Lolth	Chaotic evil	female	Drow	Demonweb Pits	arachne	Lolthite
Moradin	Lawful good	male	Dwarves	Dwarfhome	sonnlinor	Moradite
Oghma	Unaligned	male	Knowledge	House of Knowledge	lorekeepers/namers	Oghmanyte
Selûne	Good	female	Moon	Gates of the Moon	silverstars	Selûnite
Shar	Evil	female	Shadows	Towers of Night	nightcloaks	Sharran
Silvanus	Unaligned	male	Nature	Deep Wilds	druids	Silvanites
Sune	Good	female	Beauty	Gates of the Moon	heartwarders	Sunite
Tempus	Unaligned	male	War	Warrior's Rest	battleguards	Tempuran
Torm	Lawful good	male	Law	Celestia	holy champions	Tormish

GODS

Name	Alignment	Gender	Sphere	Dominion	Priests	Adjective
Angharradh	Good	female	Wisdom	Arvandor	circle singers	Angharradhan
Auril	Chaotic evil	female	Winter	Deep Wilds	icepriestesses	Aurilian
Bahamut	Good	male	Justice	Celestia	Justiciars	Bahamutan
Berronar Truesilver	Lawful good	female	Family	Dwarfhome	faenor	Berronan
Beshaba	Evil	female	Bad luck	Warrior's Rest	doommasters	Beshaban
Garl Glittergold	Good	male	Protection	Arvandor	Glitterbrights	Garlian
Gond	Unaligned	male	Craft	House of Knowledge	Gondsmen	Gondar
Ilmater	Good	male	Suffering	Celestia	painbearers	Ilmatari
Loviatar	Evil	female	Pain	Banehold	pains	Loviatan
Luthic	Chaotic evil	female	Caves	Nishrek	shamans	Luthican
Mielikki	Good	female	Forests	Deep Wilds	druids	Mielikkian
Sheela Peryroyl	Good	female	Beauty	Green Fields	greenfosters	Sheelite
Sseth	Evil	male	Serpents	Towers of Night	mazewalkers	Ssethssar
Talona	Chaotic evil	female	Plague	Towers of Night	malagents	Talonite
Tiamat	Evil	female	Greed	Banehold	wyrmkeepers	Tiamatan
Tymora	Good	female	Good luck	Gates of the Moon	luckbringers	Tymoran
Umberlee	Chaotic evil	female	Sea	Deep Wilds	waveservants	Umberlant
Waukeen	Unaligned	female	Merchants	Eternal Sun	goldeyes	Waukeenar
Zehir	Evil	male	Poison	Towers of Night	Venomer	Zehiric

PRIMORDIALS

Name	Alignment	Gender	Sphere	Realm	Priests	Adjective
Akadi	Unaligned	female	Air	Sky Home	airwalkers	Akadian
Bazim-Gorag	Chaotic evil	male	Chaos	Pandemonium Stone	lords of change	Bazimite
Grumbar	Unaligned	male	Earth	Root Hold	earthwalkers	Grumbarryn
Istishia	Unaligned	male	Water	Cresting Spires	waterwalkers	Istishian
Kossuth	Unaligned	male	Fire	Undying Pyre	firewalkers	Kossuthan

EXARCHS

Name	Alignment	Gender	Sphere	Dominion	Priests	Adjective
Abbathor	Evil	male	Greed	Banehold	aetharnor	Abbathoran
Arvoreen	Lawful good	male	Vigilance	Green Fields	–	Arvoreenan
Baervan Wildwanderer	Good	male	Travel	Arvandor	–	Baervanian
Bahgtru	Chaotic evil	male	Brute strength	Nishrek	–	Bahgtrun
Baravar Cloakshadow	Good	male	Illusions	Arvandor	–	Baravarian
Brandobaris	Unaligned	male	Thievery	Green Fields	misadventurers	Brandobarian
Calladuran Smoothhands	Unaligned	male	Mining	Arvandor	earthbloods	Calladurian
Clangeddin Silverbeard	Lawful good	male	Battle	Dwarfhome	–	Clangeddite
Cyrrollalee	Good	female	Friendship	Green Fields	–	Cyrrollaleen
Deep Sashelas	Good	male	Oceans	Arvandor	–	Sashelan
Dugmaren Brightmantle	Good	male	Scholarship	Dwarfhome	–	Dugmarenite
Erevan Ilesere	Unaligned	male	Mischief	Arvandor	–	Erevanian
Fenmarel Mestarine	Unaligned	male	Outcasts	Arvandor	–	Fenmaren
Fzoul Chembryl	Evil	male	Service to evil	Banehold	–	Chembryn
Garagos	Chaotic evil	male	War	Warrior's Rest	bloodreavers	Garagathan
Hoar	Evil	male	Revenge	Banehold	doombringers	Hoarite
Hruggek	Evil	male	Ambush	Banehold	shamans	Hruggekan
Jergal	Unaligned	male	Fatalism	Fugue Plane	doomscribes	Jergali
Labelas Enoreth	Good	male	Longevity	Arvandor	–	Labelasan
Lliira	Good	female	Joy	Gates of the Moon	joydancers	Lliiran
Maglubiyet	Evil	male	Goblins	Banehold	shamans	Maglubiyen
Malar	Evil	male	Beasts	Deep Wilds	talons	Malarite
Marthammor Duin	Good	male	Explorers	Dwarfhome	volamtar	Marthammoran
Milil	Good	male	Song	House of Knowledge	sorlyn	Mililan
Obould	Chaotic evil	male	Warriors	Nishrek	–	Obouldan
The Red Knight	Lawful good	female	Tactics	Warrior's Rest	holy strategists	Red Knightist
Sharess	Good	female	Cats	Gates of the Moon	sensates	Sharessan
Shargaas	Chaotic evil	male	Night	Nishrek	–	Shargaasan
Shevarash	Unaligned	male	Vengeance	Arvandor	dhaeraowathila	Shevarashan
Shiallia	Good	female	Fertility	Deep Wilds	woodwives	Shiallian
Siamorphe	Lawful good	female	Nobility	Eternal Sun	highborns	Siamorphan
Solonor Thelandira	Good	male	Archery	Arvandor	–	Solonoran
Thard Harr	Good	male	Hunting	Dwarfhome	–	Thardite
Uthgar	Unaligned	male	Wildlands	Warrior's Rest	shamans	Uthgardt
Valkur	Good	male	Sailors	Warrior's Rest	wavetamers	Valkuryte
Vaprak	Chaotic evil	male	Frenzy	Nishrek	shamans	Vapran
Vergadain	Unaligned	male	Wealth	Dwarfhome	–	Vergadainan

ARCHDEVILS OF THE NINE HELLS

Name	Alignment	Gender	Territory	Priests	Adjective
Bel	Evil	male	First Circle	cultists	Bellic
Dispater	Evil	male	Second Circle	cultists	Dispatian
Mammon	Evil	male	Third Circle	cultists	Mammonian
Belial	Evil	male	Fourth Circle	cultists	Bellian
Levistus	Evil	male	Fifth Circle	cultists	Levistan
Glasya	Evil	female	Sixth Circle	cultists	Glasyan
Baalzebul	Evil	male	Seventh Circle	cultists	Baalzebaan
Mephistopheles	Evil	male	Eighth Circle	cultists	Mephistophelean

FAERÛN AND BEYOND

HIGH MOUNTAIN ranges plunge to misted forests dotted with ruined castles and older, crumbled civilizations long forgotten. City-states, vast kingdoms, theocracies, magocracies, and regions ruled by undead seek to expand their influence. Towering mountains and oceans of grassland, blasted deserts and lush forests, islands in the sky and lands that swirl and change as if water—Toril is a world of extremes, in climate, in terrain, and in people.

The fantastic alterations of the last century are mere history for most creatures that draw breath in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. Few humans now recall the Year of Blue Fire (1385 DR), unless they have magically cheated old age, or were changed in the wake of the unfettered wild power that infected flesh, matter, and magic equally. Even the deities had their casualties.

When the Spellplague raged, whole countries were wiped away, especially in Faerûnian regions south of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Other lands were barely affected, at least in comparison. Yet even the most unchanged locations saw the appearance of motes of untethered landscape freely floating in the sky.

Toril has thousands of stories to tell. It contains countless locations suitable for a one-shot adventure, a long-running campaign, or an epic story. Adventurers can choose from among the world's many kingdoms, cities, ruins, lairs, and wild places to try their strengths and face their fears. The roads over which characters trek might be under sun, or beneath the earth, or might lead to entirely new realms. Wherever the characters dare, soul-shivering danger, undying glory, fabulous rewards, and exciting adventure beckon.

This chapter identifies significant regions, countries, and city-states of Toril, describing them in a fashion suited for both Dungeon Masters and myth makers. Important settlements, current events, ruins, dungeons, items, plots, and people are highlighted throughout the text. Not simply a geographical catalog, this chapter is a vibrant gazetteer of fantastic imagery and story.





OVERVIEW

The world of the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is Toril. This Earth-sized planet is dominated by oceans surrounding a handful of continents, the largest of which stretches more than 8,500 miles east to west.

FAERÛN

When the eladrin first stepped upon its verdant soil, they called the world Faerûn, an old Elven term meaning “One Land.” Today, Faerûn describes only the westernmost portion of an immense landmass; Kara-Tur lies to the east. Faerûn is the cradle of the world. It is bounded on the west by the Trackless Sea, on the south by the Great Sea, on the east by the wide expanses of the Hordelands, and on the north by the ice of the uttermost arctic.

THE NORTH

The extent of the North is debated, but most agree it includes the entire wilderness south from the Spine of the World through the High Forest, and east from the Evermoors through to the Icerim Mountains.

An endless, unbreakable wall of frigid, snow-capped peaks in the Spine of the World holds the Kingdom of Many-Arrows, an orc realm ruled by a succession of peaceable kings uncommon for their kind. Tucked beyond the Wall is tiny Icewind Dale. The more civilized of this “Savage Frontier” have come together in coalition to form Luruar, a confederation of city-states also known as the League of the Silver Marches. The dour dwarves in their fortified citadels left the League long ago, unwilling to break their age-old enmity with the orcs.

SWORD COAST

Commerce along the Trade Way and other caravan routes binds the city-states of the Sword Coast. The coast itself is treacherous, featuring undersea reefs, rocky outcroppings, and a soft, mucky bottom that extends for miles in many areas. True ports are few and far between, a fact that makes the sheltered bay at the foot of Mount Waterdeep so precious. Its natural harbor has permitted Waterdeep, the City of Splendors, to grow into one of the shining jewels of the Sword Coast. Port cities north of Waterdeep didn't fare well in the years after the Spellplague; both Neverwinter and Luskan are now in utter ruin. Baldur's Gate, on the other hand, survived the last century relatively unscathed and has swelled to become the most populous city in Faerûn. Candlekeep remains a bastion of learning, though the crag it rests upon now stands at least 100 feet off the coast.

TRACKLESS SEA

Many small kingdoms dot the restless sea off the western shores of the Sword Coast. The northern islands—among them Icepeak, Tuern, and Gundarlun—are little more than rugged peaks buffeted by swirling winds and cold currents brought south and west from the Sea of Moving Ice. At the heart of the Sea of Swords lie the Moonshaes, a large cluster of rocky islands cloaked in mists and covered in deep woods. Mastery of the Trackless Sea has long been the domain of proud seafaring peoples of Ruathym, though the reavers of the Nelanther Isles challenge that claim at present. The fey isle of Evermeet still lies more than a thousand miles west of the Sword Coast—but now the world has lost contact with this refuge, which has been relocated to the Feywild.

WESTERN HEARTLANDS

South of Luruar, the land and the people grow less wild. The Western Heartlands thrive on a gently rolling agricultural area centering on the Chionthar River, fortified by the gleaming bulwark of Elturgard and its righteous paladin defenders. The nearby City of Thousand Spires has so far resisted attempts to join the neighboring theocracy. Northeast of Elturgard, sandwiched between mighty Netheril and sinister Najara, dwells the mist-shrouded city of Everska. Protected by its ancient mythal and staunch defenders, this eladrin city stands as a deterrent to expansion by the Netheril Empire. The most serious threat to the region stems from the serpent kingdom of Najara encompassing the eastern reaches of the High Moor, the Serpent Hills, the Forest of Wyrms, the Marsh of Chelimber, and the river valleys that meander through the area.

EASTERN HEARTLANDS

The human nations of the Heartlands share a common language, and their cultural heritage and social order are similar. Over the last century Cormyr has reluctantly grown into an imperial power annexing cities along the Dragon Coast, as well as fortifying its holdings throughout the Stonelands and Tilver's Gap. Sembia, now a vassal state of the Netheril Empire, has become more aggressive, swallowing up a few dales along its borders. The remaining Dalelands have since united under strong leadership in Mistedale and the welcome protection of Myth Drannor. Westgate proved too large and powerful to be drawn into the orbit of either Cormyr or Sembia and remains self-governing. The once independent city-states of the Vast have united to form the nation of Vesperin. All free communities of the Eastern Heartlands remain vigilant, wary of the imposing presence of Netheril.

NETHERIL

The Empire of Netheril, long covered by the Great Desert of Anauroch, has been partially restored to the green steppes and verdant forests of its ancient past. Local Bedine tribes have been largely integrated into Netherese society, though a group of separatists known as the Sand Kings have been opposing the Shadovar at every opportunity. Netheril has also brought Sembia under its control as a vassal state, patrolled by the floating enclave Sakkors. It attempted the same in the Moonsea, but the Zhen-tarim fought back, forcing the Shadovar into more destructive acts of conquest.

MOONSEA LANDS

The Moonsea, in reality a deep freshwater lake, is the centerpiece of a land of harsh climate and hardened folk. The region includes many city-states ruled by tyrants. Its northern steppes are dominated by roving tribes. The western reaches are dotted with monster-infested ruins—the burned-out hulks of Zhentil Keep and other strongholds of the former Black Network. The Church of Bane is still strong in the region, its power base moved to the dark eastern metropolis of Mulmaster. The Great Gray Land of Thar remains a desolate breeding ground for orcs, ogres, and minotaurs. The brutish humanoids provide a buffer for the civilized lands against the growing predations of neighboring Vaasa.

THE DEMONLANDS

This region consists of isolated territories of tough folk, hardened by decades of conflict with demonic beasts and fell magic. It includes Impiltur, Damara, Vaasa, Narfell, and the Great Dale. The region saw a glimmer of hope when King Gareth Dragonsbane united Damara and Vaasa into the unified kingdom of Bloodstone, and when young King Imbrar II of Impiltur dissolved the council of paladins (the Lords of Imphras II) and began ruling unfettered by the dynastic machinations of the past. This prosperity was not to last. The assassination of Dragonsbane's heir twenty years ago led to civil war throughout Bloodstone, allowing the patient Warlock Knights to seize control of windswept Vaasa. King Imbrar's death and the retreat of the Inner Sea in the Year of Blue Fire ended Impiltur's hopes. The kingdom is now firmly in the grip of the Fraternity of Tharos, a fanatical cult of demon-worshippers. Demons freely menace the Dunwood and terrorize the villages of the Great Dale and frigid Narfell.

AURIL'S TEETH

The inhospitable wintry land of Auril's Teeth features mile after mile of windswept tundra incapable of supporting agriculture. At its center lies indomitable

Pelvuria, the Great Glacier. Only nomadic tribes of humans and dwarves, who hunt reindeer and fish the frigid rivers and lakes of the region, survive in this harsh land. The glacier has been slowly receding over the last century, and its melting has uncovered passages to the monster-infested Frostfell at the top of the world. The only civilization of any note in the area is the remote arctic realm of Sossal, sandwiched between Pelvuria and the Great Ice Sea.

THE UNAPPROACHABLE EAST

Beyond the Easting Reach lie the exotic lands folk in the Heartlands call the Unapproachable East. Today, this region is dominated by the dark and forbidding land of Thay and its endless undead armies. A pall of smoke and ash smothers the land, sometimes extending into neighboring territories. On Thay's periphery lie the rugged lands of Aglarond, Rashemen, and Thesk. Aglarond is a land of open water and deep woods peopled predominately by half-elves. Feral warriors name the rolling hills and sparse pine forests of Rashemen home. Ruled by the Iron Lord and the mysterious Wychlaran, this land of witches and berserkers has confidently defended its borders for centuries. Thesk, the Gateway to the East, is the starting point of the fabled Golden Way trade road to far-off Shou Lung on the continent of Kara-Tur. This land of tolerant folk is home to large numbers of civilized orcs, Tuigan settlers, and Shou refugees.

EMPIRES OF THE ALAMBER SEA

On the Alamber's eastern shore rises the Empire of High Imaskar, ruling over the region once known as Mulhorand, which was wiped clean during the Spellplague. High Imaskar enjoys a trade alliance with Tymander, a realm of dragonborn that occupies the former lands of Unther. The people of Tymander are militaristic, toughened by generations of fighting dragons. Mount Thulbane in the north is

THE HEAVENS ABOVE TORIL

One satellite and seven other planets are visible in the firmament, known as the Sea of Night, that surrounds the planet of Toril.

A lone moon named Selûne orbits Toril every 30 days; eclipses happen frequently. Following the moon in its path across the Sea of Night is a collection of shining shards, called the Tears of Selûne.

In addition to the moon, seven visible planets wander the star-misted Sea of Night. They are dusky Anadia, green Coliar, blue Karpri and Chandos, ringed Glyth, odd-shaped Garden, and disk-shaped H'Catha. All follow regular orbits around the sun. The stars are distant and eternal, forming patterns and constellations that each culture names according to its own desires.

an active volcano, sending billowing smoke into the air and blanketing dragon-ruled Threskel under an ashen sky. The Black Ash Plains, south of the Smoking Mountains, are home to a tribe of stone giants. South of High Imaskar, the ancient realm of Okoth has been restored at Azulduth. It is ruled by the sarrukh, an ancient race of serpent people and one of the legendary *iqua Tel'Quessir* (creator races). Okoth continues to rebuild, slowly and secretly, unwilling to draw the attention of more established realms.

SEA OF FALLEN STARS

The Inner Sea was once four separate bodies of water until the batrachi realm of Kolophon was devastated nearly 33,000 years ago. Scholars generally hold that a chunk of Toril's second moon struck Faerûn at that time. Today the Sea of Fallen Stars has dropped almost 50 feet from its pre-Spellplague level. The Abolethic Sovereignty, ruled by aboleths and their aberrant servitors from its floating city Xxiphu, is greatly feared throughout the region. Other monsters known as the Unfettered swim the waters and soar the skies of the Sea of Fallen Stars. The undersea depths of Serôs are controlled in the west by fey from Myth Nantar and in the east by the sahuagin realm of Alextis. The Pirate Isles host buccaneers, cutthroats, and the like, though pirate attacks have been significantly reduced in the last century.

NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

The pages of this book are filled with nonplayer characters—potential allies, patrons, rivals, villains, and extras that can help to bring the world of the Forgotten Realms to life in your campaign. If you're familiar with past incarnations of the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, you might be surprised not to see any game statistics for many of these characters. If you end up wanting to use these characters in combat situations, creating their game statistics is up to you. Bear in mind these three principles:

It's your world. You can change or invent the game statistics for any character in this book.

It's your game. Design challenges that are appropriate to the level of your characters. If you want to use the shade assassin Belendithas (see page 106) as a threat in your game, he might be 8th level or 28th level, depending on the level of your characters. Of course, if you want him to be significantly tougher than your characters, you can set his level above theirs and keep him as an off-stage threat until they're ready to fight him.

Use the resources you have. The *Monster Manual* provides many statistics you can use as a starting point for nonplayer characters, and future *Monster Manual* volumes will offer more options. Also, articles on D&D Insider will expand many of the characters mentioned only in passing in this book, providing full combat statistics you can use or adapt for your game.

VILHON WILDS

The lands of the Vilhon Reach were affected greatly by the merging of Abeir with Toril. The waters of the Reach were partially drained, revealing several ruined Cities of the Sword from the ancient Jhaamdath psiocracy. The once welcoming and cosmopolitan folk of Turmish have grown increasingly xenophobic. Akanûl, formerly the lands of Chondath, is now populated by genasi from the Abeiran land of Shyr. This region barely survived its first contact with the Abolethic Sovereignty roughly fifty years ago. Since the Year of Blue Fire, civilization has been slow to return to the wilder Spellplague-morphed regions. In the nearby Plaguewrought Land, the surreal landscape features thousands of earthmotes, swaths of moving rock, and great ravines that lead directly to the Underdark.

ERLKAZAR AND THE LAKE OF STEAM

South of the Vilhon Wilds and north of the Lake of Steam, a temperate climate and good cropland engender stability and burgeoning populations. The Baronies of Erlkazar are seemingly peaceful and idyllic. When night falls, however, the vampire thralls of the Night Barony terrorize the region. Arnaden, the Lake of Steam, is a shallow, enclosed bay of the Shining Sea, its stinking, warm yellow waters a testament to volcanic activity. The desertification of the Lake's southern shores has transformed the Border Kingdoms into a lawless frontier of outlaws and would-be rulers.

LANDS OF INTRIGUE

South of the Western Heartlands and west of Erlkazar are the so-called Lands of Intrigue: Amn, Muranndin, Tethyr, and the duchy of Velen. The entire region is suited to agriculture, though the ruling merchant houses of Amn have chosen to focus on trade and colonization, organizing mercenary companies to strong-arm and intimidate its neighbors. Tethyr's feudal monarchy, the Rhindaun line, governs from its capital in Darromar. Between these two human nations lie the fey-ruled Wealdath and the monstrous kingdom of Muranndin. Cut off by Muranndin, remote Velen seceded from Tethyr in the Year of Thundering Hosts (1423 DR).

CALIMSHAN (SKYFIRE EMIRATES)

Home to genasi and their human slaves, Calimshan is engaged in a civil war for control of the harsh desert of the Skyfire Wastes. A second Era of Skyfire once again pitted the forces of Calim and Memnon against each other. As during previous battles between these ancient foes, fell magic was employed that drained the life from the landscape. The sands of the Calim Desert spread east during the decades-long conflict, consuming the once-fertile Schamedar Plains and

the fetid Spider Swamp (present-day Plain of Stone Spiders). Even the beautiful city of Suldolphor now lies in sand-blasted ruin along Talagath's Gauntlet. Almraiven is the lone human bastion in this war-torn land of efreet, djinns, and their genasi servitors.

SAVAGE COAST

Chult is a craggy jungle plateau rimmed by large volcanic mountains and filled with savage beasts, hulking behemoths, and disease-ridden swamps. To the east, the lands previously known as Samarach, Thindol, Tashalar, and Lapaliya are now wholly or partially drowned. The yuan-ti kingdom of Serpentes fell too when the waters of the Great Sea joined violently with those of the Shining Sea. Today the few scattered miles of dry land poking above the ocean are known as the Mhair Archipelago.

THE SCARRED SOUTH

Once called the Shining South, the lands east of the Savage Coast have suffered cataclysmic changes since the days of the Spellplague. Formerly an immense savannah, the Shaar became a vast dustbowl when the formation of the Underchasm cut off all fresh water flowing to the area. South of the Shaar Desolation, scattered tribes of xenophobic elves hunt down and kill any intruders who attempt to cross this semi-arid region that outsiders name Elfharrow. Once a great magocracy, Halruaa today is wholly unrecognizable. Neither land nor population escaped the natural and magical disasters that struck the nation. Dambrathan clans rose up against their half-drow masters in the decades following the Spellplague and have since embraced lycanthropy. The formerly peaceful and tranquil halfling shire of Luiren now rests at the bottom of an immense gulf opening into the Great Sea. The few *hin* who survived the deluge fled to previously landlocked Delzimmer.

THE BEASTLANDS

The Beastlands derive their name primarily from the monster-infested remains of the lost kingdom of Veldorn. Still, most northerners lump Durpar, Estagund, and Ulgarth under the same appellation. Even the more civilized lands of the region are filled with bizarre sights unheard of in the north, such as Durpari replacing their natural limbs with magically animate crystal. The birdlike kenkus have become prominent in the region's larger settlements.

MURGHÔM

Boxed in between the necrotic nation of Thay and the sandy badlands of Raurin, the ancient nations of Murghôm and Semphâr are under the dominion of the dragon princes. For the most part benevolent, the dragons receive monthly tribute from their subjects

in exchange for protection. In recent decades, spies from High Imaskar have begun to infiltrate the area, seeking to unearth ancient artifacts from the ruins that dot the perimeter of Brightstar Lake. Many dragon princes are aware of, and fully support, these incursions, expecting to relieve the Imaskari of their ill-gotten gains once discovered.

THE HORDELANDS

The steppes north of Murghôm are blasted in winter by storms from the Great Ice Sea, and baked in summer by searing winds from the Quoya Desert. This inhospitable mixture of extremes discourages all but the hardiest peoples from settling in a land others view as the Endless Waste. The horse warriors known as the Tuigan, descendants of the ancient empires of Imaskar and Raumathar, have long lived a nomadic existence on the rolling tundra and steppes of the region. Today, the environs in and around the Lake of Mists are home to all manner of elemental beasts. The lands for miles around are scattered with low mounds topped by standing stones. On the far eastern border of the Hordelands, past the enormous Quoya Desert, lie the ruins of the Dragonwall. The spirit of the dragon that once inhabited this structure was released from its millennia-long imprisonment during the chaos of the Spellplague.

RETURNED ABEIR

A realm once forgotten is forgotten no more. When the Weave unraveled and the Spellplague collapsed the walls of reality, the antediluvian world of Abeir crashed through to Toril. The two long-separated siblings were joined anew, but only imperfectly. Portions of Abeir fell across Toril, overlaying some lands and obliterating others. In Faerûn, the realms of Akanûl and Tymrather are Abeiran seeds that germinated nations. The greatest portion of the returning world, however, replaced Maztica, the continent west of Faerûn. Now, a savage land breathes beneath a steely sky across the Trackless Sea: Returned Abeir. Here, ancient primordials sleep while their rapacious dragon mounts of old rule vast empires. It is from Abeir that dragonborn and genasi hail, steeped in lore previously unknown in Faerûn.

UNDERDARK

The Underdark is a network of tunnels, caverns, seas, and rivers that spans the entire world. Lightless, but far from lifeless, the Underdark is home to a dizzying array of creatures, from the civilized but unforgiving drow to carnivorous monsters that haunt the darkness. In these depths, drow rule mighty cities, the queen of which is the metropolis of Menzoberranzan. But their rule is far from absolute. In dark tunnels, mind flayers conspire, and aboleths slide on mucus trails.

AGLAROND

A land of open water and deep woods, Aglarond is a nation of humans, elves, and half-elves on a broad peninsula thrust into the Sea of Fallen Stars. Elves and humans have intermingled in Aglarond for centuries—few natives can claim a pure bloodline one way or the other. No other region in Faerûn has a higher half-elf population.

AGLAROND LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Thay has literally risen as a land of shadowed death. Exiled zulkirs, former wizard-rulers, have appeared in the already Thay-influenced Wizard's Reach. As a result, Aglarond has been forced to recognize that Thay's presence (expatriate or not) isn't going to fade anytime soon. The chronic irritant of Thay galled Aglarond's newly formed Simbarch Council beyond reason. The nation raised armies and took the fight to the exiled zulkirs. The war was long and fierce, and Aglarond suffered much. Having defeated the Aglarondan advance, the zulkirs-in-exile returned to Thay to proclaim their victory. The Thayan Regent, Szass Tam, rewarded them only with death. The zulkirs left behind administrators and soldiers in the Wizard's Reach, but in the chaos and confusion that followed the rulers' deaths, Aglarond declared renewed sovereignty over the area. It remains to be seen whether the Thayan remnants will gainsay the Simbarch Council's declaration without their former leaders.

Streetwise DC 10: In addition to the threat of an overt attack by Thay's undead army, evils spawned under Thay's influence find their way to the wilds of Aglarond's Yuirwood. To the north, expanding Thesk now encroaches. The Aglarondans get along well with the Nentyarch of the Great Dale, and also with the genasi of the city of Airspur to the south.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Aglarond includes both coastal land and communities, as well as the vast Yuirwood forest.

THE SIMBUL

The former ruler of Aglarond is thought to have perished in the Year of Seven Sisters (1425 DR). Many believe the Simbul was consumed in the fire that destroyed the god Velsharoon, and they honor her sacrifice in keeping the god's corpse—a powerful token in its own right—out of evil hands. In truth, the powerful mage did survive the conflagration and now resides in the Dalelands.

VELTALAR

Capital City; Population 70,000

Aglarond's capital, formerly called Velprintalar, is the nation's chief port. The inhabitants followed the retreating coast as the Sea of Fallen Stars subsided late in the previous century. They left behind the older, narrower, jumbled buildings of what is now called Old Velprintalar to worsening slumhood.

Simbarch Council: Aglarond is ruled by a council of fifteen simbarchs, all spellcasters. They meet in the old Palace of the Simbul, a mansion of pale green stone built upon a rise overlooking the city. The simbarchs inherited both the palace and their titles from the country's former ruler, though their current positions required armed strife with outlying populations who were initially disinclined to be governed by the Council.

One simbarch, Seriadne, takes the form of an elf but is actually a malaugrym who seeks to advance her own sinister agenda. Another, Ertrel, works to undermine his fellow simbarchs—he is allied with Ambal, the leader of the Stone Bears thieves' ring.

UNDUMOR

Thayan Outpost

Aglarond's grim fortress-city Emmech was lost to Thayan influence and renamed Undumor. This fortification at the mouth of the River Umber houses voracious monsters, vampire knights, and shambling corpses under the command of a necromancer.

Forces of untried city youths and battered woodfolk, launched from Citadel Dantalien, join in perennial attempts to clear the undead threat. Rumor has it that Undumor is burrowing under the Umbar River to bypass Dantalien with a tunnel wide enough to disgorge hundreds of shambling corpses each minute.

THIEVES OF VOLTALAR

The Stone Bears are notorious Aglarondan thieves. They operate out of Old Velprintalar, the squalor of which frustrates any real effort by city officials to bring the thieves to justice.

Ambal leads the Stone Bears. Most are unaware that he is heir to great wealth. His grandfather, a powerful human merchant, survived the civil war that followed when the Simbul disappeared. Although Aglarond has mostly accepted the rulership of the simbarchs, some wealthy human lords still wait for the opportunity to overthrow them and install a nonspellcaster. Ambal styles himself just such a revolutionary. He finances his machinations against the rule of simbarchs through both thievery and secret donations by noble human malcontents.

WATCHWALL

Southeastern Defense

The Watchwall is a massive, magically engineered stone wall stretching 15 miles from the fortress city of Glarondar to the slopes of mighty Umbergoth. The Watchwall overlooks the Umber Marshes, a morass of bogs, swamps, and mudflats run through with shallow streams that drain south.

The Army of the Green Drake consists of a mere 350 troops stationed in Glarond Keep and along the Watchwall. Their numbers are so significantly reduced from their former strength that monsters out of Thay and the Umber Marshes are becoming bolder. Still, the threat along the Watchwall is considered minor compared to that from Undumor. Thus, troop levels remain low, as does morale.

YUIRWOOD

Peninsular Forest

Aglarond's signature feature is the Yuirwood, a forest whose depths are a dangerous expanse of plague-lands and hostile fey. The woods also contain ancient, malfunctioning portals that open sometimes to a splintered nightmare land of loss, and other times, to the Feywild.

The wild tribes of half-elves and elves of the Yuirwood are suspicious of outsiders, including their fellow citizens living along the coasts. They dispute the rule of the Simbarch Council. The simbarchs, for their part, have made little effort to assert their authority over the denizens of the deep woods. Until recently, they were more concerned with the ex-zulkirs in the Wizard's Reach.

Of more concern are the plaguelands hidden in the tangles of the Yuirwood. Ruins of an eladrin civilization litter the forest and seem to attract pockets of active Spellplague, especially within menhir circles. These standing stones are monuments that also mark fey portals that once opened onto a realm called



Sildëyuir. A few circles now lead to fragments of that fabled land—lands of solid ground inhabited by strange monsters. A large part of Sildëyuir was pulled into the returning Feywild, and many eladrin finally found a true home there.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Laothkund the Drowned: The sinking waters of the Sea of Fallen Stars did not match the subsidence of the land beneath Laothkund. Now fish swim Laothkund's silt-dusted lanes, and sea monsters inhabit its drowned towers. The dead city's treasures yet lie in the cold depths.

Tannath Mountains: This range forms the southern edge of the Dragonjaw Mountains, south of the River Umber. The mountains are tall and rugged, flanked by wide passes. Griffons, giants, and stony beings more mountain than flesh inhabit the high peaks and steep slopes. Abandoned silver mines puncture the Tannath slopes, worked out and empty. However, rumor has it that the old mine shafts now serve as warrens for an extended tribe of opportunistic goblins.

The Witchhouse: Legend tells of six sisters who inhabit an old mansion on the Yuirwood's western edge. In one night of blood, the sisters murdered their father, mother, and brothers and swore a pact to something infernal. Even fifty years later, the so-called "Velprin Witches" inspire scores of scary stories. Foresters sometimes stumble upon their decrepit mansion, although not always in the same place. When people in western Aglarond disappear, it is said the Velprin Witches took them.

CITADEL DANTALIEN

The simbarchs constructed a fortress south of Undumor, directly across the wide Umber River. The massive citadel is continually seeking naive recruits, skilled adventurers, and mercenaries loyal to coin.

The citadel provides basic training and equipment for raw recruits assigned to bottling up the undead of Undumor. Whenever possible, the citadel's leadership assembles elite groups of four to six adventurers each and sends them on missions near and even inside the haunted city.



AKANÛL

This land is characterized by crazed stone spires, cavernous ravines, and cliffs like petrified waves. Free-floating earthmotes host miniature forests, grasslands, and lakes. Ever-replenishing waterfalls flow from watermotes to drape the land below in curtains of mist. The wild landscape seems perfectly suited to the tempestuous genasi who claim the land as their own. They breed several varieties of drakes to assist them in trade, transport, and war.

Akanûl's capital and largest city, Airspur, holds the bulk of the population. Otherwise, the claimed territory is mostly frontier. The shattered ruins of Chondathan cities lie broken at the bottom of ravines or thrust high atop stone buttes, a constant draw to adventurers seeking troves of lost gold. Predators native to Abeir hunt shadowed lowlands, while ravenous abolethic horrors stalk the cloud-girdled northern skies, pursuing their own inscrutable plans.

AKANÛL LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: A portion of Toril's sibling world Abeir violently exchanged places with western Chessenta during the Spellplague. Prior to the merger, this Abeiran land was populated predominantly by genasi in the realm of Shyr. Generations of Shyran genasi suffered under the brutal rule of a primordial named Karshimis. When the Spellplague struck, only a portion of Shyr was transferred. The transported genasi rejoiced upon discovering that their overlord's citadel of burning ice had not made the trip with them, and set about creating a realm of their own. Akanûl is now counted among the nations of Faerûn.

Akanûl survived its first contact with the Abolethic Sovereignty roughly fifty years ago. During that conflict, the genasi's first city of Brassune was destroyed and depopulated by unfettered kraken. Survivors fled the northernmost portion of the kingdom, which remains abandoned. The current capital city of Airspur was constructed miles to the southeast, from the bones of a lost Chondathan city of the same name.

Streetwise DC 15: Akanûl is allied with High Imaskar and Aglarond, and is currently on good

GETTING AROUND AKAÛL

Wondrous suspension bridges are prevalent in Airspur and other areas. These connections run from cliff dwellings to sky-scraping towers and even to earthmotes. Thickly muscled, if slow, draft drakes pull conveyances across these bridge-roads. Simple carts compete with elaborate carriages for space on the swaying lanes.

terms with Chessenta despite the rivalry between that land and High Imaskar. Netheril too has an embassy in Airspur. This Shadovar toehold has soured relations with the kingdom of Cormyr. Akanûl has no direct ties with Calimshan, viewing the slave-owning genasi of that realm as decadent and morally bankrupt. Akanûl and Tymanther, another Abeiran land, still hold long-standing grudges, and the two have occasionally skirmished in the blasted land of Chessenta's southern marches.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Akanûl is noted for its awe-inspiring vistas and the dangers that gird its borders and lowlands.

AIRSPUR

Capital City; Population 30,000

Airspur's infrastructure, shops, and dwellings are incorporated into Akanûl's wondrous landscape of elemental spires and earthmotes. In this three-dimensional city, upper spires do not necessarily have a foundation on solid land (though most do). The city is patrolled by genasi riding well-trained war drakes.

Airspur is home mostly to genasi. Representatives of other races also live here, usually craftspeople, mercenaries, or other specialized workers, but genasi also fill many of these positions (and none but genasi ever act in leadership roles). Being a genasi in the city means never having to worry about falling on hard times. The queen sees to the basic needs of all refugees from Shyr and their direct descendants (although criminals and ne'er-do-wells are eventually expelled).

The Queen and the Four Stewards: Akanûl is ruled by Queen Arathane in partnership with the four Stewards of Earth, Fire, Sea, and Sky. Arathane is considered a good and just ruler. Her throne is high atop a twisted spire above Airspur where each of the

FIRESTORM CABAL

Even in a kingdom as idealistically founded and enthusiastically supported by its citizens as Akanûl, dissent exists. Some genasi hold the queen and the four Stewards in contempt for their failure to adequately secure the kingdom's borders, against either the abolethic threat or the dragonborn of Tymanther.

The Firestorm Cabal is pledged to patrolling the northern and eastern borders of Akanûl, beyond the kingdom's official defensive perimeter. It keeps its Motherhouse in Airspur and has smaller safe houses all around the kingdom. Average citizens see the Firestormers as national heroes, willing to risk all. Akanûl's officials see them as distractions at best and provocateurs at worst, but so far have allowed them to travel into the frontier.

four Stewards holds his or her own tiny “thronemote.” There, the lords decide the fate of the kingdom.

Each of the four Stewards has specialized responsibilities. Tradrem Kethrod, Steward of the Earth, heads up a body of secret informers and spies within and especially beyond Akanûl’s borders. Magnol, Steward of Fire, cares only about Akanûl’s defense against any and all enemies; Akanûl’s armies ultimately answer to him. Myxofin, Steward of the Sea, oversees the business of the realm as the Lord of Coin. Lehaya, Steward of the Sky, is also called the Lawgiver because she is charged with administering the laws of Akanûl. All give their allegiance to the queen, but if they together disagree with their monarch—by her late mother’s own decree—she must abide by their wishes.

BRASSUNE SAFEHOLD

Firestorm Cabal Safe House

The Firestormers’ most famous safe house is located on the outskirts of Brassune, the city the genasi first established in Akanûl. The Brassune Safehold is located on a large forestmote overlooking the tumbled, mist-shrouded ruins of the city. It is a defensible structure of stone, with dual lookout towers to warn against incursions from the ruins—attacks by kuo-toa servants of the Abolethic Sovereignty are frequent.

Those interested in delving in the ruins of Brassune can’t find a better place than this to retreat and rest. The Safehold offers quarters, basic supplies, and hot meals for all who pledge loyalty to the Firestorm Cabal, regardless of lineage (although dragonborn are still shunned).

CHONDALWOOD

Border Jungle

Akanûl doesn’t claim the Chondalwood, though it does regularly send foresters into the lush land. The tropical forest is a confusion of ravines and floating junglemotes, some sailing free, others webbed to lower regions by thick vines and vegetation. The Chondalwood’s vigor is impressive—it grew in the Spellplague’s wake instead of being diminished or erased. Its colonizing junglemotes spread like airborne seeds in all directions.

Spellscarred satyrs and other fey roam the jungle. The satyrs tell stories of halflings and centaurs that

MAGEDOOM

At the center of the Chondalwood is a ruin of ancient, toppled stone towers whose cellars are packed with gold coins. The elves of Wildhome steer well clear of it, citing terrible bodiless guardians that ravage flesh and inspire madness. The horrors attack spellcasters in particular, igniting them like torches.



once also inhabited the Chondalwood. Above all else, plant creatures of every variety thrive, including fungus hulks, mushroom entities, and stranger beings in the deep wood.

A once-sizable group of elves yet calls the Chondalwood home. Their nation has declined to a single extended territory called Wildhome. The elves declare blood feud on any outsider whose explorations threaten to reach the jungle’s heart.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Akanamere Tomb: The waters of the Akanamere were once the main source of fresh water for western Chessenta, but wilderness has reclaimed and laid waste to the surrounding farmland. The tomb of a powerful wizard drowned long ago now stands partially revealed at the lake’s center. This pyramidal construction of stone is still magically sealed against moisture.

Dragonroost: Somewhere in the Akanapeaks lairs a dragon of prodigious size. Its name is unknown, and sightings of it are unreliable. It is thought to be a gray dragon, one of these draconic breeds whose temperament and abilities are as yet untested. Whatever its nature, this dragon engages genasi and abolethic ambassadors with equal ferocity.

Glass Mesa: In the Akanûl wilderness rears a great translucent tableland, apparently a solid chunk of clear quartz. Sometimes a blot darkens the mesa’s heart; other times it is absent. The genasi say the Glass Mesa is a remnant of Shyr, though none alive know what function, if any, it once served. By decree of Akanûl’s first queen, the Glass Mesa is off-limits to all citizens, on pain of death.

Amn is a nation under the golden thumb of a few obscenely rich and corrupt merchant houses. With the wealth these oligarchs command, Amnian fleets dominate Faerûn's southern coasts. Amn's rulers have declared arcane magic to be illegal, except in the hands of spellcasters licensed by the High Houses. All others are denied the opportunity to level the magical

POWERS OF AMN

Amn's Council of Five includes the Meisarch, Tessarch, Namarch, Iltarch, and Pommarch. Although these positions were once anonymously held, they now openly belong to the houses Selemchant (from Athkatla, sponsors of the Cowled Wizards), Dannihyr (from Eshpurta, secret masters of the Shadow Thieves), Alibakkar (from Athkatla), Ophal (from Crimmor), and Nashivaar (from Esmeltaran, strongly allied with the Church of Cyric), respectively.

Each of the High Houses (whose leaders make up the council) sponsors a number of smaller client houses. The mercantile cabals constantly feud, each wanting a bigger piece of the pie and working to insinuate their members into good positions. In theory, a highly successful independent house could claim a spot on the council and make it a Council of Six as it once was. Right now, about the only thing the leaders of Amn agree on is that there's no reason to cut the take six ways.

Other important groups include the following.

The Cowled Wizards: This cabal of the only "legal" arcanists in Amn is under the control of House Selemchant. The Cowled Wizards serve as the Meisarch's spies, troubleshooters, and assassins. Most are little more than mercenaries.

The Shadow Thieves: This widespread syndicate has largely succeeded in driving all other Amnian thieves' guilds out of business.

Church of Cyric: Cyric's faith is powerful in Amn, since it espouses as virtues ambition, self-reliance, and the principle of "buyer beware." The church is not seen as particularly murderous or antisocial by most Amnians. Those initiated into the deeper circles of the faith know otherwise. Merchants who don't want to suffer mysterious monster attacks against their caravans and ships pay off the Black Sun. Many wish to arrange such things for their rivals and willingly participate in every sort of degradation and initiation demanded by the Prince of Lies. The Cyricists are working to elevate the Pommarch to the position of council leader.

The Emerald Cabal: This secret society of unlawful spellcasters opposes the whole crooked Amnian system. The cabal occasionally arranges "unfortunate events" for merchant lords who become excessively destructive.

playing field. Rebellion simmers constantly among Amn's numerous disaffected and disenfranchised, many of whom are halflings.

AMN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: Amn's colonies across the Trackless Sea vanished in the Spellplague, but Amnian merchant companies (backed by highly prized charters obtained from the ruling Council) still control profitable areas of Chult, the Mhair Archipelago, and the Moonshaes.

Streetwise DC 15: Nobody really likes Amn. Amnian merchants organized into various "companies" have strong-armed and intimidated people for thousands of miles around. The nation revels in plundering the wealth of a dozen other countries. Still, it is a human land, and individual Amnians aren't really all that bad. It's only the rich ones you have to watch out for.

Amn's rivalry with Waterdeep is particularly fierce, although it's more competition between certain merchant houses than national fervor. The monstrous realm of Muranndin to the south is a constant headache to Amnian trade.

Tethyr regards Amn's voraciousness with no small concern, despite declaring its friendship with the nation. Such a "friend" is not likely to be of much help when trouble strikes, unless well paid for the effort.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Amn is heavily settled, especially along its great rivers and around Lakes Esmel and Weng. Inns and taverns cater to traffic along the Trade Way, lining the road for the length of its passage through the country.

ATHKATLA

Capital City; Population 122,000

Anything goes in Athkatla. What is considered illegal, immoral, or despicable in other places passes without comment in this so-called city of sin if the price is right. Lewdness, slavery, and even less savory acts such as murder occur here, as in any large city. But in Athkatla, the law permits almost anything. The only illegality is speaking or acting against a merchant house. In all other cases, the response to an offense is a fee, whose size depends on the degree of inconvenience to the other party. Once the fee is paid (often in advance), the act is not considered criminal—only not paying is seen as unlawful behavior.

Gold flows freely in Athkatla. As one of the busiest ports in all Faerûn, almost any good or service can be had here. Ships from places near and far dock in the

city, transporting exotic vegetables, slaves, jewelry, strange relics, pirate booty, and more. Athkatla's marketplace might even overshadow Waterdeep's. Above the bay is Goldspires, a temple to Waukeen nearly as large as a small town.

Popular shops include Tiny Deaths (poisons), the Museum of Inquisition (torture equipment), Madroon's Curios (a little of this, a little of that), Lowmarket (slaves), Faded Ages (memory tailoring), Odd Candy (sweets . . . ?), and I Change (body modification).

CRIMMOR

Caravan City; Population 40,000

The "caravan capital of Amn" is a fortified mustering point for practically all trade heading northward by land. The Shadow Thieves (see the "Powers of Amn" sidebar) openly headquarter in Crimmor because it is the one city where they do not practice their trade. Indeed, they ruthlessly stamp out any freelance thieves.

Crimmor bristles with inns, taverns, and feshalls serving the numerous caravanners and adventurers who pass this way.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The Cloud Peaks: These mountains mark the northern border of Amn. Despite being home to white dragons and other dangerous creatures, they are mined for iron, precious metal, and gems. A pair of steep crags known as the Fangs guards the Trade Way leading to the Sword Coast lands. Giants are sometimes seen scaling the crags as part of some ceremony or game.

MURANNDIN

South of Amn lies the monster kingdom of Muranndin, comprising the city of Murann, the Small Teeth, and portions of the northern Wealdath and eastern Dragon's Head peninsula. This realm isolates the independent duchy of Velen from the rest of Faerûn and exacts tolls on all traffic along the Trade Way. Marauders from Muranndin roam all nearby lands.

Slavery is common here. The monstrous conquerors of the city enslaved thousands of Amnians back in the 1370s, and many of the descendants of those unfortunates still serve the ogres, orcs, and bandits of the area. A human in Muranndin can easily fight his way out of slavery—if he's willing to show the orcs and ogres he's as mean, nasty, and tough as they are.

Orc and ogre chieftains (as well as black-hearted human bandit lords) maintain scattered strongholds and keeps here. Although all are theoretically subject to the dictates of the kingdom's leader, the Great Mur, infighting and feuds are common.



AMN

The Cloud Peaks are also home to the Mountain of Skulls, a temple dedicated to Cyric.

Lake Esmel: This dark blue lake plummets to unknown depths in its central, southern, and eastern portions. Hot mineral springs flow in the western shallows. Rumors speak of a great wyrm lairing there—some stories describe it as red, others copper.

The Wailing Dwarf: An enormous vertical slab of rock 4,000 feet high in the western portion of the Troll Mountains is carved to resemble a dwarf. Named because of the noise of the wind blowing through its hollow eyes, ears, and mouth, it marks the site of an abandoned dwarven city. In more recent times, the underground ruin was controlled by an unusually clever tribe of trolls. A newer, more vicious force has taken over the site, however, slaughtering the trolls. During the last decade, no creature entering the Wailing Dwarf has returned to tell what new monstrosity hides in the fallen city.

Behind the facade of the Wailing Dwarf, the shackled bodies of maimed, regenerating trolls are strapped across walls and ceilings. This terrible spectacle is a warning posted by several guardian nagas that the trolls disturbed after pushing too far into the ruin, a clear message to intelligent creatures to retreat from the complex immediately lest they face a similar fate. The nagas, sentinels imbued with an unquenchable desire to protect their secrets, remain potent obstacles to any other creature seeking to find treasure or knowledge in the old dwarven city.



BALDUR'S GATE

This sprawling city depends on the trade passing through its ports and gates to support a population far too big for its own good. The only criterion for citizenship is a couple of silver pieces. Humans dominate the city, though eladrin, elves, dwarves, and other civilized humanoids have settled here. Baldur's Gate is a city anyone can visit, and strangers met in far-off places might originally hail from here.

Though census figures are impossible to rely on, the city's population is believed to have long ago surpassed even Waterdeep's. How the metropolis manages to support itself is unclear—somehow, it just does. Those who pay attention to such things in Faerûn refer to the phenomenon as “the Baldur's Gate Miracle.”

Baldur's Gate is a prosperous city where just about anything can happen, and often does. It contains an active and organized thieves' guild, powerful merchants with questionable ethics, and influential cults and secret societies both malignant and benign. All the power groups maintain a precarious balance under the authority of the Flaming Fists, a former mercenary group that serves as the city's police force, law enforcement, and protector.

BALDUR'S GATE LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Untouched by the Spellplague, Baldur's Gate received an influx of refugees from the south that greatly swelled its population in the

KEY INHABITANTS OF BALDUR'S GATE

Grand Duke Portyr: A fair man well liked (though not quite loved) by the citizens, Portyr is easily manipulated by power blocs inside and outside the parliament. His inability to side wholly with anyone on anything keeps the city stable, however.

Nine-Fingers: The head of the thieves' guild, Nine-Fingers Keene is one of the most powerful inhabitants of Baldur's Gate. She has a candidate of her own in mind to succeed Portyr.

High Priest Faenor: A servant of Oghma, Faenor presides over the High House of Wonders, a temple once exclusively devoted to Gond. Faenor sees himself as the true stabilizing force of Baldur's Gate, and his rhetoric stops just short of calling for the institution of an Oghmanyte theocracy.

months and years following the disaster. Word soon spread—not entirely accurately—that Baldur's Gate was an “open city,” a safe haven for refugees from south of the Sea of Fallen Stars. The trickle of displaced people soon became a flood, and the city nearly collapsed under the weight of a population that doubled, then tripled in size.

Streetwise DC 15: Baldur's Gate refuses to be drawn into local political conflicts. The city-state has remained neutral through any number of regional disagreements. This policy has created an environment where no nation or city-state bears Baldur's Gate ill will (though “businesspeople” out of Luskan or even merchants in Waterdeep resent the considerable competition from the city's port). The thought of invading a place as huge and well defended as Baldur's Gate is something its neighbors never seriously consider—the Flaming Fists is a military power to be reckoned with.

CITY DISTRICTS

The heart of Baldur's Gate lies within the old, high walls, but the city has spread across the River Chionthar and for miles in every direction. Built quickly and by the hands of refugees, the architecture is a hodgepodge of styles from all across Toril. Streets meander in a maze visitors find impossible to navigate. Despite these impediments, districts and neighborhoods have emerged, providing local color and character that only the natives can pick out from among the architectural morass.

BLOOMRIDGE

Wealthy Neighborhood

Bloomridge, through feats of engineering and magic, is contained on and within the old walls of Baldur's Gate. The neighborhood extends down the side of the wall in swoops of stairs, galleries, and hanging gardens. It swarms with well-dressed buyers and discreet sellers. Architecturally pleasing shops are built in and around flower-filled arcades and open-air cafes.

The wealthy and celebrated seek to buy one of the rarely available houses in Bloomridge, or failing that, to rent one of the small but expensive apartments built over popular shops and cafes.

TWIN SONGS

Temple District

Twin Songs is one of many temple districts in the city, and a small one at that. Because the city's population is so diverse, this area hosts temples to powers with wildly different goals. Even shrines to evil gods persist unchallenged by the Flaming Fists. Though local

chapels and temples can be found in the tenement districts, Twin Songs is wholly devoted to the divine. Here one can easily find temples willing to perform healing rituals for the appropriate price.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Candlekeep: This many-towered fortress stands on a slender volcanic crag 100 feet off the coast. Candlekeep preserves a huge library of Faerûnian lore, learning, and prophecy.

The keep's central tower is surrounded by beautiful grounds. A ring of buildings runs along the inside of the massive outer walls. The structures include guest houses, stables, granaries, a warehouse, an infirmary, a temple to Oghma, and shrines to Gond and Milil.

The keep is ruled by the Keeper of the Tomes and First Reader, who are assisted by several Great Readers, many scribes, and numerous apprentices. Visitors who bring a tome as their entry fee are allowed to stay for up to a tenday, during which time they can conduct research and have rare books copied (for a steep price).

Church of Last Hope: This large stone chapel is located in the Twin Songs district. Depressing music emanates from the dour and dirty chapel. The Church of Last Hope offers a brief "sanctuary" for the suicidal. When gloom and depression are at their worst, the church sends a card by courier, inviting the vulnerable to services. How do they know when someone is feeling down? A religious miracle, assert the Last Hope celebrants. The church claims to provide a dignified exit from life in a reverent ritual of peace and memory. In truth, those who fully partake in the ritual lose not only their life, but their souls as well. So far, no one has come back to complain or to reveal the charade for the evil ritual of destruction it is.

Cloak Wood: South of Baldur's Gate, the Cloak Wood is a thickly overgrown, ancient forest that looms along the shore south of the Sword Coast. Unlike the cliffs to the north, the Cloak Wood's shoreline theoretically allows a ship to moor and launch a small boat for water and supplies. In practice, only desperate mariners dare the wood's nasty population of beasts, monsters, and vicious fey.

The Cloak Wood once contained portals to several other parts of Faerûn. The sages of Candlekeep say most of those passages are now defunct.

Mandorcai's Mansion: This fabulously appointed manor is located in the Bloomridge district. It is named for the owner, a tiefling who purchased the grounds from a rival merchant's heir the morning after the rival was found dead under suspicious circumstances (all the corpse's blood was missing).

No connection was ever traced to Mandorcai. The tiefling's mansion became something of a sensation when it appeared on the vacant lot, fully built, landscaped, and staffed, just three days after the final purchase. Many whispered of diabolic pacts, though again nothing was ever proved.

Then Mandorcai went missing, and his mansion began to trap any who entered it. Only a few escaped, and they speak of shifting rooms, oppressive chants by unseen singers, and nightmarish, blood-soaked scenes of butchery. It might well be that Baldur's Gate has a devil problem after all.

Wizard Cave: Far below the city, in a natural cavern locked in eternal dark, is a wizard's tower. Created as a refuge from the city by a wizard absent (or dead) for thirty years, the tower is accessible from the surface streets first by sewer conduits, then by little-known deeper tunnels. Most inhabitants of Baldur's Gate would be surprised to learn of these old passages beneath the city, which possibly lead even into the Underdark. In any event, the abandoned wizard's tower stands as a silent sentry on the edge of this deeper expanse, its doors and windows sealed against all entry for reasons unknown.



THE BEASTLANDS

Monsters infest the region north of Estagund and Durpar. Among the remains of the lost kingdom of Veldorn, the Beast Lords rule this area without mercy over competing tribes and brutal city-states. Each monstrous lord vies against the others for land, power, and prestige, though all occasionally unite in a fractious alliance when armies from other regions threaten. Beyond this mutual defense pact, the Beastlands exists in a constant state of low-level conflict.

The Beast Lords include undead, dragons, giants, and even beholders, but plenty of humans live here—mostly slaves or outlaws who have fled other realms. A few folk who find the rulership of monsters to their liking also dwell in the Beastlands.

BEASTLANDS LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Long ago, monsters from the Giant's Belt Mountains and a vast stretch of wilderness called the Beastlands overran or conquered the inland Durpari cities of a region known as Veldorn. Kenkus, birdlike people from the east, settled part of the area later. During the Spellplague and the intervening century, dragons, giants, and rakshasas from the Giant's Belt and Dustwall chains destroyed or took all but the last remaining cities in Durpar. The flooding of Luiren and the desolation of the Shaar allowed the Beastlands to expand west and south. To

outsiders, the Beastlands are and have long been a barbaric region where humans are kept as slaves and monsters walk without fear.

Streetwise DC 15: Most of the Beast Lords acknowledge a loose alliance, created by the charismatic vampire lord Saed of Old Vaelan (page 119) in Durpar. As a result, the despots defend one another from all would-be invaders. Otherwise, each rules alone over separate lands. Tirumala, one of the monster-controlled city-states of the Beastlands, has a strange alliance with the human-controlled nation of Estagund.

Streetwise DC 30: The ravenlike kenkus have become integrated into almost every state in the Beastlands, as well as the cities of Durpar and Estagund. They have a hidden rookery in Blackfeather Barrens where, it is whispered, they maintain a network loyal only to kenkus.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Adventure and danger abound in the Beastlands. The ruins of Veldorn cities and much older Imaskari dungeons are scattered throughout the region.

TIRUMALA

Holy City; Population 10,000

Situated atop seven "holy hills," the city-state of Tirumala is ruled by a rakshasa rajah of the same name. Tirumala rebuilt the so-called Holy City from the foundations of a Durpari settlement razed long ago





by giants. Rakshasa nobles live here, served by a large force of hill giant and orc soldiers, as well as a spy network of kenkus. The rest of the populace is composed mostly of human, halfling, and kenku slaves.

Recently, Tirumala opened trade with Estagund. All folk know that evil rules in the Holy City, so many people suspect that Estagund's rajah has been magically influenced, if not outright replaced.

BLACKFEATHER BARRENS

Kenku-Controlled Badlands

Blackfeather Barrens is a region of fractured plains situated between various monster states within the Beastlands. Within the desolate canyon lands is the hidden kenku rookery of Blackfeather, a town inhabited solely by kenkus. Although the birdfolk are part of the populace of cities and states around the area, and readily serve differing causes, those of the Barrens attack all outsiders without mercy. Even the monsters of the Beastlands fear Blackfeather Barrens. It is a place of death that belongs only to those who have proven themselves strong enough to keep it—the kenkus.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Aerilpar Forest: Known also as the Wood of Dark Trees, this dense jungle is home to all sorts of dangerous creatures. The animate and malevolent trees from which the forest gets its name are numerous, as are venomous flying snakes. A pair of chimeras with black dragon heads lives deep in the forest, lairing not far from the Mound of the Sleepless and attacking any who approach. What the chimeras guard is unknown.

JAMES ZHANG

Castle Al'hanar: Atop a great precipice in the Toadsquat Mountains, overlooking the Gulf of Luiren, stands a shattered keep. The fortress once housed the near-mythical Knights of the Eternal Dragon, an order of undead warriors pledged to foil the machinations of the Everlasting Wyrms of Sharawood (see below). The cataclysms following the Spellplague largely ended the fellowship. A good portion of its keep fell into the sea, and a vicious assault by the Everlasting Wyrms' forces decimated the warriors. The dracolich's minions still occupy the ruins, guarding the wealth of the knights who fell here.

Mound of the Sleepless: The Wood of Dark Trees hides a mysterious mound at its center. An old wall surrounds the place—tree branches grow right up to but never cross the barrier. A grassy mound rises within the wall. Maze magic and resident monsters keep intruders at bay, ensuring that the site has lain undisturbed for at least a century, and perhaps far longer.

Purple Spire: Sparse foliage, cactuses, and an occasional squat, thorny tree dot the empty lands directly west of the Giant's Belt. In one lost ravine stands a crooked spire of purple stone. A narrow stair at the spire's base leads down to a crumbled chamber that has runes inscribed on every surface. The markings constitute a puzzle that, if solved, grants passage to an ancient Imaskari complex.

Sharawood: Sandwiched between the northeastern shore of the Gulf of Luiren and southeastern shore of the Lake of Salt, Sharawood abuts the Toadsquat Mountains. The gloomy jungle houses monstrous spiders, drakes, and strange undead. The darkest secret of the forest is the Everlasting Wyrms, a blackfire dracolich that lives in its center. Since the destruction of its old enemies in Castle Al'hanar, the dracolich has openly joined the Beastlands. It has the power and the potential to unite those lands under its wing.

Thruldar: Once an outlying trade town of Estagund, Thruldar is now a haunted ruin. In the Year of the Shattered Altar (1264 DR), a human druid named Voolad gathered an army of monsters and razed the town.

His victory was short-lived, however. Halflings from the Lluirwood surprised Voolad and killed him. Whatever fell purpose drove the druid enabled him to rise as a powerful ghost. The halflings used strong magic to seal the city, trapping the mad ghost and his minions inside. There he was contained, until the magic failed during the Spellplague.

Thruldar is now the seat of Voolad's power, and as a Beast Lord, he controls all that remains of the eastern Lluirwood, as well as the lands south of the Toadsquat foothills to the shore of the Gulf of Luiren. The ghost maintains an army of undead, foul plant creatures, weird beasts, giant insects, and ogres.



CALIMSHAN

Calimshan is a desert ruled by battling genasi who keep human slaves. The overlords wage constant war against each other across the dune seas and in the high air. Ruins and mysteries abound, and untold treasures await any brave enough to venture into the war-torn badlands of the Calim Desert (also called the Skyfire Wastes).

CALIMSHAN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: The Spellplague shattered the high magic that bound the efreet Memnon and the djinn Calim in the *Calimemnon Crystal*. The two were released, along with similarly bound servants, many of whom were genasi. Ancient enemies, Calim and Memnon immediately picked up where they left off—trying to annihilate each other. Many presumed humans among the population revealed themselves as genasi and joined in the fight. Thousands more genasi, descendants of those scattered to the Lake of Steam, Tethyr, and Amn after the first djinn and efreet empires fell, returned and promptly declared for air or fire. Even some genasi out of newly arrived Akanûl joined the fight. The result was thousands dead, the desert's expansion east across the Spider Swamp, and an explosion in the genasi population.

The period between the beginning of the Spellplague and the Year of Holy Thunder (1450 DR) is known locally as the Second Era of Skyfire. What happened that year to send Calim and Memnon back to their home plane no one knows. Their lieutenants and foot soldiers remain in Calimshan, and continue a bloody war based on little more than opposing philosophies.

Streetwise DC 15: The headquarters of the warring genasi factions are the cities of Memnon and Calimport. The human population of both cities serves as slaves and as fodder in the constant battles. Only the city of Almraiven, still rich in magic and well defended, remains under human control. Indeed, it is the last bastion of human rule in Calimshan.

MYSTERY FLEET

Almraiven is home to a renowned shipbuilding facility. At the bustling docks, several long, deep carracks are being constructed by order of the WeavePasha. Many assume the vessels are to be used in an upcoming naval raid on Calimport. Others say the fleet is to be used as a last resort for evacuation, though it is capable of holding only about one-tenth of the city's thousands.

Streetwise DC 20: Efreets and the genasi pledged to them do not refer to the country as Calimshan; they call it Memnonnar, as their empire was known during the First Era of Skyfire (c. -6500 DR). The djinns and their genasi followers call their homeland Calimshan, despite the association of that name with the former human-ruled nation. Folk beyond the country's borders simply refer to the whole area as Calimshan, and so it is still labeled on most maps. Scholars in Candlekeep have proposed alternative names for the embattled region, most notably the Skyfire Emirates, but none have gained widespread use.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Calimshan is unthinkable ancient; before the Spellplague, it was the oldest of all human lands.

ALMRAIVEN

Human Bastion; Population 38,000

Prior to the genasi uprising, Almraiven was the premier center for magical study within Calimshan. Because the Spellplague left the spellcasters of the city relatively unharmed, they were able to defend it from the genasi rebellion that overthrew human rule in greater Calimshan.

The WeavePasha of Almraiven is sworn to protect his city from the endless wars of fire and air, but he's barely holding the place together. If the citizens understood how tenuous is his hold on the peace, they would flee as fast as they could.

The WeavePasha's policy is to expand trade with and gain allies among other seafaring nations, while keeping Almraiven from the attentions of its genasi enemies. The WeavePasha sometimes sends agitators and Akanûl expatriates to stir up trouble in either Calimport or Memnon, laying the blame at the other city's doorstep.

CALIMPORT

City of Calim Loyalists; Population 60,000

Its population greatly diminished in the Second Era of Skyfire, Calimport is controlled by genasi who have enslaved the remaining human population and wage constant war against Memnon.

The city contains large palaces taken over by genasi and their retainers, extensive slave markets, and two great arenas where human slaves are pitted against each other and against threats from the Elemental Chaos. The slave brand of Calimport is infamous—a stylized gust of sand-laden wind.

Human slave stock has dwindled over the years. As a result, the genasi have begun to employ the services of slavers from other lands to collect fresh merchandise for the Calimport slave block. Expanding such operations risks the ire of northern nations, so slavers



range east and south. This situation of course puts a premium price on slaves of northern stock.

MEMNON

City of Memnon Loyalists; Population 35,000

Founded by the army of the efreet Memnon, this city reveres the entity from which it takes its name. The genasi of Memnon followed Calimport's lead and enslaved the remaining human population, finding the people to be useful pawns in their war against the hated followers of Calim.

The city's outer walls are made of a dark, smooth rock that absorbs heat and shrugs off wear. This same dark rock is mined to the east, in the Marching Mountains, and those slaves who can be spared from the war effort toil in the mines. The life of a slave miner is brutal and short.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Calim Desert: This expanse of sand, salt, and rocks is the blasted battleground of the efreet Memnon and the djinn Calim. They are now gone, but the desert remains. The sands hide the ruins of great cities, some thousands of years old.

THE TWISTED RUNE

Events and alliances in Calimshan have long been influenced by the Twisted Rune, a group of powerful undead spellcasters led by a mysterious figure who wears a corrupted version of Kelemvor's symbol. The cabal meddles in mortal affairs for power and amusement, and it has forged alliances with genasi leaders in both Calimport and Memnon. The spellcasters control a handful of still-functioning portals leading to places across Faerûn. They have hundreds of agents, most of whom don't know their ultimate masters.

Marching Mountains: This forested mountain range is home to orcs and ogres that routinely raid Memnon's mines in the area. A remnant of a freedom-loving adventuring company called the Janessar maintains a secret outpost behind a nameless cliff face. From time to time, it frees groups of slaves, sending them northward, east to Almraiven; former slaves who ask to join the Janessar are readily admitted.

The Plain of Stone Spiders: Formerly the Spider Swamp, this area dried up with the expansion of the Calim Desert. The native creatures were infused with elemental magic, or perhaps were plaguechanged; either way, they now have limited control over their rocky environment.

Suldolphor: This once-vibrant city of almost 150,000 souls is now a stretch of sand-blasted ruin where efreet battle djinns in an endless cycle of mad violence. Its streets, buildings, and palaces lie buried only feet beneath the sweltering, ever-moving dust of the Calim Desert. City features sometimes appear in the wake of a strong sandstorm, only to vanish again in the next battle. Some say an association of merchants and traders called the Unseen Hand once kept a secret base in Suldolphor, and vast treasures are rumored to be hidden there.

Tomb of the Astronomer: Tales speak of a lost reliquary for a djinn contemporary of Calim, though not as powerful. This ancient tomblike structure, lost in the midst of the Calim Desert, is said to contain an age-old secret. The noted collector Dulmanico of Waterdeep is said to be putting together an expedition to dig up the reliquary.



CHESSENTA

Descendants of ancient Imaskari slaves, the people of Chessenta are obsessed with physical conflict. They value their war heroes highly, hailing them as celebrities and potential rulers. Chessenta's national enmity is focused mostly on the resurrected nation to the east, High Imaskar.

Despite half the nation being devastated by a cast-off piece of Abeir, elements of the former Chessenta survive and even prosper. Although many Chessentan cities were destroyed in this tumultuous transposition, others survived and accepted refugees from the obliterated lands of Chondath, Unther, and even Mulhorand. The country involuntarily ceded all its western lands, those most radically altered in the Year of Blue Fire, to the Abeiran genasi of Akanûl.

CHESSENTA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: When the surface lands partially collapsed into the Underdark, the smoldering volcanoes in the Smoking Mountains to the south touched off, as did Mount Thulbane to the north. From the Smoking Mountains, various disturbed creatures ravaged northward. In the north, the vampiric green dragon Jaxanaedegor was freed to forage even during the day, since the sun was obscured by an ashen sky. Faced with monstrous invasions so soon after massive



upheaval and changes to the land, Chessenta nearly failed.

The only city not devastated and broken was Luthcheq. There, the fractious, surviving inhabitants rallied under a war hero named Ishual Karanok. Fighting off marauding monsters, abolethic horrors, and opportunistic settlers from less disrupted lands to the north, Chessenta persisted. When the immediate hostilities cooled, Ishual returned to his family home in what remained of Luthcheq. The hero disbanded a wizard-slaying cult his family had long propagated (claiming that their aims had been met with Mystra's death), but continued to enshrine the powerful tool that served as the old cult's focus: a *sphere of annihilation*. The item, its powers somewhat modified since the Year of Blue Fire, now serves as the *Crown Jewel of Chessenta* (see page 56 for more about this minor artifact). Continuing the cult's aims, if not its existence, the law of the land subjugates spellcasters.

Streetwise DC 15: Chessenta is the enemy of High Imaskar to the east. Although not initially inclined to return hostilities, High Imaskar has learned to guard against Chessentan war parties.

The dragonborn of Tymander are allies. Although at odds with many people, Chessentans look upon dragonborn with honor. They believe (rightly or wrongly) that dragonborn are in some way related to their own dragon lord, Tchazzar, who returned briefly to rule Cimbar before the Spellplague devastated the region.

KEY INHABITANTS OF LUTHCHEQ

Shala Karanok: Luthcheq is ruled by this war hero. She is related to the founding hero Ishual Karanok, and is the sole remaining descendant of her family. She is always accompanied by the orbiting *Crown Jewel of Chessenta*.

Luthen: A secret pawn of the vampiric green dragon Jaxanaedegor, Luthen is high in Shala's councils. He reports significant information back to his true master; physical information drops occur through a series of mercenaries who are unaware of their ultimate paymaster.

Anhor: A spellscarred elf whose presence is said to disrupt magic, Anhor seeks to steal the *Crown Jewel of Chessenta*. He sees it as the root cause of Chessenta's continued irrational hatred of magic—or so he tells his adherents (wizards, warlocks, and other arcanists). In fact, he wants the item to renew the Cult of Entropy that existed prior to the Spellplague. Anhor views the death of Mystra as a good first start and gloried in the resulting Spellplague, but he is discouraged with magic's resurgence in the aftermath. He views the "greenpalms" walking the streets as abominations.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

A few interesting locations remain within Chessenta's borders.

LUTHCHEQ

Capital City; Population 38,000

Luthcheq stands in the lee of a great cliff-face, half of its squat structures partially embedded in stone. Warlord Shala Karanok's seat of power is the War College, which juts from the face of the cliff overlooking the city like the prow of a mighty ship.

Chessentans' distaste for Imaskar extends to all uses of arcane magic. Known wizards, warlocks, and other arcanists face execution by burning unless they agree to have their palms tattooed with special green sigils that identify their disreputable art. Rumor has it that the marks prevent their bearers from casting spells if they do not know their own particular tattoo's "password."

MOUNT THULBANE

Lair of Jaxanaedegor

This ancient vampiric green dragon lairs somewhere in Mount Thulbane and claims the surrounding wastes as its kingdom. Thulbane, the ancient volcano, has partially woken. It constantly spews a dark canopy of smoke into the sky, allowing the dragon to fly freely across its realm despite its vampiric nature.

Jaxanaedegor has allowed a Thayan embassy to be built permanently into its mountain. The complex holds several high-ranking necromancer ambassadors and a company of undead warriors. Thay seeks to use Thulbane as a beachhead

in its expansion south of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Jaxanaedegor, whose power is untested, views the embassy as its own first move toward consolidating influence in Thay.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The Gates of Burning Mountain: One of the Smoking Mountains periodically erupts, raining down hot ash for miles in every direction. Stories have it that a mad, entombed primordial transposed from Abeir is responsible for the eruptions, though no one knows for sure. A number of eyewitness accounts describe one new and surprising discovery uncovered by a recent eruption: sealed adamantine gates a hundred feet high in the mountain's side.

Tchazzar's Reliquary: Chessenta's storied past includes King Tchazzar, known as the Father of Chessenta and the Great Red Dragon, who ascended to godhood while battling sahuagin in the Year of the Dracorage (1018 DR). He returned in the form of a true red dragon over 350 years later and established absolute rule over the city of Cimbar. Before the monarch's plots could bear final fruit, however, the Spellplague changed everything. Cimbar was mostly destroyed, and Tchazzar went missing. Nearly a century later, Tchazzar's legend remains firmly ensconced in the modern Chessentan mind.

Recently, a secret reliquary was discovered in the Sky Riders hills, bearing the Father of Chessenta's crest. The reliquary is sealed, and rumor has it that the place is well trapped and strongly guarded. One legend says that gaining the reliquary's heart could call Tchazzar back to Faerûn once more.



CHULT

Chult is a savage land of fearsome jungles plagued by carnivorous monsters. Human civilization is virtually nonexistent here, though an Amnian colony and a port sponsored by Baldur's Gate cling to the northern coasts, and a few tribes—some noble savages, others depraved cannibals—roam the interior. Creatures of every description hunt Chult's mysterious, continentwide rainforest. More than one civilization lies forgotten in the dark heart of the jungle.

CHULT LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Much of what was formerly known as the Chultan Peninsula was drowned almost a hundred years ago. The yuan-ti kingdom of Serpentes fell in the course of the change, the kingdom of Samarach was submerged, and the city of Mezro collapsed into the earth, its population scattered.

Streetwise DC 20: Principal factions in Chult now include the yuan-ti survivors of Serpentes (mostly in the east), the spellscarred of Samarach, savage tribes (mostly in the northwest), human-run strongholds along the northern coast, and strange creatures from across the Trackless Sea that have begun to colonize the Mistcliffs.

Streetwise DC 25: Junglemotes are common in Chult. Some are populated with creatures alien and awful in aspect—entities not native to Chult, or at least absent since before the time Abeir and Toril went their separate ways.

Streetwise DC 30: In the Year of Blue Fire, the Chultan jungle was interpenetrated by pockets of Abeiran landscape that now lie scattered in the skies and the forests. Strange, savage behemoths now prowl the shadowed jungles and wandering motes alike. Several Chultan tribes were hunted to extinction by these voracious new predators; those that remain have learned new methods of coexistence.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The mysterious jungles of Chult cloak many wonders, but its heart of darkness swallows most of the adventurers who dare to enter.

FORT BELUARIAN

Baldur's Gate Trade Fort; Population 1,000

This outpost has weathered much over the years, and twice was completely eradicated by native uprisings. However, Baldur's Gate retook the fort both times.

The high stockades are manned by elements of the Flaming Fists mercenaries. Amn has lately made offers to buy out the city's interest in the fort. Most suspect that if the Amnians acquired Beluarian, they would merely shut it down so that their competing Port Nyranzaru would control all water traffic to and from Chult.

THE JUNGLE

Continent-Spanning Overgrowth

Famously mysterious jungles cover Chult. The dense canopy is broken only by the highest mountains and a few great, marshy clearings and grasslands that surround large lakes in the interior.

Tavern tales have it that the jungles of Chult are the deadliest places on Toril. Every bush and vine is a strangling, poisonous, flesh-eating, or blood-sucking horror—and under every bush lurks a scaled, taloned, fanged monster.

PORT NYRANZARU

Amnian Trade Colony; Population 12,000

The harbor of Port Nyranzaru was designed with defense as its first priority, because pirates roam the sea north of Chult. Protecting against threats from the interior is just as important, and thus a high stockade wall of stone fronts the jungle, pierced by three well-guarded gates.

Amn owns and controls all activity in Port Nyranzaru. Taxes are high, but those lucky enough to be employed by one of the major trading companies live in relative safety inside the walls of this ultimate frontier city. Those not affiliated with any of the trading companies are forced to live in the expansive shantytown beyond the wall. They survive as best they can, dealing constantly with disease and threats from the jungle.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Dur Unkush: This ziggurat rises nearly 200 feet above the marshy jungle floor in a series of 20-foot steps. Every 44 days, surrounding jungle-dwellers are summoned by dreams to enact strange rituals in a covered chamber on top. The summit is accessible by only one stairway, and a guardian serpent of great size prevents spies from observing the ritual or the nature of the strange, unearthly music that

RICHES OF CHULT

Chult is riddled with veins of gold, gems as large as a human's palm, exotic plants prized by collectors on the Faerûnian mainland (and sources of poisons, perfumes, and medicines by the score), huge jungle timbers, and rubber trees. Amn sees the creation of a monopoly over Chultan access as one of its highest priorities.

accompanies every rite. After each ceremony, the celebrants utterly forget all that transpired.

Forsaken Tree: Deep in the Chultan jungle stands a mighty tree, ancient beyond all imagination. Cannibal tribe myths say its highest branches scrape the clouds, and circumnavigating its broad trunk is a journey of several days. According to these same tales, the tree is hollow and sometimes swallows creatures, which wander its woody interior until they are finally absorbed as food. The Forsaken Tree is said to gain its unholy vigor from a singularly evil object—a golden coin of one of the fallen civilizations that long ago ruled Chult.

Pyramid of the Moon: On nights when the moon is full and Selûne's Tears glitter, the Pyramid of the Moon appears in Chult, never in the same place twice. Once it manifested before those standing on Port Nyranzaru's walls, shimmering in the far distance. The next day, over two hundred people were missing from the port, and they were never seen again.

The pyramid is said to possess interior hollows where an eternal celebration is held. Spirits walk arm in arm with living creatures, singing, dancing, and imbibing wondrous delicacies and fiery spirits. Those who fail to leave the pyramid before moonset are consigned to become spirits, eternally beholden to the Silver Priestess who sits on her glass throne within the inmost chamber.



CHULT

Quomec Ziggurat: Rising above the jungle canopy is a ziggurat of twenty-eight stepped levels, surmounted by a temple sealed behind great bronze doors. The exterior of the temple is heavily inscribed with indecipherable glyphs. Local tribes claim that the ziggurat is a funerary crypt to Lord Quomec, an emperor whose name is recorded in no history book. Other inscriptions lower on the ziggurat depict a gargantuan sarcophagus from which writhe animate vines.

Ruins of Mezro: Once the fabled holy city of Chultan priest-kings, Mezro is now a great, vine-shrouded cavity in the earth. The pit contains all that remains of the city when it plunged over 200 feet during the cataclysm that drowned the peninsula.

Undead haunt the debris. Zombies with blue triangles tattooed on their foreheads shuffle about upon broken paving stones. Liches that have faded claims to glory are confined to shattered temples. Ghouls dart out of the shadows to feed on the sacrifices that are thrown, tied and screaming, from the lip of the cavity above.

DISEASE IN CHULT

Disease and parasites are everywhere on the Chultan Peninsula. They are carried by plants with stabbing spines, injected through any of the hundreds of insect bites suffered in a typical day, or borne on jungle mists. Those who drink unboiled jungle water are in for a nasty surprise. One of the most prevalent diseases, described below, is carried by the brain fluke.

Brain Fluke: This minuscule, wormlike parasite concludes its adult life in a victim's brain.

Brain Fluke

Level 12 Disease

This minuscule, wormlike parasite concludes its adult life in a victim's brain..

Attack: +17 vs. Fortitude

Endurance improve DC 27, maintain DC 22, worsen DC 21 or lower

The target is cured.

Initial Effect The brain fluke bores into the target's brain. The target gains vulnerable 5 psychic and has a -2 penalty to Will defense until cured.

When the target is under a charm or fear effect that allows a saving throw, the target must instead succeed on two saving throws.

Final State The target is dominated by the brain fluke. The target spends most of its time eating to nourish the parasite before its spawn bursts from the brain two weeks later, killing the host.

CORMYR

Cormyr is a strong nation that lies at the western end of the diminished Sea of Fallen Stars. The kingdom is ancient but remains vigorous. Old forests dominate the landscape and national character. Humans predominate in Cormyr, and they are justly proud of their country's long and noble traditions. The dragon, the stag, and the unicorn are prominent in Cormyrian folk tales, ballads, and heraldry.

In days of old, the people of this civilized land carved a domain out of wilder territory through grit, bravery, and determination. Though the nation has a reputation for just rule, sometimes Cormyr has had to make difficult choices to ensure its security. Its most contested border is that with shadowy Netheril, though Cormyr also borders the hazardous Stonelands, Tunlands, Storm Horns, and Thunder Peaks.

Cormyr is protected by two highly skilled and renowned forces. The Purple Dragons are an elite army of battle-tested warriors. The War Wizards include powerful swordmages (see page 236), as well as other accomplished spellcasters that even the Netherese respect.

CORMYR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: In order to counter Sembia's expansionism of the last century, Cormyr reluctantly grew into an imperial power. The kingdom annexed

KEY INHABITANTS OF CORMYR

King Foril: About seventy years of age, Foril Obarskyr has ruled for the last thirty years. He's not the old lion that Azoun IV was, nor a great lawmaker like his father Azoun V, but he is a great strategist, statesman, and administrator. In his youth, he trained with the War Wizards and the Purple Dragons. Now he leaves the fighting to others, understanding that he is too important to his country to act recklessly. Foril is also well aware that he is reaching the end of his reign.

Crown Prince Irvel: Foril's son, Irvel Obarskyr, shows a lot of the old boldness of his famed ancestors, which could portend interesting times for the country.

Erzoured Obarskyr: Foril's nephew is a black-hearted schemer who wants the throne so badly he can taste it. He plans to do away with Irvel so he can be named the new crown prince. To that end, he has made several secret contacts in Sembia, Netheril, and even Thay.

some Sembian cities, resettled parts of Tilver's Gap, and pushed southwest into the Dragon Coast. The thief-ruled city of Proskur was also brought under Cormyr's thumb.

The Obarskyr dynasty has ruled Cormyr for over 1,300 years. Foril, the son of Azoun V, is the current king.

History DC 20: Forty years ago, under Azoun V's reign, Cormyr fought the shades of Netheril and succeeded in driving them off. Netheril and Cormyr maintain an uneasy cease-fire to this day.

Near the end of his reign, Azoun V signed the Suzail Writ, which bound the king by law and gave free folk inalienable rights—notably trial by jury of peers. The Writ restricted the nobility and elevated the common people. Most nobles have accepted the new status quo, but a few still scheme to gain influence over the throne (or to gain the throne itself) and thereby return the noble houses to prominence. King Foril remains a strong proponent of the Writ.

Streetwise DC 15: Cormyr is a key power in Faerûn. The nation enjoys a warm alliance with the fey kingdom of Myth Drannor and the human Dalelands to the northeast. Together they have acted to check Netherese expansion and to curtail Sembia's subversive efforts in the Dalelands. As a result, Cormyr lies squarely in the sights of the Empire of Netheril.

Streetwise DC 30: The Shadovar of Netheril have attempted to infiltrate and conquer Cormyr in much the same way that they took control of Sembia. Thus far, Cormyr has managed to avoid that fate. Its charismatic leaders have been able to discredit muckrakers who were secretly funded by Sembia, and the royal intelligence apparatus has publicly proven all such attempts to have been instigated by Netheril. A healthy fear of all that is shadowy, and the memory of the destruction of Tilverton, keep Cormyrians on their guard. One fact is certain: A direct confrontation is building.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Cormyr is a rolling, green, and pleasant land, flanked by mountains and well fed by its own farms and ranches.

SUZAIL

Capital City; Population 55,000

The royal capital and richest city in Cormyr, Suzail is home to the important nobles and merchant houses of the country. The city center is the royal palace, which is surrounded by gardens and the buildings of the Royal Court. King Foril keeps his residence in the palace.

The Purple Dragons and the War Wizards jointly occupy an impressive fortresslike barracks in Suzail. Both constantly drill in the courtyard, using swords, spells, and special tactics to quell a variety of threats.

The city maintains the realm's new shipyards and is home to the royal navy that once docked in Marsember. Suzail is also known for its inns, taverns, and festhalls. Coin of every nation is good here, and the city is thick with diversions and entertaining experiences. Adventurers and explorers from all over the continent are always welcome.

Tymora's temple is the most prominent one in Suzail. Shrines to Oghma, Tempus, and Waukeen are also found here. The famous carvers of Suzail buy exotic ivory from many lands, shape it into new and decorated forms, and export it at a greatly increased value.

MARSEMBER

Seaport; Population 38,000

Marsember spans a series of islands connected by bridges and cut with canals. Many of the higher canals are now planted with crops or allowed to grow wild for livestock to graze upon. Bridges overhead permit both farming and urban life to occupy the same space. Newer facilities nearer the lowered Sea of Fallen Stars keep alive Marsember's status as a hub of trade, though the volume of items moving through the port is much reduced from a century earlier. Marsember took longer to recover from the lowering of the Sea of Fallen Stars, and the navy never returned to that moorage.

Marsember is known as the City of Spices due to the local merchant companies that specialize in

such wares. These Spice Lords trade in a variety of flavorings, elixirs, and (it is whispered) even banned substances—*haddrum* (see page 171) out of the Raurin desert, “traveler's dust” from sources said to lie in Impiltur, and the like. The Purple Dragons and the War Wizards constantly seek to disrupt illegal trade but never seem to be able to stamp it out, possibly because some among their ranks secretly count the Spice Lords as allies.

STORM HORNS

Mountainous Western Border

The forbidding Storm Horns form a high wall that separates Cormyr from Netheril to the north and Najara to the west. It is broken only near High Horn Pass and Gnoll Pass, which are guarded by Castle High Horn and Castle Crag, respectively.

Orc and goblin tribes in the mountains occasionally rise up and attack when a charismatic leader stirs them to action. The orcs especially hate Cormyr, and recent intelligence suggests that a few of the tribes might have made secret contact with the Shadovar.

The Storm Horns have two permanent human settlements, Eagle Peak (caravan stop; population 500) and Skull Crag (mining community; population 1,000). Skull Crag is known for its awe-inspiring shrine to Kelemvor. The miners here pray to Kelemvor; it is uncertain whether the god listens.

WHELOON

Prison City; Population 3,000

Once known for its vibrant green slate roofs and ferry trade along the Wyvernflow River, the city has been transformed into something far darker by royal



decree. The Purple Dragons discovered that a majority of Wheloon's residents, be they craftsfolk, traders, or farmers, were also secret worshipers of Shar. Fearing that the entire city was a front for Netherese spies, the king ordered it walled up with brick and magic, and all its residents declared lifetime prisoners. Now, whenever Shadovar spies or sympathizers (as well as other offenders of the crown) are discovered, they are put over the wall and left to fend for themselves. Life as a prisoner in Wheloon is brutal and short, unless one is able to join one of the many rival gangs.

To "escape from Wheloon" is a euphemism for accomplishing a difficult task. Those who do so literally are marked by prisoner and gang tattoos imprinted while behind the walls. This branding makes continued life in Cormyr one that requires constant disguise.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Darkhold: West of Cormyr in the Far Hills is a high-spined keep rising from a bare rocky spur on the side of Gray Watcher Mountain. This echoing stronghold was a fortress under the control of the Zhentarim and remains so to this day, despite Zhentil Keep's failed fortunes. Darkhold's massive doorways, corridors, and ceilings of black stone were constructed for giants. Legends variously ascribe the keep's construction to the days when giants ruled Faerûn or to elder elementals serving as slaves for the kingdom of Netheril.

At present, the citadel houses a force of Zhent mercenaries available for any task, no matter the perfidy required to undertake it.

Elf mound: Despite its name, this strangely flat-topped hill in the King's Forest has little to do with elves. Recent excavations indicate that the place is more likely a ruin of ancient Netheril—a far-flung watchtower of old, or perhaps a distant safe house meant to hide away a treasure or bury a danger. Work ceased when, after uncovering a rune-inscribed shaft, all the explorers were simultaneously struck with a death curse. Sometimes crying echoes up from the darkness; at other times, a soul-shearing scream is heard.

BELENDITHAS OF THE DUSK

A shade assassin stalks the countryside and cities of Cormyr, killing lords and commoners alike. Some say that Belendithas is an agent of Netheril. Others believe he has come to Cormyr to flee Shadovar justice. Either way, Belendithas is a force to fear, if an enemy contracts with him to take your life. The assassin's fee is a mere 100 gold coins—and a newborn human baby. What Belendithas does with the child is unknown.

Farsea Swamp: This slowly growing mire consists of two formerly separate marshes, Farsea and Tun. The ruins of a vanished civilization, not Netherese as many speculate, rise here and there amid this sodden and thoroughly unpleasant area. Thick with poisonous insects and plague, Farsea prevents all but a few from glimpsing these ruins. Surviving witnesses describe ornate buildings made of glass as strong as steel that hint at a magical technology lost to the present day. Rumors also have it that the bold can pry gold and strange secrets from the half-drowned basements, if they brave the swamp's pestilence and withstand the might of strange creatures set as guardians within the interior of the vitreous towers.

In the southern swamp, bands of human raiders not tainted by sickness have created a ragtag bandit empire that survives by preying on Cormyrian trade.

King's Forest: This westernmost fragment of ancient Cormanthor hasn't seen elves or eladrin in generations. Its entire area is claimed by Cormyr's crown, which keeps the land as a private reserve. Royal forest guards patrol the woods, clearing squatters and battling occasional orc incursions. Cormyr's royalty has been assiduous in denying the forest to poachers and settlers. Recent tavern talk has it that the policy is not out of a desire to keep the environment pristine. Instead, it seems the practice has more to do with an ancient prophecy. An old song, long thought mere nonsense, speaks of a "Queen of Thorns" who sleeps beneath the trees, quiescent and sated, but prone to disturbance. If this queen wakes, the kingdom of Cormyr would be wiped away—the prophecy does not explain how or why.

A small community in the King's Forest called Dhedluk (population 1,000) is home to farmers and woodcarvers. Cutting live wood has become a taboo so strong in the community that it is punished nearly as severely as murder. Those caught in the act are hanged on the arch of a defunct portal on the outskirts of Dhedluk.

The Monolith: This strangely angular, black shape is sometimes visible above the breaking waves along Cormyr's coast, but it is never seen in the same place twice. It appeared around the same time that

AURGLOROASA AND THE THUNDER PEAKS

A dracolich named Aurgloroasa lairs in the abandoned dwarven city of Thunderholme, which lies in the Thunder Peaks. Named for the sudden and devastating storms that batter them all year, the Thunder Peaks are home to tribes of orcs and goblins that bear no love for Cormyr, Sembia, or the Dales.

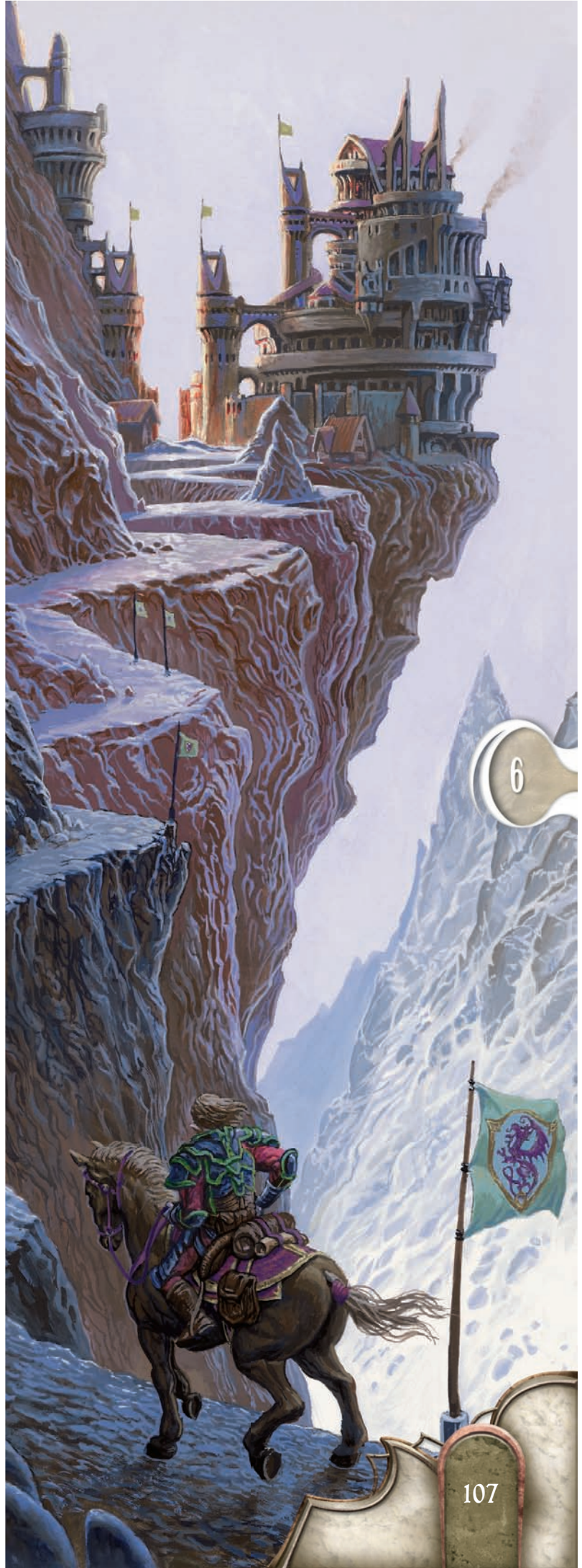
the Abolethic Sovereignty's city of Xxiphu rose over the Sea of Fallen Stars. It's not a great leap of reason to suspect that the Monolith, with its disquieting geometry, is a movable watchtower or beachhead of the aboleths. These rumors have been sufficient to keep all who view it from investigating. In fact, upon witnessing it, most ship captains or coast-walkers flee in the opposite direction.

Stonelands: A band of wide, rocky desolation between the Storm Horns and Netheril, this region is inhabited by spellscarred goblins, gnolls, orcs, and other brigands. For more than a century, Cormyr's rulers have offered generous land grants to adventurers willing to tame this area and carve out civilized holdings.

Tilverton Scar: The city of Tilverton fell to the Shadovar in the Year of Wild Magic (1372 DR), leaving only a concave space filled with darkness. After the Spellplague, explorers found the character of the area further modified. It was marked as the only known plagueland in Cormyr. Where before only shadow reigned, a perpetually infalling spiral of darkness and blue fire appeared. Creatures that brave the edges of the pocket sometimes come away marked with a spellscar, other times with a flesh-ravaging disease. All subsequently report nightly dreams of an awful plaguechanged entity squatting in the Tilverton Scar's nadir, fused with earth and shadow equally, entombed and sustained by the magical infection of the land.

A small keep built a few hundred yards from the perimeter of the pocket allows the curious to scrutinize the dangerous boundary in something approaching safety.

The Vast Swamp: This region of marsh forms the border between Cormyr and Sembia—neither country wishes to claim it, and both disregard the area unless its monsters wander into their territories. Home to gnolls, hobgoblins, lizardfolk, and trolls, the wetland is also known to shelter a few small black dragons, a mad beholder or two, will-o'-wisps, and yet stranger creatures. This is probably the deadliest region within the area. Still, its creatures usually remain in the moors, and the people of Cormyr have no reason to enter it, so they are content to ignore it.



THE DALELANDS

The Dalelands comprises several forested counties, called dales, scattered around the perimeter of the Cormanthor Forest. Although the dales share common traditions, cultural practices, and religious allegiances, the Dalelands is not a unified kingdom like Cormyr or Impiltur. The broad forest vales, separated by rolling farmlands, are interlinked by narrow trade roads through lush woods. The dales' independent spirit and age-old alliance with the fey of Cormanthor are well known across most of Faerûn.

DALELANDS LORE

A character knows the following information about a given dale with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Over the last century, the Dalelands has been the focus of powerful surrounding realms, all vying for control.

Archendale: The Swords, cloaked autocrats that previously ruled Archendale, were unmasked in the Year of Azuth's Woe (1440 DR) and found to be in Sembia's pocket. This dale staved off incorporation into Sembia only by becoming aware of the danger and making common cause with the remaining free dales.

Battledale: Alarmed by Featherdale's bloodless capitulation to Sembia, Battledale began to restrict trade and travel with the Netheril puppet state. The dale came under heavy attack in the Year of the Advancing Shadows (1422 DR), forcing the evacuation of Essembra.

Daggerdale: Long since free of Zhent influence, Daggerdale now finds itself an unwilling buffer against the Empire of Netheril. In recent years, Daggerdale has been increasingly troubled by savage humanoids from the Desertsouth Mountains and lycanthropes from the Dagger Hills.

Deepingdale: Not much has changed in Deepingdale over the last century. It continues to prosper, despite diminished trade through the Eldreth Veluuthra-controlled Hullack Forest in the west.

Featherdale: Over the years, Sembian investors slowly bought up so much of the place that eventually Sembian administrators moved in. As a result, the Shadovar of Netheril "accidentally conquered"

Featherdale in the Year of the Lords' Coronation (1418 DR).

Harrowdale: With aid from Myth Drannor, Harrowdale Town completed work on a defensive wall. In the Year of the Elfqueen's Joy (1428 DR), the Seven Burghers announced a formal alliance with Myth Drannor and renamed the city New Velar. Soon after, Myth Drannor established an embassy in New Velar and began construction on shipyards.

High Dale: Receiving little aid from the then-quiet Dales Council, High Dale threw in its lot with Cormyr, deciding that doing so was the best way to stave off Sembia's advances. Purple Dragon Knights of Cormyr moved in to defend the dale in the Year of the Advancing Shadows (1422 DR).

Mistledale: Ashabenford, the capital, has grown remarkably over the last century and now serves as the seat of the Dales Council. This organization has grown real teeth since Sembia began to conquer dales. The age-old Dales Compact was reaffirmed with Myth Drannor in the Year of Seven Sisters (1425 DR) and the Standing Stone was restored. This renowned symbol of that agreement had been destroyed by drow roughly fifty years earlier.

Scardale: Scardale fell to Sembia through a series of betrayals, sneaky merchant deals, consolidations of power in tiny steps, and finally, the appearance of a mercenary army in the capital, Chandlerscross. The troops slaughtered many Dalelanders and drove out the rest. The new capital is Scardale Town.

Shadowdale: This dale remains peaceful and secure, even with the absence of powerful protectors of old, such as Storm Silverhand. Elminster resides there still, but his powers have diminished since Mystra's fall. The border with the Feywild is weak along the River Ashaba in Shadowdale. As a result, a burgeoning population of fey and sylvan creatures has appeared throughout the land.

Tasseldale: When Sembia was unable to subvert Tasseldale as bloodlessly and easily as it did Featherdale, mercenaries financed out of Yhaunn overran the area in the Year of the Dark Goddess (1420 DR). Requests for aid from Archendale were rebuffed, and Tasseldale was eventually brought under Sembian rule.

Streetwise DC 15: Those dales that are not under the control of a foreign power are closely allied. Moreover, the Dales Council has consolidated its authority in the aftermath of Sembia's overt conquests. Most areas are also on good terms with Myth Drannor, though the relationship is strained in the case of Archendale. The Dales are friendly toward Cormyr, especially High Dale, but Mistledale worries about Cormyrian expansion through Tilver's Gap.

The Dalelands is continually troubled by the unsettled situation in the Moonsea region, the drow (who plague Battledale, Mistledale, and Shadowdale),

ELDRETH VELUUTHRA

This militant group of human-despising elves seized control of the Hullack Forest in the Year of the Wrathful Eye (1391 DR). A brief conflict between Cormyr and the elves ensued in the Year of Deaths Unmourned (1394 DR), but King Azoun V soon turned his full attention to more pressing threats from neighboring Netheril and Sembia.



and the monstrous infestation of Daggerdale. An uneasy peace lies over Tasseldale and Featherdale, but Dalelanders fighting Sembians could provoke a wider war. And beyond the Desertsmouth Mountains looms the ominous Empire of Netheril.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Every dale is unique and offers its own wonders and threats.

HIDDEN HAND OF FATE

For centuries, a small cult of Hoar has dwelled in a temple fortress shrouded in the depths of the Arch Wood. The inhabitants of Archendale are known for their short tempers, grudges, arrogance, and love of intrigue—quite a few Archenfolk worship the Doombringer.

This informal order of bounty hunters and vigilantes, known as the Hunters of Vengeance, enacts what it believes to be Torm's will through the retributive hand of Hoar. (In truth, Hoar now serves Bane, who is pleased to let the misconception continue.) Priests of the Hidden Hand of Fate sponsor a number of troubadours, bounty hunters, and assassins throughout the Heartlands and coordinate a loose network of vigilantes dealing rough justice throughout the wilder stretches of the Dalelands.

ARCHENDALE

Militaristic Dale; Population 90,000

Known as the unfriendliest and most aggressive of the dales, Archendale is also the toughest and best defended. The vigilance of both citizens and soldiers leaves Archenfolk free to get on with the business of

ABBAY OF THE SWORD

In the last century, during the Time of Troubles (1358 DR), the god Tempus appeared on the battlefield of Swords Creek in Mistledale. More recently, the priest Eldan Ambrose traced the deity's path and discovered that he had arrived in Faerûn in the shell of a shattered castle in Battledale. The priest established the Abbey of the Sword in a rebuilt portion of the castle.

Priest General Ambrose was slain when a strong force of Vhaeraunian drow attacked the abbey, coming up from an unwatched portal in a nearby deep cavern. The defenders of the Abbey of the Sword repelled the drow but could not resurrect Ambrose.

Today, the small town of Ambrose (population 3,000) is filled with hearty folk rich in their worship of the Foehammer. It has grown up around the much expanded Abbey of the Sword.



growing wealthy through trade—something they have always done very well.

Archendale fills the long, narrow valley of Arkhen Vale. It surrounds the gorge cut by the swift, cold River Arkhen. The valley flanks the gorge and spreads out a day's ride in all directions from the dale's preeminent community, Archenbridge.

Archenbridge (population 8,000) is the Dalelands' most fortified city. Its center is as cramped and as bustling as a ward of a much more populous city. Wagons rumble up and down cobbled streets at all hours, and every building rises at least three floors

ZHENT HEADLESS HORSEMAN

Terrified Dalesfolk describe seeing the Zhent Headless Horseman galloping through forest crossings and night mists. The Horseman (actually a lich), wearing the colors and regalia of the overthrown Zhentarim, is a haunting and literal reminder of the Black Network's previous power in the northern dales. The Horseman rides the twisted forest paths at full speed, trailing mist and mad laughter in his wake. Attempts to waylay the apparition have failed—the bodies of would-be heroes are discovered when the mists clear, sans heads.

above ground level. Tenements and noble townhouses alike feature barred windows and hidden inner holds equipped with arrow slits and nastier defenses.

Though it nearly fell to Sembia's expansionist desires, Archenbridge maintains trade with its southern neighbor—trade that fuels the city's thriving markets, merchant houses, and far-flung concerns. As a result of the removal of the three autocratic Swords from rulership nearly forty years earlier, Archenbridge now tempers its greed for trade with a significant concern for defense.

BATTLEDALE

Tranquil Dale; Population 30,000

Despite its impressive name, Battledale is today a guarded but peaceful land. The dale earned its name centuries ago from a long history of bloody warfare among greater powers hailing from the Vast (now Vesperin) across the Dragon Reach to the east.

Large in size, it is one of the least populous and most dispersed of the Dalelands. Visitors to Battledale see only the open, rolling farmlands along Rauthauvyr's Road, referred to by Dalesfolk all over as "the Belt." In summer this is marvelous country to camp in, although one should beware of brigands and the occasional Eldreth Veluuthra hunting party from the Tangled Trees.

Deep within the thick woods of Battledale lies the ghost town of Esembra, a long lane of abandoned and fire-ruined cottages rotting on both sides of Rauthauvyr's Road. Nearly sixty years ago, Esembra was the site of a fierce battle between forces from Myth Drannor and Netherese-backed Sembia. Fell magic was unleashed in the ensuing conflict, prompting local Battledarrans to abandon their homes and seek refuge at the Abbey of the Sword.

THE FALL OF STARS

New Velar is home to the Stellar Fellowship, a famous society of adventurers, and its club the Fall of Stars, which serves as a rooming house, restaurant, and tavern. The club looks like the row of quietly luxurious old houses it once was. Behind that facade, a huge feasting hall occupies the space that used to be stables, coach houses, and alleys.

Wounded adventurers who have had the forethought to join the Stellar Fellowship find this club to be a timely godsend and a shrewd investment. The Fellowship's stock of potions, antidotes, and medicines is dispensed freely to injured members in need.

Guests not in such dire straits can enjoy the famed social opportunities of the club—meeting fellow adventurers, talking business, hearing the latest rumors, and exploring hiring opportunities.

DREW BAKER

DAGGERDALE

Nightmarish Dale; Population 15,000

Most of Daggerdale is rolling wooded hills broken by labyrinthine rocky valleys. It's good grazing country for livestock, but large ranches are confined to the region around Dagger Falls. That name applies both to the steep waterfall and to a nearby frontier town (population 2,000).

The Desertsouth Mountains tower over the hills of Daggerdale. A great dwarven kingdom called Tethyamar once occupied the Desertsouths. Several hundred years ago, it fell to orcs, ogres, evil wizards, and fiends—some of which still lurk in the peaks. Many adventuring companies based in Daggerdale seek Tethyamar ruins in the western mountains.

A century ago, Daggerdale was ruled by Zhentarim agents, but that occupation is a distant memory today. Daggerdale has been increasingly troubled by humanoids raiding out of the Desertsouth Mountains and by a resurgence of lycanthropes infesting the crags of the Dagger Hills. As a result, the frightened villagers of Dagger Falls have become isolated and cut off from the other dales.

DEEPINGDALE

Welcoming Dale; Regional Population 50,000

This dale is situated along the contested route between Cormyr and Sembia. Deepingdale comprises the lands around the rivers Glaemril and Wineflow. Both of them flow swift and strong, and have abundant salmon runs that nourish forest creatures as well as the people of Highmoon (population 8,000), Deepingdale's capital city.

More than any other dale, Deepingdale is woven into and around Cormanthor. The Deepingfolk, half of which are elven or half-elven in ancestry, live in the shadow of the trees and in the lighter growth at the outskirts of the great forest.

FEATHERDALE

Sembian Dale; Population 18,000

Featherdale isn't technically a dale, since it is not a valley. Its rich farming lands fall within the sweep of

the River Ashaba as it flows east toward the Sea of Fallen Stars. The lowlands of the Ashaba are a patchwork of gently rolling farms. Waist-high fieldstone walls and rather haphazard lines of evergreen-planted levees guard against flooding.

Featherdale is truly the pastoral farming country that many Sembians imagine the Dalelands to be. Thus, despite being under Sembian control, the Shadovar puppet state pays little mind to this stretch of road between regions of far greater significance.

Unlike other Dalesfolk, Featherdarrans have little to do with Myth Drannor. This traditional separation has become even more pronounced with the influx of Sembian merchants, who collect taxes and enforce their trade policies on farmers by means of well-paid mercenaries.

HARROWDALE

Oldest Dale; Population 44,000

Harrowdale borders Cormanthor to the west, the Dragon Reach to the east, and the Cold Field to the south. The dale is mostly farmlands, which turn to orchards closer to the sea and to the Velarswood at its center.

The countryside has changed little over the last century, though the former small seaside village of Harrowdale Town has grown into the rich mercantile port of New Velar (population 9,000). The renamed city is the largest free settlement in the Dalelands (now that Scardale has fallen to Sembia) and claims the best port into the area. Goods from all across the Sea of Fallen Stars flow through New Velar on their way to and from Myth Drannor along the Harrow Ride (the old Halfaxe Trail, now a well-guarded, paved road through the old Elven Court). This robust trade accounts for the great wealth of the city.

Greater Harrowdale and its capital city are ruled by its wealthiest merchants, the Council of Seven Burghers. A Burgher holds his or her position for life, and upon a death in the Council, the Harrans appoint the wealthiest non-Burgher to fill the seat.

HIGH DALE

Cormyrian Dale; Population 15,000

High Dale is tucked just below the main section of the Thunder Peaks and just north of the mountainous splinter that runs along the Vast Swamp to the west. The main area of High Dale is a high plateau suitable for farming. Its people also farm the mountainsides by carving terraces into their slopes.

High Dale is known for crisp air, splendid views of the Thunder Peaks, and hardy shepherds, small farmers, craftsmen, and stonecutters. Scattered among the native dwellings stand stone watchtowers garrisoned by Cormyrian forces—High Dale gives its allegiance to Cormyr, the only force that aided the Dalelanders when Sembian militants threatened attack.

THE DANCING PLACE

Just a few miles north and west of Highcastle, this valley is preserved as a sacred garden by priests of Mielikki, Oghma, Selûne, and Silvanus. More than a dozen deities manifested here in the Year of the Dawn Rose (720 DR) to inspire the founding of the now-defunct Harpers. Elves and eladrin still come to the Dancing Place as pilgrims, though the agreements they made with their gods prevent them from staying long. Some say it was agreements originating in the Dancing Place that allowed Cormyr to bring High Dale under its protective wing.

High Dale's pass has three hidden valleys branching off to its sides: Copper Gulp, the Dancing Place, and Hidden Vale.

MISTLEDALE

Ruling Dale; Population 34,000

Mistledale occupies the valley along both sides of the Moonsea Ride, east of Peldan's Helm and west of the spot where the forest closes in roughly three miles before the Standing Stone. The River Ashaba cuts across the center of the dale, crossed by the Ride at the excellent natural ford at Ashabenford (population 5,000), whose population has exploded over the last several decades.

Mistledale is a widely spread dale. Its small settlements can see each other and Ashabenford across the gently rolling hills, except in the mornings and the evenings, when mist rises from the river and fills the valley. For communication across the dale, each hamlet is equipped with special bells whose peals penetrate the fog. By varying the rings, the bell-ringers carry different messages of alarm or inquiry. The sounds are understood by long-term residents of the dale but are a mystery to outsiders.

SCARDALE

Sembian Dale; Population 90,000

Scardale's three significant geographical features are the River Ashaba, which runs through the dale from west to east; the Sea of Fallen Stars at the river's mouth; and the great gorge named the Scar, which gives the dale its name. According to legend, this high-sided ravine is the result of an errant blow from the sword of Corellon during his struggle against Gruumsh (see page 74).

Sembia owns Scardale, and the center of that control is Scardale Town (population 20,000). Like Sembia, Scardale is subject to Netherese rule. Still, the dark hands of the Shadovar lie lightly here. Scardale has long been a naturally contentious and unruly place. Scarlet ships out of Thay sometimes put in at Scardale Town harbor without comment by the authorities.

SHADOWDALE

Fey Dale; Population 10,000

Shadowdale is a broad tract of rolling hills and thick forest with patches of cleared and settled land. The unwalled village of Shadowdale (population 1,000) and the looming presence of the white granite promontory called Old Skull dominate the forested area where the North Ride and the River Ashaba cross.

Today the woods of Shadowdale are quite changed from centuries past. The Living Wood, as it is once again known, is peopled by all manner

of benevolent fey. Led to the dale by retired Lord Azalar Falconhand, the fey congregate near the Ashaba because of the unusual concentration of geomagical energy along its banks.

Just outside Shadowdale's town limits, north of the old Silverhand farm, are a series of standing stones surrounding a copse of ancient trees. This is the Druid's Grove, a place that visibly exudes great primal power and is particularly sacred to the fey.

Shadowdale is currently ruled by Lady Addee Ulphor, who gained the *Pendant of Ashaba* twenty years ago when Azalar Falconhand resigned his lordship.

TARKHALDALE (LOST DALE)

Netherese Dale; Population 10,000

In ancient times, Tarkhaldale was a flourishing mining and farming community, trading with the dwarves of the Desertsouth Mountains and the human realms of Asram and Hlondath. After the spread of the Great Desert of Anauroch and the destruction of the dwarven mines at Tethyamar, Tarkhaldale was abandoned, left to the orc and goblin tribes of the region. Among the few who remained aware of the land, it became known as the Lost Dale.

In the Year of the Turret (1360 DR), a lizardlike race of humanoids named saurials arrived in the dale, enslaved and carried from their home dimension by the lost god Moander. The saurials broke free and enjoyed decades of peace, carving a home for themselves in the forested hills of the Lost Dale.

Today, Tarkhaldale is once again peopled by human settlers. The Empire of Netheril uncovered the hidden saurial villages of Tarkhaldan and drove its inhabitants underground. Few outside Netheril know of the vale's existence.

TASSELDALE

Sembian Dale; Population 10,000

Tasseldale sits north and east of the Arch Wood, southwest of Featherdale, and just barely north of Sembia. The dale is largely flat, open land, perfect for farming. Yevenwood to the north provides fur, timber, and hunting for Tassadrans who can't bear to work the loom or plow.

The craftsfolk and tradesfolk of this dale are heavily taxed by Sembian merchant overlords. Long thought immune to Sembia's imperialistic ambitions, Tasseldale learned to its woe that Sembia had no qualms about annexing it, just as it long ago overran the long-vanished Moondale (later renamed Ordulin).

Unlike in Featherdale, the Tassadrans resisted the occupation, led by their charismatic leader Grand Mairshar Erich Inshiland. The locals fought bravely and blood was spilled, but in the end, Sembia (and thus Netheril) gained control. Together with Scardale,

this area constitutes a restless northern borderland for Sembia, because the Dalelanders who still live here don't care to be governed by outsiders.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The Cold Fields: South of Harrowdale and north of Scardale, this treeless moor is haunted by the spirits of warriors who fell in dozens of battles. In summertime, shepherds graze their sheep along the high grass. The livestock cares little about the spirits sleeping restlessly in unmarked graves beneath the hills, but the shepherds keep a sharp eye out. In winter, only fools venture into the Cold Fields.

Dagger Hills: Filled with dense thickets and thorn fields, the Dagger Hills feature labyrinthine valleys broken by rocky crags and tors. Traditionally the haunts of bandits, wolves, and owlbears, today the hills are filled with murderous lycanthropes and their thralls. Large settlements and steadings are not found here. Rather, folk huddle in small stockaded villages and farms within running distance of the walls, scratching out a meager living in this perilous land.

Darkwatch: North of the River Glaemril—deep enough in the forest that only fey have good cause to stumble upon it—lies a long, dark rift in the forest floor marked by blackened and twisted trees. The rift was (and might still be) the prison of an enormously evil power of decay and corruption. The identities of the prisoners, if any still exist, are unknown, for none have dared descend into the unnatural darkness between the rift's steep sides. What's certain is that the rift is a nexus for evil spirits and dark gods. Madness infects forest creatures and magical beasts that stray into the area, sometimes driving them into a killing frenzy. Priests of Cyric, the Prince of Lies, relish the energy swirling around the rift. They visit the Darkwatch as a sort of unholy invigoration, though none stay for long.

Glaun Bog: This little-known marshland nestled between Tasseldale and Deepingdale is host to several tribes of lizardfolk.

Old Skull: This bleached stone headland once served as a doorway through which Underdark drow made their way to the surface and controlled the surrounding area in Shadowdale. Old Skull's depths descend to the Underdark. For a while, Elminster's power kept the drow bottled up. Since the Spellplague and Elminster's diminishment, the drow are whispered to be once again wending their way up the narrow stairs. Likewise, adventurers sometimes descend past the old volcanic dome. Some return; others are lost forever in the dark lands beneath.



ELMINSTER

"Ye can call me Elminster, 'tis true. Once upon a time I was called the Old Sage, though others had other, less flattering names for me. And mayhap I earned them. Though I've walked these realms for millennia, of late I grow tired. Ye might be the same, or worse, were ye standing in my boots. The things I've seen . . . By vanished Mystra, some images I wish I could wipe away. I've said before I am far from the oldest, wisest, or mightiest being to walk Faerûn. No one was more surprised than me to learn I did not lie. Run along now, will ye? Leave me to my peace."

The wizard Elminster Aumar, once one of the most powerful individuals in all Faerûn, lost much with Mystra's death and the lapse of all abilities associated with being her Chosen. He remains in Shadowdale, much diminished, though he retains his immortality and considerable arcane power. The Old Sage is no less intelligent, experienced, and quick-witted than before. Though his advice remains highly sought after, he has grown even more averse to dispensing it. Elminster resides at the old Silverhand farm, passing the days lost in his thoughts, his trademark pipe in hand.

DAMARA

Damara is wild, rugged, and rustic—a frontier as unrefined as it is remote. This is a northerly land of windswept plains, ice-crowned mountains, dark pine forests, and long, fearsome winters. Any who stray too far from the walled towns end up fighting for their lives against horrible monsters. Adventurers are drawn to Damara to carve out lands of their own, taking on lordship and inventing titles for themselves.

DAMARA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: About twenty years ago, the last heir to the old Dragonsbane dynasty was assassinated and the ambitious Lord Yarin Frostmantle took the throne. King Yarin's hand in the death of his predecessor is an open secret in Damara. Stronger and wealthier than anyone else, Yarin is absolutely ruthless in crushing those who dare question his legitimacy.

Streetwise DC 15: In Helgabal (formerly Heliogabalus), the despotic King Yarin Frostmantle clings to power, heedless of the threats gathering around his land.

While Damara's people groan under tyrannical rule, deadly perils loom on all fronts. To the west, the Warlock Knights of Vaasa grow stronger and threaten war. To the north, the receding Great Glacier has uncovered passages to the monster-infested Frostfell at the top of the world. Deadly creatures completely new to Faerûn haunt the northern marches. To the east, the demon-haunted Dunwood (formerly known as the Rawlinswood) grows darker and more deadly every day. All the while, feral tribesfolk from Narfell engage in ever bolder raids.



SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Hardy adventurers can find plenty of opportunities in Damara's monster-infested mountains and winter-blasted lands.

HELGABAL

Capital City; Population 25,000

This once-prosperous trading city is the former seat of Damara's throne. Merchants traveling north now think twice before venturing into the frontier domain, given the despotic control of its temperamental monarch.

DAMARAN GATE

Choke Point between Damara and Vaasa

This fortress wall guards the end of Bloodstone Pass between Damara and the Warlock Knights of Vaasa. The Damaran Gate is 3 miles long and 30 feet high, studded with ballista-defended towers, and flanked by castles at either end. The castles and gate are regularly patrolled and filled with stockpiles of food and armaments in case of an invasion.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The Breath of Winter: A creature of ice stalks Damara, seeking groups or lone creatures to steal their heat. It leaves only frozen husks that are found months or years later. The nature of the Breath of Winter is hotly debated inside Damara's walled cities and vassal keeps—is it a white dragon, some sort of undead, a sentient blizzard? One tale posits a giant carved of ice, wearing crystalline armor, whose breath neutralizes all heat.

Castle Dunraven: This old ruin has the reputation of being haunted by a green-glowing woman in knight's armor. The haunt sometimes appears to those lost in driving snowstorms and leads them to the shelter of the castle. Survivors of Castle Dunraven, however, speak of a bottomless pool of dark water that claims any who seek to drink from its unfrozen surface.

THE DESPOT OF DAMARA

King Yarin understands that the Warlock Knights are a real threat. He relies on the strongholds and war bands of upstart vassal lords—many of them former adventurers—to defend the passes of the Galena Mountains. Yarin reserves his own cadre of foreign mercenaries to crush any subordinates who show signs of moving against him. Sooner or later Yarin will depose a lord whose forces are integral to Damara's defense, inviting real catastrophe to his besieged kingdom.

DAMBRATH

Dambrath is a hot plain dominated by horse-riding, nomadic humans related to the Nars of northeastern Faerûn. Some Dambrathan clans are bellicose and insular, raiding nearby lands. Others are less aggressive and more accepting of outsiders. The clans don't war on one another, except in highly ritualized honor-duels or minor raids for resources and sport. At one time all Dambrathans were slaves, so they still see themselves as united against a hostile world.

DAMBRATH LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Half-blood drow known as Crinti formerly ruled Dambrath under a state religion dedicated to Loviatar. Native Dambrathans, who call themselves Arkaiuns, rebelled during the Spellplague. Turning to their totems and nature spirits, they drove the half-bloods from their lands and burned every priest of Loviatar they could catch. Surviving overlords fled to T'lindhet, a drow enclave under the Gnollwatch Mountains, but the city proved no refuge. The drow offered a cold and deadly welcome, thinking little of the newcomers' mixed heritage and devotion to a foreign goddess.

Nature DC 20: Dambrathan clans revere Silvanus and his exarch Malar, and occasionally worship Selûne. Through this devotion, they have come to embrace lycanthropy. The blood of shapeshifters flows in many a Dambrathan's veins. Through totems and primal magic, even some who lack such heritage take on animal shapes when danger threatens.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Dambrath's open plains support nomad camps.

HILLS OF THE KINGS

Sacred Site

Meandering streams crisscross these grass-covered hills. In the east, halfling villages thrive by trading. The hills also house the tombs of eight Dambrathan kings. Some of the tombs were looted during Crinti rule, but others remain hidden.

Dambrathans view the hills as sacred. On the southern side, the nomadic tribes meet twice a year to trade, socialize, and intermarry, often making or breaking pacts.

Over a hundred totem sculptures mark the meeting place. Each work of art signifies a particular clan, and

each clan updates its totem to record past events and future intentions. Dambrathans can identify a totem's clan and read the history recorded on the sculpture.

PURL

Pirate Port; Population 800

On the peninsula between the Bay of Dancing Dolphins and the Great Sea, the lawless town of Purl still stands. Lack of Crinti rule spared it the fires of rebellion, and the nomads sometimes come here to trade.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Gate of Iron Fangs: A ruined city lies on the south side of the Forest of Amtar astride the River Dambron. Its name comes from a tower-flanked gate that resembles serpent fangs. Dambrathans, along with the elves and halflings of Amtar, avoid this place.

The city is the domain of the Quinix tribe of gnolls, a particularly savage clan that believes its members are the favored of Yeenoghu. The tribe shares its name with its ruler, a glabrezu demon that came to the city through an erratically functioning portal to the Abyss. That portal is now closed.

Taboo Lands: As the Crinti were driven out, Dambrathans put their decadent cities to the torch and sealed the underground road to T'lindhet. The Dambrathans avoid the ruins for various reasons, leaving them to outlaws, outsiders, and monsters, such as savage gnolls from the Gnollwatch Mountains. Dambrathans guard and bar entry only to the former port city of Maarlith, which seems to be the source of a virulent disease that slays in one day.

Dambrathans call the remains of Cathyr "the Corpse of Lolth" because of a spider-shaped temple that squats amid the ruins. When the Dambrathan uprising began, the priestesses closed the temple doors and began dark rites. To this day, the ruins of Cathyr are home to monstrous spiders of all sorts, as well as demons. Rumors speak of worse horrors and great treasures that wait within the brooding temple.



DRAGON COAST

The Dragon Coast is a collection of independent city-states along the southwest coast of the Sea of Fallen Stars, ranging from Proskur in the west to Star mantle in the east. The region is lawless and piratical—commerce is king, and graft is queen. The area is also a cultural hot spot. As the western termini of the sea routes leading to the Golden Way—a continental trade route from Thesk all the way to Shou Lung (see “Eastern Lands,” page 143)—Westgate and Teziir have grown large and prominent Shou-towns much like those in eastern trade cities. An entire nation of Shou formed even farther west: Nathlan. All manner of eastern wizards, monks, spirits, and even living Shou deities (or so it is claimed) can be found in the region.

DRAGON COAST LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: The receding waters of the Sea of Fallen Stars spelled ruin for Ilipur and Pros; those small trading towns dried up and blew away. Proskur has fallen under Cormyrian dominion, and Purple Dragon lords now hold sway over most of the southwest coast of the Dragonmere. Teziir is likewise a protectorate of Cormyr, but Westgate rebuffed both Cormyr and its rival Sembia.

Streetwise DC 20: Westgate is the most well-known city along the Dragon Coast. The city proved too large and powerful to be drawn into the orbit of either Cormyr or Sembia. A shadowy group known as the Fire Knives has a strong presence there.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Dragons, dungeons, and ruined cities abound along the Dragon Coast. An adventurer who can't find an opportunity or item here isn't looking hard enough.

GULTHANDOR

Wilderness Realm; Population 7,000

Gulthandorans respect the sky and the wilderness; they look to nature for inspiration and power. Natives revere all trees, especially groves of cedar and pine. They admire limpid pools, flowing rivers, and the nearby sea. They believe the isolated hilltops that rise above the forest canopy are holy places.

The forested realm of Gulthandor is controlled by a circle of druids who meet in Cedarspoke. The circle never numbers more than thirty-three, and its members change with the seasons.

Humans, elves, and half-elves are the dominant humanoid residents of the region, though natural

forest creatures of every type, as well as awakened trees, satyrs, and Feywild visitors, are common.

NATHLAN

Feudal Shou State; Population 18,000

The County of Nathlan (capital Nathlekh City) runs along the shores of the Long Arm. It is a small feudal state inhabited chiefly by several strong Shou clans. Towns such as Westgate and Telflamm feature large Shou-dominated districts, but some clans savor independence.

A Shou clan shares a common surname, a mutual ancestor, and an ancestral village far to the east. A few clans wield far greater power than the others. One such is Clan Neng. It was once a “consort clan,” a group whose close ties to the Shou emperor garnered it special privileges and power. When representatives of Clan Neng and its allies reached the western end of the Golden Way hundreds of years ago, they settled in Nathlekh City. In the intervening years, the city garnered more and more Shou settlers until this one-time “City of Cats” became predominantly Shou, and grew to govern the larger region now called Nathlan.

Although friendly to trade, Nathlan is suspicious of non-Shou, particularly nonhumans. None but Shou are allowed to live permanently in Nathlan, and visitors are restricted to a special section of Nathlekh City.

WESTGATE

City Built on Trade; Population 40,000

Westgate is the major trading city on the Sea of Fallen Stars. It is an open city—open to all races, all faiths, and all coin. Westgate is the one coastal city that has never suffered from the far-ranging aboleths of Xxi-phu—it's whispered that some horrible deal was made to insure such immunity.

The vampiric Night Masks thieves' guild was driven out long ago. A new syndicate, the Fire Knives, now employs the majority of the assassins, extortionists, enforcers, and spies in Westgate. House Bleth controls the Fire Knives, and the head of that family, Jaundamincar Bleth, is the First Lord of the city. The Bleths are hard at work transforming Westgate from an oligarchy back to a monarchy. Jaundamincar would prefer to change his title from First Lord to King.

The Fire Knives are opposed by a group out of Westgate's growing Shou District—the Nine Golden Swords. The Swords claims to be an organization of the people, though its roots in the criminal organization of the same name in Telflamm make this statement dubious. Still, the Nine Golden Swords in Westgate has publicly opposed the Fire Knives' worst affronts against those too weak to defend themselves. Consequently, the group, criminal or not, enjoys the popularity of the working class.



PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Giant's Run Mountains: The high places in these mountains are hollowed to admit the towering forms of their residents. The peaks are carved in great steps suitable only for massive treads. The giants have answered to the same monarch for the last fifteen hundred years: Dodkong, an undead stone giant whose seat of power lies in Cairnheim. The undead king reanimates each clan chieftain who dies, forming the Dodforer, a council of "Death Chiefs" who serve him.

Cairnheim is a city of tunnels and caverns. The city's lower depths open directly into the Underdark, though the giants impose hefty tolls to restrict surface access for creatures of Faerûn's lightless underbelly.

KRAKEN HUNTERS

Westgate enjoys protected status for its harbor districts against the monstrous servitors of the Abolethic Sovereignty, but its ships are not so blessed. As a result, a thriving business for freelance "kraken hunters" exists in the city. Anyone interested in safeguarding a shipping lane or a cargo can hire on a group of doughty, spear-wielding individuals from any of a number of agencies on the waterfront. Kraken hunters boast such colorful names as Aboleth Slayers or Yu Kai's Kraken Exterminators but know the odds of being attacked by unfettered krakens en route across the Sea of Fallen Stars are quite low. Most collect their fee without having to work for it.

At least one kraken hunter could be legitimate, though. Sashara Keenspear, a female genasi, wields a rune-inscribed and glowing spear 30 feet long.

Ruins of Starmantle: This city was destroyed in the Spellplague. The few who survived say that a wave of blue fire erupted from a portal, boiling outward until the entire city was engulfed. When the chaos subsided, all was different. A gyre of light and confusion hangs above the ruins like a low-hanging storm cloud. Within are strange green crystal spires humming atonal melodies, deep pits harboring suspicious blue glows, and slowly moving masses of obsidian. Treasures might lie sealed below the landscape, in the vaults of long-dead merchant lords.

True Lair of Kisonraathiisar: The dragon Kisonraathiisar, slain by Saldrinar of the Seven Spells in the Year of the Bold Poachers (-349 DR), had a fantastic hoard. In fact, the dragon's slayer might have rebuilt and expanded Westgate using treasure gathered from the lair. A party of tomb raiders recently appeared in Westgate with all manner of gold and jewels, claiming to have taken them from "Kisonraathiisar's true lair" somewhere to the west. They spoke of living spells as tomb guardians, a spectral dragon, and other traps that prevented them from reaching the inmost chamber. Even so, they were happy with their haul from the outer regions. This group, which goes by the name of the Dragonlords of Westgate, has offered to sell its map of the true lair to anyone who pays a substantial fee up front and promises the Dragonlords a 50 percent cut of any treasure retrieved. So far, none have taken the Dragonlords up on the offer.



DURPAR

Durpar is better known for its former glory than its current reach. No nation in western or northern Faerûn has seen a ship flying Durpari colors for a decade or more. Reports of destroyed cities have fueled rumors in the north of Durpar's final dissolution. Other tales suggest that trade yet exists between what remains of Durpar and the realm of High Imaskar.

DURPAR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: Bold, monstrous armies from the Beastlands and surrounding mountains, along with the lack of a strong military, cost Durpar most of its cities. The drowning of Luiren and Var the Golden in the Spellplague cost it allies, and fluctuating sea levels cost it trade routes. The shifting climate further fueled anxiety.

The prominent Datharathi chaka (merchant house) proposed a consolidation of power and alliance with the Iron Eye goblins from the Curna Mountains. Despite the Adama, the strict Durpari code of honesty and personal conduct (see "Estagund Lore," page 128), several chakas broke with the proposed compact. The resulting Merchant Wars of Durpar ended with the Datharathi on top.

Streetwise DC 20: Durpar is a frontier region. Most of its lands are menaced by monsters from the Beastlands, marauders from the mountains, and roving

PLANGENTS

Plangent crystal is a magically animate, violet-hued mineral. Some people replace their natural limbs with this crystal and are known as plangents. A typical plangent dresses elegantly, most often in colors and styles to complement his or her delicate trceries and prosthetics of plangent crystal.

According to the claims made by House Datharathi, which controls all access to the requisite crystal, becoming a plangent is more than fashion. It is an advancement. The fact that all Datharathi "take the crystal" is seen as an argument for their position.

The true nature of the crystal is debated, and some suspect that it is worse than merely unnatural. A century ago, the exotic mineral was mined only from Adama's Tooth. Now the crystal is being extracted from other quarries under Datharathi control. How the Datharathi find and mine the crystal is a tightly guarded secret even within the merchant house.



brigands. Humans, halflings, kenkus, and other races inhabit Vaclan, Assur, or scattered keeps controlled by independent sovereigns and petty princes. Others live hand to mouth as desperate wanderers.

Only the Durpari capital, Vaclan, retains a glimmer of its former strength. Since the ascendancy of the Datharathis, Vaclan has existed in relative (and unusual) peace.

House Datharathi keeps its coffers stuffed by taxing the other chakas' right to trade with Delzimmer, Estagund, and High Imaskar. The ruling house also maintains a standing army, which includes bugbears, hobgoblins, and goblins that were integrated during the Merchant Wars. The Datharathis and the wealthy of Vaclan are also known for their magical technology of body enhancement, using plangent crystal.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Durpar's remaining walled settlements are as much prisons as they are dwellings.

ASSUR

Port Town; Population 5,000

Destroyed by giants out of the Beastlands, Assur was uninhabited for decades. After the Merchant Wars, Assur was rebuilt more as a military and naval station than a true city.

Assur still has a bustling market and enjoys a naturally deep harbor. It also sports a stout wall and a large garrison of human, halfling, and goblin soldiers. These warriors defend the town and patrol the roads and farmland between Assur and Vaclan.

VAELAN

Capital City; Population 45,000

Vaelan, the original crown jewel of Durpar's trading empire, remains the last bastion of Durpari culture in the region. Dominating its skyline is a central district of over a hundred pale, slender towers that serve as the homes of chaka members deferential to House Datharathi.

The tower district—a complex of white-plastered walls, balconies, stairs, galleries, promenades, and open courts—is surrounded by the city proper. Wide streets separate one piece of the mazelike complex from the next, and high bridges arch overhead to connect rooftop gardens. Vaelan maintains all the grandeur of a wealthy Durpari trading city.

Even so, Vaelan's citizens are reminded daily of their precarious position. Goblin soldiers and citizens—long included in the fabric of the city, but rough, inhuman, and (to the Durpari) all too privileged—serve as a reminder of how far Durpar has fallen.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Adama's Tooth: Adama's Tooth is a nearly vertical natural monolith located on a small peninsula of the same name near the Raurin Gap between the Dustwalls and the Giant's Belt Mountains. It rises at least 2,000 feet above the meandering coastline of the Golden Water. According to some, the spire isn't natural but an artificial structure raised by ancient Imaskari wizards.

Nearly a century ago, long before its rise to rulership in Durpar, House Datharathi controlled the Tooth and mined below it from its enclave in the now-lost city of Huorm. The miners' discovery of a great magic seal buried at the Tooth's root unleashed some sort of curse that killed many. Only a few Datharathi scions and servants escaped. Since that day, a cloud of darkness has hung over the Tooth like a warning flag.

House Datharathi never returned to the mine, and it now guards the site against all outsiders. Rumors persist of great mineral wealth, ancient magic, and an evil of elder days haunting the dark shafts and corridors riddling Adama's Tooth.

Iron Eye Tribe: Goblins of the mixed Iron Eye tribe from the Curna Mountains of Estagund have

strong ties with Vaelan and the Datharathi chaka. The hobgoblin Jargaat, King of the Iron Eyes, is also a Beast Lord (see "The Beastlands," page 96). Datharathi knew this to be true from the beginning of their alliance with the Iron Eye.

The return of the fomorian kingdom Nacmoran (page 129), once dominant over the Iron Eyes, might check the climb of the mighty goblin tribe. It remains to be seen how the Beast Lords react to Nacmoran.

Will they protect their existing ally, or bide their time to see if a more powerful evil force rises in the Curnas?

Old Vaelan: The current city of Vaelan is not the original. The first city to possess the name was overrun nearly 500 years ago. Today, Old Vaelan is nothing but a series of grassy knolls and scattered piles of stone rubble. Beneath the hills, a huge complex serves as a lair for a sizable population of lycanthropes and undead. These creatures answer to the vampire lord Saed, who is prime among the Beast Lords. Saed directs his forces to disrupt trade through the region, especially that from Estagund.

House Datharathi has a price on the vampire's head that grows each year. The chaka still claims Old Vaelan as Durpari territory, but that assertion is more for show than fact. Durpar's rulers secretly have an agreement with Saed, paying him tribute in money, goods, and slaves. Saed distributes a portion of this wealth to his allies, and the

vampire's long-term view has earned them all more than merely crushing Durpar ever could have. Through Saed, most Beast Lords now consider Durpari holdings to be part of the Beastlands and instead eye Estagund. Durpar's citizens are none the wiser.

The Datharathi play a dangerous game by encouraging adventurers to attack Beastlands holdings. Through the Datharathi, Saed indirectly manipulates such "heroes" to eliminate rivals and upstarts. Successful adventurers remove threats to Durpar and Saed; those who fail die, preventing them from eventually finding out the truth.

The kingdom of Nacmoran is a wild card in this situation. With no ties to the Beastlands, the fomorians pose a threat to Durpar and its "allies."



A plangent

EAST RIFT

The dwarven kingdom of East Rift lies along the vast Underchasm, a cavity formed mostly between the Landrise and Great Rift in the Spellplague's wake. The floor of what was once called the Great Rift is now a shelf on the side of the Underchasm. It has come to be called the East Rift.

EAST RIFT LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: During the Underchasm's fall, large portions of the Great Rift were destroyed or cut off. Fortunately for the dwarves of East Rift, the elemental portals that feed the Riftlake didn't close. The lake, and rivers from the Eastern Shaar, kept the East Rift from becoming a forsaken land.

Drow enclaves were also destroyed, including the city of Llurth Dreier. A few years after the collapse, dark elf refugees invaded the dwarven city of Underhome. The drow overran the city and still hold its lower regions.

Streetwise DC 15: With the loss of Underhome, Eartheart has become the center of the dwarven lands. Underwatch, a fortress and village near Underhome, is a principal gateway that surface adventurers use when entering the exposed Underdark.

Streetwise DC 20: Drow in the Underchasm periodically test the dwarven defenses. Such a wide opening offers unheard-of opportunities for moving large forces to the surface all at once. Thus, the dwarves of East Rift must remain vigilant.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The gaping Underchasm is a constant threat to this dwarven land.

EARTHEART

Capital City; Population 50,000

Fortified Eartheart is the heart of the dwarven kingdom. The Deep Lords, a council of important dwarves chosen by merit from among the populace, once ruled from below the earth. They fled from their tunnels during the cataclysm, and they now govern the dwarves of the region from a great citadel carved into the vertical side of the East Rift. The identity of each Deep Lord is kept secret, out of fear of drow assassins. Each lord speaks through one or more emissaries, and the Lord Scepter of Eartheart is their mouth to the populace.

The structures of Eartheart are built into the sides of the East Rift, and the city extends far more in the vertical than the horizontal. The vertical "streets"

that grace Earheart's expanse are a series of cunningly carved switchbacks. Small stairwells, suitable for a single creature at a time, are prevalent, but one immense switchback exterior stair connects the vertical portion of the city from top to bottom. The lower regions, untouched by the sun, glow with magical light, day and night. Those who don't want to chance the stairs, and who have extra coin, can travel by griffon steeds, which are bred and stabled throughout the city.

Hammergate: Once a tent city known as Hammer and Anvil that sprawled around the southwestern gate of Earheart, Hammergate is now a walled foreign quarter of the city. Its eastern gateway opens onto the road to Delzimmer. Nondwarf outlanders are not allowed beyond Hammergate, but just about anyone can stay and trade in this part of Earheart, under the watchful eye of numerous dwarf guards.

RIFTEDGE TOWERS

Sentinels' Bastions

Stone towers guard the edges of East Rift, along the top and the depressed shelf, as a precaution against whatever evil might rise up from below. The towers that once surrounded the entirety of the Great Rift now extend only partly around the more expansive Underchasm. The dwarves are unable to fully guard the entirety of that vast opening. They are also uninterested in doing so, since they are primarily concerned with their own security. They do send patrols afield on foot and astride griffons, even around the Underchasm's periphery, just to keep an eye on things. Such patrols carry powerful horns to summon reinforcements from afar.

UNDERCHASM

Hole to the Underdark

The Underchasm is an expansive sinkhole formed by the collapse of a portion of Faerûn into the Underdark. The Sea of Fallen Stars, the Shining Sea, and the Great Sea all feed the Underchasm by various waterways, so many of the walls in the depths are veiled in steaming cascades whose thunder is audible for miles.

The upper portions of the Underchasm's sides host colonies of flying monsters and the occasional dragon. The lower portions hold vast numbers of bats and darker denizens.

The northern section of the Underchasm partly undercuts the thick Chondalwood. The jungle has begun to reach down into the dark, creating mile-long vines and massive roots ideal for climbing creatures. Junglemotes also float above the northern Underchasm.

Several other earthmotes hover over other portions of the Underchasm, tunneled with chambers lined in luminescent fungus. Within such motes



reside creatures normally confined to the deep earth, and treasures of the former Underdark are somewhat easier to reach.

UNDERWATCH

Garrison Town; Population 7,000

This fortress is easily three times the size of a typical riftedge tower. Situated within sight of the Gates of Underhome, Underwatch serves as a station for dwarf soldiers assigned to watch the lost city for interlopers. Woe to any who let the dwarf authorities catch wind of a plan to enter Underhome.

A village around the fort is a trade station and a logging camp where trees harvested from the Riftwood can be brought into the East Rift. The village is often used as a base of operations for those who wish to enter the East Rift or the Underchasm.

From Underwatch, dwarves mount regular expeditions into the Underchasm to refine their maps and to keep tabs on what threats might be gathering below. Any outsider interested in signing onto one of these expeditions is welcome—after being vetted to assure the expedition leader that the newcomer isn't a spy or worse.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Rathgaunt Mote: A portion of what was once the Rathgaunt Hills survives as a large earthmote floating over the Underchasm. At the center of the mote are the ruins of a heavily fortified gnome abbey once known as the Shield of the Rathgaunt Hills. The abbey's gnome tenants now mill about as undead around the dusty walls of the ruined fortress.

Sadrach's Splinter: A thin mesa reaches up from the Underchasm. A series of suspension bridges anchored by earthmotes connects the Splinter to the chasm's western wall. Its entire upper reach—only a few hundred feet wide—contains a dark, castlelike

structure. That construction is the home of Sadrach, formerly a human wizard but now a plaguechanged part of the structure's stone who can form a body from his home. He employs a retinue of monsters and slaves, but his needs are few.

Underhome: The collapse of the Underchasm shattered most of Underhome. Drow overran what remained not long after. The dwarves retook the Gates (Underhome's magic gold doors) and the upper levels three years later. They then sealed the city, defiled beyond redemption in their eyes, by fortifying the Gates and placing newer magic iron doors in several key locations. Drow and other evil creatures were surely left inside when the city was sealed. Despite the treasures that those enemies still hold within Underhome, the dwarves refuse to return. They see any attempt to enter as a crime against their ancestors.

BORDER AREAS

Delzimmer: This free city (population 15,000) is proof that the Spellplague wasn't all tragedy. The deluge of Luiren and the desolation of the Shaar ensured Delzimmer's continued existence. The Gulf of Luiren made the formerly landlocked Delzimmer a port and provided an influx of displaced *hin*. The drying of the Shaar caused yet more immigration.

With the growth in population and an advantageous location, Delzimmer expanded, building a new wall and a fine harbor. The city's mercantile interests thrive from the trade coming mostly by sea to avoid the desolation of the Shaar and the Plaguewrought Land. Delzimmer is also known as "the gateway to the East Rift" because of all the dwarven goods that leave its docks.

The Shaar Desolation: Once a vast savannah, the Shaar became a desert when the formation of the Underchasm cut off all fresh water flowing to the western regions. An increase in temperature furthered the plain's decline. The land west of the East Rift is a vast dustbowl, most of its inhabitants dead or displaced into more livable lands.

No hospitable settlements remain in the west. Shaarmid is abandoned and buried in sand dropped by unnatural storms. Rumors say that the deity Sseth is transforming yuan-ti in ruined Lhesper, grooming them to be lords of the desert. The snake creatures enslave those who wander too far from Elfharrow.

The Eastern Shaar remains habitable, however. Rivers still flow from the Uthangol Mountains and the shattered remains of the western Toadsquats. Nearby seas moderate the temperature. Nomadic Shaaryans survive here, along with their native horses, but competition for resources, and the ravages of gnolls, keeps the population low.

ELFHARROW

Scattered tribes of xenophobic elves hunt down and kill any intruders who attempt to cross this dry, not-quite-desert land that outsiders call Elfharrow. The natives also patrol the North Wall mountains south of their lands, recording occasional sightings of monstrous entities in the high clouds along the ridgeline of desolated Halruaa.

ELFHARROW LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Elfharrow oral tradition has it that the elves' ancestors betrayed their kin to the depredations of the drow during the Crown Wars (see page 43). Following those events, they settled the Misty Vale in remorse over their betrayal. For years, the elves of the Misty Vale secreted themselves in the forest so no one would see their guilt. They vowed to live in isolation forever after.

Climatic shifts following the Spellplague dried out and killed their forest over the course of twenty years. The elves gradually moved out onto the plains, claiming all the emptied lands north and northwest of Halruaa. This change in lifestyle was accompanied by extensive heartache and loss of life. Old elves, confident and set in their knowledge of the forest, had to learn a completely new way of living with the land. For the most part, such innovation became the province of the younger generations. These elves now subsist as herders and hunters. A few even moved north into the Shaar Desolation, building their homes in the lees of towering mesas and deep caves.

Streetwise DC 30: The Elfharrow tribes might not be as xenophobic as is commonly thought in

neighboring lands. Travelers who have crossed Elfharrow and had contact with the elves believe the image is consciously projected as a defense. The tribes wish little from the outside world, except to be left to go about their lives without worrying overly much about the rest of Faerûn. They are not wanderers—each tribe claims a particular territory, which it exclusively hunts.

Nomadic centaur communities, forced out of what is now the Shaar Desolation, coexist uneasily with the elves of the arid plains.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The city-state confederacy known as Lapaliiya that once thrived along southeast shore of the Shining Sea is no more. All its zealous warriors and industrious merchants are gone or dead, leaving only the partially drowned ruins of once-wealthy cities. Because of the Elfharrow tribes' reputation, these ruins remain mostly unlooted by salvagers from northern lands.

ABN'DAK TERRITORY

Northwest Elven Territory

The Abn'dak Tribe, commonly called the "Sea Crows," claim several miles of coast along the Shining Sea that includes the ruins of Sheirtalar. The Sea Crows live in stone huts on high hills overlooking the scrubland interior and the restless waves of the Shining Sea. Collections of abodes make up a string of tribal villages, each of which contains at least one Abn'dak shaman responsible for communication between villages. Such messages are mostly news of the latest hunts by land or by sea.

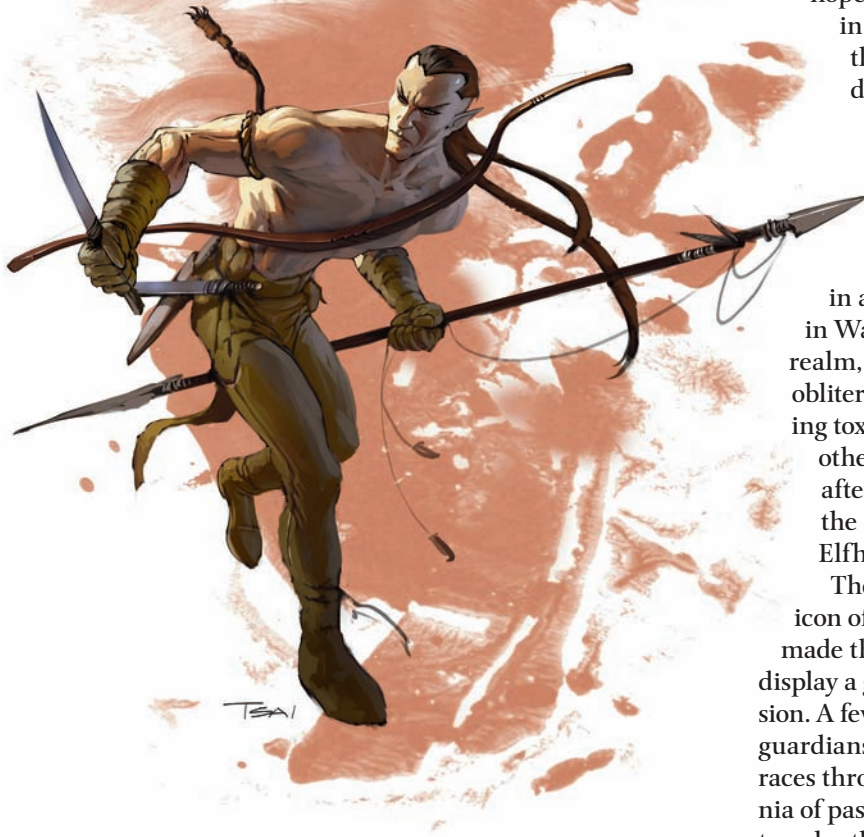
The Abn'dak chieftain is Seaspark. She is young, having gained the chieftom from her grandfather, who died while she lay in the womb. Control over the tribe bypassed her parents at her grandfather's dying request. Seaspark's grandfather is not around to pass on his wisdom directly, but her mother, the old chieftain's daughter, teaches her the tribe's wisdom while Seaspark grows into her role. Most believe Seaspark will rise to the challenge, though she remains untested.

THE DEAD VALE

Tribal Holy Site

Lifeless, twisted stumps stretch for miles through the Dead Vale. The lush forest known in former times as the Misty Vale is a blasted, ruined skeleton of its former verdant expanse. The forest did not die by curse or the hand of an evil intruder, but through the shift in climate. Druids and treants that might have averted the change briefly lost access to their powers





as a result of the Spellplague—just when they were most needed. The Dead Vale is the result.

The Elfharrow tribes regard the Dead Vale as holy ground. Its blasted expanse looms large in the memory of their people. Small groups venture into the deadscape on occasion, looking to uncover lost remnants of their past life amid the dead trunks and

RED WOLF, THE LONE HUNTER

A being known only as the Red Wolf hunts alone across the dry lands of Elfharrow. Some stories paint him as a killer, others a righter of wrongs. Still, the Red Wolf is widely acknowledged as the strongest, fiercest warrior of all the tribes. From time to time, cocky youths seek out the hunter to test their mettle. All such contenders pay the ultimate price for their impudence—death. The Red Wolf sometimes takes the shape of a tall elf in hunter's garb; other times he appears to be a scarlet-hued wolf of immense size. On the rare occasions when he shows up with news or instructions, the chiefs and shamans listen and do as they are bidden.

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yellowed grasses. More than anything else, the elves seek Cuivanu, a mystical tree that once grew in the heart of the vale. Cuivanu is said to seep life-giving sap—those who drank of it were preserved from disease, curses, and even old age. The Elfharrow elves

hope that the tree remains in a hidden glade, still in leaf and flower. Their worst nightmare is that the tree is a great, gnarled hulk, dry and dead, home to nothing but rot or worse.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

North Wall Gap: During the Spellplague, Halruaa was annihilated in a sorcerous blast so mighty that windows in Waterdeep rattled. Along with the wizards' realm, a section of the North Wall mountains was obliterated. This gap exposed Lapaliiya to spewing toxic waters and uncontrolled wild magic that otherwise might have been contained. In the aftermath, Lapaliiya's confederacy crumbled, the climate skewed, and eventually, the land of Elfharrow was born.

The gap has become something of a totemic icon of the Elfharrow tribes—those who have made the journey within and survived proudly display a gleaming tattoo commemorating the occasion. A few also come back with spellscars. Elfharrow guardians at the edge of the gap allow visitors of all races through, and upon their return apply the insignia of passage. Entering the gap eventually brings a traveler through the North Wall to look upon the face of ultimate destruction. The trip also includes one or more brushes with plaguelands, a plaguechanged creature or two, and possibly even a scouting party of Abolethic Sovereignty agents searching the edges of Halruaa for purposes unknown.

Ruins of Sheirtalar: The Shining City's gold- and silver-leaved domes are now half-drowned, cracked, and dulled by a century of fierce weather without upkeep. The famed Domed Palace of the Overking, which once sat high atop a granite outcrop, was pulled into a fissure so deep and twisting that daylight never reaches it. All manner of opportunistic monsters lair in the ruins, preying on each other, and protecting the treasure vaults of this fallen merchant jewel with their ravenous presence. An outcast, self-aware aboleth, never part of the Sovereignty, sits upon the Overking's ancient throne, ruling over the creatures that creep through the damp and drowned corridors.



ELTURGARD

Elturgard is a theocracy ruled by those who are certain they walk the path of righteousness. The paladins of this land take pride in their moral clarity and pursuit of good.

Elturgard is dominated by a “second sun” that hovers eternally in the sky above the city of Elturel, making this a realm of endless daylight. Creatures of darkness cannot abide even the sight of the city.

Unlike most countries, Elturgard has a state religion: Torm is revered in the temples that dot the landscape.

ELTURGARD LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Elturgard is a relatively small island of order and hope in an inhospitable swath of the Western Heartlands. Over the years, hundreds of people fleeing a mummy’s curse, a vampire’s service, or some other undead involvement have arrived here, settling in Elturel in particular. The forests surrounding this land have grown wild and dangerous. A pocket of plagueland festering several miles to the south has a habit of spewing forth occasional monstrosities.

Streetwise DC 25: In some quarters, Elturgard has garnered a reputation for being too righteous. Many problems attend its inflexible laws, inquisitorial persecution of evil, and bold plans for “setting Faerûn aright.”

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The land with two suns is proud, not infrequently wearing its intolerance as a badge of honor. This realm includes the cities of Elturel, Iriaebor, Scornubel, Triel, and Berdusk.

ELTURGARD PALADINS

The cause of Elturgard is just and good, and the paladins who serve it are uplifted by that undeniable knowledge. Their blood is fired with light’s conviction, their minds focused with purity, and their hearts hardened with their faith. Nothing stands in their way—while they grip their sanctified blades; fear is unknown to them and reviled in others.



ELTUREL

Capital City; Population 17,000

The city of Elturel rests atop a cliff that dominates the River Chionthar. A shining orb hangs like an eternal promise directly over the city’s center, providing a golden companion to the sun’s light by day, and reassuring sunlike illumination by night. The heatless second sun is called the Companion or Amaunator’s Gift, though no one but the High Observer knows if the object was truly bestowed by the sun god. Whatever its provenance, the Companion’s illumination suffuses the city, and undead of every sort are burned by its touch.

Elturel is the capital of the wider kingdom it claims. The city is ruled by the High Observer of Torm, who keeps order within the city and the wider realm through a knighthood of paladins who share Elturgard’s goal of one day bringing righteous judgment to all Faerûn. Numerous citizens dream of joining the knighthood, and many succeed. Though not all serve the same god, all have sworn oaths to Elturgard and wear the blazing insignia of the Companion.

As in previous generations, Elturel sees to it that the city and surrounding lands are the safest, best policed, and most efficient trading and farming community in the Western Heartlands. Caravans and riverboat convoys dread tying up in Elturel. More than anywhere else, travelers must be on their guard lest they use profane language, joke in an impious way, or otherwise accidentally anger the righteous port officials. Taxes are high for such offenses, and penalties include stripping a trader of the right to enter the city.

SCORNUBEL

City of Caravans; Population 14,000

Scornubel is a sprawling swarm of mercantile activity along the north shore of the River Chionthar where it meets the River Reaching. Caravans of all nations, organizations, and trading costers are welcome as long as they abide by the rules of good business. The paladin citadel visible from most points in the city is a constant reminder to those who might try otherwise. Dirty dealing in Scornubel can lead to severe punishment. Its earlier rulers chose profit over ideals, but the exact opposite is now true.

Scornubel's fortunes nearly failed in the decades following the Year of Blue Fire, when trade across Faerûn essentially fell to nothing. But the City of Caravans found a strategy to survive when it was nearly wiped out by destitution and starvation: The elders of Scornubel allowed it to be annexed into the realm of Elturgard. A contingent of paladins rode into the city, and it was saved. Over the last few decades, Scornubel has regained much of its former mercantile vigor, but the permanent citadel Elturgard built at the city center, brimming with paladins, has changed its overall tenor.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Dungeon of the Inquisitor: Those who trespass against the laws of Elturgard three times are thrown into the Dungeon of the Inquisitor. This vast, subterranean maze lies deep beneath the streets of Elturel, and its population is constantly being replenished by new lawbreakers. Parts of the dungeon consist of natural caverns discovered during the excavation, and their full extents and final destinations have yet to be determined. Strange sounds infrequently echo from unknown cavities—sometimes rushing water is heard, other times the enraged roars of vicious behemoths ring out. From time to time, dungeon prisoners on mining detail escape their captors and dash into

unexplored crevices and tunnels. They are never seen again, on or below Faerûn.

Fort Morninglord: This keep lies a day's ride west of Elturel, overlooking the River Chionthar. Its entire complement of paladins disappeared one night three years ago in an event that blackened every stone and fused every door and window of the keep. Fearing contagion by the unknown evil that rendered the keep uninhabited, the High Observer sealed all visible entrances behind additional layers of stone and mortar, and proclaimed that anyone who broke this interdiction would become an outlaw of the land.

Reaching Woods: This expansive stand of deciduous trees—mostly elms, maples, beeches, and oaks—seems a pleasant and beautiful forest from the exterior. That is merely a facade. Elturgard has discovered that its inmost secret glades hid shrines to primal entities not approved by the High Observer. The holy sites were tended by elves, humans, and, to the paladins' dismay, gnolls and goblins. The High Observer, declaring that goblins are vicious creatures and that gnolls serve demons, ordered the forest barricaded. No one can enter or leave, on pain of death.

Twenty years passed in silence, but the calm has recently been broken. A lone elf slipped past the paladins' blockade and told her story: The gnolls have conquered every other humanoid within the Reaching Woods, keeping the survivors captive as food. Only a few prisoners are left, and once they're gone, the gnolls must set their sights on food sources beyond their green sanctuary.



IRIAEBOR

Iriaebor is still an independent and strong city-state, despite the best efforts of Elturgard to bring it into the fold. The City of Thousand Spires is not free of Elturgard's influence, however. Where competing states might seek to overrun a rival through force of arms, Elturgard attempts to woo Iriaebor with gifts, largesse, and promises of safety, all delivered by sun-blazoned paladins. Some merchants of the city freely accept these gifts, even going so far as to allow small companies of Elturgard knights to stay in their guest towers. More than a few see this as a threat, but others say the resident paladins are gracious—and handy to have around when true evil is afoot.

THE TRADE WAY

Over the centuries, numerous separate caravan paths coalesced into a well-traveled route along the western edge of Faerûn called the Trade Way. Regular traffic once extended from Luskan to Calimport, but has been truncated since the Spellplague. It now runs from Waterdeep to the southern edges of Tethyr. Parallel to but usually some distance from the coast, the route moves farthest east just north of Baldur's Gate, where Elturgard paladins guard the crossing at the Winding Water River. Few, if any, of the lands through which the Trade Way passes are completely safe, and caravan guards are in constant demand.

ERLKAZAR

The Baronies of Erlkazar are home to a small population of simple folk scattered through tiny, pastoral villages. Such peace is presumably maintained by the Baronies' relative insignificance and proximity to the Vilhon Wilds, though stories tell how this sleepy, out-of-the-way place was once harried by gangs of bandits. Those marauders are gone, or at least they no longer bother with Erlkazar. Instead, border regions of Calimshan, Tethyr, Amn, and Turmish are victimized by midnight raids from a well-organized bandit army. No one knows where the bandit army is based—no sign of the night raiders appears in idyllic Erlkazar.

ERLKAZAR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 25: The vampire Saestra Karanok, once a native of the city of Luthcheq in Chessenta, was discovered by her horrified father and driven out on pain of destruction. After several years wandering southern Faerûn, she ended up in the sleepy, out-of-the-way realm of Erlkazar. It didn't take Saestra long to exert her influence over the bandits there, and she soon had them united under her thrall. The bandits, some now vampires in their own right, ceased their raids in Erlkazar.

Streetwise DC 35: Through wiles and threats, Saestra garnered the cooperation of all five baronies. She seduced and then transformed the king, leaving the palace in Llorbauth a haunted symbol of the realm's true ruler. When the sun shines, the Day Baronies of Erlkazar live on, unmolested by either vampires or bandits. After sundown, though, the Night Barony holds sway, using Erlkazar as a base of operations to raid caravans, settlements, and even

cities from the edge of the Plaguedwrought Land to the east, south into Calimshan, and west into Tethyr and Amn.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

From time to time, adventurers trail bandit raiders from surrounding lands to Erlkazar, where they find only peasant villages, incapable of hiding anything the size of the army they were after. The simple townsfolk are welcoming and friendly, and are bewildered if asked about a raiding army. After sunset, however, the villagers lock themselves in their houses, and nothing can convince them to go out at night. That's when the vampires rise up from their caves, and with their bandit minions, slay the troublemakers.

DAY BARONIES

Daylight Realm of Pastoral Villages

The Day Baronies are small, peaceful, and remarkably stable, having changed little in decades. The villagers get along wonderfully and are never menaced by outsiders. In the dark of night, though, they don't leave their abodes and don't want to know what goes on outside.

Ahlarkhem: The heart of Saestra's realm, this area is where the bulk of the Night Barony bandits hide, far beneath the pastoral fishing villages. Ahlarkhemites are the most nervous people in Erlkazar, and rarely speak to or make eye contact with visitors.

Carrelath: Unlike the rest of the realm, Carrelath is populated mostly by dwarves. More and more they have tried to distance themselves from the rest of the realm and from Saestra. Still, they too live in fear of the vampires who could invade their underground homes any time, day or night. They look to the Baron of Impresk as a possible ally to one day drive Saestra out and restore the peaceful kingdom to its old ways.



Impresk: The northernmost barony, Impresk engages in some resistance to Saestra's rule and thus is the least stable of the Day Baronies. One of the Day Barons, Tolarran, is a young and ambitious leader. If any hope exists that the people of Erlkazar might throw off the yoke of the Night Baroness, Tolarran is it.

Shalanar: The seat of the former king, Shalanar has become the least important of the five baronies. The city of Llorbauth has shrunk from a population of 28,000 to fewer than 10,000, and the citizens have gone back to the land, working small farmsteads or gathering in tiny thorps of fewer than a hundred souls apiece.

Tanistan: The least populated barony, Tanistan is farmed by a few toughened folk who make their peace with the night through strong drink.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Ellhimar Tower: Old Shalane Lake has dried up, and where blue waters once rolled now lies a pocket of plagueland. On the edge of the corrupted land, just within its borders, an old tower is visible that must once have lain below the lake's surface. Old stories have it that the tower was owned by a vanished wizard named Ellhimar. The structure remains inviolate, its flickering field of magic withstanding the hazy blue flames that spiral up from the surrounding plagueland. No denizen of the Shalanar Barony has attempted to gain entry.

Night Vault: Any subterranean access or tunnel beneath Erlkazar is likely a passage to the Night Barony. The dark hollows beneath Erlkazar house living bandits and their undead vampire lords.

A half-collapsed portion of the Night Barony was condemned by Saestra and excised from the realm for its instability years ago. The rockfall sealed away a Night Barony treasury, several bandit guards, and at least one vampire master. The instability was accompanied by upwelling magma streams swarming with salamanders and others creatures of the flame-loving depths. Of late, Saestra's surface raids have dropped precipitously; she has been using her forces to cleanse the new fiery threats in her own backyard.

NIGHT BARONY

Cavern Realm of Bandits and Vampires

From her resting place deep in a cavern beneath the barony of Ahlarkhem, Saestra rules the Night Barony. Generations of bandits, dozens of them now vampires, swarm the caverns under the Day Baronies. Saestra keeps them well trained and loyal—they can tear a village apart in an hour if so ordered. None of her victims have any idea where to find her, and the villagers fear her far more than any foreign invader seeking the bandit army.



Another section of the Night Vault is the former lair of a red dragon called Fyrentennimar. Long ago the creature was slain by magic and steel, but the dragon's spirit still resides in the stone. One of Saestra's ongoing projects includes somehow extracting that spirit and using it to amplify her own necromantic power.

Spirit Soaring: Once a temple to the vanished god Deneir, this impressive cathedral of soaring towers, flying buttresses, and great windows has become a haunted ruin. Gargoyles perch at every corner, though not always in the same position. Reedy music emanates from the structure, dirgelike and laden with the sadness of ultimate loss. Majestic double doors and blackened glass windows open into the main area of the cathedral, the central chapel. Soaring columns raise a shadowed roof high above. The walls of the chapel hold ledges lined with statues, blackened and begrimed, faces seeming to leer in the darkness. Throughout the structure, no supporting arch or door is without decoration, no door or wall is absent of runes, and no empty space is unfilled with menacing sculpture.

All stories agree that Spirit Soaring is haunted, though no one knows by what. Are the sculptures inhabited by evil spirits, or do the vengeful ghosts of past inhabitants yet walk the darkened corridors and catacombs beneath? No one who has entered intending to loot the sacristy has ever again emerged, so the true nature of the threat remains a mystery.

ESTAGUND

Estagund shares a common cultural heritage with decimated Durpar and drowned Var the Golden. Its folk are Durpari, who value trade and honor the Adama, a divinely inspired moral code. Beset by enemies, and within reach of few allies, Estagund relies on its noble warrior class and friends in High Imaskar to keep it safe.

ESTAGUND LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: Estagund endured a few ills in the wake of the Spellplague, but its lands were spared from the devastation. Trade initially suffered, but time heals all wounds.

Over the last thirty years, kenkus have become prominent in the nation's larger settlements. In the last five years, an alliance has grown between rakshasa-ruled Tirumala in the Beastlands and Estagund.

Religion DC 20: Unlike Durpar, where faith in the Adama faltered during the Merchant Wars, Estagund still has a strong religious center. The Adama is both a belief system and a code of conduct. To the average believer, the Adama is a guiding force, teaching that only through honest practices and mutual respect can one find peace and happiness.

All creatures, including deities, and objects are manifestations of the Adama. Gond, Oghma, Selûne, and Waukeen are the strongest representatives of its values of fairness, hard work, and honesty. Worshiping any god is paying homage to the Adama, but dishonesty and wickedness tend to separate evil deities and creatures from its principles.

Estagund's people derive their sense of truth, fairness, and tolerance from the Adama. It's the foundation by which they conduct themselves in daily life, not just in ceremonies or in worship. Word of the

Adama has spread to other lands; it and the people who follow it enjoy a reputation for fairness.

Streetwise DC 20: Unlike other states created by the Durpari people, Estagund has been and remains a monarchy. Rajah Jasraj Seltrarir rules with the aid of the Council of Chakas (merchant houses). The rajah is the final authority in the land, as well as the commander of its armed forces.

Differing further from their counterparts in Durpar and lost Var, Estagund's people honor a class of noble warriors known as the Maquar. The members of this class follow a highly restrictive code of conduct that dictates many aspects of their lives, limiting or prohibiting many activities. In exchange for these sacrifices, the Maquar are freed from the responsibility of providing for themselves so they can devote their lives entirely to the protection of the people. The Maquar answer only to the rajah of Estagund and those he deems fit to command units in his stead—usually the leaders of Estagund's other cities. The Maquar, in turn, form the command structure of the military, performing as officers for common professional soldiers and local militias alike.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

All of Estagund's major population centers lie on the Great Sea, far from the dangers of the northern reaches.

CHAVYONDAT

Capital City; Population 80,000

Set on the Bay of Kings, Chavyondat houses important centers of government, trade, military, and religion. In the city's center are Seltrarir Palace and the House of Chakas, where affairs of state are handled. Nearby stands the House of the Vanquisher, central training grounds for all Maquar. The minarets of the House of the Adama rise next to the palace, and within, halflings displaced from Luiren long ago maintain a shrine to Chauntea and Sheela Peryroyl.



The largest ward in Chavyondat is the marketplace, where everything imaginable within the morality of the Adama is for sale. The former Durpari chaka Vosh sells magic and items unusual for this part of the world. Although that chaka traces its heritage to the Red Wizards and fallen Thay, it no longer has a relationship with either.

Chavyondat's market gives way to docks on the Great Sea. From these quays, Estagund's merchant ships sail the Gulf of Luiren west to Delzimmer, north to High Imaskar, and beyond into the Sea of Fallen Stars. They also brave the Great Sea in routes to Calimshan, Amn, and the Sword Coast.

CURNA MOUNTAINS

Mines and Monsters

During the Merchant Wars of Durpar, the Gemstone chaka, a house run by a collective of dwarves, fled to Estagund rather than submit to the will of the Datharathi. With them, they brought the contents of the Library of Ormpé, sacked long before Ormpé vanished beneath the Golden Water. Rumor says the chaka found the secret of their Curna Mountains mines in the library. Those mines are the sole sources of Curna emeralds, bright green stones that shine with internal light when cut correctly. It's possible that these emeralds have traces of plangent crystal (page 118) in them.

Other than the hidden mines, the Curnas hold abundant monsters, including the largest population of bugbears, goblins, and hobgoblins in the area. The range hosts the ascendant Iron Eye tribe with its connections to Durpar (page 118). Well-armed cyclopes roam the peaks as well, suggesting a connection to the Feywild there. Rocs take flight from the highest crags, sometimes hunting the plains and the sea.

SOUTHERN LLUIRWOOD

Just across the Gulf of Luiren from Estagund, this surviving expanse of the Lluirwood is a dense jungle. Claimed by no other land or ruler, it is home to a federation of hardy halfling tribesfolk allied to the *hin* of Dambrath's Hills of the Kings (page 115). These halflings are also skilled boatfolk and sailors; some of them regularly make the trip to trade in Estagund's cities.

A trek through Southern Lluirwood is chancy. Yuan-ti claim a portion of the deeper jungle, as do a few beholders. Even the halflings can be dangerous to strangers, whom they see as possible yuan-ti spies.

Ammathtar: The beholder Lyxeda lurks in the ruins of the halfling city Ammathtar, destroyed almost a millennium ago. All sorts of aberrant creatures, birthed in the corruption sown by the beholders, live in this nightmarish place. From there they strike out into the jungle and Dambrath, giving Ammathtar an evil reputation.



GULF OF LUIREN

Newborn Sea

During the Spellplague, the Great Sea inundated the land of Luiren, homeland of the halflings. Most *hin* who once inhabited the area perished. Only a small portion of the Lluirwood remains on the gulf's east shore, and monsters of the Beastlands rule the truncated forest from ruined Thruldar.

Under the bay's shallow waters lie drowned halfling settlements still full of their riches. Sahuagin, aquatic ogres, water trolls, and wretched halfling ghosts haunt these drowned sites. Here and there, a tower juts from the bay, allowing access to its inundated interior.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Nacmoran: The return of the Feywild spelled change for the Curna Mountains. The veil between planes is thin here. As a result, the fomorian kingdom of Nacmoran has been reestablished in deep, glittering caverns beneath the peaks.

Nacmoran is the source of the wild cyclopes that roamed the south while the Feywild waned. Now the fomorian hold is consolidating power and spreading dark fey throughout the highlands. It has already assimilated hill giants, cyclopes, and goblins under its authority. Forces loyal to the fomorians have clashed with the Gemstone chaka's warriors in deep mines and with the Iron Eye goblins in the crags. Soon, the fomorians of Nacmoran will begin to extend their reach.

Vizier Devang: Within Seltrarir Palace, a cancer festers in the form of Vizier Devang. Originally from the Dustwall Mountains, Devang is a rakshasa lord in service to the rajah of Tirumala (page 96). Estagund's Rajah Seltrarir trusts Devang and keeps the vizier's counsel, going so far as to sign a trade agreement between the Seltrarir chaka and Tirumala. Even the common folk know Tirumala to be a wicked place, and they're mystified as to why their benevolent rajah has agreed to trade with the city. The most popular rumor is that the rajah is a rakshasa. Pratigya, captain of the rajah's three hundred personal Maquar, doesn't believe this rumor, and she's planning to send agents with a caravan to Tirumala to investigate what's going on.



EVERESKA

Protected by high magic, a powerful mythal, and thousand-foot cliffs, Evereska is a mist-shrouded city of secretive eladrin. Its inhabitants spurned the Retreat to Evermeet, keeping their city hidden from the rest of Faerûn, only to end up at the center of a war between the Shadovar and the phaerimms.

EVERESKA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: One of Evereska's Tomb Guards unwittingly helped release the phaerimms, bringing Shade Enclave back from centuries in Shadow. That mistake nearly destroyed this city of ancient wonders. A century of relative peace has seen Evereska rebuilt. It has been drawn, despite its reluctance, into a more visible role as one of the three major powers opposing the expansion of Netheril.

Streetwise DC 10: Evereska maintains its secretive ways; admission to the city is a closely guarded privilege. The Passing—magic required to enter the vale—comes only by invitation from a member of the Hill Elders for outsiders, or through a password for native Evereskans.

The various access points to the city are patrolled by the Vale Guard, each contingent led by a *kanqat* in command of no fewer than a hundred archers.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Since the Spellplague, the walls between the world and the Feywild, always thin in Evereska, have grown thinner still. Eladrin pass between planes with ease. Evereska remains a secretive place full of ancient lore and priceless treasures.

EVERESKA'S MYTHAL

Almost entirely rebuilt by Evereska's high mages after the phaerimm siege, the city's mythal weathered the Spellplague with barely a flicker.

The mythal is semisentient and committed to the protection of the city and its inhabitants. Its magic allows citizens and visitors to walk up and down vertical surfaces (as long as their feet and hands are bare), and covers the city in a protective aura that includes *feather fall* and other beneficial effects.

The mythal also provides protection from enemies in the form of a startling array of offensive spells that makes Evereska among the best-guarded cities in Faerûn, rivaling Waterdeep and Shade.

THE MEADOW

Defensive Perimeter

Evereska's vale is covered in a wide swath of meadowlands and farmlands dotted with copses and small forests of smokethorns, blueleafs, and other exotic trees. Past the flatlands, the Meadow Wall surrounds the city proper at a short distance, forming the last line of defense if an enemy manages to accomplish the Passing. It marks the limit of Evereska's mythal, but to the untrained eye, it appears to be nothing more than a decorative hedgerow.

The Vine Vale, the area beyond the Meadow Wall, is home to terraced farms watered by a thousand springs. It is perpetually shrouded in mist that hides the city from sight.

EVERESKA CITY

Large City; Population 22,000

Evereska is built on a lofty mesa nestled in a valley surrounded by high hills. The Three Sisters are towering marble cliffs a thousand feet tall, upon whose plateau the city glistens. Its winding streets and towering structures have changed little in thousands of years. Buildings carved of granite and marble are merged with living plants. The air smells of moss, leaves, and flowers. Streets paved with marble extend up the vertical sides of great towers. The eladrin wander over every surface, occasionally flying or levitating from place to place.

The Hall of the High Hunt is an imposing structure of soaring marble minarets and vine-covered arches where the Hill Elders hold court. This council of the most learned eladrin includes fierce warriors, high mages, and nobles born of families that were old when humans still wielded bone clubs.

Evereska has a number of temples devoted to gods worshiped by the fey. A statue of Hanali Celanil rises hundreds of feet above the city center, and the awe-inspiring Floating Gardens of Aerdrie Faenya provide a tranquil respite. Though confusion accompanied the revelations that Hanali Celanil was in fact the elven aspect of the goddess Sune and that Aerdrie Faenya was none other than the primordial Akadi, the worship of the goddess of beauty and the Lord of Sky Home are still major parts of life in Evereska.

Both Sune and Akadi must surely be pleased by Evereska, which combines jaw-dropping beauty with

PATHS TO THE FEYWILD

When the Spellplague pushed the two planes closer together, Evereska drifted into the fringes of the Feywild and now exists equally in both places. Eladrin are taught at the youngest age to wander freely between the worlds, and all the defenses that protect Evereska from the dangers of Faerûn protect it as well from the greater dangers of the Feywild.

stomach-dropping heights. Nothing is close to the ground here, and towers compete with each other to scrape the clouds. The tallest structure in the city is the Tower Higher than Eastpeak, which is so named because it's taller than the mountains east of the vale that sometimes block the rising sun.

The Academy of Magic and the Academy of Arms are sponsored by the high mages and the Long Watch, respectively, and no finer wizards or fighters can be found in the world. Possessed of extraordinary power, the high mages of Evereska keep their lore a closely guarded secret.

WARRIORS OF EVERESKA

Military Defenses

The military might of Evereska is considerable. In the last century or more, it has begun to shift its focus from protecting the city to venturing out—often in company with soldiers from Cormyr and Myth Drannor—against Netherese encroachment.

The Long Watch is tasked with extending the military reach of Evereska beyond its protected vale. Skilled archers and powerful battle mages greatly impress any who fight alongside them, and strike fear into those who oppose them.

One of the city's primary missions for centuries has been the protection of its tombs from plunder. That task is in the hands of the Tomb Guard, capable adventurers who are dedicated stewards of the buried past.

The Swords of Evereska is a militia composed of nobles. The finest families in Evereska are represented, a fact that makes it clear that no one is above contributing to the defense of the realm.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The Arvandor Gate: In an effort to learn the truth of their goddess's identity, the priests of Hanali Celanil opened a portal to Arvandor out in the Vine Vale. The casting was successful, but they learned the deity existed in Arvandor only as an avatar of Sune, who was allowed by Corellon to extend her power from the Gates of the Moon.

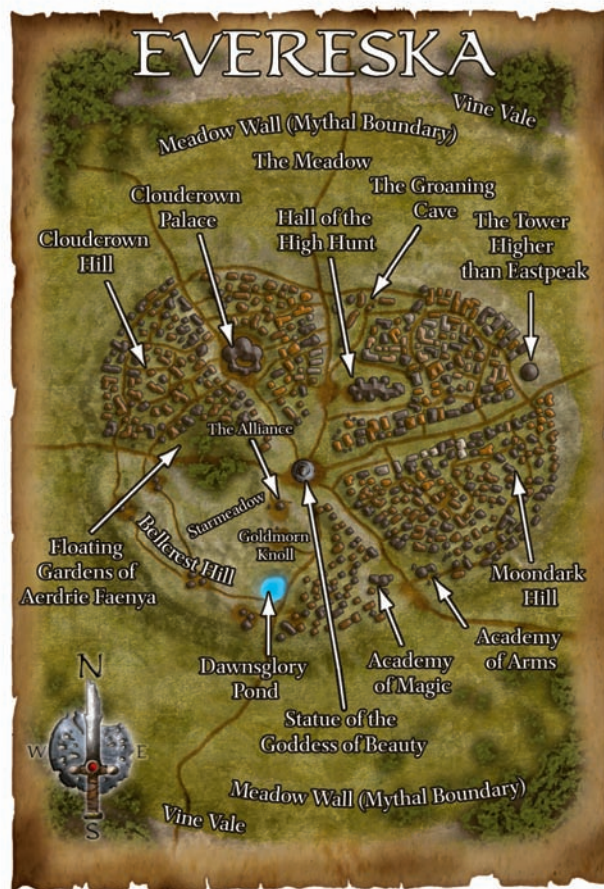
HIGH LORD DUIRSAR

High Lord Duirsar, a trusted, capable, and decisive commander, has served as the leader of Evereska for more than two centuries.

Though he long protected Evereska from the outside world, High Lord Duirsar has been working since the phaerimm siege to move toward a more open relationship with the city's neighbors. He understands the true potential of the Netherese threat, respects the efforts to rebuild Myth Drannor, and has embraced the end of the Retreat.

Duirsar commands the Cold Hand, an elite military company drawn from Evereska's finest warriors.

ROBERT LAZZARETTI



EVERESKA

6

The portal was opened in the Year of Blue Fire, just as the Spellplague passed over Evereska. The mythal protected the city from all but a few minor occurrences of wild magic. Thanks to the planar conjunction with the Feywild, however, the portal to Arvandor remained open. No effort since has been able to close it. The gate is one-way, and no one who has passed through it from Evereska has ever returned.

The Groaning Cave: This mysterious cave rests in a hillside inside the city. The entrance is surrounded by a granite terrace and balustrade. What lies inside is known only to the high mages, but it's assumed to be the chamber in which the mythal is housed. It also serves as the city's archive, filled with treasures beyond imagination.

The Shadow Remnant: During the phaerimm siege, the protective shell around the city was strengthened by a pall of Shadow Weave magic. This act helped block the phaerimms' spells, but occasioned near disastrous results for the mythal.

Though it was successfully removed for the most part, a single remnant of the shadow veil has persisted through the decades, stymieing the high mages' attempts to dispel it. It appears as a thin, rectangular sheet of utter darkness suspended high in the air. Without warning, vile magic spits forth, along with even more vile creatures straight out of the Shadowfell.

EVERMEET

Evermeet is the refuge of the Elven Court that withdrew from Faerûn during the Retreat. Elves and eladrin of many cultures followed Queen Amlaruil when she moved the center of fey life out of its ages-old home in the forest of Cormanthor. Strong, magical, and filled with soaring forests, Evermeet is an achingly beautiful land. Long viewed as a “world beyond the world,” it was where fey went to get away from everyone and everything else. Although difficult to reach, it once lay over the sea to the west of Faerûn. Evermeet is widely considered to have perished in the Spellplague.

EVERMEET LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: Even Evermeet’s closest allies, the fey kingdoms in Faerûn, lost contact with Evermeet after the Spellplague. With the failure of all portals, embassies, and attempts to reestablish contact, common wisdom now has it that Evermeet has been destroyed.

Arcana DC 40: Evermeet in fact survives in the Feywild. An echo of the fey refuge remains in Toril as an isle with the same shape and diameter, lying off the coast of the unfamiliar continent of Returned



Abeir. The echo is empty of structures and has few residents. Evermeet fey can step back and forth between the echo and the Feywild’s Evermeet as they choose.

Contact points and routes between Faerûn and Evermeet were severed during the Year of Blue Fire, and they have been slow to reknit in the years since. Queen Amlaruil is gone, and the throne stands empty; Evermeet is currently governed by its Royal Council. Some suspect that a Moonflower heir yet walks Faerûn, severed from his or her native land.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Evermeet is a large forested isle in the Feywild. It brims with wonders, integrating natural beauty and supernatural splendor.

LEUTHILSPAR

Capital City; Population 60,000

The capital of Evermeet is the paramount example of organic architecture, in which buildings are grown rather than built. Skyscraping crystals are riddled with spiral passageways and glass-floored living quarters. Mighty trees grow into citadels, linked bole to bole by fluting branches. Soaring arches and shimmering fields of magical force support airy palaces that seem too fragile to exist even in a dream. Eternally vigilant warriors and mages in armor of gleaming glass guard the tranquil city.

A Royal Council rules Evermeet. Its members include Selsharra Durothil, Ammisyll Veldann, Breithel Olithir (the Grand Mage), Keryth Blackhelm (the Lord Marshal), and others. Zaltarish, an aged scribe long associated with Evermeet, has shuffled off the mortal coil.

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Eagle Hills: From Thalikaera Rock, the highest peak of the Eagle Hills range, lookouts can see far across the surrounding waters of a Feywild sea that remains mysterious and inscrutable. The lookouts often step across into the echo to look toward Returned Abeir, watchful for dangers from that mysterious land.

The Farmeadows and the Horsefields: The two largest meadows on Evermeet are lush and pleasant, representative of the dozens of smaller glades tucked in among the trees.

Ardulith River: Leaf boats ride from the river’s source high in the Silver Hills down to where it joins the River Shaelyn. From there, the waterway flows into the sea in view of the Royal Council’s palace in Leuthilspar.

Silver Hills: These 3,000-foot, conifer-lined peaks tower over the rest of the island.

Moonflower heirs persist within the borders of Evermeet, but so far none have claimed the throne. Most of Evermeet's citizens agree that a Moonflower must be the monarch—although Durothil, Veldann, and others scheme constantly to declare the Moonflower dynasty at an end, so that they can found a new one.

The Royal Council has formed a company called the Abeir Explorers' Guild, which is partly financed from the royal coffers. The Guild sends groups across the Feywild border into Toril, and from there to the new continent to gather information and map the unexplored lands. Even after years, only a fraction of the nearest continental coastline is known, because many expeditions of the Explorers' Guild fail to return. So far, the guild has mostly found unrelenting jungles from which poke structures large enough to house giants, all apparently empty.

CORELLON'S GROVE

Temple Site

The high temple of the First of the Seldarine can be found in a northern forest of the island. Indeed, it would be proper to say that the north quarter of the island is the high temple to Corellon, since it's impossible to know where the normal forest ends and the space holy to the great deity begins. According to eladrin sages, Corellon's Grove comes closest to replicating the divine environment of Arvandor outside that blessed dominion.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Grove of Grief: This large copse lies close to the echo isle's eastern edge. Mists and dense trees conceal a series of ridges and breakneck gullies that seem rougher and more dangerous with each step one takes. More than one Explorers' Guild member has disappeared in this thicket, apparently lured deeper and deeper by a noise that at first sounds like a child's crying.

Sumbrar: When Evermeet was whirled into the Feywild, the military stronghold of Sumbrar made the trip as well, but not unscathed. Its miles of



EVERMEET

interwoven magical fortresses, companies of wizard-warriors, and enchanted armadas ignited and burned with blue fire. The last eight dragons of Evermeet sleeping below the isle were lost—perhaps killed or snatched away into some unreachable realm.

Now lying only a few miles off Evermeet's coast, the ravaged isle of Sumbrar is a plagueland filled with hideous creatures that slay any eladrin looking to salvage something of the former island stronghold. Treasures of military power might yet languish in Sumbrar waiting to be claimed, but so far few would-be scavengers have survived such expeditions.

LIFE IN EVERMEET

When Evermeet shifted into the Feywild, the Elven Court exerted its power to ensure the smooth passage of the seasons and to preserve the stately cadence of contemplative serenity Evermeet has long enjoyed. As ever, noble houses, family lines, and clan relationships color relationships between individual eladrin.

Many of the elves who lived in Evermeet remained behind in the forest of the echo land. From there, most dispersed to the new continent of Returned Abeir or traveled to Faerûn.

THE GREAT DALE

The Great Dale is the long, windswept gap between the Forest of Lethyr and the northern Dunwood (formerly called Rawlinswood). Rumpled ridges of bare rock rise from the thin soil, growing steeper and more rugged to the north and south as one climbs toward the forests that flank the vale.

Fierce winter winds scour the land during the cold months, and all year long the Great Dale is a desolate land. Leaving aside trade towns, the only major settlement is Yeshelmaar.

GREAT DALE LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: In the Year of Rogue Dragons (1373 DR), the Rotting Man, a servant of Talona ensconced at Dun-Tharos in the center of Dunwood, was foiled in his plot to suckle an abomination on divine blood. For all his evil, though, Talona's champion had watched over the ancient Nar capital's ruins, much as the druidic Nentyarchs of previous years had done before him. The failure of the Rotting Man's mystical machinations and his demise woke long-quiescent demons beneath the ruins of Dun-Tharos. Since then, the Dunwood has become a far more dangerous realm of evil-looking trees.

Streetwise DC 15: The unforested portion of the Great Dale has never been much more than a wide range for goats and other hardy livestock. With threats from Narfell in the north and the demons of Dunwood, few communities remain. Yeshelmaar, home to the druids of the Circle of Leth, is the Great Dale's center of civilization.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Tiny holds ruled by druids or tough foresters exist here and there, mostly at the eaves of the Forest of Lethyr.



BEZENTIL

Trade Post; Population 200

Mostly overgrown now, the Great Road runs through the dale from Uthmere to the crossroads of Kront. It passes through this walled village, which serves as a waypoint for travelers and caravans. Five-foot-high stones, carved with a tree-in-circle mark, stand on the road to Bezentil, signifying that the crossroads is under the protection of the Circle of Leth.

DUNWOOD

Demon-Haunted Northern Forest

The Dunwood forms the northern border of the Great Dale, weaving its way south of the Giantspire Mountains and the plains of Narfell until it peters out near the Cold Road in the east. Once the Dunwood was a northern twin to the Forest of Lethyr, but then the Rotting Man disturbed the wreckage of Dun-Tharos, the ancient Nar capital.

Now the blightlords and the Rotting Man are no more; ageless demons in their hundreds stir within Dunwood instead. The Nentyarch of Yeshelmaar is occupied in a fierce contest against the demons of Dun-Tharos. His greatest wish is to eliminate them entirely, but this goal is slow in coming.

FOREST OF LETHYR

Druid-Guarded Southern Forest

The Forest of Lethyr occupies the southern half of the Great Dale and provides a natural boundary between the Great Dale and Thesk. The forest is rich in wildlife, including bears, wolves, big cats, deer, rabbits, and all manner of birds, squirrels, and other tree-loving animals.

Druids, rangers, and other folk of the woodlands answering to the Nentyarch guard the boundaries of the Forest of Lethyr. Several treants also roam the wood, dedicated to finding and dispatching demonic infections from the north. A few secretive villages of elves exist in the woodland. Human settlements are limited to the forest's southern edges, in Theskian land.

KRONT

Trade Village; Population 400

The first glimmer of civilization along the Cold Road from N'Jast in Narfell, Kront stands on a crossroads that leads to Two Stars in Thesk. Despite raids from far-roaming Nars, the rough frontier village still stands. No lord higher than the current Lady Chini-lvur, of an Impilturan noble line, claims dominion over Kront. The Chinilvurs would have built the town in the Ashanath on Lake Ashane, but that stretch of land is prone to unnaturally regular and severe tornadoes.

UTHMERE

Trade Village; Population 400

The Easting Reach withdrew as the Sea of Fallen Stars receded, leaving this former port landlocked. A major earthquake then finished the city. Most citizens fled to Impiltur.

A walled trading post still stands along the Great Road and the Dalestream here, surrounded by small farms. The Hall of the Just, once a temple to Tyr, is the town's authority. Uthmere's streets are safe, and a traveler can expect fair treatment in the village.

YESHELMAAR

Trade Town; Population 2,000

Near the center of the dale, a great tor rises from the forest. A pristine lake of clear, cold water stands at the foot of the hill. Carved into the tor is an old stronghold known as Yeshelmaar, built in a day when the Lethyr fey faced off against threats from Narfell.

During the wars with the Nars, Yeshelmaar grew higher and deeper, until the original tor was obscured. Now it is difficult to pick out the transition between the natural stone of the hillside and elven engineering. Slender walkways thread the tallest spires, and curling stairways provide external access to many of the towers and lower balconies. Trees root in earth-filled stone planters on nearly every level surface, providing soothing breaks in the otherwise stern stonework. Green ivy grows over the sides of every wall.

The Nentyarch and his Circle of Leth formerly dwelled at Dun-Tharos, but the Rotting Man and his blightlords drove them out. Yeshelmaar became the Nentyarch's seat-in-exile.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Dun-Tharos: This half-buried ancient city sprawls for miles through the pines and bogs at the heart of the Dunwood. It was once the seat of a great and terrible realm of dark keeps and sinister lords. In a war

PETTY DEMON LORDS

Several powerful demons claim territory above and below Dunwood. Two of them are briefly described here.

Eschar: A powerful demon who commands others of its ilk in Dun-Tharos, Eschar is similar in form to a big, scaled ogre. A crown of horns protrudes from its head and glows with fiendish light. Evil pulses from Eschar like a heartbeat ringing up from the depths.

The Queen Abiding: Also claiming power in Dun-Tharos, the Queen Abiding is a blot of darkness a dozen yards across when she expands to her full diameter. The chill of coldest winter enshrouds her.

between ancient Raumathar and Narfell, some mighty spell of unspeakable power leveled the entire area. So ended the demon-haunted kingdom of Narfell.

Nentyarchs of ages past raised a living fortress of magical trees over the ruins of Dun-Tharos, chasing off explorers lest they awaken the dire forces buried beneath. Treasures of Narfell's baleful lords lie in deep storehouses and conjuring chambers under the old ruins. The Rotting Man drove out the Nentyarch and the Circle of Leth, disturbing those ancient secrets and, before his fall, unleashing an even worse power.

Now demons of every shape move through the catacombs of Dun-Tharos and the forest above. Any creature that comes looking for ancient Nar treasures risks much.

The Mucklestones: The northeastern eaves of Lethyr hide the fabled Mucklestones—a number of weathered stones covered with nature runes that stand in a cleared circular declivity. The stones shift around the clearing at times, and the whole area sometimes migrates short distances.

Guardians of the forest keep close watch on the Mucklestones. The Spellplague destroyed many of the portal connections that the stones once housed, and twisted others so that they lead to unfixed and dangerous locales.

Oracle of Fortress Clymph: The rocks and bricks of these ruins glow red with heat, and the crackling of massive flames emanates from a central fortress. The stones of the keep are imbued with powerful protection magic, transforming the perimeter of the building into a massive magic circle. Before the Spellplague, the magic barrier contained a portal that opened to the Abyss. Though that gate has been closed for nearly a hundred years now, and most of the demonic hordes within have succumbed, fiendish presences yet linger here.

In recent years, Clymph has become known as an oracle site. Those brave or desperate enough can approach the fortress's front gate, knock three times, and wait to be addressed by a booming voice from the earth. The petitioner is allowed one question, but the answer is whispered so quietly that an ear must be laid to the gate to hear the answer. Many supplicants leave unharmed, happy with what they have learned. Others are absorbed through the gate into the fortress's interior, never to be seen again.

Val-Murthag: This sprawling city was leveled by the Raumathari long ago. Its cyclopean walls and shattered towers lie in a wild and lonely corner of the Great Dale. Little is left on the surface, but deep vaults filled with imprisoned demons and restless Nar ghosts lie beneath the city's numerous keeps.



HALRUA

The former nation of wizards who traced their heritage to ancient Netheril, Halruaa is now a wasteland of crumbling settlements, noxious waters, and unchecked magic. Pockets of active Spellplague dot the land with blue fire.

HALRUA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: The Spellplague was not kind to Halruaa, heir to the Netherese veneration of magic. Fully half of the land dissolved during the initial wave of blue fire. In the tsunamis, mudslides, and magical detonations that followed, the remainder of the nation was destroyed.

Streetwise DC 20: Halruaa is best known today as the fallen magical country that birthed the mercenaries known as the Five Companies (page 254).

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The toxic landscape of Halruaa is riddled with the magical remains of a wizards' realm.

RETHILD

Tropical Mire

Once considered part of Dambrath, this vast marshland is now lumped in with the wilderness of Halruaa. Also known as the Great Swamp, it has grown over the decades. It abuts the East Wall and the southern arm of the Gnollwatch Mountains, flooding all the lowlands between. Only a few high hills provide any significant expanses of dry land.

Inhospitably hot and foul-smelling, the swamp is full of parasites, disease, clouds of poison gas, and

quicksand. Many monsters, including black dragons, inhabit its pools and stands of cypress trees. Rethild deserves its reputation as one of the most deadly swamps in Faerûn.

The lizardfolk of the Great Swamp, most numerous of its inhabitants, are united into a kingdom they call Ilimar. They have no clear ruler and often function independently, but never at cross purposes. Some of the young dragons ally and even live with the lizardfolk in a major settlement also called Rethild. This community is built on the foundations of a sunken sarrukh city in the center of the swamp.

THE WALLS

Mountainous Borders

Three ranges known as the Walls protect Halruaa's basin from outside threats—or at least, they did. During the Spellplague, the Walls, towering to 20,000 feet or more in places, made it hard for Halruaans to escape the death throes of their nation. Of the five passes that once led between the peaks, only three remain. The North Wall Gap connects Halruaa and Elfharrow, the Nath Pass cuts through the East Wall into Dambrath, and Azhul Pass descends from southeastern Halruaa to Rethild, the Great Swamp.

Formerly tamed by Halruaa's wizards, the Walls are now gorged with monsters. Normal and spell-scarred giants, ogres, wyverns, and worse rule the crags. Although Elfharrow patrols the North Wall Gap, the elves' presence is minimal. Less numerous, but more dangerous, are the few aboleth agents that comb the North Wall for some unknown purpose.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Akhaur Marsh: Named for the infamous necromancer who expanded it, this marsh was an inland swamp. Flooding in Halruaa during the Spellplague brought the sea to the marsh. Natural dangers abound here; Akhaur's influence added a spectrum of undead. The necromancer's fortress still stands, half-flooded, somewhere in the swamp.

Chasolné: On the southern reach of the East Wall, looking out over the Bay of Pirates, stand two 500-foot-tall stone heads. Their humanlike features are exaggerated and stylized, bearing grooves that resemble scaled skin.

HALRUAAN CONSUMPTION

Any nonspellscarred creature that ventures into the valleys of Halruaa is subject to a magical wasting condition known as Halruaan consumption. The game details of this disease are given below.

Halruaan Consumption

Level 11 Disease

Those who contract this malady are subject to sudden weight loss, vomiting, and finally disintegration.

Attack: +15 vs. Will

Endurance improve DC 26, maintain DC 22, worsen DC 21 or lower

The target is cured and also gains a spellscar. **Initial Effect** The target regains only half the normal hit points from healing effects and takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude and Will defenses. Additionally, the target gains a +1 bonus to damage per die when using arcane attack powers.

Final State The target dies, disintegrating into luminous blue dust. **Final State** The target regains only half the normal hit points from healing effects and takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude and Will defenses. In addition, the target takes 15 damage, which cannot be healed until the target is cured of the disease. Additionally, the target gains a +1 bonus to damage per die when using arcane attack powers.

Lately sailors on the Great Sea have seen the eyes in the heads glow at times, night and day. Ships have disappeared around the Bay of Pirates more often in recent times. Most prefer to give Chasolné a wide berth.

The heads flank a winding stair that leads to a ruin on an outcropping at the top of the cliff above. Set in the middle of the tumbled stones is a broad slab of rock that seems to be an altar, carved with images of strange sea life and stranger oceangoing vessels. Wide and shallow stone bowls, blackened by fire on the inside, flank the table.

Beyond the altar, a tunnel opens into a domed chamber. Three round passages lead into the earth from this chamber, leading to an ancient sarrukh site. Two sarrukh still reside here. They perform experiments on their lizardfolk servants and on captured travelers and sailors. Through magic portals, the site connects to Ilimar and Okoth.

Halarahh: Halarahh was the capital of Halruaa. In its heyday, hundreds of lofty towers built of coral stone, crystal, and magic rose to the skies. Floating keeps, the soaring towers of the ruler's palace, and flying vehicles without number distinguished its skyline. All that was wiped away with the rest of Halruaan civilization. Now the city is a panorama of shattered, fallen shells.

Windowless openings gleam and sparkle with residual spells, and strange sounds almost like singing emerge from beneath the ground. The broken remains of buildings and the vaults below are not only rich in treasure, but also thick with blue fire, ghosts, angry undead, magical guardians, wards, and other threats. Failed magic has also allowed all sorts of beings not of this world into Halarahh. Most common are elemental creatures, passing through unbroken connections to the Elemental Chaos.

At the city's center stands an enormous treelike entity, perhaps living, perhaps animate. It is content to remain motionless for years at a time. Then it awakens for a days-long rampage.

Ilimar: In the forested hills above the northern reaches of Rethild, at the headwaters of a stream that feeds the marshland, stands a small and ancient settlement. Recently rebuilt, its walls bear serpentine motifs and are overgrown with snakelike vines.

Elite lizardfolk guard and live at the site, practicing magic beyond that normally possessed by their kind. Guardian nagas reside among them, guiding the lizardfolk of Rethild.



Three open vaults below the settlement once housed an equal number of sleeping sarrukh. Two chambers hold treasures the nagas gathered while their masters slept. The third room features two portals—one leads to Chasolné and the other to a ruin in Gulthandor on the Dragon Coast.

Mount Talath: The Temple of Mystra carved into the side of Mount Talath erupted in an explosion of blue fire upon the deity's death, taking out much of the outer structure. When the smoke and haze cleared, a shimmering blue image of a soaring structure thick with reaching spires remained. The image bears a striking resemblance to the previous temple.

Around this temple seethe the worst plaguelands of Halruaa.

ORDER OF BLUE FIRE

The Order of Blue Fire maintains a base in the fortress of Talathgard on the outskirts of the Halruaan devastation. They attack any who are bold enough to approach what they call the Temple of Blue Fire on Mount Talath and regularly send sorties into the simmering structure. See page 264 for more about this organization.

They haven't penetrated far. As one might expect, deadly guardians and wards protect the Temple of Blue Fire. A series of magical tests once used to ascertain the trustworthiness of visitors still functions, now warped in terrifying ways. Furthermore, the tower image becomes solid and guards against intruders, touching more than one with blue fire.

Despite the risks, the order's members are driven on by rumors that the temple and tunnels beneath hold vast magical knowledge and stores of items. So immense is the collection, legend says, that spells were required to categorize and find specific items and books.

HIGH IMASKAR

The reinvigorated realm of High Imaskar claims old Mulhorandi lands that were wiped clean in the Spellplague. The realm is peopled by distant descendants of the infamous Imaskar Empire toppled thousands of years ago. The new realm retains elements of original Imaskari culture, though it renounces slavery in all its forms (unlike the old Imaskari, whose slave-taking led to their downfall). It is widely believed that those born of Imaskari blood possess a special talent for magic.

Despite High Imaskar's example and stated intentions, nearby countries deeply distrust this revived empire. After all, its ancient namesake was one of the most hated reigns of all time.

HIGH IMASKAR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Ancient kingdoms fell in the Spellplague's aftermath, among them Mulhorand. Many of the Mulan people were lost when the landscape rocked and changed. The few remaining fled to other lands, including Chessenta. With Mulhorand's gods departed and the altered landscape completely barren of civilization, a descendant of ancient Imaskar named Ususi Manaallin founded the new realm of High Imaskar. She did so by relocating the ancient (and movable) Palace of the Purple Emperor to the wilderness of former Mulhorand.

In the years since, High Imaskar has consolidated its hold on its new-claimed lands. Ususi was crowned Empress, the first Imaskari imperial presence since the last emperor, Yuvaraj, was slain in battle against a Mulan deity nearly 4,000 years ago. Ususi's first dictate was to renounce the slavery of her ancestors, and she outlawed slave ownership in High Imaskar on pain of death. She also set up the Body of Artificers, Planners, and Apprehenders, whose power is equal to and balances hers.

History DC 25: In the Year of the Wyvern (1363 DR), a secret Underdark refuge of Imaskar's few survivors cracked the Great Seal that had so long shielded its existence and location. Several explorers left the hidden city, called Deep Imaskar, to see if the forces that had brought the old empire to its knees yet persisted. In short order, the hidden city came under attack from a living doomsday weapon of their ancestors' own devising.

Deep Imaskar's Great Seal was thrown down and half the city's inhabitants were slaughtered in the streets before the threat was quelled by two Imaskari: the wizard Ususi Manaallin and the vengeance-taker Iahn Qoyllor. Deep Imaskar remains, but many from

that realm joined Ususi Manaallin in building a new empire on the surface.

Streetwise DC 15: Deep Imaskar persists as an ally of High Imaskar, though many of its more outgoing citizens relocated to the new realm. However, in the years since, Deep Imaskar has grown darker, paranoid, and resentful of its prosperous daughter colony. Expert diplomacy keeps this alliance in place . . . for now.

High Imaskar's other ally is Tymanther, the land of dragonborn in the area once claimed by Unther. High Imaskar knows that it must keep allies on its flanks, and thus it gives Tymanther favored trade status to keep the realm on friendly terms.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Few landscapes are as turbulent as High Imaskar's crazed realm. Its wild extremes, filled with towering peaks, echoing chasms and drifting earthmotes, make navigation difficult without aid. Trade is accommodated between various urban centers using huge flying beasts known as redwings. These dragonflylike creatures, bred by the Imaskari, transport both trade goods and passengers on great gondolas strapped to their undersides.

KEY INHABITANTS OF HIGH IMASKAR

The Empress: The aged Empress Ususi oversees the new Imaskari empire she helped found. Now, her creeping infirmities have become too great to forestall through magic. Thus, Ususi has asked the Body of Artificers, Planners, and Apprehenders to nominate a candidate for empress or emperor, unrelated to her, whom she will either accept or refuse. Ususi seeks to avoid the system of dynasties that helped weaken High Imaskar's predecessor realm.

Qhapaq: A proficient arcanist, Lord Artificer Qhapaq, leads a powerful group of citizen-mages that makes up a large segment of the Imaskari population. He styles himself a man of the people and speaks for their concerns.

Yanay: Skyclave's "mayor" sees to the city-tower's needs and provisioning. Lord Planner Yanay commands the nonmilitary workers and deals with the day-to-day needs of the population. She is the designated lead representative for those Imaskari who do not concern themselves with arcane enterprises.

Qhechua: A fearsome commander, Lord Apprehender Qhechua oversees a security force of vengeance-takers, the judge-executioners who police Imaskari society. He divides his time (and his vengeance-takers) between internal troublemakers and external threats.

GHELDANETH

Remnant City; Population 22,000

Radically reduced in size from the metropolis it once was, Gheldaneth yet persists, the sole surviving bastion of ancient Mulhorand. Despite its grand history, Gheldaneth proclaims fealty to High Imaskar. A detachment of Imaskari vengeance-takers has a permanent post in Gheldaneth, ensuring that the city obeys the dictates of the Empress in Skyclave. The two rules most at odds with the previous way of life in Gheldaneth are the ban on owning slaves and the ban on worship of the Mulhorandi pantheon. Several bitter, bloody conflicts have been fought by vengeance-takers and Gheldanethi loyal to Imaskar against slaver syndicates and priests of banned deities.

Despite these controversial edicts, social status remains important to average Gheldanethi. Many citizens shave their heads and paint circles upon their brows. One circle indicates someone of the middle class, two an arcane spellcaster, and three an honored historian of lost traditions. The middle class consists of artisans, craftsfolk, traders, mercenaries, and scribes.

A high concentration of tieflings lives in Gheldaneth. Many of them claim that they are mortal descendants of ancient Mulhorandi deities, though most believe they are scions of slaves who made deals with devils in an attempt to escape their bondage.

Gheldaneth is composed of relatively modern stone buildings and streets squatting on the ruins of a metropolis that once numbered over 170,000 residents. Only a few of the grand structures the city once boasted remain in use—the rest were buried in the upheaval that obliterated the greater part of Mulhorand. Submerged structures include Mulhorand's Great University and Wizard College, temples great and small, and grand tombs of previous rulers. At one time, Gheldaneth was known to house the largest collection of relics and magic items in the area. Precious few have been recovered.

All those buried structures and treasures make modern-day Gheldaneth a hub for adventurers who dream of lost riches ripe for the taking just below the city streets. The city's economy is booming, mostly serving hopeful salvagers and adventuring companies from all across Faerûn.

SKYCLAVE

Capital City-Tower; Population 18,000

Vast and imposing, Skyclave is the seat of the Empress and the Body of Artificers, Planners, and



Apprehenders. The great tower is many-windowed and sprouts hundreds of secondary spires flush with the main mass. It includes the partly restored and relocated Palace of the Purple Emperor.

From the exterior, hundreds of balconies, balustrades, verandas, spiraling stairs, and doorways protrude from the great tower's sides. The lowest balcony is a good two or three hundred feet above the farms, fisheries, and light industries that surround and support Skyclave.

More than half of all the citizens of High Imaskar live within Skyclave's hollowed interior, a space magically larger on the inside than on the outside. The city-tower's endless interior galleries are thick with interesting sites and shops. This area holds a grand theater, a vast library, residences both large and small

TAVERNS AND INNS OF SKYCLAVE

The accommodations at Skyclave are varied and numerous. A couple of establishments stand out.

Ayar's Table: From the Imaskari inscriptions on the walls to the jug of mushroom ale on every table, the atmosphere in Ayar's recalls the vaults of Deep Imaskar, with excessive exaggeration. The main room is a sprawling, boisterous hall whizzing with invisible servers, called *uskurras*, carrying trays, drinks, and decorations. Red and black sauces, popular in Deep Imaskar, dominate the menu. In Ayar's, platters are piled high with herbed cabbages balancing on mountains of succulent fennel worms.

The Edge: Occupying a series of connected exterior balconies along Skyclave's western face, the Edge is famous for its views of the surrounding landscape. Its menu boasts anomalous Mulhorandi twists on classic Imaskari delicacies. The Edge also features the perpetual presence of Jard Sharoch, an expatriate of Waterdeep whose nightly stage performances have secured a home for him in High Imaskar.

suitable for common folk and nobles alike, and numerous innlike gathering places for the locals to congregate. Here and there, uninhabited levels are given over to plantlike growths and magical lights. In the halls of the Academy of Imaskar, wizards pass on what they remember of their ancient craft to the next generation.

High Imaskar's military force, the Vengeance Riders, stables specially trained redwings in grand balcony-roosts near Skyclave's tip. A patrol of at least four redwings always circles the great spire, on the lookout for trouble.

PLAINS OF PURPLE DUST

Desert Borderland

This desert is an extension of Raurin to the east, smothered beneath a cover of ash and sand. Grim and isolated, the Purple Dust is strewn with bleaching bones and drifts of purple sand.

The desert has expanded over the previous century, spilling south between the Dragonsword and Giant's Belt mountains, covering what was once a scrubland of dry grasses, sparse foliage, cacti, and thorny trees. Now all lies under faintly magical sand. The purple worms that swim the dust seas cavort beneath the dunes, sometimes breaking the surface, especially when prey is close. The worms hunt all creatures but prefer the High Imaskari patrols that skirt the desert's edge. Much bigger worms have been seen on the horizon; no patrol chances the deep desert.

Now and again, great tornadolike dust devils emerge from the plains, moving in a direct line toward Skyclave. The massive whirlwinds always die out miles before they reach the spire, if indeed that is their true destination.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Bride Keep: A large waternote called the Bride hangs a mile or more above a dark chasm. Mile-high waterfalls stream from its sides. The upper face of the mote is a mirrorlike expanse of blue-green water,

NEZRAM THE WORLDWALKER

A powerful wizard survived Mulhorand's fall: Nezram the World-Walker. Nezram was long absent from his homeland, planewalking on the trail of an ancient race of serpent people, but the crossplane catastrophe of the Spellplague brought him back to Toril. There, he found Mulhorand wiped away. Nezram believes the Spellplague was partially accomplished through the machinations of the Imaskari, and he views their recent acquisition of Mulhorand's former lands as proof. He seeks to bring low the fledgling state of High Imaskar by any means necessary. Though few know it, Nezram has secretly subverted Yanay, High Imaskar's Lord Planner.

broken here and there by atolls and largely submerged mounts. The largest land mass rises near the center of the mote, where Bride Keep is built.

All the creatures that swim the seas of the Bride are undead, even the smallest minnow. A cursed being called Marthusal the Ender stands bound in Keep's deepest vault, screaming in never-ending horror at its fate. To hear this soul-shattering shriek is to perish.

Castle of the Rose: Northwest of Skyclave is a small, monster-infested castle spire built over the ruins of a Mulhorandi wizards' guild. A tiefling named Danzer Rose built the spire five years earlier pursuant to a land grant from the Empress. The intention was to carve out a piece of civilization in the great wilderness. Recently, communications from Rose ceased, and envoys confirm that the castle spire is now inhabited by the mushroomlike humanoids known as myconids. The spire remains uncontested by High Imaskar and thus likely contains the remains of Rose and his retinue, as well as whatever creatures he accidentally roused from the ruins of the wizards' academy beneath.

The Celestial Nadir: The Nadir is an artificial dimension (in truth, an astral dominion, though it is not controlled or inhabited by any active divine being). It was formed by the original Imaskar Empire to conduct research and store dangerous rituals and relics. The wizard-rulers of Imaskar also used the space to connect their far-flung empire. In the intervening years since it was last tended, the mage-built demiplane has taken on a life all its own. It has grown, subsuming other dimensions, and is now so dangerous that access to it has been banned by the Empress's decree. Vengeance-takers hunt and kill any person or creature that seeks entry.

Inherrek: Somewhere west of the Dragonsword Mountains lies an abandoned gold mine, featuring several underground chambers connected by a series

SON OF THE EIGHTH

Somewhere within the cityspire of Skyclave hides a self-proclaimed son of Mephistopheles, who is called the Son of the Eighth. The Son of the Eighth has gathered a sect of devil-worshippers who revere both him and his father, Mephistopheles, through a series of monthly rituals too awful for any civilization to stomach. Thus his death is commanded by Empress Ususi, and there is a standing reward on his head that includes both gold and a private meeting with the Empress herself, a boon many would give much for. Despite this, the Son of the Eighth and his sect continue to grow, bedeviling High Imaskar with an internal threat composed of corrupt Imaskari so enamored of power that they grasp after it no matter the price.

If an Imaskari citizen finds that her door has been marked by the symbol of a horn drawn in blood, she has been put on notice that she is being courted as either the newest member of the sect, or the next sacrifice.

of shafts and tunnels. It was the lair of a group of outlaw priests and slavers until a mind flayer colony emerged from an unexplored tributary tunnel and converted all the bandits to thralls.



MARK TEDIN

Now the mind flayers commit the bandit groups to ever more daring raids on Gheldaneth and even Sky-clave. They move about though restricted portals partially restored by the mind flayers.

Pyramid of the

Seer: Although many tombs and cities of Mulhorand were erased or tumbled into ravines, others remain uncovered. One is the so-called Pyramid of the Seer, a tomb of a long-buried pharaoh whose claim to fame was his ability to look accurately into the future. Called Ankhata-Parameh in life, the ancient ruler knew to the hour when he would die, and thus governed with a melancholia unmatched by later pharaohs. Knowing of his impending death, Ankhata-Parameh entered his tomb while still alive and sealed himself inside the intricately guarded maze of traps and guardians, safeguarding his ability to see the future against all tomb raiders. Stories circulate that if one successfully navigates the gauntlet to find Ankhata-Parameh's sarcophagus, the pharaoh's spirit returns to answer a single question. However, it does so only if the tomb's treasures remain unmolested. If any piece of his treasury is disturbed, Ankhata-Parameh remains silent until every last piece has been restored.

Ruins of Skuld: Skuld, the City of the Gods, was founded over 3,600 years ago. At its height, it contained well over a hundred thousand inhabitants. The tumult of the Spellplague shattered Skuld, buried its neighborhoods, toppled its towers, and drowned its fleet. Other parts of the city vanished, dissolved completely in the cataclysm, or were transposed into vanished Abeir. Now the city exists as a subterranean warren of broken streets, collapsed temples, and guttering magical curses.

The buried City of the Gods once housed temples and the incarnated Mulhorandi deities. Of all of Faerûn's ruins, Skuld is the pearl explorers seek most. It is also the most dangerous locale, its buried vaults and catacombs simmering with still-potent guardian magic and curses mouthed by long-dead deities.

Temple of Horus-Re: Beneath the streets of Gheldaneth is a grand temple to the banished and long silent god Horus-Re. Delvers who have discovered the subterranean paths that lead to the golden doors of the temple report the entrance is guarded by clay golems and stone golems carved to resemble great baboons. The constructs, despite the absence of the god once worshiped within, are vigilant. It is assumed that the temple finery remains unlooted.

THE HORDELANDS

A vast, rolling tundra and steppe of short grass, sparse water, and fewer trees, the Hordelands truly earns its other name—the Endless Wastes. Severe winters, dry summers, poor soil, and frequent violent storms make the land unsuitable for large settlements.

Raumvirans, descendants of ancient Raumathari, are common around the Lake of Mists and west of that area. Most natives of these plains, however, are horse-riding nomads called the Tuigan. In truth, Tuigan is the name of a single prominent tribe—people of the Endless Wastes are divided among fifteen wandering tribes that each range widely within their traditional or newly claimed territories. They live in tents and move frequently to survive, letting their tough steppe ponies forage on the sparse vegetation. The Tuigan feed on livestock, horse milk, and the creatures they hunt with uncanny skill using ordinary shortbows.

HORDELANDS LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Over a century ago, a great warrior named Yamun Khahan of the Tuigan tribe united the tribes of the steppes under his banner. (For this reason, the majority of Faerûnians think that all Hordelands tribesfolk are Tuigan.) His horsemen invaded Faerûn but suffered huge losses in Rashemen, and they were all but annihilated in a final battle in Thesk.

The horse culture of the plains has diminished further with the birth of Yaïmunnahar. This kingdom, forged by Yamun Khahan's son Hubadai, is only about a century old. It centers on the grand trading city of Kourmira along the Golden Way, where many Tuigan have settled.

UZBEG'S CARAVANSERAI

Four structures, two on each side of the Golden Way, stand in Uzbek's center. Each building is a walled square surrounding a courtyard accessible through a single gated entrance large enough to permit a horse-drawn caravan. Though the courtyard is open to the elements, the inner and outer walls form a cavernous hall suitable for sheltering animals and wagons. Stables, rooms for sleeping, a tavern, and vaults for valuables are also located inside.

Each courtyard contains a central well that provides water, and tent shops that offer various wares. Uzbek merchants sell mainly travel supplies at a number of stalls. Other traders come and go depending on the particular mix of merchants currently in residence and their willingness to sell to or trade with others.

Those who travel the Golden Way need worry little about bandits. They have more to fear from monsters that the Tuigan might have kept in check were their numbers greater on the steppes.

Streetwise DC 15: Traders dealing in rare Hordelands goods are common along the Golden Way. Some offer themselves as “feyguides” for strangers interested in visiting the area's numerous fey crossroads—portals that are said to bridge the gap between Faerûn and the Feywild.

Streetwise DC 40: A plagueland in the northwestern Hordelands marks the location of Deep Imaskar far below.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The region's few permanent settlements center around water, a precious resource on the steppes.

THE GOLDEN WAY

Trade Route

The Golden Way runs from the city of Telflamm on the Easting Reach, through Thesk and Rashemen, around the Sunrise Mountains, across the Hordelands to Kourmira, and then all the way to Shou Lung. Instead of a proper road, the Golden Way is a series of stone markers, each visible from the last. These markers make it easy to locate oases and caravanserais along the way. Of course, the markers also serve as hiding places for robbers and clever monsters to set ambushes.

UZBEG

Village and Inn; Population 500

A fortified caravanserai situated along the Golden Way is a welcome sight to travelers. Uzbek, near the Lake of Mists, is the largest along the route. After the Lake of Mists swallowed many settlements during the Spellplague, Raumvirans established this town with help from merchants from Thesk. A scrupulous and industrious Raumviran woman named Taimurel now heads the place.

Uzbek has a sterling reputation. Trade, information, and travelers moving up and down the Golden Way support its economy, and explorers interested in the Lake of Mists use Uzbek as a base. Brave fisherfolk make up the majority of the citizens here.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

City of the Dead: In the deep wastes is a city filled with evil spirits and walking curses. The nomads avoid it, but rumors on the Golden Way have it that the city is rich in magic and treasure from some ancient kingdom. A little over a hundred years ago, the city was a scattered ruin. Over the last

several years, though, strange buildings have pushed upward from the ground. They are slowly becoming less decrepit and tumbled, and now certain streets and white-stone buildings stand perfectly straight and strong. By day, the roads and alleys are silent, the buildings hollow and empty. At night, indistinct figures are seen

shuffling down every lane, and phantom glows and laughter emerge from formerly empty chambers. It is as if an alternate reality is being poorly reflected into the world, a reflection whose focus is becoming sharper with each passing year.

Lake of Mists: Named for the fog that constantly enshrouds its surface and the surrounding lands, this lake is the largest body of fresh water in the Hordelands. It was once the center of civilization in this area, but during the Spellplague, long-quiescent Raumathari magic sprang to life. An ancient portal opened a link to the forming Elemental Chaos. The lake boiled over its former shores, a tornado-spawning thunderstorm churned over the area for more than a month, wind and fire consumed much of the woodlands along the lakeshore, and the trade town Almorel disappeared into a quake-born fissure. Once the bedlam had subsided, the basin of the lake had changed, and all the settlements it once fed were gone.



The Lake of Mists is now home to elemental creatures, mischievous fey, monsters, and animals. Still, its waters are said to be warm and so pure as to be healing. The Golden Way passes close to the lake, and hardy settlers have returned to parts of its shores.

On the rare days when the mists lift, usually during the summer, spires and arches of black rock are visible near the lake's center. Called Blackspire, this place is rumored to be home to fire creatures that conspire to bring their element to the fore in the area. Other gossip suggests that Blackspire is the remains of an underground Raumathari fortress.

Winterkeep: To prove their stoicism, Raumathari kings once wintered in this palace on a rocky headland of the Great Ice Sea. Even in those days, the palace had few aboveground structures. Instead, its richly appointed halls were carved from the rock of the promontory. Cracked pillars, wrecked walls, and tumbled statues mark the surface level.

Tuigan legend says that "ice demons" attacked Winterkeep during Raumathar's war with Narfell. Other tales state that some great fiend, an ice devil perhaps, lives in the depths with a small army of trolls. Although the city of Kourmira is within striking distance of the keep, no verifiable story exists that anyone has successfully explored and looted the place.

EASTERN LANDS

The Endless Wastes give way to the young Tuigan kingdom of Yaïmunnahar and the continent of Kara-Tur, neither of which are shown on most Faerûnian maps. Kozakura and Shou Lung are great nations within Kara-Tur, and the Spellplague was at least as destructive there as it was in Faerûn. In the last hundred years more immigrants from Kara-Tur have begun to settle in Yaïmunnahar and Faerûn, bringing their cultures and unorthodox fighting styles with them.



IMPILTUR

Formerly a strong, prosperous, and peaceful kingdom, Impiltur is a realm in decline. Travel between the cities is dangerous, and plaguechanged monsters haunt the countryside. Demons bound long ago were freed when Mystra's Weave failed, and many yet roam the landscape.

IMPILTUR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: With the retreat of the Sea of Fallen Stars, several Impilturan cities lost access to their ports for a time, and trade through the area declined precipitously. Sarshel managed to keep ahead of the retreating beaches better than some of the larger cities, gaining a fair bit of the commerce that finally returned to the region. Today, the city is called New Sarshel.

Streetwise DC 15: Impiltur's royal line failed with the death of King Imbrar II during the Year of Blue Fire. The country is now ruled by a ragged Grand Council composed of lords from the remaining cities. People talk longingly of restoring a monarchy to the land—"The king will come and put things right, you'll see"—but for now everything keeps getting worse.

Impiltur is currently in the grip of a fanatical cult of demon-worshippers, who cause no end of trouble. The Grand Council's efforts to locate the cult's leaders and combat its depredations have proven woefully inadequate to date.

FRATERNITY OF THAROS

The demon cult currently running wild in Impiltur is called the Fraternity of Tharos. The group takes its name from the ancient Nar capital of Dun-Tharos in the Great Dale's northern forest, Dunwood. The name also reveals the source of Impiltur's demonic contamination—the demons loosed in that northern forest.

The fraternity inducts new members by requiring them to kidnap an innocent victim from among Impiltur's populace, then slay that victim in a bloody ritual calling upon various demonic names scribed with fire in the Demonstone. The Demonstone lies at the top of a windowless tower in New Sarshel. The tower's exterior is a bland, unexceptional gray; its interior is filled with all manner of demonic horrors.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Impiltur is no longer the peaceable kingdom of a century earlier.

LYRABAR Relocated Port; Population 50,000

Lyrabar is long and narrow, stretching along the seacoast for nearly a mile.

Most of its port remains high and dry, however. Newer, smaller dock

facilities keep the city on the map. Lyrabar is known for its thriving community of thieves, who have made a secret arrangement with the city watch—as long as the thieves do not target the watch, they operate in relative freedom.

In addition to thieves' gangs, Lyrabar hosts several companies of demon-hunters. The adventurers regularly strike out into Impiltur's interior, intent on bringing home a demonic trophy. Such trophies have high value here and in other countries.

NEW SARSHEL

Port City; Population 30,000

Because New Sarshel was able to keep pace with the retreating Sea of Fallen Stars when it mattered most, it captured a volume of trade and imports that Lyrabar and other western port cities previously enjoyed. Unlike the rest of Impiltur, New Sarshel enjoys the favor of Telflamm's trade from the Great Dale, and its fortunes continue to wax. Several members of the Grand Council reside in New Sarshel, including the influential head of House Marhana, the wizened and little-seen Behroun Marhana. Tavern talk has it that magic, perhaps of a sinister nature, sustains Lord Marhana's life. All know that his rise to power occurred roughly eighty years ago, during the decades after the lowering of the Sea of Fallen Stars.



LAKE OF STEAM

The Lake of Steam region is a hodgepodge of varying interests, bustling trade, and frequently changing boundaries. Independent city-states dot the north shore of the steaming lake. Small countries founded or conquered by people of many races, faiths, and agendas lie to the south. The gradual desertification of the fields and forests southeast of the lake has intensified squabbles for usable land.

Tendrils reaching from the Plaguewrought Land to the northwest sometimes touch the edges of the Lake of Steam, and strange, spellscarred marine creatures hunt the length of the volcanically warmed waters.

LAKE OF STEAM LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: In the Year of the Halflings' Lament (1386 DR), the Arnrock erupted violently, wiping out the Quick Folk that had settled around the old crater. The volcano is now a taller, wider mountain in whose caldera lava continually bubbles to the surface. The Arnrock is a dangerous location, and indeed, the entire region fears that its next eruption could be even more cataclysmic than the previous one.

Streetwise DC 10: The Border Kingdoms on the southern shore are the homes of powerful adventurers of many types, each seeking to carve out a piece of land and rule it in the manner he or she feels is best . . . at least until the next would-be ruler decides to take over. Wizard towers, monasteries, fortresses, and temples dot the region. The structures are only slightly more enduring than their owners, both of which are replaced time and again.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The most significant feature of the region is the body of water that gives it its name.

ANKHAPUR

Pearl Trading City; Population 29,000

The city's tumultuous past has given way to an industrious pearling industry that touches almost every resident, one way or another. The magnificent

pearls prized from the Lake of Steam, streaked with gold, purple, and iridescent green, command great attention from Amnian merchants.

LAKE OF STEAM

Enclosed Saltwater Inlet

The stinking yellow water of the Lake of Steam (also called Arnaden) is a testament to volcanic activity. The inlet is as shallow as a pan, measuring less than 200 feet in the deepest areas—most of the bay's eastern arm is only a few dozen feet deep.

The warm, iron-laden, undrinkable waters are rich in minerals that spur weeds, shellfish, and fish to grow to great size. Arnaden has been called the Breadbasket of the Seas. Dolphins are common, as are sharks and leeches larger than a human. Predators here grow extremely big, too, from birds and otters to dragon turtles. The most dangerous ones are so extremely plaguechanged that their original form is hard to guess. The lake is also known for the variegated pearls of its oysters.

The islands in the Lake of Steam change as volcanic stacks collapse and rise but are concentrated at the western end. The Arnrock's bubbling caldera now covers the remnants of a halfling settlement, an unmarked grave for those foolish enough to build their homes on an active volcano.

The Strait of Storms (also known as the Suldolphor Strait or the Wide Water) links Arnaden with the Shining Sea. Water flows through the passage dangerously fast. To voyage north into the bay, ships wait on strong winds and favorable tides, sometimes for days.



LURUAR

Luruar, also known as the Silver Marches, is a league of three strong cities in the North, populated primarily by humans, half-elves, elves, and eladrin. Nearby dwarven citadels are close allies but no longer part of the confederacy.

Luruar has gained a reputation for safe, friendly cities surrounded by an extensive wilderness dotted with all sorts of ruins, rugged monster lairs, and lost shrines. Because the region's extreme wilderness lies in such close proximity to points of civilization, the kingdom serves as the unofficial base for several non-affiliated adventuring companies.

Enemies of Luruar include the orcs of Many-Arrows to the north, the Netherese and their puppet monsters in the eastern marches, and the nearby Underdark realms of Menzoberranzan and Gracklstugh.

LURUAR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Before she passed away, High Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon founded a mutual defense league in the region. Her son Methrammar Aerasumé came to head a more diminished league. The dwarves of Adbar, Mithral Hall, and Felbarr parted ways with the others, unwilling to compromise their own defenses by shoring up the smaller settlements in the area. The dwarves remain potentially powerful allies of Luruar but are not always reliable.

Streetwise DC 20: Methrammar has reached an advanced age, and choosing the next High Lord

of Luruar is the talk of the league. Each member city has its own distinct government and traditions. Some think the High Lordship should remain a meritocratic position. Others maintain that the post should rotate through the member cities, or even be done away with. Methrammar's wife, the elf Gaerradh, has been put forward as a possible successor, but some folks think that would go too far in establishing the High Lordship as a dynasty.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Luruar's major settlements are Silverymoon, Sundabar, and Everlund. A number of smaller member towns and villages in the vicinity benefit from the league's protection.

EVERLUND

Walled City; Population 23,000

Located on the banks of the Rauvin River, Everlund is an active mercantile community. A thick stone wall is pierced in five places by the city's gates. Like the spokes of a wheel, straight streets lead from each gate to Bell Market at the city center. City architecture was designed to accommodate the needs of trade caravans—hostelries feature stables and wagon parking, and streets are well cobbled and in good repair.

GLIMMERWOOD

Vast North Luruar Forest

This wide forest's uninterrupted expanse includes the previously separate Moonwood, Druarwood, Cold Wood, and the Night Trees. Favorable growing conditions over the last century have allowed these individual woods to become a single forest.

The western eaves of the Glimmerwood shade ettins, orcs, Uthgardt barbarians, and red tigers beneath pine and spruce. The Uthgardt are beholden to their shamans. They fell only sanctified trees, build fires only in blessed pits, and avoid any overgrown ruins labeled taboo. Overall, the Uthgardt are a superstitious, if fierce and bloodthirsty, people.

The northern Glimmerwood rises sharply toward the Spine of the World. Forested ridges climb ever upward, though the trees are thinner here, dwindling to spruce and fir. In addition to orcs and human savages, the northern Glimmerwood is stalked by frost giants and hill giants that come down from higher icy abodes to hunt game in richer areas.

Eastern Glimmerwood (sometimes still called the Moonwood by locals) is dominated by pines, shadowtops, and duskwoods. Though fey and woodcutters inhabit the southern fringe of this expanse, most of the trees are the acknowledged territory of the skin-changers, the People of the Black Blood. These lycanthrope tribes still worship Malar, despite his

HARPERS OF LURUAR

The Faerûn-spanning organization known as the Harpers disbanded nearly a century ago. However, in the city of Everlund is Moongleam Tower, a Harper hold of old. When Netheril returned, a remnant of the old organization re-formed. Under the leadership of Eaerlraun Shadowlyn, the small organization is dedicated to one purpose: opposing the growing power of the Shadovar. When Eaerlraun was later assassinated by Shadovar assassins for his effrontery, the old, oft-ignored rule of keeping one's Harper membership secret gained new meaning and purpose.

Even with the assassination of Eaerlraun, the fledgling organization persists. Today, Moongleam Tower serves as the only known Harper hold in all Faerûn. Rather than housing Harpers, the clandestine leadership based in the tower is a patron to all who wish to take the secret pledge against the Shadovar and all ill that emerges from Shadow.

reduced status. They raid nearby communities, kidnapping prominent members of communities as far away as Silverymoon for their animalistic rituals.

SILVERYSMOON

Elven City of Renown; Population 40,000

Silverymoon is the Gem of the North, a center of learning and a symbol of greatness. It is a beautiful place of ancient trees and soaring towers, with curving lines and garden plantings adorning every nook and balcony. Aerial steeds carry riders across the skies, magic and learning are revered, music and laughter echo in the streets, and the city is celebrated for its fascinating shops brimming with maps, books, art, and items of esoteric lore.

Silverymoon boasts a conservatory of music, a great library, parks, and castlelike residences of noble folk. It boasts temples and shrines to such deities as Mielikki, Oghma, Silvanus, Sune, Tymora, and long-dead gods (the old temple to Mystra still stands, but now as a memorial shrine and monument to the goddess of magic). The arcane-oriented University of Silverymoon comprises several formerly separate colleges, including The Lady's College, Miresk's School of Thaumaturgy, and Fochluchan.

The city's army, the Knights in Silver, circulates constantly and lends detachments to the Luruar confederacy for patrols between the three main cities. Silverymoon's famed magical wards of protection faltered during the Spellplague and have not yet regained their original strength. On rare occasions, though, a particular ward flares into life for unknown reasons, altering just-completed rituals in sometimes bizarre ways.

NOTED WAY STATIONS OF SILVERYSMOON

Among the watering holes of Silverymoon, the following are well respected.

Son of the Goat: Located north of the Moonbridge, the Son of the Goat tavern is built where its forerunner, the Dancing Goat, stood before a fire consumed it. The Son of the Goat is every bit as renowned for its raucous revelry at all hours as its predecessor. Dancing, flirting, and singing are never-ending pastimes, all fueled by a cellar boasting hundreds of vintages. Pickpockets and other professionals are drawn to the tumult.

Golden Oak Inn: This historic inn features cozy, rustic rooms, dim flagstoned passages, fragrant herbs, and pots and window boxes full of well-tended plants. All the rooms open off a central atrium dominated by a gargantuan oak that rises into the open sky. The tree's branches are alight with glimmering lanterns, giving soft light to the tables beneath.



PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Tombs of Deckon Thar: Seven wight-haunted tombs shudder in the cold grip of the Mound King, a plaguechanged wight with powers unknown but whispered to be terrible. The tombs were once the secret hoards of bandit lords called the Chieftains in Gold, who dominated the western Nether Mountains centuries ago. They sallied from a great keep and buried their dead in barrows filled with ill-gotten loot. One of the seven tombs was plundered by a group of salvagers, and vengeance found them all as they made their way back to their Silverymoon base. In each case, the dismembered corpses were discovered, sans loot and equipment, with the message “Disturb not the Mound King” inscribed in their flesh.

Tower of the Tree Slaker: In the Glimmerwood, a square tower overgrown with vines stands in a shallow vale. The keep is guarded by animate vines, shambling mounds, and burrowing roots. Its master nourishes a botanical monstrosity growing inside by “watering” it with the blood of elves and humans. This vegetable entity was grown from the plaguechanged seed of an oak tree.

Xammux: A ravine marked by a few standing stones can be found south of the Nether Mountains in the eaves of the High Forest. Cut into the ravine's side is a stone door on which symbols of warning are lightly scratched. Beyond is an underground complex, apparently hundreds of years abandoned and partly flooded. Animate fungus creatures stalk the moist upper halls, and pale monstrosities swim the flooded vaults. The meaning of the word Xammux remains elusive.

LUSKAN

The cesspool of the world, Luskan is a city stewing in its own rot. Once it was a thriving port anchoring the northern end of the Trade Way, but decades of social unrest and rampant crime have left it largely abandoned. Now Luskan is the exclusive territory of rival street gangs, monsters, and vermin. A middle-class citizen of Luskan would be a beggar in any other city in the North.

LUSKAN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: In the Year of the Haunting (1377 DR), Captain Deudermont of the pirate hunter *Sea Sprite* broke the stranglehold of a collection of pirates and evil wizards over Luskan to briefly serve as governor. Deudermont's reign was short—the populace was too accustomed to the corruption-as-usual practices of the former city masters. The City of Sails ultimately fell back into the hands of the surviving high captains, who immediately began to fight among themselves. Within a decade all four had either been killed or run off.

Left without any central government, even a corrupt one, there was no hope left for Luskan. Rival gangs of thieves and pirates have been fighting, street by street and alley by alley, ever since. In the ensuing decades, numerous attempts have been made by master thieves, pirate captains, bandit kings, and monsters ranging from kobolds to beholders to take control of the city, but nothing resembling a government has stayed in power for more than a few months.

Streetwise DC 15: Huge tracts of Luskan lie in ruins—four thousand people inhabit a city built to accommodate ten times that many. The port is now useless, crowded with the half-sunken hulks of the last ships unlucky enough to tie up here, including the once-mighty *Sea Sprite*. No central leadership, and nothing even remotely resembling a city watch, exists. On a walk through the streets of Luskan, one encounters rats and other vermin the size of horses,

roaming gangs collecting whatever meager spoils the rubble might still yield, and dead people and animals rotting in the streets or floating face down in the filthy, disease-ridden Mirar River.

Thieves and other outlaws who flee justice from places such as Waterdeep are never pursued past the gates of Luskan. No dungeon cell in another northern city could possibly be a worse fate. This sort of “immigration” is primarily how the population replenishes itself.

SITES AND FEATURES

Getting around in Luskan is an adventure. You never know if you'll accidentally wander into the territory of a blood-crazed gang of thieves, wererats, or Shou yakuza.

The Broken Bridges: All three of the great bridges that once spanned the Mirar River are smashed. Attempts are occasionally made to repair them, sometimes with just a few ropes—so that the gang responsible for the repairs can charge a toll to cross. In the chaos of the City of Anarchy, these makeshift crossings never last long. Diving into the filthy, disease-laden, monster-infested river is attempted only by the desperate or the insane. Most Luskars content themselves with staying on their side of the waterway.

Host Tower of the Arcane: Once the home of the Arcane Brotherhood, this strange ruin is haunted by undead. Lesser creatures roam the area around the structure; greater threats are entombed below. Few dungeons are more dangerous than this one, and the locals won't go anywhere near it.



MANY-ARROWS

Amid the eternally snow-capped peaks of the Spine of the World Mountains is the orc realm known as the Kingdom of Many-Arrows. For the most part, the nation is confined to mountains through which icy winds constantly shriek.

MANY-ARROWS LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: The original orc king Obould survived his now-legendary encounter with the drow hero Drizzt. He was scarred, but he took from that duel newfound strength and clarity of purpose. In the end, he united the disparate tribes of the Spine of the World into a cohesive army. Leaving Drizzt and the dwarves to their own ends, Obould sealed off the territory he had claimed in the mountains. Here and there are posted crudely written border-markers on which is written “Kingdom of Many-Arrows.”

The creation of a unified, relatively stable orc society provided the other powers of the region a single entity to negotiate with, contain, or fight. Mithral Hall, the dwarven citadels, and Nesmé were tired of war and curious about the orcs attempting to become civilized.

A hundred years on, the orcs have largely succeeded in keeping this local coalition of tribes together. Though the kings who ruled after Obould haven't enjoyed his popularity, they have kept the kingdom together most of the time. The region suffered a few civil wars, and for a decade the realm was split. Since the Year of the Malachite Shadows (1460 DR), however, the orcs have maintained a single kingdom of their own.

MITHRAL HALL

Situated between Many-Arrows and Luruar is the most famous dwarfhold of northern Faerûn. Though old King Bruenor has passed away, the symbol of Clan Battlehammer (a foaming beer mug) remains the realm's standard. Mithral Hall's underground expanse lies beneath Fourpeak Mountain south of the Spine of the World. A pair of massive, heavily guarded granite portals marks the main gate. The hall's upper levels are trap-filled tunnelscapes designed to thwart invaders. The middle levels include workshops and mithral mines. Beneath those lies the Undercity, the living center of Mithral Hall. Still deeper are tunnels sealed and warded against potential threats from the Underdark.

Streetwise DC 15: The Kingdom of Many-Arrows exists alongside the dwarves and humans of the North in a tenuous peace. These bitter enemies tolerate each other most of the time, even trading, and see occasional friendships arise. Even so, the area could explode into war any second, and has done so from time to time.

The current orc ruler, King Obould XVII, continues a mostly unbroken dynastic line that began when Obould strode the North, unifying disparate tribes with fire and sword.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

An endless, unbreakable wall of frigid peaks holds many threats, including the seat of the Kingdom of Many-Arrows.



DARK ARROW KEEP

Capital Fortress; Population 2,000

King Obould unified the mountain orcs beneath his harsh banner over a century ago, and an orc king still rules from the same citadel. Rambling and well defended, Dark Arrow Keep is renowned for its massive weight of stone, blind alleys, crude traps, and confounding corridors raked by hidden arrow slits.

From his skull-adorned, horned throne in the keep's central chamber, King Obould XVII holds his kingdom of brutish orcs in thrall. As with all previous kings, he sometimes finds it necessary to mete out lethal punishment as an example to his chieftains. This punishment is administered in the Pit, an arena where a victim is given a sword to defend against an array of giants, monsters, and better-armored and armed veteran orcs. An orc who has seen the bottom of the Pit and lived receives a pardon. (Obould XVII makes certain to administer a slow-acting poison to Pit victims he doesn't want to see alive again.)

MOONSEA

The Moonsea proper is a deep natural lake, surrounded by a fragmented patchwork of lands and city-states ruled by despots, humanoids, and savages. The area is infamous for its bleak landscapes, harsh winters, ravaging dragons, cutthroat pirates, and rapacious tyrants. Commerce exists between hard, heartless city-states such as Hillsfar, Melvaunt, and Mulmaster. Only the strong survive, however: Trading costers and merchant houses compete with knife, fire, and poison. Many notorious ruins lie in this region, including Zhentil Keep, the Citadel of the Raven, and spider-haunted Sulasspryn. Tombs, buried catacombs, and monster lairs also abound in the Moonsea hinterlands, drawing adventurers from every corner of Faerûn.

MOONSEA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: A few years after reestablishing their realm in the desert of Anauroch, the Shadovar moved against Zhentil Keep, which formerly contended for control over the Moonsea, the northern Dalelands, and the empty lands west of the great desert. The Zhents fought furiously, but the Netherese prevailed. Zhentil Keep was razed, as was the Citadel of the Raven. The Black Network of the Zhentarim was broken.

The Shadovar attempted to colonize the citadels they had razed, but Coronal Ilsevele of Myth Drannor struck an uneasy alliance with Hillsfar, Melvaunt, and Thentia to prevent Netheril from achieving this goal.

Streetwise DC 15: This region is dotted with city-states and robber baronies, some old, some new. Mulmaster is the center of Bane's worship in Faerûn and, some say, the ideological heir to the Zhentarim.

THAR

The Great Gray Land of Thar is a windswept, broken moor with a harsh climate. Orcs, ogres, and other humanoids lair in Thar and the nearby mountains, sometimes threatening the human cities of the northern Moonsea. Recently, the Blood Skull orc tribe destroyed the trade-meet site of Glister and launched an attack against the small city of Hulburg. The monsters were ultimately repulsed with heavy losses. A dozen lesser tribes of goblins, ogres, and other such creatures are now scrambling to establish dominance, given the power vacuum created by the Blood Skull's setback. Manticores, giant lizards, bulettes, and other terrors also roam the land.

Voonlar, Teshwave, Phlan, and Thentia are small realms where Myth Drannor and Netheril quietly fence for influence.

Aside from Netheril, the quarreling realms of the Moonsea Lands are collectively threatened by the tribesfolk of the Ride, the orcs of Thar, and the monsters of the Border Forest. The Cult of the Dragon is whispered to have a foothold somewhere in the area as well.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The Moonsea region is a frontier ripe with opportunity, standing as a buffer between southern elven lands and the darker, sinister lands of the Ride and Thar. Cities rise quickly, built on nerve and wealth, only to fall in wars or raids. The Moonsea's numerous ruins reflect its long and violent past.

Most traffic within the region is shipborne, since roads and good trails between settlements are almost nonexistent. For travelers on foot, it is a long way between comfortable inns, and no safe campsite exists.

HILLSFAR

Gateway City; Population 35,000

Perched on a rocky bluff overlooking the Moonsea, Hillsfar is an important trade city. Metalwork, quarried stone, livestock, and furs from the northern city-states come through Hillsfar on their way to Cormyr and Sembia. Wine, grain, and ale of southern lands passes through the gateway city bound for the north. Hillsfar is ostensibly neutral, but in fact its power runs from Teshwave to Elventree.

A contentious senate made up of wealthy merchant-nobles and important guildmasters purportedly governs the city, but its thirty-one members accomplish little. Since the senate rarely agrees on anything, true control of the city falls to the First Lord, Torin Nomerthal. Head of a powerful family, First Lord Torin is a clever, calculating man who hides his sharp mind behind a genial guise. Normally the senate chooses a new First Lord from its membership once every seven years, but Torin is well into his third term, having now governed Hillsfar for close to twenty years. A strong mages' guild and a large, well-paid standing army known as the Tower Guard (so named for the First Lord's Tower, the citadel of Hillsfar) keep the city and its surroundings safe from bandits and monsters.

Hillsfar maintains an uncomfortable peace with Myth Drannor. For years, the lords of the city-state have desired to clear and settle more of the forest lands to their south, but the power of the Coronal

deters them. As a result, Hillsfar tries to ignore the fey kingdom as much as possible. It deals with Myth Drannor only when forced to—for example, by the threat of Netherese expansion in the western Moonsea lands.



MULMASTER

Oppressive City; Population 50,000

Mulmaster is a center for commerce, intrigue, and the worship of Bane. Nestled among the barren rocks of the Earthspur Mountains, Mulmaster relies on fishing and trade from its iron foundries to feed its populace. The city smells strongly of half-rotted fish and the tang of molten iron. The odor is nauseating to visitors, but residents soon become accustomed to it.

The city is supposedly governed by the Council of Blades, a group of merchants and nobles. The House of the Black Lord, Bane's temple in Mulmaster, has several Blade Council members, thus creating a formidable voting bloc. Despite this advantage, Bane's efforts are being hampered by Blades devoted to other deities or to their own lust for power.

Crime is rampant in Mulmaster. Thieves, fences, and assassins are plentiful, and the largest criminal organizations are well represented on the Council of Blades, either through direct membership or through the purchase of a particular member's favor.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Pillar of Fire: A magical location imbued with elemental fire is buried deep inside the southernmost tip of the Galena Mountains. The interconnected caverns leading to the Pillar's chamber are overrun by fungal growth and ogre squatters. Here and there are broken summoning conduits to the Elemental Chaos.

Ruins of the Raven: What's left of the Citadel is scattered across the western slopes of the Dragonspine Mountains. Before Netheril invaded, the complex was a chain of interconnected fortresses stretching for roughly 10 miles through the mountains. Today most of the flanking towers and minor fortresses are weed-sprouting rubble heaps. Miles of tunnels wind back and forth deep in the rock beneath the old defensive wall. A handful of Zhentarrim agents have returned to the mostly intact central citadel in recent years, and are taking steps to rebuild their former bastion.

Ruins of Zhentil Keep: Once the strongest city on the Moonsea, Zhentil Keep was largely destroyed by Netheril years ago. The secret society known as

the Zhentarrim, or the Black Network, was driven out of its seat of power; it now lurks in the fortresses of Darkhold and Wyvernwatch in distant lands.

The wreckage of the old city's northerly districts is a dismal pirate den and bandit town, lawless and violent. Ships belonging to a loose league of corsairs known as the Black Moon Brotherhood often descend on this wretched place, selling their captives into slavery and taking on new crew members desperate or wicked enough to sign on.

Across the Tesh River to the south, the walled core of the old city is a half-razed ruin shadowed by relentless twilight and half-cast curses. Unlike the picked-over ruins on the opposite bank, the southerly portion of Zhentil Keep yet contains unlooted treasures, shrines, and wizard workshops. Overall, the ruin of Zhentil Keep harbors hundreds of separate adventure sites, each one offering its own dangers and rewards. Traveling to and from such dungeons, however, requires dealing with the ubiquitous, roving undead. The unnatural dimness allows day-fearing undead to walk even at noon, turning the ruin into a haven for such creatures. Several factions, controlled by intelligent undead or in one case a living necromancer, vie for this valuable territory.



MOONSHAE ISLES

The Moonshaes are a cold cluster of rocky islands cloaked in mists and covered in deep woods. Tumult and war stalk the islands—the kingdoms of old are under threat from new powers that seek to control the waterlocked lands.

MOONSHAES LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: In the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR), Northlander kings throughout the Sea of Moonshae swore fealty to High Queen Alicia Kendrick. For the first time in their stormy history, both Northlanders and Ffolk were united under a single banner. With grand ceremony, the High Queen signed a proclamation marking the birth of the United Moonshae Isles.

History DC 30: In the decade leading up to the Spellplague, the planar barrier separating the Feywild from Faerûn weakened, permitting otherworldly creatures to pass freely to Myrloch Vale and the forest deeps of Winterglen. On the night of the spring equinox in the Year of the Risen Elfkin (1375 DR), the ancient fey capital of Karador rose from the crystal clear waters of Myrloch. High Lady Ordalf, a noble eladrin, declared herself queen over all the ancestral lands of Gwynneth.

Streetwise DC 15: The Moonshaes face a threefold threat. First, mercenary bands hired by Amn control the southern island of Snowdown; Callidyrr, badly weakened by the war against the separatists, struggles to recover to this day. Tribes of orcs, ogres, and ettins have increased their attacks on settlements along the coast of Moray. Worse, sinister fey have moved into Dernall Forest on Alaron, breaking a decades-old armistice.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The Moonshaes consist of a handful of major islands and hundreds of smaller isles. Even the smallest isles boast at least one or two villages.

ALARON

High King's Isle; Population 70,000

Ruled from the city of Callidyrr, this island is the most powerful Moonshae kingdom. The rugged Fairheight Mountains to the north separate the traditional lowland homes of the Ffolk from the Northlanders who congregate in the realm of Gnarlhelm to the north. Inter-marriage has eliminated the

cultural divide between the two peoples in all but name. Customs and respect for the sea and the woods are shared.

The Kendrick dynasty yet rules in Caer Callidyrr, a mighty castle overlooking the sprawling port city of the same name. Derid Kendrick is the current High King. His most pressing concern is to retake ancestral holdings on Snowdown stolen by Amn-sponsored mercenaries, and to establish a lasting peace with the fey kingdom of Sarifal.

Only portions of Dernall Forest remain tamed by the nation's druids—the interior is a shadowy realm beset by the worst of the Feywild. Every day, battles are fought on the border. Sometimes the druids win. More often, the fomorian influence grows.

GWYNNETH

Fey-Controlled Isle; Population 50,000

Gwynneth today is a breathtakingly magical place, home to a race of noble eladrin claiming to be of the same stock as the mythical fey creator race of old. Radiating outward from the shining city of Karador at the heart of Myrloch Vale, the valleys, forests, and waterways of Gwynneth are filled with lush vegetation, fantastic beasts, and the laughter of sylvan creatures dancing beneath the stars. This land is called Sarifal by some of its fey inhabitants, and humans are no longer welcome on its shores.

The old human kingdom of Corwell has not existed for over a century. The ruins of Caer Corwell rest atop a rocky promontory above the terminus of Corwell Firth several hundred feet below. King Kendrick has vowed to see the ancestral home of his family restored.

OMAN

Giant-Ruled Wilderness; Population 3,000

This central island was once ruled from Iron Keep, the most feared and violent of the Northlanders' kingdoms. A brief surge in settlement following the Treaty of Oman years ago was reversed when a plague of cyclopes and fomorians burst from the Grampalt

RUATHYM

This barren island lies more than 200 miles north of the Moonshaes. Ruathym is the ancestral home of the Northlanders, the savages who colonized the northern Moonshaes and Luskan. Scattered steadings and villages cluster around the isle's fjords and inlets. The largest settlement is Ruathym, a city of nearly 6,000. Ruathym has avoided most of the tribulations visited upon the Moonshaes by interdicting all arriving ships. Luskan's collapse has resulted in a diminished threat from that traditional enemy, and Ruathym has grown less strident and warlike.

Highlands. The giants overran all colonies of the Ffolk and Northlanders, slaughtering their villages; most vestiges of civilization on the isle were overwhelmed. Today Oman is the wildest and most dangerous isle of the Moonshaes. Only fools seeking death set foot on its rocky shores.

NORLAND

Northlander Stronghold; Population 30,000

Norland is home to Rogarsheim, a warlike and powerful Northlander realm. The Stormbanner Wolves, unlike the Northlanders on Alaron, are culturally distinct from the Ffolk. They remain suspicious and warlike even against their long-time neighbors. Like western Moray, Norland has seen an upswing in giant activity from its southern mountains. Stalwart defense by Northlander and Ffolk settlements working together have thus far checked the invasions.

Stormbanner Hold is the greatest stronghold of the Northlanders. The hold perches upon the east central coast of the isle overlooking the Bay of Norland. Norland remains a warlike realm, focusing most of its energy against Amn's colonies in the south. Northlanders take special delight in overtaking and sinking Amnian merchant vessels that sail between Snowdown and the mainland.

MORAY

Lycanthrope Badlands; Population 3,000

Moray, the westernmost of the major Moonshae islands, is infested by a bloodthirsty sect called the Black Blood tribe. Every dark of the moon, the lycanthropes descend into a secret cave beneath the granite peaks of the Orskull Mountains. There, thirteen worshipers perform a ritual sacrifice around a glyph-inscribed stone slab. When the Black Bloods found this cave and its deep shrine, they hallowed it to Malar and continue to revere that now-reduced entity. The primitive temple was originally the work of ancient people who worshiped entities possibly primordial in nature.

SNOWDOWN

Amnian Isle; Population 20,000

Amn's mercenaries and merchant houses are bent on subjugating the islands, and they've made a good start in Snowdown. Since the early 1400s, the Ffolk of Snowdown have been subject to Amnian law and rule from the mainland.

Lady Erliza Daressin is the Viceroy of Westphal; she keeps her status as a vampire a secret. The Amnians buttress their control through the threat



of violence against members of the royal family. The isle's resources are being consumed by Amn at a ferocious rate.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Citadel Umbra: Deep in the forest of Winterglen on Gwynneth is a mound bearing the silhouette of a desolate tower. This is Citadel Umbra—a point where a particularly foul portion of the Feywild intersects with Toril, creating a nexus of unpleasantness and a point of contagion.

Sinister fey creatures are thick in the area. Fey-grove chokers, howling hags, displacer beasts, dusk unicorns, and even cyclopes are likely to be encountered. The tower contains several sculptures whose presence keeps the interface open and the structure anchored in place. Below the tower, the mound is riddled with tunnels and halls alive with yet more evil and amoral fey.

MURGHÔM

Between the high plateau of Thay and the Dust Desert of Raurin lies the oft-conquered land of Murghôm. Murghôm shook free of Mulhorandi bonds when that nation collapsed, only to fall under the dominion of fiercer masters—the dragon princes.

MURGHÔM LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: When an epidemic ravaged the metallic dragons of the Copper Mountains in the Year of True Omens (1409 DR), several survivors fled south, crossing over the dark eaves of the Great Wild Wood. One fleeing dragon named Skalnaedyr, more through accident than design, hit upon an ingenious method to assure his survival. Hungry and feverish from his close call with the draconic illness, he alighted in a village called Phannaskull. The village ataman thought to protect his people by offering obeisance to the dragon. Taken aback, Skalnaedyr agreed, becoming the first dragon prince and setting an example for the swarm of dragons that would come to follow him south from the mountains. To show his respect, the ataman immediately changed the name of the town to Skalnaedyr.

Other dragons fleeing the same infection soon learned of Skalnaedyr's ploy. After that, the largest dragons each sought a village to rule, either through fear, deceit, or promises of protection against later waves of dragons that might be less diplomatic.

THE DRAGON PRINCES

Dragon princes are alert for landless wyrms looking to find a town of their own. The landless search for princes weak enough to pull down and replace. Some dragon rulers seek to expand their holdings to more than one city. They might send humanoid mercenaries to burn the farms of another prince's people, or to kidnap and enslave them. Neither princes nor the landless ever send mercenaries directly against another dragon. An unspoken rule requires that humanoids remain in awe of dragons—nothing should be done that would embolden the subjugated or make them believe they could mount a credible threat against a dragon.

Despite the low-level conflicts that arise between princes from time to time, none has yet actively sought to rule all the land as the first dragon king. Sometimes the princes gather in a Council of Wyrms to discuss worrying events. By tradition, the council is held in hidden Dracowyr, an earthmote miles above the Great Wild Wood. Dragon does not fight dragon in Dracowyr.

Streetwise DC 15: Murghôm's cities and settlements are ruled by mighty dragons. Each dragon prince claims a particular village and the region around it. Most are served by a retinue of human viziers, mercenaries, advisors, and chamberlains. Humans not part of a prince's coterie view those who willingly serve a malicious dragon as traitors and betrayers.

Some dragon princes are benevolent, others distant, and a few downright nasty. Some require the name of the city they rule to be changed to their own; others don't care, as long as they receive monthly tribute in gold, jewels, and food.

Dragon princes regard dragonborn with suspicion, knowing most of them have little love for draconic kings.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Most of Murghôm's scattered towns each support a dragon prince.

DRACOWYR

Earthmote over Great Wild Wood

This mass of land floats unsupported 5 miles over a forest known for its vicious beasts. The mote is a mile long and half that wide. Dracowyr's landscape is scarred and twisted, thick with rocky spires and ravines. A central area holds a castlelike structure carved into the earthmote, granting external perches for up to a hundred dragons, each on its own spire. Below each spire are interior passages and chambers large enough to support each dragon's humanoid coterie, if any.

Dracowyr is patrolled by its guardian Ananta, a dragonborn who was saved by Skalnaedyr from a fate she refuses to describe. For this act, she pledged her life to the protection of Dracowyr.

SKALNAEDYR

Largest Dragon-Ruled City; Population 10,000

This "crossroads of Murghôm" has grown from a village to a city over the past seventy years, and the winding streets and jumbled architecture are a testament to this rapid growth. The newest parts of the city are built around the palace of Skalnaedyr, an elder blue dragon. Skalnaedyr is rarely seen, but his vizier Merwena has the authority to speak in his place.

The city has grown so large because Skalnaedyr was the first dragon prince to give a measure of respect and freedom to his human subjects. People early on flocked to the city, finding work in various trades. Other dragon princes have since attempted to emulate Skalnaedyr, but most prefer to rule through fear rather than respect.

The Cult of the Dragon maintains an active and visible presence from the Dragon House. Those who run the Dragon House do not preach the apocalyptic core doctrine of the cult, saving that for die-hard converts who work their way into the organization over several years' effort and personal expense. The "real" cultists operate out of the nearby Tower of the Talon, a foreboding edifice on the edge of the Plains of Purple Dust.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Drowned Necropolis: Undead humans, animals, and monsters have long infested the northern shore of Brightstar Lake. No matter how many are destroyed, more appear later to threaten fishers and travelers who stray too near. Recently, an expansive city carved of basalt was discovered beneath Brightstar's surface. Shadowed and cold, the city's streets are filled with the silt of centuries. Dark meteoric stone can be found everywhere, pulsing with life-sucking shadow. According to remarkably preserved carvings in a central building, the stone was mined by the city's former residents and incorporated into art and architecture, and even inlaid in weapons. In time, the rock's influence pulled the entire city into death during one night of terrible screaming. The nature of the dark stone is a mystery. Is it mined from a vaster sculpture or structure, as is claimed by some waking from nightmares in the vicinity?

Skalnaedyr's Tomb: Skalnaedyr has already had his tomb constructed, a grand affair in western Murghôm, despite the fact that he is far from dead. Like the pharaohs of vanished Mulhorand, he prepares ahead. The massive granite mausoleum has the general shape of a monumental dragon sitting in regal repose. Stairs lead up to an open mouth that

CULT OF THE DRAGON

The Cult of the Dragon is an organization dedicated to undead dragon rulership over the entire world. The tumults of the previous century have done little to advance the cult's goals but did present some important omens. These omens include the rise of Murghôm as a dragon-dominated land, the unlooked-for appearance of dragonborn in Tymander, and the rumors of dragon empires in Returned Abeir. Invigorated by these events, the Cult has come out of the shadows in a number of locations and begun openly serving its scaly masters.

The Cult of the Dragon is discussed further on page 246.



houses the entrance, allowing visitors to view a series of chambers engraved with images and stories of Skalnaedyr's reign. Many walls are yet empty, waiting for events to unfold. A sealed mithral portal will one day hold Skalnaedyr's mortal form. Or will it?

Many believe the entire tomb merely serves as a doorway to the Feywild, or another realm even farther removed. In that remote location, Skalnaedyr keeps a secret army, biding his days until he saves Murghôm from some future threat—or becomes that threat himself.

Tower of the Talon: This foreboding tower on the edge of the Plains of Purple Dust rises up like twin dragon fangs, fused but for the tips, which surmount the tower like horns. Balconies and open bays are numerous near the tower's apex, perfect entrances for dragons and other flying creatures. The structure is home to a cell of the Cult of the Dragon and is named in honor of Anabraxis the Black Talon, that group's ultimate authority. The cell has agents in the Dragon House in the city of Skalnaedyr, and maintains contact with one or two dragon princes of Murghôm, though most view the tower with suspicion.

The Tower of the Talon is organized like a military keep and includes provisioning vaults, armories, and barracks for a large force of human and dragonborn warriors. Quarters and a grand war room serve the cultists' upper echelon. The deepest cellar in the catacombs beneath the tower contains a fossilized dracolich still mostly embedded in stone—work on freeing it without damage is a slow and tedious process.



MYTH DRANNOR

The small but vital realm of Myth Drannor is nestled in the forest of Cormanthor. The region's giant maples, looming shadowtop trees, and towering oaks seem a living testament to a forgotten green age, a time in which humans were an afterthought. The new Myth Drannor is not as powerful or widespread as the realm that fell in the Year of Doom (714 DR), but it's still the strongest state between Sembia and Thay.

MYTH DRANNOR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: The fallen kingdom of Cormanthyr (now Myth Drannor) was refounded by Ilsevele Miritar after the eladrin Crusade, led by her father Seiveril Miritar, drove out the elf-demon spawn known as daemonfey in the Year of Lightning Storms (1374 DR). Ilsevele was an able and worthy Coronal, and over the course of a century she rebuilt the ruined city, drove the drow of Auzkovyn and Jaelre back into the Underdark, and checked Zhent and Sembian designs on both the forest and the Dalelands nearby.

Streetwise DC 15: Unlike the remote fey kingdom of Evereska and even more distant Evermeet, Myth Drannor is open and accessible. Even so, the realities of its self-assumed responsibilities—watching over Netheril—make it a cautious land where first-time visitors are treated with suspicion.

Myth Drannor is allied with the Dales Council and is currently on good terms with Cormyr. Coronal Ilsevele and King Foril of Cormyr both understand the threat posed by the Shadovar. Together with

KEY INHABITANTS OF MYTH DRANNOR

Myth Drannor is ruled by Coronal Ilsevele Miritar, daughter of Seiveril Miritar, the leader of the eladrin Crusade that drove out the daemonfey. Although Seiveril did not live to see the refounding of the realm, his daughter still governs the city just over a century later.

Ilsevele is considered by her subjects and allies to be courageous, compassionate, determined, and plucky. She is one of the fiercest adversaries of the Shadovar, who have come to see her as their principal foe in the region.

Ilsevele's consort is Fflar Starbrow Melruth, who serves as the High Captain of the city and the leader of its army.

Silverymoon and Evereska, Cormyr and Myth Drannor attempt to stem Shadovar expansion.

The Empire of Netheril is an enemy of Myth Drannor, but currently no direct confrontation exists. The shades aren't interested in owning the forest of Cormanthor or dominating its denizens. During Netheril's original rule, a fey kingdom thrived in Cormanthor, and the Netherese are content to let the reconstituted realm exist. However, Myth Drannor's continuing interference with Netherese plans in Sembia, the Moonsea, and the southern Dalelands seems likely to engender open hostilities at some point.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Deep, green forest once stretched unbroken from the Sea of Fallen Stars north to the Tortured Land, west through the Thunder Peaks passes, and around the Stonelands to the Storm Horns. The Cormanthor forest is much reduced from that ancient day but remains a broadly canopied and beautiful realm.

Although the renewed kingdom of Myth Drannor is a safe and stable place, several ruins in the wider Cormanthor Forest remain serious threats to the unwary. Old citadels sleep in the northeastern Elven Court, and drow-infested tunnels lie beneath the woods.

CITY OF MYTH DRANNOR

Eladrin Realm; Population 10,000

Myth Drannor is essentially a city-state, one that has been largely restored to its old beauty. The city features flourishing glades, wide forest meadows, cobbled roads, and stately buildings—both free-standing structures and those incorporated into the boughs and canopy of Cormanthor Forest. The population of Myth Drannor is mostly eladrin, though a few thousand elves also call the city home.

A repaired mythal firmly seals the city's numerous old portals and prevents planar intrusions (even, ironically, from the Feywild). Current Myth Drannor is smaller than its ancient footings; large stretches of pristine forest now make up whole districts. These woods squat over haunted regions of restless undead and deadly traps—many, but not all, fully cleared out.

The work done to seal the countless gates and portals riddling Myth Drannor and its environs is a crucial advantage that Ilsevele enjoys in dealing with the Shadovar. With extraplanar connections suppressed in the heart of the forest, shadow-dependent wizards can't easily bring their hostility into Myth Drannor's heart. On the other hand, the eladrin of

Myth Drannor are unable to pierce the veil into the Feywild and enjoy their ancient racial homeland—at least, not while they remain in or close to Myth Drannor.

FOREST OF CORMANTHOR

Woodland Enclosing Myth Drannor

Cormanthor is a beautiful high forest, worthy of bards' songs and poets' flights of fluttering adjectives. With the renewal of Myth Drannor in its heart, the dangers of the forest are easy to ignore. Travelers move with confidence beneath the whispering boughs and green canopies. Still, centuries of magical portals, wards, and summonings have left certain areas that only the skilled, wood-wise, or magically gifted can expect to survive without harm. Every year, Coronal Ilsevele commissions a group of explorers to reconnoiter a particularly dangerous section of the wood, and if possible, end the threat or put clear boundaries on the particular danger of a forest region.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Citadel of Fungi: One ancient citadel near the old Moander's Road features a layer of yellow-green mold so thick that it obscures the structure's architecture. Beneath the layer of corruption, a walled, single-tower keep slowly crumbles beneath the weight of mushrooms. Its dark, moist interior hallways are choked with puffballs and other fungi so toxic that an animal graveyard of sorts litters the forest in a 300-foot radius. These creatures made it only so many paces before the inhaled poisons overcame them.

The vaults of the citadel are said to contain artwork of the previous realm, costly bits of magic sculpture and likenesses of ancient eladrin from long ago. With luck, the fungal infestation has not ruined these treasures. No one has managed to penetrate so far and discern the truth, though, or even learn why the rot has such a hold on the place. Some whisper it is a remnant influence of Moander, an ancient power of corruption whose body is said to lie beneath a high hill 5 miles distant.

Demon Estate: This rambling structure is half-shaded by dimness supernatural in origin, likely emanating from the Shadowfell. The fey of Myth Drannor have essentially put the Demon Estate out of mind, since it sits on a large section of forested land miles from the city proper.

The Demon Estate squats at the end of a twisting trail half a mile through progressively more gnarled trees. Three stories high and an unknown number deep, the house sounds with occasional screams of rage, pain, and unnamed emotion. The voices are

likely demonic in origin. It is unclear who once lived in the estate, when they were driven forth, or whether they succumbed to magic so foul that they were trapped forever in its shadowy grasp.

Vale of Lost Voices: This valley is named for the ghosts that wander an ancient burial ground. Rauthauvyr's Road bisects the vale, and travelers who stay on the road are safe enough. Those who stray from the road into the forest risk encounters with ghosts and guardian spirits who see strangers as invaders and enemies to be slain. The area is sacred to eladrin and elves—as long as they visit individually and remain respectful at all times, the spirits leave them alone. Unmarked graves, headstones both simple and grand, and mausoleums of various sizes are scattered throughout the forest. Those who would seek to loot them incur the wrath of both dead and living fey folk.



NAJARA

Nagas, yuan-ti, and lizardfolk inhabit this monstrous realm. Najara encompasses the eastern reaches of the High Moor, the Serpent Hills, the Forest of Wyrms, the Marsh of Chelimber, and the river valleys that meander through the area. Its center lies in the Serpent Hills. For all its size, the existence of the realm remains a point of debate, because it is not a state or country in the human sense of those terms—the monstrous denizens of the region don't patrol their borders or carry on any sort of commerce or relations with nearby lands.

NAJARA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 25: The naga Terpenzi, slain by the Shadowking, returned as a powerful undead entity. Though it possesses power equal to that of exarchs, Terpenzi has been enslaved to the will of successive naga kings. It is bound by a relic called the *Marlspire of Najara* and holds the position of Guardian of Najara.

The reigning King of Snakes is Jarant (Huge level 25 dark naga), who slew the previous king Ebornaje five years ago in a struggle that put Najara on the map—at least as far as the realms of Elturgard and Evereska are concerned. The short internal civil war that preceded the power change saw great activity among the yuan-ti and lizardfolk of the area. The border nations had clear cause to be concerned that war was mounting from the long-slumbering marshes and hills.

Streetwise DC 25: As the King of Snakes, Jarant proudly wears the *Marlspire of Najara*. He rules unchallenged, but has not yet issued any edicts setting Najara on a war footing against its neighbors.

BOARESKYR BRIDGE

A bridge bearing the name of a now-vanished realm provides access across the Winding Water. Here passes the Trade Way. The bridge is constructed of black granite and contains a sculpted image on each end—one of the deity Cyric, the other of an entity called Bhaal.

A contingent of Elturgard paladins maintains watch over the bridge in a newly built miniature keep. After a caravan bound for the theocracy disappeared while staying at the bridge caravanserai, the paladins felt they had no choice but to patrol here, even though they don't know whom to blame for the caravan's disappearance. Despite Elturgard's watchers, oathbound human slaves of Najara pass across the bridge frequently, with Elturgard none the wiser.

Other than claiming power for himself against the aged former monarch, Jarant seems content to allow Najara to continue the policy of obscurity that has served the realm so long. Even so, Najara is now widely known, if only as an area of interest to adventuring companies, since it contains ruins of all ages that remain unexplored.

Streetwise DC 30: Some yuan-ti in Najara, disillusioned with their god Sseth, turned to the worship of an interloper deity named Zehir. Despite the King of Snakes' ban on such devotion, the cult of Zehir has become a real, if hidden, force within Najara.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Najara is one of the largest and most potent kingdoms in western Faerûn, though few are aware of that fact. The land is littered with impressive ruins, including ancient serpentfolk strongholds, centuries-abandoned Netherese settlements, and the remnants of the collapsed human kingdom of Boareskyr.

FOREST OF WYRMS

Snake-Infested Forest

Despite the underlying rocky terrain, the Forest of Wyrms is composed of great redwoods and thick pines that soar to staggering heights. All manner of serpents reside therein. Small communities of yuan-ti are common, and the place is home to several youthful green dragons, whose alliance with the yuan-ti is tenuous at best.

Several locations of interest lie in the forest, including Ss'thar'tiss'ssun, one of the most ancient ruins in Faerûn, and Thlohtzin, an old lich stronghold turned slave citadel by its new yuan-ti residents. Although most steer clear of the ancient ruin, sinister human and tiefling slavers travel to Thlohtzin to sell their merchandise for ancient gold. The slaves are then reapportioned throughout Najara.

SERPENT HILLS

Najara-Controlled Badlands

These rocky hills and difficult ravines roll along a great expanse, broadening to the west until they fade into the High Moor. Great mesas and red-clay earthmotes dot the sky. The Serpent Hills ripple in spectacular color, alternating between dark black coal and green coppery tints, not unlike a snake's scaled hide. The ravines between the clawing hills contain dying scrub brush and dry riverbeds that only a few years ago trickled with water. The land has turned crueler since.

Crypts dot the landscape, dating back to the era following old Netheril's fall. Some ruins are vacant, their underlying crypts sealed. Many are home to

lizardfolk, nagas, and yuan-ti, all ostensibly subjects of the King of Snakes. The breached tombs have been plundered and form part of a network called the Serpent Tunnels that extend beneath the hills. This conduit for Najaran business is home to yuan-ti that find the surface too dry.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Crypt of the Six: The crypts sprinkled through the Serpent Hills are not Netherese—they were left by Anauria, a survivor-state that rose from the rubble of Netheril’s fall. Anauria persisted a little more than 400 years before it fell to one of the orc hordes that periodically rampage from the north. Some of the crypts of its nobles and kings, holed up in their last bastion, are filled with treasure and ancient magic. Others have been looted and reconstructed as domiciles for yuan-ti and their slaves.

The Crypt of the Six is composed of half a dozen unbreached, catacomb-linked caverns containing the remains of elder Anaurian counselors interred with their immediate families. Like all Anaurian tombs, the Crypt of the Six is defended by spell-wielding mummies and guardian golems. This crypt is also defended by a spatial distortion that forces would-be tomb raiders to trek across portions of the Abyss. The tumbling, demon-fraught landscape has proved an impassable gantlet for yuan-ti and outlander explorers alike.

Ss’thar’tiss’ssun: The sarrukh, the yuan-ti progenitor race, built this temple-city thirty thousand years ago, making it one of the oldest ruins in all Faerûn. Ss’thar’tiss’ssun was abandoned after the death of the deity it was built to exalt. It stood sealed for thousands of years until it was restored by the ancient naga Terpenzi and its followers, marking Najara’s first flowering. However, in the Year of the Moor Birds (90 DR), the Shadowking and other Netherese wizards slew Terpenzi and partially razed the city.

Humans briefly inhabited the land above the ruins, but their habitation, called Serpent’s Cowl, now stands empty. The surface dwellers were annihilated

SS’KHANAJA, NAJARA’S CAPITAL

Ss’khanaja is located in the western portion of the Serpent Hills near the High Moor. Beneath a small valley surrounded by hills, the city encircles a narrow shaft that plunges to the Underdark. A spiraling ramp coils down the shaft, offering access to side chambers every quarter-revolution. The city is inhabited mostly by Najara’s ruling class of nagas, their attendants, and their guards. Small groups of yuan-ti and lizardfolk also live in the side chambers lining the shaft nearer the surface.



when the Netherese wards designed to keep out serpent kin failed roughly a hundred years ago.

The Shrine of the Cowled Serpents lies in the heart of ruined Ss’tar’tiss’ssun. Over the last century, yuan-ti have uncovered the shrine and often visit the location. It is inhabited by all manner of monsters and treasures dating back to the original Kingdom of Snakes.

Thardresk Crypt: This crypt lies in the southern Serpent Hills. Access is through a natural cavern that opens in the shadowed face of a small hill. From there, a narrow shaft leads down to a series of worked mine tunnels and small chambers. The tunnels end at a natural chasm buried when ancient Netheril fell, containing an Anaurian crypt guarded by animated swords, elaborate magic traps, wards, and undead. Past explorers claim that the crypt is that of King Thausimbel Thardresk, Anauria’s greatest monarch, renowned for his swordcraft and jeweler’s eye. Other explorers say that the tomb is false, an ancient ploy to distract notice from a true but yet undiscovered complex of actual crypts spanning many levels and years of Anaurian kings.

NARFELL

Narfell is a wintry country covered in infertile soil and scraggly grass. Glaciers on Mount Nar reach down from the peak and into the plains. Icelace Lake is frozen nearly year-round. Bitter, killing winds blow unceasingly.

From the backs of tall, shaggy horses, nomadic folk hunt reindeer and wild oxen. Calling themselves Nars, these fierce riders and archers supplement their resources by raiding west into Damara, south into the Great Dale, and even into northeastern Thesk. More often, though, the tribes fight among themselves.

NARFELL LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Recent decades have turned an already frigid land colder. Nars adjusted to the colder conditions, but the more persistent winter slowed trade along the glorified track called the Long Road. Many tribes fell to internecine bickering and raiding into neighboring lands.

History DC 25: About thirty years ago, a few desperate tribes recalled their heritage. Narfell was once the heart of a nation that maintained its power through pacts with various devils. Knowledge of these ancient ways has reemerged among the Nars.

Streetwise DC 15: Although the craft of calling and securing planar entities within Narfell is referred to as demonbinding, the practice was not so limited. Ancient Nars made pacts with all kinds of otherworldly beings, including devils. Strong tiefling bloodlines are common throughout the Nar tribes, and many tieflings occupy positions of power among the nomads.

Streetwise DC 25: A few Nar tribes have taken up permanent residence around ruins that previous generations were content to let lie for over a thousand years. Demonbinding is, after more than a millennium, being practiced once more in the remains of ancient Narfell.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Much of significance lies under the surface of Narfell or among the ruins that top its desolate landscape. Most Nars treat ancient sites with respect, and all know that valuable items lie within such places. Nars believe that venturing into a ruin is fine, but staying at one is forbidden.

BILDOOBARIS

Trademeet; Population 30,000 (summer)

During the majority of the year, this place is nothing more than a vast stretch of flat land cut by winding draws. When summer sun makes travel easier and fills the gullies with meltwater from nearby Mount Nar and the Firward Mountains, Nar tribes gather in Bildoobaris for a festival of the same name. At that time, miles of hide tents fill the plain, mingled with the finer temporary abodes of foreign merchants.

The Nars drink, feast, and trade. Marriages are arranged and stories are swapped. Through an intertribal council, the tribes make common policy, each voting according to its size and the number of riders it can muster. The current ascendant tribe is the Harthgroth.

During Bildoobaris, Nars also sell horses, native craftwork, and ancient treasures to foreigners. They trade for armor, clothing, jewelry, weapons, and even food and exotic drink. Merchants must be wary, however, because any Nar who feels cheated might become violent.

JIIYYD

Crossroads Village; Population 500

A rough collection of squat stone buildings and hide tents, Jiiyyd is a trading center. It boasts the first available services along the Long Road past the Giantspire Gap, set where the road to Peltarch meets the Long Road. Passing Nars, traders from Peltarch, and even a few goblins come to Jiiyyd to barter. Foreigners and natives alike take advantage of the village's largest feature, the Delyth Caravanserai, which is operated by a family that moved from Damara long ago.

N'JAST

Crossroads Village; Population 500

Much like Jiiyyd, N'Jast is a trading settlement nestled at the point where the Long Road crosses the Cold Road, a passage from remote villages and dwarfholds near the Icerim Mountains all the way to Nethentir in Thesk. N'Jast is a stopover for Nars and merchants on their way to Bildoobaris.

PELTARCH

Port Town; Population 2,000

The only sizable permanent settlement in Narfell is on the southern shore of Icelace Lake, a body formed by runoff from the Great Glacier to the north. The Nars of Peltarch, mostly of the Ulyoon tribe, fish the lake. They also welcome the few winter caravans that cross frozen Icelace Lake instead of braving the snow-choked and goblin-infested Giantspire Gap in the winter. Through food trade and intermittent traffic, the citizens of Peltarch have become wealthier

than their kin, and other Nar tribes consider them outlanders.

Stone for the buildings and walls of Peltarch was taken from an older ruin that lies to the north, which the Nars call Old Peltarch. Peltarch has had its share of strange occurrences, dark spirits, and overly aggressive animals—especially cave bears and dire bears. Many Nars blame these troubles on the ruins and the transported masonry. Similarly blamed on the mingling of the ancient and the modern, it is whispered that the demonbinding ways of old Narfell reappeared here first.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Giantspire Gap: The Giantspire Mountains get their name from the small tribes of hill and stone giants that wander them. Ogres are also common here. Still, hobgoblins and bugbears far outnumber the larger brutes: Goblins truly rule the mountains and its pass. In fact, the most powerful goblin tribes include ogres and even giants.

A few tribes vie for position here. Garnuuk rules the Blood Mountain tribe, a savage bugbear clan known for headhunting in the pass and along eastern Damara. The Razor Heart clan, through the machinations of its queen, the hobgoblin Maaqua, has ties with Damara and a right to “tax” the Giantspire Gap. Maaqua’s mixed tribe possesses two powerful items rumored to belong to a fiend torn from the world during the Spellplague—a *Crown of Whispers* and the *Greatsword of Impiltur* (see pages 55 and 56 for descriptions of both items).

Razor Heart has been steadily assimilating other tribes, but the Black Wolf clan of the southern mountains has resisted thus far. The Black Wolves owe their independence to their ability to retreat into Dunwood and a long-standing alliance with the worgs of that forest. The hobgoblin Aruugan, chief of the Black Wolves and pledged to Bane, holds another *Crown of Whispers*, a twin to Maaqua’s.

Guecumar: The bloodthirsty Nar tribe known as the Creel is encamped around these ruins. Their chief, Tur, follows the commands of the tribe’s witch, a tiefling named Sylanth. Tur’s warriors protect the permanent camp and fend off raiders from passing tribes, who see the Creel not only as taboo-breakers, but also as potentially wealthy targets.

While Sylanth was learning her craft, the promise of power came to her in a dream. She left her tribe and ventured to Guecumar during Bildoobaris. She



returned a year later with a stone tablet she calls the Word of Guecumar, arriving just after the tribe’s former witch succumbed to a strange and fast-acting disease.

Creels nightly seek to bypass old wards suppressing demonic presence and sealing the lower city from access. The going is slow, and only parts of the city become accessible at a time. Missteps are common, and many Creels have lost their lives. The reward for their sacrifice is the demons that Sylanth now has bent to her will. With them, Tur hopes that the Creel tribe will soon become the mightiest of the Nars.

Jastaath: Upon the western face of Mount Nar sits a tower surrounded by tumbled ruins, all perched above a glacier field. Barely visible from Bildoobaris, the tower became known to the Nars only about forty years ago. Because of their fear of Kryonar, the white wyrm dracolich said to live on the mountain, few Nars have dared to approach the place.

What most Nars don’t know is that Kryonar is dead. Some time ago, the Red Wizard Branimer Rythil arrived in fallen Jastaath following her studies of the Nar ruins of the Great Dale. She was accompanied by an entourage of fiends, corrupted fey, and her twisted ally, the fomorian warrior Hughan. Having successfully learned secrets to transform from a human into a cambion hellfire magus, Branimer and her allies slew Kryonar and built a stronghold among the ruins on Mount Nar. There, the wizard seeks the earliest secrets of Nar demonbinding, intending to build a kingdom in Narfell and eventually turn her power on the Great Dale, Rashemen, and Thay.

Kryonar’s Caverns: Within the glacier on the northern face of Mount Nar is a series of tunnels that lead to a natural cavern. These caves once housed the dracolich Kryonar. Now, even the undead dragon’s bones are gone. In the dracolich’s place are twisted cyclopes and other creatures that came to Mount Nar with Branimer Rythil. They remain loyal to the transformed wizard.



NELANTHER ISLES

The Nelanther Isles are a widely scattered chain of atolls stretching from Amn into the Trackless Sea. More than half the islands lack water and are fit only for wrecking ships. The places that can support life are fought over by pirates who prey upon the shipping of Amn, Calimshan, the Sword Coast, and the Moonshae Isles.

It is widely believed that hundreds of secret pirate troves are scattered about the isles. These treasures have remained undiscovered during the century since a local sea surge during the Year of Blue Fire wiped out sea fortresses, pirate enclaves, and numerous ships, crews, and captains.

NELANTHER LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: The mighty sea swells of nearly a century ago destroyed several pirate enclaves and fleets, smashing ships upon unforgiving shores. Since then, a few surviving fleets have been refurbished and new ones founded. The isles might one day become the same threat to merchant shipping that they were before the Year of Blue Fire.

Streetwise DC 15: One pirate's flag has become particularly known and despised in the shipping lanes—the white and purple colors of Captain Ornappur the Rock. Ornappur is a nasty piece of work. He's sly and deceitful, and has become a master of might and magic. The Rock as a lad was thrown off a ship near Skaug for stealing rum. Not seen again for twenty years, he reappeared suddenly with a crew of cutthroats and a ship carved of black stone. Ornappur's flesh had become dark, hard stone, and his heart a piece of flint. No ship can stand before Ornappur's nameless vessel, and only a few survivors have ever floated ashore to tell of the ferocity of the Rock's terrible onslaughts.

LANTAN'S REST

The great tsunamis that followed the shifting continents inundated Lantan as it ravaged other coasts and island nations. When the water receded, the island land was nearly gone. All its machines, its technology, and its people were drowned. The land is much reduced in area, and its clockwork marvels lie rusting below the waves. The pirates of Nelanther say a monster sinks any ship that draws near.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Only a few of the islands in this archipelago are named. Maps of the area show the major islands and a few of the smaller ones, but fail to note shoals, seamounts, wrecks, partly submerged islets, vortices, and other information important to those wishing to navigate passage. Sea caves, sunken ships, trapped pirate lairs, and more make the Isles an interesting, if dangerous, adventure location.

A pirate captain makes his or her name by learning at least one fast, safe route through these hazards, and then keeping it a close secret. Such knowledge is the most valuable treasure any pirate owns in the Nelanther Isles.

IOMA TOWN

Mining Community; Population 800

Ioma Town lies on the large island of Ioma, which is dominated by a mountain of the same name. A rough band of purple crystal caps the peak's summit.

Ioma Town was founded by Amn roughly sixty years ago, back when "Iomic crystal" enjoyed the reputation of having antimagical qualities. Amnian merchants made good coin selling it set into amulets and bracelets as wards against future Spellplague flare-ups. However, as wizards relearned their craft



BEN WOOTTEN

in the decades following the Weave's collapse, Iomic crystal was shown to be nothing special.

That didn't stop the industrious miners. Ioma Town and its mine operate to this day, quarrying the purple crystal, which Amnian merchants sell as faux amethyst on the mainland.

Ioma Town has become a competitor to Skaug, the other open community in the Nelanther Isles, though its port can handle only twenty ships, half that of Skaug. On the other hand, Amn's presence in the village has brought a force of three Cowled Wizards to the island. These three, armed with a reputation and a badge of authority, keep an eye on things. As a result, visitors are slightly less likely to be stabbed in a tavern brawl. Just slightly.

SKAUG

Pirate Port; Population 2,000

Skaug is a rough-and-tumble port that welcomes pirates of every stripe, and actively discourages bounty hunters and others who threaten the flow of grog and coin. Lawless Skaug is a good place to fill a ship with scurvy seadogs who value plunder over all else. Life is cheap in its alleys and ale-soaked taverns.

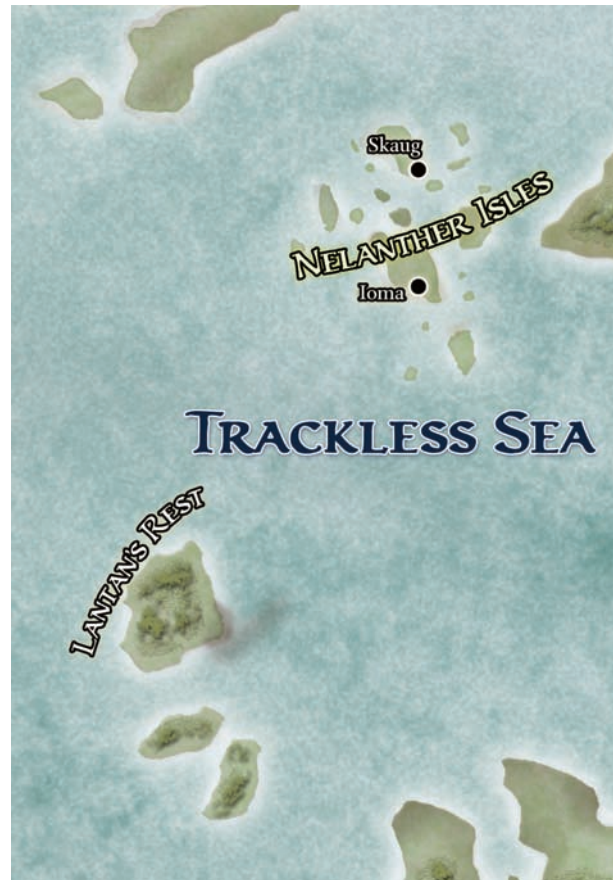
Of all the infamous taverns along the wharf, the Keelhaul is the longest-running concern. Cards, dice, companions-of-the-hour, illicit substances, and questionable deals can readily be found within its creaking timbers. Drunken patrons sometime fling newcomers and alleged cheaters down an oiled chute. The plunging victims are ejected from the prow-fronted building and into the cold waters of the harbor outside.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Sea Towers: High stone towers jut from several islands and occasionally straight out of the sea. Remnants of long-ago watch posts built by a previous civilization or civilizations, most are empty and open. A few recently discovered towers remain magically locked and warded against intrusion. Pirates avoid

VANISHED NIMBRAL

The island of Nimbral, also known as the Sea Haven, was southwest of Lantan in the Trackless Sea. Like Lantan, Nimbral vanished without a trace after the cataclysmic waves subsided. Concentrations of powerful magic were a hazard in the early days of the Spellplague, and Nimbral certainly had magic enough. Some people think the isle still exists, cloaked in illusion. Others think it drowned in the sea, or that its veils of magic carried it off into some far plane. Whatever the truth of the matter, no ships have found the island in almost one hundred years.



them with superstitious fanaticism. Of late, the lights that burn on all the towers' crowns have started to waver and blink in odd rhythms. Those tempted by the lights either have found nothing or have disappeared. Stories concerning the towers' new occupants are varied, but all share one trait: Requests from slavers for children not more than one month from the womb have been traced to hooded figures who bear their squealing burdens back to a tower's vicinity.

Wreck of the Sea Witch: The infamous *Sea Witch* went down with all hands somewhere off the western coast of Ioma, and many a pirate and salvager has tried to find it since. The *Sea Witch* was known for its complement of wizards, warlocks, and other spell-slingers. This personnel allowed the captain, Mala Ravenstar, to employ a variety of diabolical tactics against foes. All assume the sunken ship's hold must be bursting with magic treasure.



NETHERIL

The Empire of Netheril stretches from the edge of the High Ice south to the Farsea Swamp, occupying the former desert land of Anauroch. Rivers now flow from the melting glaciers, rain falls, temperatures are moderate, and in some places vegetation is particularly lush. Netheril is a land reborn, despite its cruel overlords.

The Twelve Princes rule Netheril from their capital city of Shade Enclave (known also as Shade and, formerly, Thultanthar), the lone city of old that escaped ancient Netheril's collapse. These incalculably powerful mages threaten all of Faerûn's nations. A floating enclave, tentatively identified as the resurrected city Sakkors, is sometimes sighted hanging over Sembia in the dead of night. Stories of bloodshed and heartache follow in Sakkors' wake.

NETHERIL LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 25: A fragment of the ancient Netherese, who call themselves Shadovar, escaped the destruction of their empire by fleeing into Shadow. They spent long, difficult centuries there but have finally returned, although with something of the shadowstuff in them.

The Netherese returned in the Year of Wild Magic (1372 DR) and found their old empire in ruins, buried under a desert covering the once-verdant landscape. Their nation was all but forgotten by the descendants of the tribes they once ruled with an iron fist. To the Shadovar, the world seemed a nightmare landscape of savage realms. It was a place where magic was suppressed by the upstart Mystra to a ghost of its former grandeur. The Shadovar pledged that the peoples of Faerûn would once again accept the Netherese as their rightful masters.

SAND KINGS

An active fringe of Bedine separatists yet resists the Empire of Netheril. These so-called Sand Kings are secretly supported by the Dalelands, Cormyr, Silverymoon, and Waterdeep. They have been infiltrated by the tattered remnants of the Zhentarim, and it's difficult to tell the difference between a Bedine freedom fighter and a mercenary hoping to profit from the chaos of the armed resistance. One resistance fighter, Qambara El Ruhul, has pulled off several daring raids on Shadovar supply convoys.

Streetwise DC 20: Netheril thrives within its borders. Memory of its brutal genocide of the native dwarves is suppressed, as is the forceful integration of the primitive peoples of Anauroch. The rebuilt cities of Landeth, Orofin, Rasilith, and Oreme are peopled with Bedine who have mostly forgotten their nomadic past. They are now city dwellers who describe themselves as Netherese.

The surrounding realms of Evereska, Cormyr, the Dalelands, and Myth Drannor patrol Netheril's borders, hoping to stem Shadovar aggression. Although the league has managed to keep armed forces at bay, it has failed to fend off Netherese spies, which are widely believed to be scattered all across Faerûn. Given their magic and shadow-infused flesh, Netheril's agents could be anywhere.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Arid dustbowls are dotted with youthful forests; sparking streams wend through formerly wind-scoured rocky steppes; the thawed tundra is green with grass. Many Netherese vaults and forgotten towers of ancient days remain to be consolidated into the growing empire.

SHADE ENCLAVE

Capital City; Population 35,000

This city of black walls and high spires hangs suspended by mighty magic above the Scimitar Spires. Shade Enclave is peopled by descendants of ancient Netherese wizards now thousands of years old, sustained in life by magic and a connection to the Shadowfell. Legions of dark-armored swordmages patrol the city. The Twelve Princes of old, wizards infused with the power of shadowstuff, yet lead the city as they did before it escaped the empire's fate. Shade represents one of the most potent concentrations of arcane might on the face of Toril. It has forged an empire of incredible size and power in just a few short mortal generations.

The Twelve Princes never cross each other. They are unified in their goals, or at least they present that public face. Each rules the confines of his own dark mansion much as a mortal baron oversees his community. All the princes answer to the Most High.

All told, only a couple of hundred shades live in the city. Most of the Shadovar are still human. However, all have been touched by generations of living in the Shadowfell, and shadar-kai began to appear spontaneously in the generation following Shade's return to Faerûn.

SAKKORS

Resurrected City; Population 15,000

Unlike the city of Shade, Sakkors did not survive the original fall of Netheril—it crashed into the Sea of Fallen Stars and languished on the bottom. Over a hundred years ago, in the Year of Lightning Storms (1374 DR), the Shadovar raised the ruin, rebuilding and rejuvenating it, fashioning a second city approaching the glory of old.

Sakkors is built on a floating inverted mountaintop. Shadow magic is incorporated into its rejuvenated structure: Darkness twines around thin spires, over thick walls, along wide boulevards, and through the windows of shops, residences, and noble manses.

From time to time, Sakkors appears over Sembia in the dead of night, apparently not having crossed the intervening distance, or at least without being sighted by anyone in Cormyr or the Dalelands. This appearance, not part of any openly discussed or official Netheril policy or promise, might be designed to create fear. After such sightings, disagreements between the Empire and Sembian merchants, if any, fade away.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Phaerimm Memory Spire: When Shade returned, the phaerimms knew only moments of exultation before the Shadovar unleashed their age-long plan of revenge. The Netherese claim that no phaerimm now remains alive in Toril—even the corpses were blasted into nothingness. Even so, a silvery spire appears irregularly in northern Netheril.

The Shadovar believe the spire appears according to a certain pattern, which, when worked out, will allow them to predict its future presence. They assume that the spire is a tomb containing the physical corpse of at least one phaerimm, possibly its arcane arms and armament, and perhaps a treasure trove of lore. If any creature happens to discover and enter the randomly appearing spire, avoiding the



powerful tomb guardians and traps, it might find weapons whetted and keyed to kill the heirs of Netheril. The Shadovar want to make certain that such a discovery falls to them.

Ravaerris: Prior to the return of Shade Enclave, the now-collapsed Zhentarim maintained outposts on the edge of Anauroch. Ravaerris was the largest of these forts, housing a company of prospectors, diggers, soldiers, diviners, and a series of special vaults that held what treasures they could pry from the unforgiving sand.

When the Spellplague struck, some relic, spell, or captive creature in the Ravaerris vault reverberated like a bell, sending out waves of force that collapsed the sprawling outpost into a hidden fault. A handful of Zhents escaped, only to watch gape-mouthed as the fault closed with a final shudder, stealing away Ravaerris and all of Zhentil Keep's hard-won Netherese relics. The few scattered Zhent outlaws who yet wander Faerûn tell each other when they meet that, somewhere, Ravaerris yet remains.

NETHERIL AND SHAR

The active worship of any deity but Shar is forbidden in Shade and Sakkors, and is only moderately tolerated in the territories of Netheril. The Bedine have, for the most part, converted to the worship of Shar. Savvy Sembians have realized that getting a leg up in the new business climate requires at least the appearance of being a devoted follower of the Mistress of the Night.

OKOTH

Inconceivably ancient, Okoth is a realm of the sarrukh. These ancient creatures, called Serpent Kings by nearby tribes, are few in number. Indeed, they are so rare that a number of respected sages think them to be extinct.

OKOTH LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 40: Three great sarrukh empires arose at or near the beginning of recorded history. Okoth, south of modern High Imaskar, appeared first. It gave way to civil war and a sarrukh diaspora into the planes. On and near what is now Chult, Mhairshalk had great success creating and shaping new creatures. Sarrukh masters of that empire slowly succumbed to an ageless torpor, giving their empire over to the yuan-ti they had created. Isstosseffil existed where Netheril now lies. It fell soon after its arcanists rerouted the Narrow Sea to drive the phaerimms away.

The sarrukh all but vanished into hidden slumber or among the planes, narrowly escaping a catastrophe they called “the changing of the stars.” During that event, the face of the world was irrevocably altered. Perhaps the sarrukh foresaw this doom and retreated to safety.



Religion DC 40: During the Time of Troubles (1358 DR), the sarrukh and their progeny had a religious upheaval. The god Sseth stopped speaking and entered a sleep of ages. A mighty sarrukh priest named Pil'it'ith bound Sseth in his slumber and turned to the worship of the interloper Mulhorandi deity Set. The sarrukh and yuan-ti of other regions, especially Chult, began to search for a way to awaken Sseth.

During the Spellplague, large numbers of serpent-folk attacked Okoth in a secret war. They put down Pil'it'ith, his loyal followers, and his heresy. Sseth reawakened soon after, and Set faded from Faerûn. Dark whispers suggest it might have all been a test, and that Sseth arose as a mightier deity after this power struggle.

Streetwise DC 40: In the Ruins of the Serpent Kings, sarrukh bide their time. They continue to rebuild, slowly and secretly, unwilling to draw any attention. Although few in number, each is immensely powerful, knowledgeable, and potent. It remains their goal to reinvigorate their race in some fashion, and begin breeding a revitalized generation fired with the ambitions of youth.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Reptilian races and humans tainted with serpent blood gather in Okoth, serving their creators. Ruins buried for more than thirty millennia have broken again to the surface during the great upheavals of the last century.

SAR'UKOTH

Capital City; Population 3,000

Ancient ruins sprawl across this fear-enshrouded island. Most are simple low walls, half-cobbled floors, and crumbling monuments. Among the central ruins are newly constructed low domes that rise out of the earth, their interiors accessible through strangely small circular openings. Narrow crawl spaces wind into warm, moist, unlighted corridors and rooms.

Each dome complex houses a single sarrukh and its personal retinue of guards, counselors, entertainers, and other servants, especially yuan-ti. Beneath, winding catacombs connect the domes with one another and with a larger area of tunnels, grottos, and subterranean salt lakes. Also below are the tombs of the sarrukh that failed to survive the past millennia.

The sarrukh of Okoth, eighteen in total, are sterile and childless. A singular title, such as messenger or shaper, describes each surviving sarrukh by its expertise. They form a council led by one they call *khuzdar*, or imperator. The current *khuzdar* is Ziss'thiss, Devotee of Sseth. He is considered to have authority over sarrukh across Faerûn. See “Reptile Kingdoms” on page 268 for more information about sarrukh.

BULDAMAR

Lakeshore Town; Population 2,000

The growing town of Buldamar lies on the eastern shore of the Lake of Salt. It has a reputation as a frontier town where scavengers, salvagers, and adventurers from many lands gather before exploring the ruins around the lake. Over the last twenty years, the small village has swelled four times in size, becoming a true town, rife with frontier opportunities and dangers. The only law in town is imposed by the largest gang of thieves, the Salt Creepers. Life is cheap for those without the strength to fight off predators.

Many local legends and warnings circulate about Buldamar. Those who attempt to approach the island in the middle of the lake soon discover they don't have the guts to land on it, due to a pervading sense of doom. Nobody has ever returned from the accursed place. Another oft-repeated tavern tale is that the city is full of wereserpents (page 271) and other serpentfolk, such as yuan-ti. Supposedly, these seemingly normal citizens transform by night to stalk the streets.

In truth, many serpentfolk do live in Buldamar, though they do not wantonly attack other residents. Instead, they serve as the eyes and ears for Sar'Rukoth. They give warning whenever an expedition of adventurers heads toward that island, and might even suggest other possible looting targets to the group. The sarrukh don't want to attract attention by harming Buldamar, and in truth they need not do so. They control it utterly.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Moon Stair: A crumbling crystal spiral staircase rises out of the Lake of Salt near the southern end, where the River of Swords drains out into the Gulf of Luiren. The stairs are hardly visible until one has nearly run aground upon them. The staircase climbs 5 feet above the water and descends 20 feet beneath the surface, where it is firmly grounded in the salty lake bottom. The upper portion is obviously broken off, as if it once ascended to some higher, now absent structure.

Once every month, when the moon is dark, the stairs are seen to extend upward into the sky. The extension appears to be a glimmer of moonlight given shape, but those trying the steps find that they are solid enough. Braving the stairs to their apex—a grueling journey nearly 3 miles upward—an explorer discovers a floating tower, otherwise inaccessible. The tower is of black stone, and murderous spirits of serpentine beasts guard its exterior. Even exploratory teams sent by the sarrukh have failed to return from that cursed place.



Ruins of the Serpent Kings: Though sarrukh view Sar'Rukoth as the capital of Okoth, they find it convenient to allow all others to believe it the great ruin of a vanished race. Sarrukh and their retainers inhabit only a small, central portion of the ruins on one small island. They cover the place with a magical field of dread that keeps all but the bravest intruders looking elsewhere.

All over the area are hundreds of tunnels, chambers, vaults, tombs, and halls that have lain wholly or partially undisturbed for time out of mind. Aside from potential riches left behind by the sarrukh, generations of other creatures have controlled or laired within portions of these ruins in the millennia since the fall of Okoth. Some are near Buldamar, but many are far from the actual sarrukh holds.

Buldamar's folk know well a portion of the ruins they call the Vault of Records. Although plundered long ago, the vault is said to have contained magic that allowed the rise of Mulhorand and Unther, great empires lost to Spellplague-borne changes. Using the Vault of Records as an example, some believe that wealth within other ruins could eclipse that of any other location in Faerûn. At least, so goes the patter used by Buldamar patrons seeking salvagers, and by Buldamar businesses seeking customers.

RASHEMEN

Rashemen is a rugged land of hardy and fiercely independent people. Rolling hills and sparse pine forests cover the southern areas, giving way to barren plain in the north and cold, deep lakes to the east. The far north contains only snowcapped mountains.

RASHEMEN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: Throughout its existence as a nation, Rashemen has prevailed in the face of invaders. Old enemies include ancient Narfell and Raumathar, lost Mulhorand, the Tuigan of the Hordelands, and Thay.

When Thay became embroiled in civil war, the Wychlaran, Rashemen's witches, seized the opportunity to deal with a growing internal threat—the durthans. This dark group of women and hags, with powers similar to those of the Wychlaran, focused on corrupted spirits and wicked fey. Most durthans felt that the only way to protect Rashemen was to be as ruthless as its enemies. They built a secret sanctuary called Citadel Tralkarn within the Erech Forest.

In what is now known as the Witch War of Rashemen, the Wychlaran and their commander, the Iron Lord, fought against the durthans and their allies. In the end, the Wychlaran prevailed and the durthans were no more.

Nature DC 20: Magic has sculpted Rashemen's geography just as surely as the weather. It is a place

of ancient sorceries, powerful spirits, and strong fey. Spirits and fey keep watch over the forests, mountains, and waterways. Local folk respect these sentinels, taking care not to offend them, for punishment comes to those who displease. With the return of the Feywild, Rashemen has gained an even greater number of fey to protect it, whether the Rashemi like it or not.

Streetwise DC 20: Rashemi are fiercely tied to ancient ways practiced for over a thousand years. Warriors call up a feral rage against foes. Wychlaran hathrans (learned sisters) cast spells of wild power.

The Wychlaran wield magic tied to the land, and they train those with power to serve Rashemen. Male spellcasters, called Old Ones since many live to a staggering age, are few. They excel in itemcraft and rituals.

Although Iron Lord Mangan Uruk ostensibly rules Rashemen, true power lies with the witches. It is they who choose the Iron Lord. They protect and teach this potent commander, and they can remove him from the throne at will.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The southern half of Rashemen is more hospitable and has more varied features than the north.

ASHENWOOD

Ancient Spirit Forest

Eastern Lake Ashane cradles the Ashenwood, an untamed woodland inhabited by wild creatures. This evergreen forest is also home to the largest concentration of spirits and fey in Rashemen. Great wisdom or terrible vengeance can come from these creatures, depending on an interloper's actions. Tradition holds the Ashenwood sacred, so it remains unsettled.

Ettercaps, werewolves, and trolls also inhabit the forest. Some of these creatures are legendary among the Rashemi for their age, cunning, and size. Most prominent is Dar-Guran, a fell troll who can take off a human's head in one bite.

Benevolent creatures also inhabit Ashenwood. Intelligent animals speak to the spirits and watch over the lost. A mighty treant named Stormwind walks the forest among lesser fey plant creatures. He is the Wychlaran's ally, and he speaks to the witches when they seek his aid.

IMMILMAR

Capital City; Population 25,000

The Iron Lord's citadel, built upon an ancient Nar fortification, stands at the center of Immilmar on the shore of Lake Ashane. Ambassadors and merchants come here to deal with the Rashemi.



Most of the buildings within the city are sturdy lodges, far different from the grim keep of the Iron Lord. They are formed with steep sides and a central peak, created by stout timbers embedded in the ground. These buildings are covered with earth and have grass growing over them, similar to structures all across Rashemen.

Important locations are simply more elaborate lodges. Witches Hall is a whitewashed and elaborately carved affair closed to all but the witches. The House of the Three, in which Chauntea, Mielikki, and Selûne are worshiped as the Rashemi pantheon, has a central garden court open to the sky.

MULSANTIR

Trade Town; Population 7,000

Trade might be queen in Mulsantir, but war is king. Ferries extend the Golden Way here from Two Stars in Thesk. During winter, caravans can cross the ice of Lake Mulsantir. Thayan advances into Aglarond and movements on the borders of Thesk haven't gone unnoticed in Rashemen.

Thay has besieged Mulsantir three times in the past, but the town has never fallen. It sports three rings of walls and the most stone buildings in Rashemen. Mulsantir is home to magic warships called witchboats, as well as numerous rage-fueled warriors.

URLINGWOOD

Mystical Heart of Rashemen

Witches control Urlingwood. Here they hold secret meetings, commune with spirits and fey, make offerings to benevolent spirits and the Three, and bind hostile entities. They initiate young Wychlaran and Old Ones here. Within Urlingwood, the witches also brew *jhuuld*, the famous Rashemi firewine.

Only Wychlaran and Old Ones are allowed to enter Urlingwood. The penalty for violating this prohibition is death, and no exception is indulged. Because of this extreme law, the Iron Lord's berserkers patrol the forest perimeter, warning away interlopers.

Spirits, fey, and other creatures loyal to the witches guard the forest interior, making good on the promise of death to intruders. Those whom the guardians can't defeat, they report to the Wychlaran. Strong wards keep particularly sensitive areas safe.

URLING

Village; Population 400

When not on business within Urlingwood, many witches reside in this village. The community looks to be little more than a grove of primeval trees punctuated by grassy mounds. The hills are the lodges of the Wychlaran, their spouses, and their servants. Unlike

Urlingwood, Urling is open to common folk. Some of the most potent magicians in eastern Faerûn live here, including Lady Rameena, the most dangerous witch in Rashemen.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Erech Forest: This forest in the shadow of Mount Nar and the Firward Mountains is considered part of Rashemen. Dark spirits and wicked fey inhabit these gloomy woods, as do angry ghosts of fallen durthans and Nar raiders. Near the forest's heart is the beighted ruin of Citadel Tralkarn.

Fortress of the Half-Demon: So named for the remnants of a huge iron gate made in the shape of a great demonic face, this ancient building is a typical squat Nar citadel. The upper levels of the stronghold are mundane and often home to outlaws or monsters. Levels below the ground hold powerful wards and imprisoned fiends. Nar vaults containing secrets of ancient binding magic are bound to exist here as well.

High Country: The western foothills of the Sunrise Mountains and the Mulsanyaar Plateau make up this wild and dangerous part of Rashemen. In the south, this region is only about a dozen miles from Thay across the Gorge of Gauros. Magic monoliths, thought to be Raumathari devices that trapped Nar fiends, dot the territory. Only a few mining towns exist here, full of the toughest Rashemi and guarded by witches and spirits.

The High Country is also the domain of goblin and kobold tribes, ghosts from failed invasions, and trolls and white dragons. The Nanraak tribe of goblins controls a portion of the northern High Country from caves in the mountains. The Omvudurth clan lords over the south from its dark citadel. Slightly different is the Brood of Kashaan, kobolds and younger dragons that serve an elder white dragon named Kissethkashaan. None of these monsters are willing to face Rashemen's defenders in force, however.

Ring of Blue Fire: This ancient Raumathari ruin is typical in that it's a cluster of towers. Two of the five structures that make up the ring still stand intact. A harsh gray flame flickers atop each, even the fallen ones. Those flames flared during the Spellplague and became bright, intermittent bursts of blue fire. The lights flash in time with grinding and rending noises from within the standing structures. Odd magic radiates into the area surrounding the ring, changing the landscape and the creatures nearby, marking them as a plagueland does. The dangers and remoteness of the area have prevented its looting, but few doubt that the ruin holds secrets, perhaps of Raumathari battle magic.



RAURIN

This land was once the center of the ancient Imaskar Empire. The Imaskari's battles against the vengeful deities of their imported slaves destroyed the area. Since then, Raurin has been a wasteland of stone, sand, and dust inhabited by brown and blue dragons, efreet, and dangerous storm-spawned dust devils that scour the dunes without warning. The desert extends westward, merging without obvious boundary into the Plains of Purple Dust.

RAURIN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: Imaskari tribes began to settle the fertile Raurin plain nearly ten thousand years ago. The people slowly gained knowledge in magical craft, especially dimensional engineering. Eventually the wizard-rulers of Raurin created a gate to another world, from which they kidnapped and press-ganged hundreds of thousands of people. These slaves, called the Mulan, prayed long centuries for their vanished deities to bring them salvation. Finally, they were heard.

Incarnations and manifestations of the Mulan deities arrived in Toril, fomenting rebellion. Though many of the greatest wizard-lords of the realm battled to the last, Imaskar slowly failed in the face of divine wrath. The Imaskari prepared a doomsday weapon called Pandorym but were defeated before they could use it. Even so, by this time, the landscape of the once-fertile Raurin had become a desert. So it has remained for thousands of years.

Streetwise DC 20: Travelers daring the unforgiving wastes of Raurin sometimes stumble across one of several elven enclaves that dot the desert. Why elves, of all who inhabit Faerûn, would choose an environment most at odds with the woodland environment they are known to prefer remains a mystery. Perhaps they merely adapted to a changing environment over thousands of years. If so, then the elves of Raurin were contemporaries of the ancient Imaskari and survived that empire's fall.

The fantastic storms that rake the dusty plains of Raurin are growing fiercer. Awesome displays of wind-blasted grit and lightning are now commonly seen prowling the desert's heart. More and more often, such storms throw off titanic dust devils, which take on a sort of life. Some of these phenomena have moved beyond the desert's borders to tear up the countryside of Durpar, the Beastlands, and High Imaskar to the west.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The wide waste holds ruins hiding powerful artifacts, as well as buried temples to forgotten deities.

AL QAHARA

Hidden Elven Enclave; Population 3,000

The hidden cavern entrance to Al Qahara lies in one face of a ravine that winds through hills rounded and degraded by eons of blowing sand. The cave mouth, hidden by enchantments of misdirection, is flanked by heaps of crusted dust. It opens onto a lantern-lit cavern featuring a gate carved with ancient Elven script. The entry is watched over by a company of five guards that allow visitors entry or call for reinforcements, depending on the nature of the interloper.

Beyond the entry gate lies the common area of the hidden enclave: a wide and deep plaza, enclosed on all sides by stone balconies, galleries, and square tunnels leading to hidden rooms. The entire plaza is lit by hundreds of clove-oil lanterns. Great bronze plaques with calligraphic script hang from every surface that doesn't sport a tapestry of intricate weave. A beautiful mosaic design paves the floor of the plaza, covering its most important feature: a high-walled stone well.



The elves of Al Qahara, like those of the few other fey enclaves known to exist across Raurin, have lived for generations in the desert. They have strangely weathered features for all their fey blood. The adults favor flowing, colorful gowns; children wear loose pants and simple tunics. As normal elves regard the forests, these desert-dwellers see the wastes as a place of beauty and wild majesty, despite its cruel ways for those unused to it. Visitors to Al Qahara find the natives generous with lodging and food, and eager for news beyond the few oasis towns they trade with.

RAGHEB

Oasis Town; Population 2,000

A grove of palms standing 50 feet tall marks Ragheb's location within the surrounding desert sands. Blessed with continuously running water for the last hundred years, Ragheb has grown from almost nothing to a luxurious trail stop for the rare desert traveler or oasis herder. A high, white stone wall protects the inmost area of Ragheb from the desert storms. Inside, a well and its overflowing waters collect in the diminutive but deep Lake Ragheb. Outside the stormwall, tents of red, blue, and green create a semipermanent village of craftspeople, herders, and drifters. When a storm threatens, the tents are struck, and all residents shelter inside.

Ragheb is under the protection of the tiefling Alzubra. She is a just and benevolent arbiter, and most of the citizens are happy to do her bidding. Of the many dangers that Alzubra must contend against, the trade in a drug called *haddrum* is most vexing. She banned this elixir, distilled from dragon blood and less savory ingredients, because those who ingest it sometimes fly into wild and destructive rages.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Crypt of Badr Al-Mosak: In the midst of rocky, low-lying hills, a few broken pillars form a circle surrounding a terraced bowl. Stone columns lie scattered and broken within the declivity, seeming to point with craggy fingers to the sarcophagus at the center of what might once have been an amphitheater. The massive stone crypt rises 10 feet and is of one piece with the rock upon which it rests. The grand sarcophagus depicts a ruler of old: Badr Al-Mosak. It opens

DUST DEVILS

Swelling and towering like genies loosed from their bottles, gargantuan whirlwinds suffused with sand constantly dance across Raurin. They stride above the dead plain, promising stinging death to any they catch. It is difficult to gauge a column's true size, but all seem supernaturally large. Such storms are the greatest threat to visitors who dare the briny sand seas of the Dust Desert.



onto a shaft that contains the old pharaoh's trap-laden tomb.

Ruins of Raudor: Raudor is a city long buried in sand and fallen stone. A relic of exceptional power called the *Fourth Imaskarcana* is rumored to lie within its ruins. Visitors immediately note an overpowering evil presence suffusing the very air. Those who ignore this emanation eventually begin to hear voices in their minds urging them to commit atrocities upon their fellows. These mental urgings are accompanied by an unholy hunger to feast on a living creature's brain.

SEA OF FALLEN STARS

The largest inland ocean of Faerûn, the Sea of Fallen Stars is also called the Inner Sea. It continues to be a crucial trade way, despite its diminished expanse, and even in spite of the ever-present threat of the Soaring City, Xxiphu. Below the surface is another world, with undersea kingdoms and strange beings embroiled in conflicts both new and very old.

The Sea of Fallen Stars is bordered by Aglarond, Akanûl, Chessenta, Cormyr, the Dalelands, the Dragon Coast, the Great Dale, Impiltur, Sembia, Thay, the Vilhon Wilds, Thesk, Threskel, Turmish, Tymander, and Vesperin.

SEA OF FALLEN STARS LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: The former expanse of the Sea of Fallen Stars was altered when wide portions of the landscape collapsed. A portion of the Inner Sea drained into the Underdark, forcing port cities to keep pace with the retreating water by building new dockside facilities. When the sea level reached its new equilibrium (after about 10 years of gradual draining), the average drop in water level measured nearly 50 feet. Once-submerged features were exposed to the air, as well as the tops of various

ABOLETHS AND THE SOVEREIGNTY

Aboleths have seen the rise and fall of worlds, apocalypse upon apocalypse. They are old past understanding, and their origins predate the current cosmos in which mortals (and their gods) erroneously believe they are so central.

Aboleths are effectively immortal and, barring death through accident or violence, continue to grow over their endless life spans, though after one reaches Huge size, its rate of growth slows so that changes can be noted only over geologic time. It's said that each contains the entire racial memory of every aboleth in its particular blood lineage that lived before it. However, recovering such knowledge isn't an automatic process—older memories become accessible to an individual aboleth only as it ages, and then only with the aid of memory-boosting alchemicals and accompanying rituals.

The scattered, lone aboleths that currently creep in dark, watery places of the world are not of the lineages that make up the Sovereignty. Although it's possible the ancestors of lone aboleths once served as its scouts, explorers, or agents, such connections have been lost to time. Thus, not every aboleth in (and under) Faerûn is necessarily an emissary of the Sovereignty. In fact, some might work at cross purposes with Xxiphu.

formerly drowned ruins. The partial draining of the sea was one of the most traumatic effects of the Spellplague in Faerûn. The character of the shoreline changed everywhere, though the overall shape of the sea remains as it once was.

All older seaside trade cities contain an “old wharf” portion of town, no longer useful except as cheap real estate, as well as more recently constructed working ports.

Streetwise DC 15: Life on the Sea of Fallen Stars is hard both for shore-hugging fishers and merchant sailors who brave the passages in order to transport goods. Pirates are the biggest threat to travelers and traders. The sea raiders lair mostly in the many fjord-like cuts of Pirate Isle, a perfectly named landmass home to dozens of warring pirate clans.

Below the surface, water-breathing fey called sea elves are the dominant civilized culture. Myth Nantar is the name of their marvelous aquatic city. The sea elves' most prolific and tenacious enemies are the sahuagin tribes that dominate the eastern stretches of the Inner Sea.

Sea elf, sahuagin, and pirate alike dread the appearance of Xxiphu in the turbulent clouds over the water. On occasion, they have made common cause when the Soaring City unexpectedly arrived. More often, they temporarily break off any conflict to flee.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Drowned graves and ruins litter the bottom of the Sea of Fallen Stars in the hundreds. Some of them were revealed as the sea receded.

MYTH NANTAR

Sea Elf City; Population 35,000

This city is the center of sea elf society and the capital of an ever-growing undersea kingdom, and it is protected by a powerful mythal. Despite the lurking presence of the Abolethic Sovereignty above the water, the sea elves have enjoyed decades of relative peace below. Myth Nantar, now partly revealed by the lower sea level, lies both above and below the waves. With some of its accommodations completely free of water, sea elves and surface races can and do mingle here, both for trade and for councils regarding the threats facing modern Faerûn.

PIRATE ISLE

Lawless Land of Privateers and Villainous Scum

Pirate Isle lies about 100 miles from the coast of Sembia. A great mountain known as the Dragonspur dominates the isle. The Dragonspur shelters two excellent natural harbors that have been fortified, destroyed, and then fortified again by generations of pirates. Several other secure anchorages are scattered

around the island. At any given time, between twenty and sixty pirate vessels anchor on the main isle or on one of the many islets that surround the main landform.

Reports of kuo-toas on the decks of pirate ships by survivors of such attacks is a growing concern. Are the pirates becoming servitors of the Abolethic Sovereignty in return for freedom to sail the seas? Or are the pirates capturing kuo-toas as part of some strange scheme to ward off attacks by the aboleths?

SHARKSBANE WALL

Wall across the Inland Sea

Built by sea elves to contain the sahuagin kingdom in the eastern reaches, the top of this 135-mile-long wall was originally far enough below the surface that ships could pass over it and not even know it was there. Now, however, the water has drained to the point that the wall now towers some 30 feet above the surface. It traverses the straits south of Thay and continues for miles inland to both north and south. Beneath the water, the wall is patrolled by sea elves on the west and by sahuagin to the east.

XXIPHU

Soaring City, Seat of the Abolethic Sovereignty

The most feared sight in the Sea of Fallen Stars is the movable citadel Xxiphu. The city was roused from the drowned depths by prophecy, perverted priests, and unwise delvings. Because Xxiphu can change its location at will, its influence could conceivably stretch anywhere. No one knows where it might appear next, though most sightings of it are over or close to the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Xxiphu is a glyph-scribed obelisk wrapped in an eternal storm that soars over the surface of the world. Tentacles slither and crawl in cold rookeries encrusting the vast object's sheer sides. A writhing frieze carved on the age-worn exterior depicts thousands of interconnected images. The inscriptions constantly shift and change, as if invisible artists swarm across the stone face, inscribing atrocities to the beat of a mad drummer. The full meaning of the evolving inscription invokes concepts too ghastly for mortal minds to comprehend and remain sane.

Aboleths freshly wakened from an age-long slumber creep within the obelisk's hollow interior along with their servitors. But many of these are as children compared to the few enormous elders that shamble within. These ancients do not think or plan as do other beings, and their altered consciousness is inimical to all creatures not part of their ancient Sovereignty. Reality bends in the city's vicinity, unfettering vast monsters of the deep to master the sky as they before hunted the sunless seas.

The aboleths of the Sovereignty are not like those previously known on Toril. The solitary aboleths of

Faerûn's Underdark were startled by the appearance of this mythical city from their primeval past. In fact, a few skirmishes broke out between Faerûn's aboleths and the newcomers when Xxiphu first burst up from the Sea of Fallen Stars. Now an uneasy peace exists, in that the Underdark aboleths avoid those of the Sovereignty.



PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Dragon Atoll: Somewhere in the Sea of Fallen Stars is a small, bare island that was a submerged seamount until a century ago. Now a dragon has claimed the island as its lair, killing any creature that approaches too close. Seagoers who have glimpsed its great shape circling the island say the dragon is gray. Pirates say that the dragon was native to Abeir and fell to Faerûn during the catastrophe.

Isle of Jagged Teeth: An island stands partially exposed to the battering waves, rising a mere 20 feet at its highest point above the waterline. The isle is a popular rookery for sea birds, though none roost near cave mouths that open onto the coast along the isle's south expanse. Though only a few openings are visible above water, the sea caves riddle the land below.

The murky caves are home to a wide variety of corals and colorful sea life. Hundreds of small yellow

SOVEREIGNTY SERVITORS AND FOES

The aboleths suborned populations of krakens, morkoths, and kuo-toas as servants, in some cases changing their nature. A certain limited number of their servants are “unfettered.” They are no longer bound to water because they can breathe air and have a fly speed equal to their swim speed. Other groups and individuals oppose the Sovereignty bitterly.

Unfettered Krakens: Rarely encountered away from Xxiphu, unfettered krakens are sometimes sent on lone missions. Seeing one is like seeing a vortex cloud in the distance—you pray it doesn't turn in your direction. Unfettered krakens move through the air like forces of nature, ignoring or eating those they come upon according to their own unknowable logic.

Unfettered Morkoths: These creatures are the Sovereignty's messengers, couriers, honor guards, and in small groups, a skirmisher force. They also serve as flying steeds for specially trained kuo-toa riders.

Kuo-toas: With Xxiphu's rise, ancient allegiances and bloodlines were reawakened. Many kuo-toas now serve the Sovereignty. Unlike other servitors, kuo-toas are able to infiltrate human society by interbreeding with humans. Some coastal and island cultures contain many such half-bloods, secret servitors of the Sovereignty who do not even know their own ancestry until blood eventually forces their allegiance.

Keepers of the Cerulean Sign: This organization has long maintained a vigil against the abolethic threat in its many scattered sects. Its greatest failure is now manifest in Xxiphu's existence, and many of the lone Keepers and lesser chapterhouses of the Cerulean Sign have been overrun and destroyed. However, a few Keepers persist, and they attempt to obstruct the Abolethic Sovereignty as much as they are able.

and red fish dart within the water among thick strands of slowly waving seaweed. The saltwater fish migrate in and out with the tides throughout the sea caves. However, far more dangerous creatures call the isle home, including a tribe of sahuagin who call themselves the Teeth of Karkusal.

The patriarchal tribe are indeed led by a sahuagin baron called Karkusal, who led his tribe to the Isle of Jagged Teeth some years ago. There, in the drowned caves beneath, Karkusal uncovered an ancient demon-built temple. The temple called out to the sahuagin baron in his dreams, promising the baron great power if he would unleash the demon lord that sleeps within. Karkusal remains suspicious of the dreamborn promise, but also hopeful. He has set his tribe up around the periphery of the buried structure, which is accessible only by caves. While the tribe provides for itself by hunting the sea's bounty and raiding occasionally passing merchant ships, Karkusal carefully explores more and more of the temple. The baron's progress is intentionally cautious, but also slowed by the many metallic doors within the temple that seem to open and close at random intervals, sometimes trapping exploration parties in small rooms so long that they starve to death.

Lichwreck: A century ago, the merchant ship *Thepurl's Diamond* took on seven sealed crates and ten holy guardians of the freight. The ship never reached its port. Presumably attacked by pirates, *Thepurl's Diamond* sank several miles southwest of Aglarond at the bottom of a deep-sea canyon. The danger contained in the shipwreck's freight has been revealed in recent decades. Part of the cargo being transported was a powerful lich called Ebonsoul trapped in a sealed silver coffin. The other crates contained the contents of Ebonsoul's lair in the Chondalwood. The Lichwreck is now widely known, but no one has descended to see if the silver coffin has corroded or if the scrolls, tomes, staffs, and magic mirrors rumored to be part of Ebonsoul's belongings yet lie on the seafloor.

Nhalloth: This ruined Netherese enclave was long ago a floating city; with the fall of Netheril nearly two millennia ago, Nhalloth crashed down into the Sea of Fallen Stars, where it remained until the last century. The Spellplague and the draining of the sea have raised Nhalloth to the surface once more. Though it no longer floats in the air, the awe-inspiring architecture, barnacled and eroded as it is, draws adventurers to root through its newly accessible basements, vaults, and cellars, many of which are still partly flooded. Most say that treasure-seekers have long since scoured the ruin clean; however, “shadow folk” have been spied digging in the area. What is Nhalloth's secret, so important that newly reborn Netheril would send envoys to unearth it?

Olleth: This underwater slave city was once ruled by the Arcanum of Olleth, a group of spell-



casting morkoths. In their arrogance, the morkoths ambushed a kuo-toan delegation on business of the Sea Mother. Half the embassy was slain and eaten, and the survivors were brought to Olleth as slaves.

The kuo-toas pledged to the Sea Mother made poor slaves, for their resources were only a prayer away. Within a few years, the Arcanum suffered a series of disasters secretly caused by kuo-toa priests.

The Spellplague was the final straw. One in three morkoth mages dissolved in blue fire, and the survivors lost their spellcasting ability. The kuo-toas rose up and claimed the city for themselves. All morkoths were purged, though other slave races were allowed to remain—under new masters.

The kuo-toas enjoyed only a short span of independence. Olleth pledged itself to the Abolethic Sovereignty not long after the city of Xxiphu rose.

The semidrowned streets of Olleth are a place of nightmare. Rituals are presided over by mad-eyed kuo-toas, with sacrificial victims taken from far and wide to hallow and empower the Sovereignty.

Reeking Daman's Treasure: On a lonely bit of land north of the Pirate Isle lies “Reeking” Daman Hanithorn's ill-gotten booty, or so legend tells. The treasure was buried twenty years ago, right before Reeking Daman sailed away, never to be seen again. For reasons unclear, Hanithorn hung up his pirate boots to pursue some personal vendetta in Amn. His treasure supposedly contains over a dozen chests of silver and gold, diamonds, and jewels pilfered from every nation that trades across the Sea of Fallen Stars. It is thought to lie in the center of a mazelike sea cave guarded by undead sahuagin and dozens of traps.

Tidepool of the Ancient Clasp: The sides of this tidepool on Sembia's coast are carved with all manner of intricate pictographs no sage has been able to identify. Not kuo-toan, sahuagin, or elven, the inscriptions seem to portray seallike creatures in conflict with winged enemies. The winged beings appear angelic in some depictions, devilish in others. The shaft of the drowned pool reaches to a depth of only some 30 feet when the tide is out, but when the tide is in, some have reported it to be much deeper.

Wreck of the Halshan Myrai: The warship *Halshan Myrai*, sailing under the flag of Cormyr, disappeared off the western coast of High Imaskar ten years ago under mysterious circumstances. Some Cormyrian nobles say that High Imaskar sunk the ship in an act of war. High Imaskar denies any knowledge of the ship, and further asks what a warship was doing off its coast in the first place.

Recently, a few crates stamped with the *Myrai*'s flag washed ashore in Aglarond. One of the chests contained barely decipherable correspondence penned by the ship's first mate, suggesting that the warship carried secret and dangerous cargo out of Cormyr. It had been ordered to ferry this cargo all the way south down the River of Swords, through the Lake of Salt, and on down to the Great Sea.

The cargo is described as a set of five matching ebony sarcophagi, each bearing a strange blue-burning scar on its face. According to the first mate, the image of the crates so haunted him, the captain, and the rest of the crew that no sleep could be had on the ship without the ebony shapes showing up in their dreams.



SEMBIA

Once a thriving merchant realm of independent city-states united only by a lust for gold, Sembia is now part of the growing Empire of Netheril. This long tradition of trade and commerce remains the central unifying principal for this vassal state; Sembia is Netheril's trade portal to the rest of Faerûn.

The free cities of Urmlaspyr and Daerlun are only nominally under Sembian control. After winning its war against Sembia forty years ago, Cormyr insisted that they remain neutral.

SEMBIA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: The Twelve Princes of Shade claimed Sembia as a free protectorate following the disastrous civil war of the mid-1370s. In the years leading up to the Spellplague, that was the public face of things, at least. In reality, Sembia was utterly under the thumb of the Twelve Princes by the year 1380 DR, and by 1400 DR it was fully absorbed into Netheril.

Streetwise DC 10: Outsiders are not welcome in the floating cities of Shade and Sakkors, but the Sembian port cities of Saerloon, Selgaunt, and Yhaunn are busy shipping centers even on the diminished Sea of Fallen Stars. Netheril, gone from Toril for centuries, relied on Sembia to remake its economy and to provide sea ports and capital for trade, as well as soldiers and workers to protect and serve its needs.

Though the Shadovar maintain a tight grip on Sembia, they have also grown dependent on it as their only link to the outside world. The canniest of the Sembian merchant princes have been able to capitalize on that fact, filling their own coffers with unprecedented riches.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Sembia is a land of rich peaceful cities in the shadow of Netheril.

DAERLUN

Large City; Population 40,000

The most heavily fortified city in Sembia, Daerlun lies inside a great fortress built while it remained under Sembia's control. The wall was constructed to protect Netheril's trade cities from Cormyrian influence or invasion. Shadovar magic has raised 500-foot-high walls of magically hardened obsidian around the city, the tallest curtain wall on Toril. Despite this

impressive defense, Sembian control of Daerlun faltered in the face of clever Cormyrian stratagems forty years ago. Rather than becoming what it saw as a pawn of the western kingdom, though, Daerlun declared itself a free city-state.

To maintain Daerlun's independence, armies of conscripts from across Sembia drill on massive parade grounds that compete for space with a bustling marketplace and wealthy trade quarter. Patrols from Daerlun on foot and astride veserabs (page 263) and griffons are often encountered in the Vast Swamp in the south, along the Thunder Peaks, and even in Sembian-controlled Tasseldale, Featherdale, and Scardale.

SAERLOON

Metropolis; Population 50,000

The port city of Saerloon is the least stable of the Sembian cities, and more prone to trouble from resistance cells, thieves' guilds, demon cults, and other threats both petty and severe.

A new Lord Governor, Haelia Johannes, was installed only a year ago with a mandate from her Netherese masters to bring Saerloon under control. She has spent the first part of her term searching out and destroying any hint of the worship of any deity other than Shar, desecrating and destroying one hidden shrine or secret temple after another.

SELGAUNT

Capital City; Population 60,000

The capital city of Selgaunt is a bustling metropolis that welcomes travelers and merchants from across the world. It is the site of the largest Sharran temple in Sembia, and something of a showplace for the Netherese overlords, who view Selgaunt as a shining example of the benefits of their divine right to rule.

The Lord High Governor: Selgaunt is the home of the chief administrator of Sembia, the Lord High Governor, Thamalon Uskevren II. Thamalon was the first of Sembia's merchant princes to ally with the

RESISTANCE

Organized resistance remained active in Sembia for only the first decade or so of Netherese rule. Now, through the careful application of gold, assassination, and magical coercion, the Shadovar have little to fear from their Sembian subjects, who have found a profitable and largely peaceful life serving their powerful allies.

Still, small groups of resistance fighters are organized in local cells, rarely numbering more than a score or so adventurers and outlaws. They commit acts of petty terrorism, spread inflammatory broadsheets, and occasionally assassinate a government official.

Shadovar and has held this post for over a century. He is the public face of the very private Netherese administration. He long ago embraced the Netherese way of life, to the point of allowing himself to be transformed into a shade—the highest honor the Shadovar bestow upon their servants.

URMLASPYR

Large City; Population 18,000

With the exception of Ordulin (see below), the city of Urmlaspyr suffered the most during the early days of Netherese rule. It was once known as a city of temples, where people from all over Faerûn were welcomed as friends.

When the worship of any deity but Shar was officially banned by the Shadovar, the merchant princes of Urmlaspyr resisted with disastrous results. Temples and manor houses alike were razed by magical fire, and the merchant princes, their retainers, and families were stolen away to Shadow or enslaved by petty merchants and thieves elevated in status by Netherese decree. Since the city cast off its Sembian shackles, temples and merchant manors have returned but have yet to achieve their former status.

Reminders of Sembian control yet remain. Parts of the city are still haunted by shadow creatures, and a blanket of clouds conjured by a Netherese archwizard seventy years ago perpetually hides the sun despite the best efforts of modern magecraft to remove the blight.

Trade goods flow again through Urmlaspyr's ports since Cormyr enforced its edict that Urmlaspyr remain free. Indeed, a contingent of Purple Dragons, on loan from Cormyr, is posted in the city to guard it from peril. Of course, the true threat to Urmlaspyr's independence is more likely to be hidden machinations than open assault.

SHADOW CARAVANS

Shadow caravans combine the talents of the Shadovar with the mercantile genius of Sembian merchant princes. Pulled by both common beasts of burden and creatures of shadow, these caravans travel through the Shadowfell to the farthest reaches of Toril, trading everywhere—even in realms such as Cormyr where the governments have outlawed them.

Because they're not restricted by road dangers, fees, and portage costs, shadow caravans have a significant competitive edge. They can capitalize on opportunities that would take traditional caravans or shipping operations months to even identify.

The shadow caravans hold to schedules kept as closely guarded secrets by Master Caravanner Ghillad, a Shadovar who operates from a hidden location known to outsiders only as the Fringe Grounds.



YHAUNN

Large City; Population 25,000

Constructed on the remains of a once-rich mineral quarry, the port city of Yhaunn was ravaged by the Spellplague. The resilient Sembians, with magical help from their Shadovar overlords, made the most of the uncanny changes that the Spellplague brought about. They have adapted so well that the city has grown from its pre-Spellplague population, even though nearly ten thousand were killed when the towering cliffs of stone on which its wealthiest districts were built broke away and became earthmotes.

Where once the city's wealthiest citizens competed for status by building their mansions higher and higher on the quarry walls, now the ultimate status symbol is to live on the highest of the three dozen earthmotes that comprise Yhaunn's Air District.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The Ordulin Maelstrom: Once the capital city of Sembia, Ordulin was consumed when a planar rift tore the Adumbral Calyx (a nexus within the Shadowfell) from the plane. What was left was a city-sized black whirlpool of wild shadowstuff. Hanging above it on a mobile earthmote is a Shadovar citadel—the site of bizarre and dangerous experiments designed to resurrect the Shadow Weave.

The Fringe Grounds: The Fringe Grounds are primarily a rally point for departing shadow caravans. Here, Shadovar wizards use special runes permanently carved into earth nodes, enabling them to cast the rituals necessary to send whole caravans into the Shadowfell. Rumors place the Fringe Grounds in locations as varied as a cavern under the city of Selgaunt, the heart of the Ordulin Maelstrom, or deep in a rugged valley in the Thunder Peaks.

TETHYR

Tethyr is a land of intrigue. It sports fertile rolling plains, tall mountains, an expansive seacoast, and deep forests. Most of the country is made up of grassland, and most citizens of Tethyr live in settlements along major trade routes through these plains.

This abundant realm is a feudal one. Knights ride the roads, and land is essential for status. Common folk are free, and many are members of powerful guilds. Counts select commoners as sheriffs to oversee local areas. The counts answer to dukes subservient to the monarch.

TETHYR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Tethyr was once a great forest inhabited by elves and home to Shanatar, an ancient and magnificent dwarven kingdom. Over the centuries, monsters of all sorts have ravaged the lands now within Tethyr's borders, and the nation has fallen to armies from old Calimshan. More recently, civil war ended with the crowning of Queen-Monarch Zaranda and her consort, King Haedrak III, whose line remains on the throne.

With the chaos of the Spellplague, Calimshan's disintegration, and troubles with the monsters of Murannidin, the monarchy has weakened. Tethyr is too big to be ruled easily from Darromar, so dukes and counts have little help from the crown. Remote Velen, cut off by Murannidin, used this situation as an excuse to secede from Tethyr in 1423 DR.

Streetwise DC 10: Queen Anais has had a troubled rule, starting with the machinations of her half-sister Evonne Linden, who made a play for the throne. In 1469 DR, all the queen's nieces and nephews were slain in what has come to be called the Children's Massacre—all except for her niece Ysabel, the only surviving heir to the throne. That

same night, in a coordinated attack in another town, Evonne Linden was also killed.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Tethyr's lands are settled along trade roads. The open plains are a treacherous wilderness.

DARROMAR

Capital City; Population 125,000

This beautiful city stands on the northwestern bank of the River Ith. From Faerntarn, her palace on the Ithal Crag overlooking the city and river, Queen Anais handles royal dealings. She maintains a huge military force in Darromar, five days' ride from any point in the land. Queen Anais takes the advice of the Royal Council, which includes seventeen-year-old Ysabel Linden.

Overseeing the city is a lord mayor whom the queen appoints every three years. The lord mayor administers the needs of the city, deals with city guilds, and commands the fine Darromar Watch. Under the queen, the lord mayor, and the standing military, Darromar is a safe and efficient city.

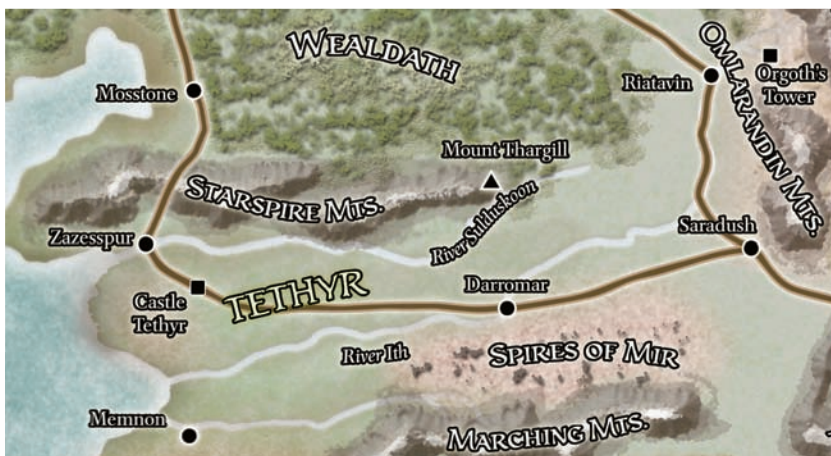
Darromar also holds the wizards' academy Black Towers, a huge market for mercenary work, and an underground of thieves. Extraordinary and odd folk come to Darromar for magical learning. Adventurers and sellswords come for work fighting the realm's many monsters. And despite the prominence of the Shadow Thieves, Darromar's underworld offers ample opportunities for the morally lax.

MOSSTONE

Wilderness Trade Town; Population 3,000

Mosstone stands under the boughs of the great trees of the Wealdath, much like any walled trade town along the Trade Way. Caravanmasters coming from the north welcome the sight of the Wealdath as a sign of relief from the tolls of Murannidin. They view the sun-dappled gates of Mosstone as the first real shelter along the road after the trials of that monster-infested land.

Most people here make their living working in services that cater to merchant traffic. They all place great importance on living in accord with the surrounding forest and the elves of the Wealdath. This is because druids maintain a powerful circle here, ruled by the Archdruid of Mosstone, whose grove surrounds the Great Oak of Mosstone. The town is ruled by consensus, and the townsfolk watch out for the needs of their fellows with a generosity unheard of in most lands.



Mosstone is a gateway to the Wealdath, the Starspire Mountains, and, for the brave, Muranndin. Many foresters and adventurers are based here. As such, Mosstone enjoys the protection of many professional warriors and mages, in addition to the druids and allied elves.

RIATAVIN

Metropolis; Population 80,000

An Amnian city that seceded to join Tethyr in 1370 DR, Riatavin has been the major spur of trade between the Dragon Coast, Ormpetarr of the Vilhon Wilds, and the Sea of Fallen Stars. Riatavin is unusual in Tethyr in that a group of merchants, the so-called Chosen Council, runs it rather than the nobility. Faith in Waukeen is primary in the city, and a number of powerful arcanists also have had influence here since the days of secession. Shadow Thieves have controlled the illicit side of the city for centuries.

Riatavin and its lands have suffered greatly under the threat of bandits from Erkkazar, just across the river. The city's population has dwindled over the years, leaving parts abandoned or full of desperate souls. A number of vampires have infiltrated the city, working on extending the reach of Erkkazar's Night Barony. The Shadow Thieves actually stand as a defense against this incursion, and Riatavin's Chosen Council would richly reward anyone who brings the vampires to light.

SARADUSH

City; Population 35,000

Saradush has suffered decline since the days of the Spellplague, even though it remains a main passage to the independent city-states in the Lake of Steam region. The city lies in the foothills of the Omlarandin Mountains, and rolling farmlands surround it to the west. Saradush is the source of Omlar gems, useful in some rituals, that come from the mountains. But the Night Barony of Erkkazar has made life in the Saradush region difficult.

WEALDATH

Elven Forest; Population 100,000

This woodland, whose name means "Unspoiled Woods," is old and deep, but not particularly dense. Two major elf tribes thrive here, the Suldusk and the Elmanasse. These elves are closely allied with Tethyr because of the royal line's agreement to respect the elven forest.

Fey creatures also roam the forest. At least one portal into the Feywild lies in Wealdath. The fey have chased out gnolls, but groups of ettercaps, monstrous spiders, goblins, and ogres remain. The forest is also home to green dragons, the brood of an ancient wyrm. An ancient gold dragon named Garlokantha

is an enemy of the greens and a friend to Tethyr; she keeps the other dragons in check.

ZAZESSPUR

Port Metropolis; Population 100,000

Once the nation's capital, Zazesspur is a mixture of Tethyrian and Calishite culture. The great port, in which almost any item can be purchased, sprawls around the mouth of the River Sulduskoon. It's a major source of goods and materials for Tethyr, as well as a departure point for sea trade. A group of nobles known as the Council of Lords rules the city, but guilds and the Shadow Thieves have great influence here. Zazesspur also houses most of Tethyr's gnomes and their leader, the Samnilith.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Branch of Linden: This human supremacist organization started by Anais's grandfather Reinhold blames Queen Anais for the Children's Massacre of 1469 DR. It plots to overthrow Anais and put Ysabel on the throne.

Mount Thargill: A dead volcano in the Starspire Mountains, Mount Thargill houses the secret lair of the elder red dragon Balagos of the Flying Flame. Balagos enters his lair through the Wyrmwel, an empty lava tube in Thargill's caldera. He keeps two other weaker dragons captive to protect his lair, and helmed horrors defend his hoard. The dragon also maintains a network of agents in Tethyr and Amn to watch for those plotting against him.

Balagos intermittently and unpredictably takes tribute in gold and flesh from towns across Tethyr, Amn, and north of the Cloud Peaks. He maintains another lair in Smokespire, the easternmost peak in the Troll Mountains of Amn. This spot attracts both ignorant adventurers and Cult of the Dragon adherents.

Old Shanatar: The dwarven land of Shanatar existed under much of what is now Tethyr. Darromar, Myratar, and Zazesspur, as well as Memnon in Calimshan, are built on dwarven ruins. Ancient tunnels, lost and sealed long ago, can be found under all these cities. They connect to Old Shanatar, an Underdark realm full of gray dwarves, drow, goblins, and kuo-toas. Old dwarfholds are common in Tethyr, and ancient dwarven wealth, constructs, and traps await those bold enough to delve into Old Shanatar.

Ogoth's Tower: This decrepit tower stands in the foothills a half-day's ride east of Riatavin, near the edge of the Shilmista Forest. Ogoth the Tainted lived here and stored the famed magic tome the *Alcaister* within, along with decades of necromantic research. Ogoth died at the claws of three fiends he summoned and couldn't control. Elves of the Shilmista warn explorers away from the place, which holds Ogoth's monstrous research, wondrous treasures, and more than one demon.



THAY

A dark and forbidding land, Thay is mostly windswept mountains, twisted badlands, and arid vales. A pall of smoke and ash from the raging volcanic eruptions of its highest peaks smothers the land, blocking sunlight and sometimes extending into neighboring territories.

Thay harbors the largest population of undead in Faerûn. Wealthy and powerful individuals often join Szass Tam's new order in undeath. Conversely, an undead slave won't rebel or easily die, and doesn't have to be fed. Thay's living citizens have a hard existence.

THAY LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: Thay was once a living land, home to the infamous Red Wizards. It was a thriving if macabre society based on magically enhanced agriculture and slaves, trade in magic items, and the use of arcane power unrestricted by morality. Szass Tam, highest among the Red Wizards, engineered Thay's downfall to elevate himself.

During the Spellplague, the Plateau of Thay rose thousands of feet, shattering the land and causing the Thaymount to erupt. Debris from melting glaciers on Thaymount spread more destruction. While these catastrophes raged, Szass Tam made himself the land's regent. The Spellplague ended the civil war of the rebel zulkirs (leaders of the Red Wizards).

Szass Tam then spent decades preparing a terrible ritual. Just as the regent attempted it, the last few exiled zulkirs and other enemies returned from the Wizard's Reach and foiled his mad plot, though they were destroyed in so doing.

RED WIZARDS

Red Wizards were once purveyors of magic items across Faerûn. However, civil war and the Spellplague spelled the end of Thay as a mercantile power. Where the Red Wizards were unpopular, the upheaval left their enclaves open to attack and destruction. Luckier Red Wizards were often cut off from their homeland. Many decided to stay abroad rather than return to a Thay ruled by Szass Tam.

The people of Thay still refer to the arcanists among them as Red Wizards, and only such mages are allowed to wear red within Thay. But a small confederacy of magic-item dealers calling themselves Red Wizards still exists as a trade concern. This organization is most powerful in the major coastal cities of the Sea of Fallen Stars, as well as in the Moonsea region—especially Mulmaster. It enjoys no protection from Thay. Most non-Thayan folk now equate “Red Wizard” with magic merchants rather than with Szass Tam's sinister nation.

Streetwise DC 30: The forces of Thay are building ringing fortresses at Nethjet, Nethentir, and Surcross bordering Thesk, as well as Undumor in Aglarond. These fortresses use the same layout as strongholds called Dread Rings within Thay. Szass Tam is turning his attention outward again. For Thay's neighbors, war seems certain.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Thay is a cold, dry, and towering plateau land. The higher one treads, the more devastated and monster-infested the land becomes.

THE CITADEL

Capital City; Population 10,000

This ancient bastion of basalt is the seat of Szass Tam's power. Seated on a peak about 18,000 feet high and located in blasted volcanic lands, the Citadel is difficult to reach by overland travel. Tunnels far under the fortress function as roads into its bowels. Nobody comes uninvited to Thaymount, much less the Citadel—and many who are invited wish they hadn't been.

Zulkir Council: Szass Tam's vassals, the zulkirs are the most powerful arcanists in Thay. All the zulkirs on the council are liches, and most of them practice some form of necromancy. These seven advise the regent but are obedient to his will. Each also acts as a steward over certain domestic duties. But the zulkirs can't be bothered with the day-to-day needs of Thay's territories (tharchs), so a chain of governors (tharchions) and bureaucrats (autharchs) see to such tasks.

The zulkirs maintain private fortresses scattered over the Thaymount. Treacherous roads and tunnels connect them to the Citadel and one another. Together with the Citadel, these strongholds hold most of Thay's military reserves.

The Dread Legions: Composed of undead, as well as gnolls, orcs, and other subjugated monsters, the Dread Legions are Thay's armies. Although this force serves a primarily defensive purpose now, it stands ready to threaten any of Thay's neighbors. Evidence of the legion's efficacy stands in the form of Undumor in Aglarond. Szass Tam sometimes dispatches elite units of the Dread Legions to other lands for his own purposes.

THE ALAOR

Contested Island; Population 25,000

In the power vacuum following the failed zulkirs' revolt, Thay has retaken a portion of the Alaor. Thay's ships array themselves between this isle and the city of Bezantur. Both places serve a military role. Thay has no allies or trade partners, though it seeks influence among the pirates on the Sea of Fallen Stars.

ELTABBAR

Former Capital City; Population 100,000

Whether by miracle or design, the former capital of Thay survived the changes to the land, as did Lake Thaylambar to the city's north. The River Eltar flows through the city and a series of elaborate canals into the nearby lake. When the zulkirs must handle affairs of state by dealing with human vassals, they do so in the Council Hall of Eltabbar.

Tharchion Sylora Salm oversees the city. Recently handpicked by Szass Tam, she also sees to the needs of visiting zulkirs. Within her manor in the city's center, Sylora discovered a teleportation circle connected to another well-hidden one inside the Towers of the Blade, the seat of power in the city of Mulmaster. Sylora found and established several other teleportation circles in Mulmaster, including one in a magic shop owned by the Red Wizard trade federation. She believes even Szass Tam is ignorant of these tools. Perhaps she is correct.

From Eltabbar, Sylora also oversees the lands north of Lake Thaylambar and the Thaymount. Magic controls the volcanic ash and smoke, as well as moderating weather in parts of this area. Limited agriculture there supports Thay's living citizens.

LAKE THAYLAMBAR

Freshwater Lake

This deep, icy lake is the site of rich fishing and dragon turtles. Necromancers created more than one undead dragon turtle from those slain in the lake. These creatures serve Thay's navy in Lake Thaylambar, the Alamber Sea, and Lake Mulsantir.

PLATEAU OF THAY

High Desert

The edges of this highland now largely define the borders of Thay. Rough canyons and mountains form a tableland averaging 9,000 feet in elevation. High Thay rises in the northwestern part of the plateau, to about 11,000 feet. Most prominent in High Thay is the volcanic Thaymount, the tallest peaks of which tower over 22,000 feet.

Cracked badlands, dotted with alpine meadows and divided by broken roads and winding rivers, make up some of the highland. Many settlements razed by Thay's upheaval still lie in ruin in these areas. Other places are settled, magically protected and manipulated to produce crops and livestock.

Tax Stations: Fortresses operated by the Dread Legions dot Thay, especially along routes that offer the easiest travel. These keeps, called tax stations, watch the roads and charge a small fee to pass through. They keep watch for unauthorized intruders and escaped slaves.



THAY

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Burning Amruthar: Once an independent city within Thay, Amruthar bore the brunt of the land's devastation. Earthquakes splintered it, lava and mud wrecked some parts, and a rain of rock and ash buried others. Deep chasms that formed within the city filled with molten rock that never cooled. Miraculously, the black ziggurat dedicated to Kossuth survived the ruin.

The high priest of that temple, the mummy lord Chon Vrael, maintains the place to this day and welcomes worshipers, defying the Thayan ban on deities other than Bane. Chon is a fierce enemy of Szass Tam. The priest commands a small army of fanatics and elemental creatures, including a tribe of fire giants, which helps him keep the city free of Thayan control for now. Some suspect that the Regent of Thay tolerates Burning Amruthar for his own reasons.

Dread Rings: In the decades following the onset of the Spellplague, Szass Tam spent all his time and vast amounts of Thay's resources building a set of fortress-sized rings to use as the focus for a great ritual. Though few people ever knew or now know the original purpose of the so-called Dread Rings, had the ritual succeeded, the rite would have propelled the lich beyond even godhood. These fortresses persist in Thay as a reminder of Szass Tam's failed bid for ultimate power. The lich can't use Thay for his ritual again—he must conquer untainted soil. No longer able to serve their primary purpose, the Dread Rings still stand as citadels of evil, housing great treasures and greater horrors.



THESK

Thesk sits on the northeast shore of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Nicknamed the Gateway to the East, Thesk is where the fabled Golden Way trade road begins. From Telflamm to Mulsantir, this road is filled with caravans carrying all sorts of goods and people from Kara-Tur.

Theskians are tolerant and imperturbable people. Exotic persons and diverse customs are normal where east meets west. In light of the Rashemi suspicion of foreigners, Thesk seems a welcoming place to settle. It even boasts a few civilized orcs, remnants of war against the Tuigan Horde.

THESK LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Thesk formed as a confederation of trading settlements. Trade along the Golden Way has made Theskians a comfortable people.

The Tuigan Horde invaded Thesk in 1360 DR and quickly laid waste to many of the northern settlements. An army of unified peoples, led by King Azoun of Cormyr, met the horde in Thesk and was victorious at Phsant. Still, Thesk was in disarray for years after the attack.

History DC 20: About eighty years ago, a Shou hero named Tai Shing arose in Phsant. He battled the criminal gangs that dominated the city, driving them underground. Tai Shing became First Council Lord of Phsant and went on to be elected the first Suzerain of Thesk.

Since Tai Shing's death in 1453 DR, Thesk has been a patchwork of feuding nobles, powerful merchants, secret societies, and hidden gangs. The current suzerain, a female orc named Vunmal Murn, is a weak compromise candidate who stays out of everyone's business while fomenting a rivalry with Aglarond over Tannath Gap.

Streetwise DC 15: About half of Thesk's human population is made up of Shou humans from Kara-Tur. The other half is people of mixed Damaran and Rashemi blood. Many nonhumans also settle in Thesk to seek their fortune, such as elves from the Forest of Lethyr, gnomes from the Dragonjaw Mountains, and goliaths from the Thesk Mountains.

Thesk is a land rich in opportunity. Money is the only true authority here. Each settlement has a council of oligarchs to rule it, and the most prominent of these rulers form the Council of Thesk. Within Thesk, those who have the ambition and ability can rise to power through guile or heroics without the need for blue blood. Powerful criminal gangs and clans are deeply entrenched in Theskian cities and

commerce, offering another sort of challenge or opportunity.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Most of Thesk is an empty plain; the nation's major settlements crowd the Golden Way.

Recently, Szass Tam's forces have built roads to and fortified the broken towns of Nethentir, Nethjet, and Surcross. Theskians eye these developments with apprehension.

DRAGONJAW MOUNTAINS

Coastal Range

These peaks rise starkly on Thesk's southern border, forming a sheer wall against the Sea of Dlurg to the south. In the west, the range forms a sharp peninsula called Cape Dragonfang, which ends in a tall mountain called the Dragon's Tooth. Sailors use the peninsula and the Dragon's Tooth as landmarks.

Shy gnome clans inhabit the whole Theskian part of the Dragonjaws. These gnomes avoid strangers and ambush anyone who resembles a Thayan. They farm alpine meadows and caverns, and mine the mountains for riches, which some of them trade in Milvarune, Ethvale, and Phent.

Copper dragons live on the Dragon's Tooth in the west, as well as a forked peak called the Old Swords in the east. These dragons range over the Dragonjaws, brooking no draconic rivals. Filauxerimos, an ancient copper dragon, is the patriarch of this loose clan. He and his kin keep a watch against Thayan advances, and they might prove to be allies of Aglarond against the forces of Undumor.

PHSANT

City; Population 30,000

Where the armies of the western alliance put down the Tuigan Horde, Phsant is the cultural center of Thesk and a layover point for most who travel east or west. Its diversity is astounding, even for Thesk. Thesk supports a large population of civilized orcs and half-orcs, and Phsant has the largest population of orc-blooded citizens in the nation.

Shou-Town: Phsant is also home to the biggest population of Shou people in Thesk. Like every Theskian settlement, it has a city ward dedicated to Shou culture, but Phsant's Shou-Town is the largest in Thesk. Anyone seeking an aspect of eastern culture can find it here.

One such societal element is the criminal one—the yakuza came to Thesk along with their more honest kin. Yakuza disdain outright theft, preferring other illicit activities and violent work, such as assassination and intimidation. Nonetheless, they clash with the Shadowmasters in Phsant and elsewhere.

TELFLAMM

Port City; Population 40,000

Telflamm is Thesk to most outlanders. Even though the Council of Thesk recognizes no one settlement as the nation's capital, Telflamm's prominence makes that point moot. Founded by the Balindre Impilturan noble house (whose company, the Royal Company of Shou Lung, also pioneered much of the Golden Way), Telflamm is as far into Thesk or the East as many ever travel.

A prince of the Balindre line once ruled here, but with the death of that line's final scion, Telflamm passed into oligarchy. Its Merchants' Council now manages the city's affairs, and the council's leader is given stewardship over old Castle Balindre. The powerful criminal guild known as the Shadowmasters, servants of Shar and users of shadow power, is the real authority in the town, but it allows the council and its leader to maintain the appearance of working against corruption.

Xiang Temple: Telflamm is home to an order of monks who train endlessly to master fighting with swords, spears, staffs, and most of all their bodies. Xiang Temple's warriors stay out of Telflamm's politics, and no faction in the city wishes to provoke them.

THESK MOUNTAINS

Inland Range

Steep but short, the Thesk Mountains rise quickly from the plains to a height of about 7,000 feet. Landslides and subsidence are common, so travelers who aren't experienced mountaineers face grave danger from the environment alone. Strange ancient roadways weave through the crags, built by an unknown people and broken by the ravages of time. The Thesk Mountains shelter native hill giants, ogres, goblins, and goliaths, as well as orcs descended from those who fought the Tuigan Horde.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Bonedark Hills: The Spellplague significantly altered Thesk's eastern reaches when the rising of Thay created a broad area of steep, broken terrain. Theskians call this expanse of badlands the Bonedark Hills, since the Thaymount's eruptions often blot out the sun and cover the ground here with gray ash. Thayan soldiers, both undead and living, patrol this bleak landscape, especially near their forts in Nethjet, Nethentir, and Surcross.



THESK

Gang Wars: Yakuza and western gangs, especially the Black Dragons and the Shadowmasters, fight for territory all over Thesk. In the western settlements, the Shadowmasters are ascendant, as the yakuza are in the east. Phasant is an underworld battleground, with the Black Dragon clan on top most of the time. These gangs realize that they exist only because they maintain a low profile and don't overtly harm trade, keeping the citizens from forcing the authorities to crack down. A lot of money and glory could be had by someone willing to take the fight to the gangs, maybe even pitting them openly against one another.

Mount Nirg: This dark peak's gravelly slopes wind more than 10 miles through the Thesk Mountains. Ancient tombs and ruins dot its lower reaches, and the old roads found elsewhere in the mountains are more numerous here. On a tor near the summit, facing east toward Thay, is a drow outpost for the city of Phaundakulzan (see "Undrek'Thoz," page 224). The interior of Mount Nirg houses drow enclaves and winding stairs that lead to this watchtower.

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TURMISH

A once pastoral land nestled between two mountain ranges, Turmish was forever changed by the Spellplague, which redrew its coastline and put long-standing traditions to the test.

TURMISH LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: For centuries, Turmish was known as a realm of merchants, not unlike Sembia, where trade and commerce were the rule of the day. Held in check by a powerful band of druids, the cities of Turmish were not allowed to grow beyond a certain point, and the result was a politically stable and affluent realm with a small population enjoying considerable wealth.

That all changed when the Spellplague ripped through Turmish, erasing many of its closest neighbors and draining the Sea of Fallen Stars to leave its busy port of Alaghôn high and dry. Now a stop along the route for fanatics on scar pilgrimages (page 193), torn by increasingly competitive and desperate merchant costers, the old Turmish has been replaced by a realm always on the edge of chaos.

The realm is ruled by a parliamentary democracy, embodied by the Assembly of Stars, which elects one of its own as chief administrator.

Streetwise DC 10: To the uninitiated, the people of Turmish come across as gruff and impolite, and indeed many are just that. They are serious, business-minded people who disdain the luxury of social niceties. The once welcoming and cosmopolitan Turmians have grown increasingly xenophobic over the difficult past century and are guarded and suspicious of strangers, even though they remain dependent on outside trade.

FESTIVALS

Two major festivals are observed throughout Turmish.

Feast of the Moon: Though this feast is celebrated throughout the rest of the world in winter, Turmish observes it on the first full moon after Midsummer. It is the one day that Turmians allow themselves to truly relax, enjoy what they've earned over the preceding year, and spend time with their families and friends. Turmian merchants go to great lengths to return home in time for the Feast of the Moon.

The Reign of Misrule: Ten days after Highharvestide is the Reign of Misrule, a day devoted to destructive celebrations and petty civil unrest in which the normally serious and reserved Turmians let go of all restraint.



SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Turmish is a land of wild coasts and social and political extremes.

ALAGHÔN

Capital City; Population 75,000

By far the largest city in Turmish, Alaghôn was founded in -37 DR by Chondathan settlers as a mercantile trading post on the Sea of Fallen Stars. It became one of the Inner Sea's busiest ports, but all that ended when the sea withdrew. The Turmian merchant fleet never completely recovered.

Though Alaghôn still enjoys a reasonable standard of living, it's not nearly the boomtown it was a century past. Boarded-up buildings and shabby storefronts mar the streets.

Alaghôn's curious architecture is the result of the Chondathan humans building over existing structures left by a previous dwarven civilization. The dwarves also left an abandoned mine beneath the city streets. This maze of subterranean tunnels has never been fully explored.

NONTHAL

Large City; Population 14,000

Nonthal is the most peaceful and stable city in Turmish, and the citizens are set on keeping it that way. Though not entirely unwelcoming to visitors, it tends to give adventurers a chilly reception, even though there's no shortage of them passing through.

The city has long been said to hold a hidden cache of magic items, secreted by a long-dead mage in Nonthal's Hold. The hold can be found at the end of Nonthal's Path, which winds from the city center and eventually into the Feywild. Few who dare walk it ever come back, and no one has returned with the fabled magic items.

SAPRA

Small City; Population 8,500

Sapra is Turmish's only active port. Though nowhere near as busy as Alaghôn once was, goods from all over the Inner Sea pass through it.

The citizens of Sapra tend to be fearful of those who flamboyantly wield extraordinary power, and the public display of such activity, though no longer illegal, is strongly discouraged.

XORHUN

Small City; Population 8,000

Not too much more than a caravan stop along the Halondar (the trade road connecting to Hlondath), Xorhun is most notable for its strange mix of citizens. Many eladrin who once dwelled in Xorhun have migrated to Myth Drannor. The remaining population is split evenly between elves, half-elves, and gnomes. A small community of kobolds, once bitter rivals from the Orsraun Mountains, have settled peacefully in Xorhun in a ghetto neighborhood known as Koboldtown.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Alaghôn's Undercity: The former dwarven mines that honeycomb the bedrock under Alaghôn have been sealed in most places, but a few entrances to the Undercity remain. Not a few adventurers have braved their dark reaches in search of plunder. The Assembly of Stars neither encourages nor condemns such expeditions, hoping that someone will find some treasure or vein of precious metal it can exploit—or at least stop the monsters that occasionally wander up from the maze of tunnels.

Gildenglade, the Buried City: The volcano Mount Kolimnis in the central Aphrunn Mountains erupted in 1423 DR. The city of Gildenglade, once home to nearly 50,000 people, was buried under hundreds of feet of volcanic mud and ash. Only a few

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Many of Turmish's exotic customs remain in place, not the least of which is the square-cut beard worn by Turmian men. They also continue to mark their foreheads with dots: one dot indicates that one can read, two that one can write, and three that one practices magic. These marks of respect are occasionally faked, and some purveyors of magic remove the third dot before traveling to Sapra.



hundred of its citizens managed to survive, and the city was erased from the map.

Years later, after the lava had cooled, caves opened into the buried city. Bold adventurers dug down to find it eerily preserved—and overrun with creatures from the Underdark.

Ironcloak: Morningstar Hollows is a ruined village, the remains of a logging operation destroyed by the Emerald Enclave. Rumors of riches left behind when Lord Ironcloak was killed have persisted for centuries, and continue to attract curious adventurers.

Morningstar Hollows: Not far to the north of Ironcloak is another abandoned village along the banks of the Alaoreum River. Formerly occupied by humans, it was resettled by lizardfolk. But over the years, the lizardfolk were so harried by adventurers seeking fame and fortune that they too abandoned the village for the Wetwoods. Today, the ruins are home to a gang of bandits who prey on scar pilgrims.

THE EMERALD ENCLAVE

Founded in 374 DR by devoted druids, the Emerald Enclave once worked to preserve nature alongside civilized folk and often held more power than the Assembly of Stars. The druids were based on the island of Ilighôn, but when the Spellplague came and the seas retreated, the island became part of mainland Turmish.

The druids of the Emerald Enclave struggled to understand a rapidly changing world. They began to fight a losing battle against the changes wrought by the Spellplague. As years became decades, their original mission slowly perverted from one of respect for and guardianship of nature to a vain struggle against forces far beyond their control.

Led by the increasingly mad female eladrin Cindermoon, the druids still struggle against the tide of change. They send agents into the plaguelands to the south of Turmish. The Emerald Enclave also attempts—often by violent means—to stem the tide of scar pilgrims that pass through Turmish.

Much of the order's original membership has died or left for the forests of Gulthandor. The remaining druids are less and less experienced and capable. Too many are committed to nothing but a burning hatred of the spellscarred.

TYMANTHER

Tymanther is the realm of the dragonborn, a fragment of an old nation in a new place. Though draconic humanoids are not novel to Faerûn, the dragonborn are a distinct race with thousands of years of history, culture, and myths all their own. More than anything else, Tymanther dragonborn are a martial folk, toughened by generations of fighting dragons.

The bulk of the dragonborn population in Tymanther resides in the mighty citadel city of Djerad Thymar. Built to hold off a flight of attacking dragons, Djerad Thymar has become a sight renowned throughout Faerûn for its incredible size, unique shape, and impenetrable architecture.

Despite their gruff exterior, dragonborn are an outgoing and energetic race, eager to make allies wherever they can, willing to learn the ways of others, and keen to show all the grandeur of their capital city.

TYMANTHER LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: The dragon empires in Abeir prospered for millennia on the labor of their dragonborn servitors. Rebel dragonborn clans sometimes rose and prospered for a time, but the rebels of Tymanchebar were most successful. Tymanchebar ruled itself.

TYMANTHER POWER GROUPS

Several organizations vie for the hearts and minds of the dragonborn in Tymanther.

Lance Defenders: The heart of Tymanther's military strength lies in its highly trained army, the Lance Defenders. They train with lances, among other weapons, both on foot and mounted on the great bats sheltered in the Lance Roost. Most citizens of Tymanther spend two years as Lance Defenders, though only a small percentage make a permanent career of service. One who rises high enough might one day become Tymanther's next vanquisher.

Platinum Cadre: The Platinum Cadre works to change the dragon hatred of the people. It teaches that dragonborn are the ancient children of the dragon god Bahamut, not servitors bred by the ancient wyrms of Abeir. To dragonborn, the idea of a good dragon is alien, so the Platinum Cadre is ridiculed at best and often beset by angry violence at worst.

Cult of the Dragon: A secret cell of the Cult of the Dragon prospers in Djerad Thymar. The cult keeps its inmost membership and beliefs secret, but it has a public face called the Abeir Academy that welcomes dragonborn who are down on their luck and looking for a new start. In this way, the cell cultivates potential members.

Then a portion of Tymanchebar was ripped from Abeir during the Spellplague. The inhabitants of Returned Abeir have not yet learned that Tymanchebar fell hard across Unther's lands. Already on the brink of collapse and under military threat from Mulhorand, Unther was completely undone. Invading Mulhorandi armies and the downtrodden people of Unther alike were mostly erased. The only original residents of the area to survive relatively unscathed were the stone giants of Black Ash Plain (now commonly called ash giants).

The newly arrived dragonborn assumed they had suffered a particularly potent attack by their ancient foe, the Empress Dragon of Skelkor (page 212). After months of confusion, chaos, and bloodshed, the Tymanchebar expatriates learned the truth. The dragonborn then knew sadness, for their numbers accounted for much of Tymanchebar's strength. Their absence likely spelled the doom of those from which they were separated.

But the dragonborn are not easily bowed by sorrow. They founded a new realm in Faerûn, named to honor both the dragonborn province they had left behind and the Faerûnian realm their own lands had replaced.

Streetwise DC 15: The dragonborn of Tymanther hate dragons. They sometimes send small groups of elite warriors to track down known lairs of powerful dragons. Sometimes those elite warriors return with a head for the Hall of Trophies in Djerad Thymar; other times a particular group never returns.

Tymanther is particularly suspicious of Murghôm. In spite of the very loose organization of the dragon princes, Tymanther believes that Murghôm is well on its way to developing into a cruel dragon-ruled empire like those in Abeir.

Streetwise DC 20: Despite Tymanther's desire for friendly relations with others, it has won few true allies. High Imaskar invites trade, believing that such contact will keep the peace between the two kingdoms. Chessenta is also friendly with Tymanther, apparently fascinated by the draconic people.

Dragonborn who achieve fame abroad are celebrated as state heroes back in Tymanther. The dragonborn see these few as emissaries of their race, proving to the wide continent of Faerûn that they have nothing to fear from dragonborn.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

A great citadel-city dominates Tymanther. The land is littered with the ruins of the old kingdom that was swept away in the Spellplague.

DJERAD THYMAR

Capital City; Population 30,000

The citadel-city of Djerad Thymar is visible for miles. Indeed, the cyclopean structure's vast, pyramidal silhouette looms like a mansion of the gods on earth.

The city's lowest foundation is a massive block of granite that rises at least 200 feet above the surrounding land, the surface of which serves as Djerad Thymar's lowest street level. The citizens refer to this district as the Catacombs for the tunnels that wind through the foundation block.

Resting on this foundation are hundreds of massive stone pillars, each 50 feet in diameter, that support an enclosed, four-sided structure vaguely resembling a pyramid. However, the four walls do not rise to a point, but rather to a flat, upper level exposed to the elements. This is the City-Bastion, where the bulk of the city's dragonborn live. The open spaces between the pillars form the Market Floor.

The combined height of the foundation, the pillars, and the enclosed City-Bastion contribute to a structure that towers more than 1,500 feet into the sky.

Catacombs: This area houses the crypts of the dead, as well as copious siege supplies, foundries, and various machines of war such as ballistas, catapults, and other equipment designed more for piercing dragon scales than castle walls. Grand funeral rites sometimes wend through these tunnels for days, when heroes or other beloved individuals perish. The dragonborn adorn themselves in white ash and sing deep songs commemorating the fallen.

Market Floor: This level is a wide-open bazaar of both permanent and temporary structures for trade, commerce, and entertainment. Farmers haul their produce up the Great Ramp to the Market Floor daily. The Market Floor also serves as the festival hall, site of monthly Grand Balls. Visitors are always welcome to attend these joyous occasions in which the dragonborn relax, dance their strange dances, and eat their exotic delicacies.

City-Bastion: This upper level is the protected, elevated home for thousands of dragonborn. A central open gallery rises the height of the structure's interior, ringed by tier on tier of balconies that mark dragonborn apartments. Magical light copiously illuminates the enclosed City-Bastion, waxing and fading to distinguish day from night. Each morning, residents gather at their balconies to sing the Dawn Greeting. The gallery floor is thick with plants that thrive in the artificial light. The ceiling is the Lance Roost, home to a colony of bats large enough to carry armored dragonborn.

Above the City-Bastion is the open-air platform called the Lance Barracks, where Tymanther's army trains under the sky, ever watchful for approaching wings on the horizon.

Tymanther (and Djerad Thymar) is ruled by Vanquisher Tarhun. A vanquisher (a cross between monarch and general) shows fitness to rule by rising through the military ranks over a period of at least twenty years, and is finally promoted by general acclaim of military peers. A new vanquisher, always a



dragonborn, is chosen every ten years. A vanquisher usually has at least one dragon head in the Hall of Trophies to his or her credit.



PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Black Ash Plain: Interwoven ashen spires move across this wasteland like slow and solid dust devils. Stone giants native to the area have learned to predict, and in some cases direct, the movement of these landforms as they slide and weave across the landscape. A few giant adepts can direct them so well that they sometimes use the ash spires to attack trade caravans attempting to travel up the Dust Road.

Ruins of Messemparr: Once a large city, Messemparr was precipitously drowned. Now the ruins are the haunt of bloodthirsty sahuagin. Portions of Messemparr's taller buildings yet peek above the water, especially the Tower of the Northern Wizards. The tower was a guild house for powerful wizards that remains magically sealed to this day.

Ruins of Unthalass: The dragonborn land didn't so much exchange places with Unther as fall on it. Thus the old capital remains, buried and dead, but accessible to explorers. Even before its ruin, Unthalass supported a subterranean realm of monsters, including wererats and swarms of creatures called lamias able to assume a humanoid guise. One lamia rules the ruins of Unthalass as a queen.

VAASA

Vaasa is a desolate realm of bogs, tundra, and wind-swept mountains in the northwest corner of the Bloodstone Lands. The dreaded Warlock Knights of Vaasa gather an army of monsters of all descriptions, preparing for the day when their terrible hordes will sweep away neighboring kingdoms, spreading their alien evil.

VAASA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Usually a conflict-fraught place, Vaasa enjoyed a brief respite under the rule of Gareth Dragonsbane of Damara in the wake of a war between the two nations. Not long after a falling star landed on the tundra, a sect of fierce arcane warriors known as Warlock Knights arose to trouble Vaasa. The Warlock Knights, servants of a mysterious but all too real entity, drove off or conscripted the small human and dwarf population, and then began to organize and marshal the numerous humanoids and monsters of the region.

Streetwise DC 20: An entity called Telos, Master of the Iron Sky, is the focus of the Warlock Knights' power. The most powerful members of the Warlock Knights advise this mighty ruler of Vaasa as a group called the Ironfell Council. Members of the council, as well as their servants, also compete with each other for status and power. See page 276 for more information on the Warlock Knights of Vaasa.

BORDER AREAS

The Ride: This land is an open steppe stuck between mountains, badlands, swamp, and Netheril. Tribes of proud savages, orcs and humans, ride the plains. They consider any outlander fair game, but they tolerate mining communities that offer trade in exchange for the privilege to extract the considerable mineral wealth of the surrounding highlands. Warlock Knight agents work among the tribes, intending to annex the land one day soon.

The Tortured Land: Covered in lava formations that were carved by ancient glaciers and smoothed by millennia of windborne grit, the Tortured Land is even less hospitable than Vaasa. Its mesas and spires have shapes that defy the imagination, some like glass, and more than a few broken and jagged where time has taken its toll. Swift, vicious monsters with strange forms roam the waste.

Some of the priests who call themselves Warlock Knights are Banites. They might keep alive their connection with Bane's center of worship in Mulmaster. Certainly, all Warlock Knights view the rest of the Moonsea region with greedy eyes. Damara, Impiltur, and the stronger Moonsea cities keep a worried eye on Vaasa, recognizing the Warlock Knights and their potent master as a threat potentially as significant as Thay, Netheril, or the Abolethic Sovereignty.

Streetwise DC 40: The Warlock Knights don't serve Telos. Instead, they siphon power from that entity, which fell from the sky during the Spellplague. Telos lies comatose under the fortress in the city that bears its name.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Vaasa lies to the far north, between Damara, the Ride, and the Tortured Land. Few settlements provide safe haven in this harsh country.

DARMSHALL

Town; Population 5,000

Warlock Knights conquered this town, once ruled by successful adventurers, quickly and brutally. It supports a large number of free humans and fewer nonhumans than other Vaasan communities. The city's fields and ranches support the Iron Divide, a fortification that guards the Vaasan end of Bloodstone Pass.

GREAT GLACIER

Slowly Melting Ice Mass

Though considerably diminished in size from the time when cartographers dubbed it the Great Glacier, the enormous ice flow remains impressive. Slowly, the glacier gives up its secrets as the Novularond Mountains surface from their icy prison. Ruins from some lost civilization stand on those peaks.

White dragons and other creatures of cold roam the glacial waste. Frighteningly organized and intelligent chillborn zombies emerge from the lost city of Vaalathrim. Hungry and savage, the undead kill warm-blooded creatures by sapping their heat.

The long-dead Ice Queen Iyraclea once lived in a castle of sculpted ice somewhere in the northern reaches of the Great Glacier. Previously known for kidnapping spellcasters from southern lands to prolong her life by stealing their life and magic energy, Iyraclea died during the Year of Rogue Dragons (1373 DR). In her absence, her castle was colonized by an outcast angel of vengeance named Zaol. The Great Glacier slowly melts without Iyraclea's attention and ministrations.

PALISCHUK

City; Population 10,000

East of Castle Perilous, Palischuk was once a ruined city, but it was rebuilt after the war with Damara. Palischuk was peaceful until the coming of the Warlock Knights. It is now the fortress city of Knight Vindicator Mansard Kanaoth, an influential member of the Ironfell Council who wishes to be Vaasa's king.

Claiming to be a direct descendant of the Red Wizard Zhengyi, Mansard has secretly broken ranks with the council and assumed the old title of Witch-King. This Witch-King has secretly gathered forces near Castle Perilous (see below), but he has had no better luck in gaining entry to the fortress than other Warlock Knights.

Mansard vociferously speaks out against the Voice of Telos within the confines of his secret camp. Telos, according to Mansard, is a tool to be used, not a being whose unconscious dreams and whims should be followed. He is more circumspect when he ventures abroad, seeking other Warlock Knights to defect to the side of his "rightful" rule.

TELOS

Fortress City; Population 15,000

The Ironfell Council meets in a large central castle in this city. Each councilor has a suite of rooms in the castle but is only rarely in residence, because every Warlock Knight serves as lord over a portion of land in Vaasa. Some Warlock Knights claim only a small keep and patch of surrounding land, but some have true fortresses and miles of surrounding region to rule. Every Warlock Knight maintains a private army, which the council can summon at need.

Much of Telos's population is composed of refugees from other Vaasan settlements that the Warlock Knights destroyed when taking the land for themselves. In addition to humans and dwarves, the fortress contains orcs, giants, goblins, and kobolds. Many are slaves, some are slave-soldiers, and an elite few are true Warlock Knights.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Castle Perilous: Long ago, the famed Castle Perilous was a seat of power. The self-styled Witch-King Zhengyi housed a huge army in and around the castle, repeatedly using it to attack the kingdom of



Damara. The lich was finally destroyed and his army defeated, and his castle fell into ruin.

Two years ago, a great earthquake rattled northern Vaasa and Damara. The ruined castle sloughed off crumbling stone and the marks of age, revealing a sleek and dark edifice beneath. Black runes shimmer with darkness on this castle's walls, absorbing the wan northern light but providing no clues to the castle's sudden rejuvenation.

The Warlock Knight whose lands were in view of the old ruin wasted no time relating the event to the Ironfell Council. The council dispatched a small expedition, but the dark runes frustrated all attempts at entry. Some Warlock Knights speculate that the renewed bastion was built in a night by a horde of demons once loyal to Zhengyi. Ironfell Councilors worry about this sign of an old evil renewed, but only a few mighty Warlock Knights have personally investigated and tried their power against the runes.

Delhalls: This mine, a twin to Talagbar, is rich in gems and copper. A recent quake collapsed several main shafts into the Delhalls and sealed the entrance. The local lord quickly dispatched dwarf slaves to reopen the mine, but the new shafts revealed spaces not previously known to exist. Exotic crystal rock formations and strange, haunting melodies resound in the depths, luring miners ever deeper.



VAR THE DROWNED

Once called Var the Golden for its glorious wheat fields, this land now exists as a drowned, silt-covered field of ruins.

VAR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: The land called Var the Golden precipitously collapsed beneath the waves in the Year of Blue Fire. Thousands died immediately, and thousands more in the days and weeks afterward. The land was no more.

Streetwise DC 20: The sunken ruins of Myrmyr, Zelpir, and Pyratar, once rich trade cities, are treasure-rich prospects for adventurous salvagers. Tomb raiders return with incredible treasures and even more incredible tales.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

These doomed cities sank beneath the waves in the turmoil of the Spellplague.

MYRMYR

Ruined Small City

Set amid rolling hills before the cataclysm, some of the buildings of this city survived without breaking up. Air pockets and cave systems that honeycomb the nearby hills allowed a remnant population to survive, though as food grew scarce, that population turned to cannibalism. Rumors indicate that the drowned ruin now shelters a colony of voracious ghouls that continue to thrive by hunting sea life above their homes and in the extended tunnels of the Underdark that the old cave systems ultimately connect to.



PYRATAR

Ruined Large City

The old capital of Var the Golden, Pyratar ranked as one of the wealthiest cities of its day, so it is a site potentially rich in salvage. Its promise of wealth and magic lured many adventurers to the sunken city, but few survived the rampages of a berserk blue dragon that guards the drowned capital.

Once the Sublime Potentate Anwir Dupretiskava (an elder blue dragon), Pyratar's ruler went insane when his realm sank beneath the waves. One of his many treasures (a golden circlet) enables him to breathe water, and he spends his time patrolling the drowned ruins of his beloved city, eating anyone foolish enough to venture into his demesne. Though he reserves his ire for those venturing beneath the waves, he occasionally attacks and sinks ships that unknowingly sail too close.

ZELPIR

Ruined Large City

The nearby sahuagin quickly annexed the ruins of this sunken coastal city, calling it Feast from Above. This name commemorates the best day of feeding the nearby sahuagin tribe ever experienced when the entire population of the large city plunged, screaming, into the cold salt sea.



VELEN

This small duchy takes a great deal of pride in its freedom. Politically, it has a reputation for conducting itself with honor, and it insists on the same high standards from its citizens and visitors to the realm. Some say the standards might be too high. With enemies on all sides, Velen conducts most of its trade by sea in spite of constant threats by the pirates of the Nelanther Isles.

VELEN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: Once a part of the realm of Tethyr, Velen became an independent duchy in 1424 DR. The secession initially produced tension with Tethyr, but the duchy worked hard to mend relations over several years until it was able call Tethyr an ally in truth.

Streetwise DC 15: Troubles beset this small forested realm, with threats as diverse as pirates, unquiet spirits, and politics. Many ghosts allegedly haunt the city, but the living residents get by well enough as long as they leave recalcitrant spirits in peace.

To the east, the ogre kingdom of Murann cuts Velen off from the Trade Way. The pirates of the Nelanther Isles threaten its western coasts. Powerful Amnian interests have rendered the Duke of Velen almost powerless in his own land. Tethyr is far away and spares few resources for its ally.



Possibly in response to the gathering threats, the Duke of Velen has handed down stricter and stricter laws in recent years, though their harsh nature is concealed in rhetoric about honor for honor and the loyalty due friends. Murderers are executed, which most accept as an apt punishment, assuming the criminals are truly guilty. Thieves have all their possessions confiscated, no matter the scale of the theft. The thief must work in service of the robbed person for a set period of time based on the value of the stolen item. Even being caught in a lie is cause for a whipping. Some citizens have begun speaking against these draconian laws, but quietly, lest they besmirch the Duke's honor.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The independent duchy of Velen claims all the land comprising the Velen Peninsula.

VELEN

Capital City; Population 16,000

The forested realm's only major city is that from which the region takes its name. Great walls of burnished, copper-colored stone fortify Velen, protecting it from pirates and monsters alike. The wharf contains several hidden defenses against privateers, including great submerged chains that can be raised to hem in and limit the mobility of attacking ships.

Ghosts are somewhat common in the city, sighted about as often as shooting stars in the sky, and for as long. Sometimes seen stalking the high walls after dark, peering from dark windows, or moaning with the wind in the eaves, they are something citizens have learned to ignore, despite the fact that no one really knows their origin or true nature.

Duke Calchais rules from a small, tidy castle that has been in his family since the days when the dukes and duchesses of Velen answered to the Queen of Tethyr.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Unshol's Lair: A deep, wooded ravine clogged with thick, green webs serves as a lair for the enormous spider Unshol. The monster squats on the bones of an adult copper dragon she vanquished in its own lair.

Belthar's Trove: The pirate captain Belthar Hellborn buried his treasure somewhere on the Velen Peninsula inside an old ruin. The secret trove is guarded by bound devils and a maze that drives its victims insane.

VESPERIN

A young nation that coalesced from a handful of independent city-states, Vesperin is a nexus for trade, rumormongering, and skulduggery. Commerce and corruption rule this land more surely than its government. It is an exciting, dynamic place where something's always going on.

VESPERIN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: This region was once called the Vast, before the independent city-states united. The area has seen an influx of immigrants, especially the city of Ravens Bluff. Many Sembian merchants relocated here in the face of Netheril's occupation of their homeland. A couple of decades ago, Netheril outlawed all such immigration. Sembians who tried anyway wound up dead.

Streetwise DC 10: Gold counts for more than blood here. Vesperin is a place for intrigue, double-crossing, and conversing with those normally met as enemies on the battlefield.

With Sembia under the thumb of the Netherese, Vesperin has flourished. Here, neutrality is the rule. On the other hand, unlike in the Moonsea lands to the north, basic rules of conduct are enforced in Vesperin; it's not quite so bloody or literally cutthroat as Mulmaster.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Vesperin consists of three major cities: Tantras, Calaunt, and Ravens Bluff.

TANTRAS

Capital City; Population 23,000

As capital, Tantras hosts the Golden Lords, a council of the most powerful, wealthy, and influential merchants who rule as an oligarchy. As fortunes rise and fall, people gain or lose their status as Golden Lords (a term applied to both male and female council members). Despite these changes in personnel, the council has acted in a remarkably consistent manner, providing a reliable and stable government that ensures the basic necessities of life for its people while maintaining the status quo.

The business and residential districts display a clear hierarchy, in the cost of items sold in shops and in the price of homes. Ornamentation and embellishment is the norm, with thin layers of gold commonly

coating carriages, furniture, and even architectural features. Of course, such ostentatious displays of wealth attract the attention of unscrupulous individuals. Hence, the well-to-do hire personal guards, household militias, and even small, private armies for protection.

CALAUNT

Large City; Population 32,000

Important because of its ability to regulate trade on the River Vesper, Calaunt has become vigilant recently about pirates and raiders. A legal Writ of Trade issued from the Merchant Dukes of Calaunt or the Golden Lords of Tantras is required for travelers to pass unmolested. Nonetheless gold, connections, or blackmail can make even the questionable legal.



RAVENS BLUFF

Large City; Population 40,000

Over the last hundred years, Ravens Bluff has eclipsed Calaunt as the largest city in the region. Danger, intrigue, action, and rumors abound in this adventurer's paradise. Ravens Bluff is sweeter-smelling than the tannery-scented Calaunt and less structured than Tantras, with its rigid economic social and political class arrangements. As a result, most immigrants choose to settle here.

The city provides an ideal place for all manner of urban and dungeon adventures. Its cellars, sewers, natural caverns, and multiple entry points to the Underdark offer much in the way of belowground exploration.

VILHON WILDS

The Vilhon Wilds is a frontier unclaimed by any state, containing the wreckage of cities devastated by the Spellplague, separated by rough open country and plaguelands. It includes the partially drained estuary of Vilhon Reach and the strip of land formerly called Chondath on the edge of the Chondalwood. The notorious Plaguewrought Land lies close by, which means the entire region is unsafe at best.

VILHON WILDS LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: Since the devastation of the Spellplague, civilization has been slow to return to the region. It quickly earned a reputation for being wild and lawless, which has become self-fulfilling.

Streetwise DC 10: The Vilhon Wilds is one of the last great frontiers of Faerûn. The ruins here attract attention, but the risks are great. Only the hardest explorers who venture in make it back. The richest sites lie within or along the edge of the Plaguewrought Land where the Blue Fire is still active.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The most noteworthy feature of the region is the Plaguewrought Land.

PLAGUEWROUGHT LAND

Permanent Plagueland

The Spellplague is still active in this territory, contorting terrain, natural law, and the flesh of any creature that dares enter. The surreal landscape is breathtaking in its beauty, grandeur, and changeability. Earthmotes aplenty break up the sky in a strange parity with the fractured terrain below. Swaths of moving earth change with mercurial speed, and great ravines empty directly into the Underdark.

Spellscarred individuals and scar pilgrims sometimes journey here because it's the most prominent plagueland in Faerûn, as well as a great hold of the Order of Blue Fire. The stability of the plagueland's border provides an environment where the clever, ambitious, or insane can experiment with the Spellplague and its effects.

ORMPETARR

City of the Scar; Population 4,000

This is a city of merchants and road agents who prey on, or, as they prefer to say, cater to pilgrims,



magicians, alchemists, mystics, and adventurers seeking to explore nearby ruins. No other state or authority claims Ormpetarr. The Order of Blue Fire maintains its most prominent edifice, the Changing House, in the town. Its agents, important to local governance, help maintain order where the only other law is a rough brand of frontier justice.

A popular place in Ormpetarr among would-be scar pilgrims is an inn called Finara's. The inn offers reasonable rates for clean rooms above a large tavern to anyone on a scar pilgrimage. The elderly owner (Finara) was also a pilgrim, but the one time she approached the Plaguewrought Land, the horror of it forced her to flee. With her advanced age, it seems unlikely she will return. She does point people to the services offered by the Order of Blue Fire, of which she is a fringe member.

SCAR PILGRIMAGE

The Plaguewrought Land is now part of the landscape, and natives have adapted. Some humanoids have tailored their coming-of-age ceremonies to include a venture to the edge of the plagueland. Mystics travel here to seek answers about the universe or about themselves, sometimes coming face to face with a sharn or receiving visions of the Masters of Absolute Accord. Artists who yearn for inspiration and experience come to shape their masterpieces. Shamans seek guidance, saying the land talks to them. Mages conduct experiments in hopes of learning arcane secrets. The Order of Blue Fire facilitates all this through its public works branch. See "Order of Blue Fire" on page 264 for more information.

The group also helps creatures that wish to brave the mortal dangers of the Plaguewrought Land in hopes of gaining a spellscar. In Ormpetarr, those who attempt such a feat are said to be on a scar pilgrimage. As with most who brave plaguelands, few pilgrims who enter are ever seen again, but those who do return sometimes claim newfound power.



WATERDEEP

Introductions are always the first and best way to get to know people and places. And, of course, one's introduction to Waterdeep colors how one sees the City of Splendors forevermore. For me, Waterdeep and her vistas will always be dominated by Mount Waterdeep and a fond memory of an alighting griffon silhouetted against the reddened skies of the setting sun.

—Open Lord Piergeiron Paladinson
Year of the Shield (1367 DR)

The City of Splendors remains what it has been for centuries: a bustling, crowded, busy mercantile crossroads where coin is king, tolerance for outlanders of other races and habits is high (as long as they trade fairly), and folk play hard and work even harder, their lives proceeding at the fastest pace possible. Gossip is the grease that helps the daily lives of most Waterdhavians along in their endless striving to make ever more money. Wealth brings respect, respect earns influence, and influence is power.

Waterdeep today is a bustling center of commerce filled with around-the-clock stinks and noises, rumbling wagons south of Castle Waterdeep, and walled splendor to the north of the castle. The city is often swept by fads and fashions, and is dominated

GUILDS AND MERCHANTS

Economic activity in Waterdeep has been dominated by the city's guilds for more than two centuries. Their management and skilled control of commerce have brought Waterdeep to its current prominence as the premier center for trade on the Sword Coast.

Some killings of Open Lords in the last century, however, were done at the behest of guilds, and Waterdeep hasn't forgotten that. There's now widespread mistrust of guilds among the citizenry, who hold the view that they are little better than criminal gangs. As a result, the guilds are far more secretive and keep a low profile, no longer publicly engaging in politics.

At present, the City of Splendors officially recognizes forty-seven guilds. None are socially prominent, but four still wield behind-the-scenes influence in the city because of their firm, forceful, and charismatic guildmasters. They include the Cellarers' & Plumbers' Guild; the Carpenters', Roofers', & Plaisterers' Guild; the Fellowship of Carters & Coachmen; and the Guild of Watermen.

In a city as large as Waterdeep, almost anything is available for sale, and almost anything can be sold. Trade in Waterdeep runs the gamut from finished goods and edible treats to special services and illegal items. Most commerce in illicit goods and services (such as assassinations, drugs, poisons, slaves, or evil magic items) occurs in Downshadow.



by wealth, trading, and constant chatter about the latest news of events everywhere in the world (as well as rumors planted so as to sway public opinion and investment).

WATERDEEP LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: The Year of the Silent Death (1395 DR) saw the Putrescent Anathema unleashed from Stump Bog northeast of the city to spread sickness and pestilence throughout the region. The temple-farm of Goldenfields was hit particularly

STREETS OF WATERDEEP

Street plans and even building footprints of Waterdeep remain almost identical with those of a century ago. To prevent ambitious wealthy North Ward folk and cutthroat merchants in South Ward from "overbuilding" the adjacent edifices of rivals, the Lords of Waterdeep enacted strict limits on building changes. Buildings are still torn down or fall down and are replaced, but new structures have to adhere very closely to the outer wall outlines of those they replace. They are subject to palace oversight as to height, out-thrusting balconies, and the like. So the old maps are still pretty accurate—if you ignore the specific internal layouts of nobles' villas.

The city gates are customarily opened at dawn and closed at dusk. The streets are lit at night by trios of city lamplighters. Wagon traffic is common (except in the Sea Ward and the North Ward), so pedestrians are encouraged to be watchful and yield to galloping horses and coaches whizzing about the city.

hard by the Plaguebringer's Blight. The loss of Waterdeep's primary supply of grain coupled with the swift spread of disease devastated the city's citizenry, primarily the poor, who died in the thousands.

Since that time, Goldenfields has recovered under the leadership of Mother Jamandra Anuvien and expanded greatly. Goldenfields is now heavily fortified; in effect, it has become a small walled kingdom. For years, it has been a stable, peaceful breadbasket to surrounding lands, friendly to but independent of Waterdeep.

Streetwise DC 15: Waterdhavians are largely a tolerant and law-abiding people. Visitors to the city are often surprised to learn that racial tensions are largely absent in the City of Splendors. This is no more apparent than in the selection of the city's quasi-independent Magisters ("Black Robes"). This quorum of city judges recently welcomed a tiefling into its ranks with the appointment of Kylynn Silmerhelve.

CITY WARDS

For the purposes of governance and security, Waterdeep is divided into a system of wards or civic districts. Each of the seven official wards is briefly discussed below.

CASTLE WARD

Administrative District

Castle Ward lies in the heart of Waterdeep, wrapping around the eastern slopes of Mount Waterdeep. This ward is home to the city's administrative buildings and buildings of state. Deliberately putting on a show of force, City Watch and Guard patrols are heavy in Castle Ward.

The ward's most prominent landmarks include Ahghairon's Tower, Blackstaff Tower, Castle Waterdeep, the Lords' Palace, the Market, the Cynosure, and New Olamn.

DOCK WARD

Harbor District

Dock Ward is Waterdeep's oldest and most colorful ward. The harbor is very much a working place, full of sweating, cursing dockworkers and sailors loading and unloading vessels. Carts groan hastily between warehouses all over the southern half of the city and Dock Ward, carrying goods to and from the ships. Dock Ward is also notorious as a lawless, brawling place of drunks, smugglers, and fell magic.

Those who are daring or foolish enough to want to delve beneath the brackish water of the harbor are advised that the City Guard keeps a close



watch for smugglers and for items dropped for later recovery.

Notable landmarks of Dock Ward include Cookhouse Hall, Shippers' Hall, and the Full Sails tavern, headquarters of the Most Diligent League of Sail-Makers & Cordwainers.

FIELD WARD

Young District

Field Ward is a rather crowded area, newly built over, between the North Trollwall (the old inner north city wall) and the outer north city wall (still anchored by Northgate). It was once the caravan camping fields. Neither wall has been torn down, leaving Field Ward fenced off.

This district is home to folk of all walks of life who lacked coin enough to hire lodgings or own buildings in old Waterdeep, but who first arrived as the ravages of the Spellplague began. It is a slum in some places, and a struggling middle-class area in others. The Ward is a noisy, lively area that's home to poor (and a few wealthy) elves, half-bloods of all sorts (and anyone who has a deformity or visible taint), and dwarves who are determined to get the respect they are sure they deserve.

NORTH WARD

Home of the Wealthy

Waterdeep's quietest ward is also one of its wealthiest. North Ward is home to most of the middle class and lesser noble families. This ward has few notable landmarks other than the Cliffwatch, and it all but shuts down at dusk. This placid reputation belies the intrigue and scheming that goes on behind closed doors, and the volumes of smuggled goods that lie in cellars beneath the city streets.

The only widely known landmark of North Ward is the Gentle Mermaid, whose fame as a gambling hall has spread up and down the Sword Coast.

SEA WARD

Noble District

Waterdeep's most affluent ward is notable for the many-spired, grand homes of the nobility, the gleaming edifices of the city's leading temples, and the imposing towers of its premier wizards.

Lashed by sea storms, Sea Ward was traditionally deserted in the winter; the nobles preferred to weather the cold months in estates farther south. This practice has been largely abandoned over the last century, however, as strife erupted across the Sword Coast.

Notable landmarks of Sea Ward include the Field of Triumph, the lush Heroes' Garden, and the Sea's Edge Beach. Waterdeep's largest temple, the House of Heroes dedicated to Tempus, stands just north of the Field of Triumph.

SOUTH WARD

Working-Class District

South Ward lies in the southeastern corner of Waterdeep, bounded by Trades Ward to the north and Dock Ward to the west. Caravan City, as this oft-forgotten ward is sometimes known, is a homely, friendly, busy, and largely poor area of Waterdeep.

South Ward is dominated by large, tall, old warehouses made of stone, mud brick, or timber. Crowded among them are three- and four-floor tenements, most with shops at street level.

Notable landmarks of South Ward include Caravan Court, Waymoot, and Metalmasters' Hall, headquarters of the Most Careful Order of Skilled Smiths & Metalforgers.

TRADES WARD

Center of Commerce

Trades Ward lies in the eastern half of Waterdeep, encircling the western and southern walls of the City of the Dead. Given over almost entirely to commerce, Trades Ward lacks the feeling of community found in the more residential wards, but retains the hustle and bustle of a marketplace throughout the day and night.

Notable landmarks of Trades Ward include the Court of the White Bull and Virgin's Square. The towering Plinth stands no longer, having collapsed during the chaos of the Spellplague.

WATERDEEP'S NOBILITY

Waterdhavian nobles who survived the Spellplague often found themselves impoverished, having all at one stroke lost their property; all knowledge of their foreign holdings, cached wealth, and current dealings; and competent leadership. Desperate to feed themselves, many noble families sold their titles to wealthy merchants, while others intermarried to join forces. This latter practice, combined with opportunistic score-settling vendettas and the hiring of assassins, resulted in a great winnowing of the noble ranks.

Seventy-odd noble families still exist, but some families have been reduced to a single living individual. Others are missing or have gone away until things settle down, and have been absent from the city for years. Many noble families are busily hiring adventuring bands to protect what is theirs in Waterdeep, seize things taken from them (or that they see as rightfully theirs), and settle scores with rivals who did them ill during the chaos of the Spellplague. Lots of deeds, IOUs, and other documents, as well as actual coins and gems, are lost in the rubble or simply missing. Squatters have seized control of many landholdings all over the Heartlands and the Sword Coast North, and they must be driven off if the nobles are to retain any shred of their former wealth.



OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS

The Mistshore: Over the last century, Deepwater Harbor has become badly polluted, its waters brown and stinking. The north shore of the former Naval Harbor became a beaching ground (and then a scuttling yard) for damaged or age-rotted ships. Over the years, these hulks piled up one atop another, spreading out from the shore at the foot of Coin Alley for a long way into the harbor to form the Mistshore. This area is a permanent slum of sagging, ramshackle woodwork atop the heap of sunken ships, where the most disfigured, diseased, spellscarred, and monstrous of Waterdeep's inhabitants dwell.

The Mistshore is the darkest and wildest neighborhood in Waterdeep, where open violence and lawlessness is frequent and the Watch patrols seldom (and then only at double strength or more). Drunken and beaten-up inhabitants can often be seen sprawled or draped over the rotting riggings that line the winding "streets."

Mountainside: Mountainside is the name given to the new homes and streets that are slowly climbing Mount Waterdeep, in particular its north and northeast faces. A street known as the Rise climbs north out of Fetlock Court and switchbacks as it ascends the mountain. The Rise is lined by tall, narrow, many-balconied houses that typically have four or five floors. Because it costs so much to build on the wind-swept rock of the mountain, only wealthy folk build their stylish houses here, which is one of the reasons Mountainside hasn't grown faster.

Events stemming from the Spellplague left a statue lying on its side on Mount Waterdeep, alongside the first doubling back of the Ride. A row of five luxurious stone manors, complete with balconies and hanging gardens (locally known as Downgiant Row), were built up out of the statue.

Undercliff: Undercliff is by far the largest and most open new part of Waterdeep. It sprawls over the meadows east of the plateau occupied by the old city, under the cliff that still forms its eastern edge. Undercliff is large, rather lawless, and still growing; it's home to every sort of new arrival (for the last fifty years or so). Undercliff is the most fluid neighborhood of Waterdeep, where people move frequently, shanties often collapse or are torn down or torched, and change rules.

Increasingly, dwarves dwelling in Field Ward who have made enough coin are seeking to buy houses in Mountainside, and on the cliff face above Undercliff, so they can tunnel out larger abodes at will. Their diggings have already breached some sewers and cellars in the city. Their activities are beginning to attract



CIVIL DEFENSE

Waterdeep's armed forces traditionally included the City Watch, which played the role of police force; the City Guard, which defended the city from external land-based threats; the City Navy, which guarded against sea-based threats; and the Griffon Cavalry, which patrolled the skies above Waterdeep.

Today, Waterdeep's navy has been scuttled, and the city relies on warships from Mintarn for defense. The Guard is now part of the Watch, serving as a permanent bodyguard for the Open Lord and the Palace. The famed Griffon Cavalry was dissolved years ago after the griffons perished in various battles and were never replaced.

Aside from sharing facilities and personnel with the Guard, the City Watch of Waterdeep is much as it was a century ago. Watch patrols pass along main streets once between bells, varying their routes often. It's rare for a patrol to have fewer than eight Watchmen. All Watch patrols are armed and carry horns to summon reinforcements.

the attention of the Masked Lords, who are now sending down hired adventurers to patrol the uppermost levels of Undermountain to stop the illicit delvings.

The Warrens: This district underlies a portion of northern Dock Ward and a large part of Castle Ward. It consists of 5-foot-ceilinged rooms and suites opening off a few winding street tunnels. Home to many gnomes and halflings, the area is seeing an increasing number of dwarves (though any who can't get along with gnomes and halflings are firmly expelled). The district is in the process of expanding to the east, under the City of the Dead, to come out on the face of the cliff and into buildings there. Several of the new tunnels leading east from the present area of the district have collapsed and fallen down into Undercliff as a result, though none have done so recently.

These new tunnels of the Warrens have disturbed some of the oldest burial sites in the City of the Dead. Despite the diggers taking care to return a breached tomb to its former state, some say the tunnels have become haunted. Indeed, many report eerie whispered words, apparitions, and noncorporeal images of all sorts. At first this was assumed to be the talk of "uppity gnomes" until such images began manifesting to several creatures at once. Most such encounters are merely frightening or spooky rather than physically dangerous. Then again, persistent rumors speak of halflings, gnomes, and even dwarves losing time, sometimes just hours, but other times whole days. According to one old gnome, the disturbed spirits are possessing the memory-challenged victims, and goading them into actions intended to avenge long-ago slights or accomplished long-unfinished business. While this assertion seems like the height of hysterical hand-waving to the majority, a few halfling traders have started to walk the Warrens alone, seeking just such apparitions, hoping to question them in order to learn the misdeeds, secrets, and past peccadilloes of eminent Waterdhavian families, to see if this can be turned to some advantage.

TIMEHANDS

Waterdeep enjoys an often-noted golemwork clock called the Timehands. Timehands is installed in the tallest tower of the Lords' Palace. It possesses three continually turning dials, facing north, east, and south. The clock was built by several guilds of Waterdeep, working—and squabbling—together, and was finished in 1445 DR. The clock has bells that strike the hours, beginning with a "pay heed" chord, followed by a deep bell tolling the hours by number. Timehands also sports an hour hand and a smaller hand that races around the each face denoting minutes. It is a masterful design, and some wonder if its parts, rumored to have come from Lantan before that nation's drowning, can be replaced if they ever wear out.

NOTABLE LANDMARKS

Lords' Palace: The former Piergeiron's Palace (a name it retains only in nostalgic memory and in minstrels' poetic descriptions) is now the Lords' Palace, or the Palace of Waterdeep. Physically, it's largely unchanged, being a place of marble floors and high vaulted ceilings. It's the seat of local government, with Magisters holding law court daily in the Lords' Hall and the Hall of Justice. The Masked Lords meet often (usually at least once a tenday) in secret conclave and in Open Court. In Open Court, the Open Lord entertains deputations and debate from outland envoys and visiting trade delegations (who are housed in apartments in the Palace), as well as from local citizenry.

The current Open Lord of Waterdeep, Dagult "Dagger" Neverember, is a hard-drinking, eloquent, and impressive lion of a man. Tall, broad-shouldered, and forceful, he is a master manipulator and looks the part of a strong ruler; he was chosen to be Open Lord for this reason. Neverember is one of the richest men in Waterdeep. He prefers straight dealing to intrigue and genuinely wants to do what's best for the city.

Blackstaff Tower: From the outside, Blackstaff Tower is a simple three-story stone tower surrounded by a curtain wall. Those who train within, however, learn that there are at least a dozen more sublevels reachable only by magic. It is also whispered that Blackstaff Tower is sentient, a statement never refuted by the presiding Blackstaff.

The Archmage of Waterdeep and current Mistress of Blackstaff Tower, Vajra Safhar, is a thin, small, dusky-skinned Tethyrian. Vajra assumed the role of Blackstaff earlier this year following the death of her popular predecessor and lover, Samark. The young Blackstaff dwells alone in Blackstaff Tower and commands what's left of the Watchful Order of Magists & Protectors.

Castle Waterdeep: Waterdeep's great fortress is a thick-walled stronghold, with pennants and banners flown from its many battlements. It frowns down on Castle Ward from the flanks of Mount Waterdeep. The castle walls rise 400 feet at their greatest height from the ground, and are 60 feet thick on average. Many protective spells have been placed on the walls over the centuries, and they have never been breached in battle.

City of the Dead: This walled enclosure on the eastern edge of Trades Ward is the general cemetery for the City of Splendors, and its size nearly makes it a ward in and of itself. Many citizens visit the City of the Dead's parklike green lawns and white marble tombs during the day, for it is one of the few places dominated by greenery that the citizens of Waterdeep can share within the city walls. The grounds are off-limits after dusk, and the gates are locked.

Mount Waterdeep: The mountain is a bald, rough crag, topped by a lookout tower. Its seaward flanks have eleven gigantic triple-catapults for hurling loads of rock and burning material out to sea against attacking ships. The mountain is pierced by several sea caves, connected by tunnels of great antiquity now controlled and guarded by the City Guard, and used by the Lords in secretive operations.

The Sewers: Waterdeep's sewers and waterways run beneath much of the city, forming a subterranean layer between the surface and the depths of Undermountain. The uppermost portions of the sewers are in fairly good repair, thanks to the efforts of the Cellarers' & Plumbers' Guild.

The primary source of fresh water comes from several subterranean cisterns scattered through the tunnels under the city. The cisterns are filled by plentiful rain, and supplemented by pumps crafted by ancient dwarves to tap the extensive network of natural springs found beneath the city.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Although many young Waterdhavians believe one must brave the wilds of the Savage Frontier when seeking monster-infested ruins, in truth, plenty of dangerous locales can be found much closer to home. The City of Splendors contains quite a few dungeons, including the Citadel of the Bloody Hand, the Dungeon of the Crypt, the sewers that run beneath the city, the chasm known as Umberlee's Cache, and the granddaddy of them all, the former playground of the Mad Mage Halaster, the vast Undermountain.

Waterdeep is also the perfect setting for a campaign based on intrigue. Strife between guilds, nobles, politicians, religious figures, and outside power groups can provide an endless font of role-playing possibilities for players who prefer to focus on character interaction over dungeon exploration.

Downshadow: The lower sewers and the uppermost level of Undermountain have become Waterdeep's newest neighborhood, inhabited by the most desperate and yet most capable: broke adventurers. They dwell in its dark chambers, moving about often, skulking and lurking to avoid monsters and thefts or attacks by their neighbors. They make their living by raiding up into the city by night, trading in illicit goods, temporarily "hiding" persons and stolen items, and delving into Undermountain. Downshadow folk are both greatly feared and greatly admired by other Waterdhavians.

In many city wells and waterways of Downshadow live curious subterranean fish called blindfin that devour everything organic they find (except bones and teeth), excreting only sandlike minerals. Blindfin are poisonous to eat, but they cleanse the waters they swim in of everything unpleasant and unhealthy to mammals. They keep drinking water in Waterdeep

pure and palatable and conveniently consume bodies disposed of in wells by the poor or by murderers.

Pharra's Alley: This alleyway is a busy shortcut route used by merchants, and is often crowded with would-be wizards coming to study at the House of Wonder (now an arcane college but formerly a temple to Mystra). The students vanish hurriedly, though, when the Circle of Skulls appears. These eerie flameskulls are always seen floating in a circle, arguing among themselves in hollow, echoing voices. They seem tied to Pharra's Alley; each one is quick to spit fire against any who threatens the circle.

Undermountain: This vast and dangerous subterranean labyrinth still underlies Waterdeep. The city is prevented from collapsing into Undermountain in part because of the titanic magical wards established in the dim past; these same forces largely fended off the Spellplague. The underways still connect with the wider Underdark, full of adventure and treasure for those who dare to explore them.

Much has changed in Skullport and Undermountain since the death of Halaster Blackcloak a century ago. Persistent wild magic seems to drift around the Underhalls, rather like living spells. It sometimes recharges magic items taken down into Skullport, or even alters the abilities and powers of living beings. As a result, Skullport is much visited but no longer inhabited; much of its lawlessness has relocated to the Mistshore and Undercliff.



BIZARRE HAPPENINGS

Waterdeep was spared many of the ravages experienced by other cities during the Spellplague. However, the event did introduce several lesser phenomena to the City of Splendors.

Hundreds of glowing globes (floating, mobile spheres of continual radiance) now drift freely around Waterdeep. Although every mage and sage who has studied them insists the spheres of light aren't sentient, they behave uncannily as if they are. They seem to become curious, and for a random time, follow certain beings who are moving about the city; they always seem drawn to any release or casting of magic; and they seem to become excited, gathering and rushing wildly about, if anyone tries to move or harness them by magical means.

A few of the fabled Walking Statues of Waterdeep went wild, striding across the city until they collapsed, toppled, or got wedged between buildings. Some were later quarried away into nothingness, but a few remain, forever frozen.

One invisible local change wrought by the Spellplague is all too familiar to local spellcasters: Detection and location magic no longer functions. Such spells feature in old tales but are unknown in life today.

RETURNED ABEIR

Long ago, the world was twinned to save it from a final conflict between gods and primordials. The gods took one sibling (Toril), and the primordials claimed the other (Abeir).

Ages later, the Spellplague (which Abeirans call the Blue Breath of Change) caused the two separate worlds to collide and overlap. Portions of each world shifted into the other. Then the worlds separated again, contact severed, but each having contributed to the other. Perhaps as much as one-quarter of Toril now hosts lands native to Abeir.

The two most significant transplanted lands on the continent of Faerûn are Akanûl and Tymanter. However, the largest new landmass by far is an entire continent that Faerûnians call Returned Abeir, which lies west of the Trackless Sea.

In Returned Abeir, dragons rule vast realms of slaves. The dragonborn are the most numerous, but they are given to rebellion. Dwarves and humans are plentiful. Genasi were also numerous, but mostly on the eastern continent of Shyr (a continent that was not transported to Toril by the Blue Breath of Change). Other races are less numerous, and fey such as elves and eladrin are rare curiosities introduced only in the last century. Organized religion in Returned Abeir (faiths, simple shrines, and traveling clergy) is something new; even the concept of gods who answer prayers is still alien to many, though some deities of Toril have set their sights on the returned lands.

ABEIR'S PAST

The true history of the long unfolding of events in Abeir is hidden from most mortals alive today, though they hold many conflicting beliefs about the past. Among humans, only a handful of priests and sages know anything more than what follows (which is considered true by most Abeirans).

Of old, the Dawn Titans (the primordials) fought the Estelar (gods) and were humbled. Great was the slaughter among the Dawn Titans, but they retained Abeir for their own. Seared and ravaged by the divine fires of their foes, the few who survived were tired from strife. Sensing this, their steeds the dragons turned on and rose against the Dawn Titans, slaying more, until nearly all who yet endured retreated into the very stones of the mountains and fell silent.

The triumphant dragons then made war on each other and on dragons who remained loyal to the

Dawn Titans. This event was called the War of Fang and Talon, in which dragons recklessly unleashed the abandoned magic of the primordials. Much of Abeir was laid to waste, and the dragons were in turn left scarred, few in number, and at long last weary of war.

Then the legendary Gorloun, a dragon of immense size, might, and age, founded the first dragon empire. Rival draconic realms sprang up thereafter, and the long Rule of Dragons began.

Dragons quarreled, empires rose, expanded, and decayed, or were wrested from the talons of their dying emperors, but draconic rule survived nearly unchallenged until the Blue Breath of Change unearthed small quantities of dragonbane amber, enough to shatter the Rule of Dragons. Now, whole lands of Returned Abeir govern themselves, free of draconic rule at least for the moment.

SHAPE OF THE LAND

Returned Abeir is dominated by mighty mountain ranges on three sides, arcing around a great central bay, the Dragon Sea.

Returned Abeir's north coast is made up of bleak, uninhabited sheer cliffs falling into the waves from the cold, jagged heights of the mountains where Dawn Titans sleep in icy Fimbrul. South is the mountain land of Relmaur, home to warring dragonborn and orcs, and forming a natural barrier between the last two surviving dragon realms: the jungle of Melabrauth to the west, and the vast grasslands of Skelkor to the east. A mountain range separates Skelkor from human-held Eskorn and the Sword Lands. The western land of Gontal hunkers behind its mountainous border and reveals little of itself to outsiders. A land of mystery to many Abeirans, Gontal's citizens know it as a place of raging intrigues.

STEELSKY

In Abeir, the sky's pleasant blue is long forgotten. Instead, a metallic-hued vault arches from horizon to horizon. When violent weather approaches, the steelsky boils into dark green and copper-hued clouds. Steelsky doesn't obscure sunlight, moonlight, or the stars.

The metallic sky is due to arambar, the residual energy of an ancient primordial. Arambar was a Dawn Titan whose power was so vast that even in death, its memory visibly persists across Returned Abeir.

RETURNED ABEIR



THE DUSK PORTS

Abeirans frequently use “Dusk Ports” as a handy collective phrase, but these cities on the western shores of the central Dragon Sea have never cooperated in anything. Nonetheless, they all defer to Orlarrakh, an elder green dragon.

DUSK PORTS LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Streetwise check.

DC 20: The Dusk Ports seem free on the surface but in truth are in thrall to Orlarrakh, the Green Duchess. Orlarrakh collects tribute for Melauthaur the Undying One, ruler of Melabrauth (page 210). Though each Dusk Port is a fierce rival of all the others, each also maintains a fortress lair for Orlarrakh for when she is in residence. On each visit, the

ORDER OF THE DAWN

A few cults in Returned Abeir secretly worship the Dawn Titans, praying for their return in the belief that they will slay or at least break the power of the dragons and restore Abeir to a fanciful golden age of freedom. This belief is in strict contravention of the dragon lords’ edict, so these cults meet in utmost secrecy. Most have no secret knowledge or rituals, and thus their secret meetings are merely for show. A few, such as the Order of the Dawn in Mreyelundar, purport to possess relics of the Dawn Titans.

The Order of the Dawn worships a massive skull that sometimes speaks. Members believe that the skull is from an ancient primordial killed by the dragon Groloun. The skull’s booming words certainly seem impressive enough, but they are mostly riddles. Some members once alleged that the Cultmaster, a dragonborn named Rowan Babar, is behind the talking skull, and that he sought to dupe the cultists. All those members met untimely ends, and the newest lot know nothing of this event.

Rowan preaches that before dragons, the continent was a wilderness roamed by humanoids who lived in peace with the Dawn Titans. Rowan claims that the primordials rest in the heart of the deepest caverns in Returned Abeir’s northern mountains. In their light slumber, they are aware of what happens in the world and cognizant of the honor paid them by the Order of the Dawn. Rowan says that if the worship of the order is pure and strong enough, the Dawn Titans will emerge and reclaim the dragons as the steeds they were meant to be.

If the Green Duchess ever learned what the Order of the Dawn was up to, she would likely decimate the entire city of Mreyelundar just to be sure she had stamped out every last cultist.

Green Duchess demands an audience with the current lords of each city. Sometimes, new lords must be chosen when these audiences end.

DUSKLAN

Port City; Population 56,600

Dusklan is made up of a hodgepodge of races. Unlike Tarmalune (page 216), Dusklan is kind to escaped slaves from other realms and other Dusk Ports (for anyone might be chosen at random to be fed to the elder green terror). Dusklan is even home to some orcs, who dwell in Downport, a neighborhood hard by the docks featuring many brothels and shady traders. For reasons not readily apparent, Orlarrakh comes to Dusklan only infrequently and rarely stays long enough to eat more than a few unlucky citizens.

Dusklan is a far merrier place than other Dusk Ports. The locals have strong tastes for feasting, dancing, singing, theater, and public pranks. Thefts and dockside tavern brawls are common, but murder, kidnapping, and arson are almost unknown.

Dusklan is the Abeiran center for counterfeiting (coins are a local specialty) and false identities for all who can pay. Escaped slaves are especially fond of this aspect of the city.

The city is ruled by a Duspranar who dwells in a grand mansion, issues decrees, and passes sentences in trade disputes and matters of apprehended law-breaking. A new Duspranar is chosen after each of Orlarrakh’s infrequent visits.

LYLORN

Port City; Population 68,000

The fiercely proud Lylar have always been among the boldest of Abeiran sailors, traveling far across the seas in search of new trading destinations (and islands to plunder). Lylar pirates are a staple of Abeiran folklore, and the Lylar rival the Sambrese of the Sword Lands for imagining insults and drawing steel to redress them. They do not slay weaker or older foes, however, but carry small belt-whips to punish such offenders.

Lylorn is clearly the largest, wealthiest, and most dominant of the Dusk Ports. It has gained this status by sacrificing the largest number of its own citizens to Orlarrakh’s boundless appetite.

The Lylar favor walled rooftop gardens and interior courtyards in their stone, arch-windowed homes. Inside their homes are rich tapestries, deep carpets, costly statuettes, and other luxuries, including all manner of highly spiced fowl on their dining platters.

Under Orlarrakh, Lylorn is governed by a lord who is elected by other nobles. The heads of the seventeen Lylar noble houses all vote, tending to choose elderly, conservative males. (If Orlarrakh eats an oldster, at least the victim had a full life before this terrible fate.)



The fabulously rich Nandrel Gostur and Zasheena Drethyl head the Shadowkiss, a drug- and poison-vending gang active all around the Dragon Sea. Zasheena loves adventurers, avidly following news of their exploits, hiring them often, and even seducing them when she thinks doing so is safe enough. She schemes to use her drugs to one day control Orlarrakh.

MARRAUK

Port City; Population 38,800

The hills around Marrauk are bleak and bare of vegetation, so it has long been known as the City of Dust for the windblown grit (called blowscree) that scours its massive stone buildings and kills all greenery. Five high valleys just inland are filled with deep deposits of very fine, pure salt, which Marrauk now ships to all of Returned Abeir and much of western Faerûn.

Local garb features dark, hooded cloaks to shield against the blowscree, making everyone look alike out of doors. The Marraukyl are guarded, terse folk,

ruled by a hereditary high lord. Currently this office is held by a calm, well-liked woman named Dauna Lorastur. Her three young sons fear for their mother, who grows more and more defiant of the Green Duchess.

MREYELUNDAR

Port City; Population 29,900

This damp, rotting city has always been known for wealth, decadence, lawlessness, and illicit practices. Returned Abeir's foremost goldsmiths and gemcutters dwell and work here, and gangs dominate life. Melabrauth gains much tribute from this city—after Orlarrakh takes her cut.

The jeweler Trusk Rantyne is Gate Lord of the city, but the gangs fear and obey Narnorn, a mysterious and legendary sneak-thief who truly rules.

Whereas some of free people of the Sword Lands are fascinated by dragons and hunger for their might, those of the Dusk Ports know firsthand that dragons are not worthy of study or worship. In desperation, some secretly turn to worship of the vanished Dawn Titans. The Order of the Dawn, recently founded, is rapidly becoming a real force behind Mreyelundar's closed doors.

TARSITH

Port City; Population 46,800

Settled around the mouth of the River Esmur, where fish, eels, and sand clams have always been abundant, Tarsith is Returned Abeir's busiest fishing center. Every day, hundreds of citizens row or sail out into the little bay flushed by the Esmur to haul in nets full of glittering catches. Most of the eels and clams are eaten locally, but rock crabs are rolled in river clay and baked hard into balls that will keep for travel, and fish are split and dried. These foodstuffs have become Tarsith's major exports, outpacing its traditional boast: the finest ropes and sails in all the land. Tarsith's weavers make the best looms in Returned Abeir, but they are not for sale (and from time to time are stolen in daring raids on behalf of weavers in other cities).

Tarsith is governed by the Tarandar, who wields a magic cane and takes his orders from Orlarrakh. It is a mostly calm city that sometimes explodes into unexpected terror when the Green Duchess brings a fellow dragon down from Melabrauth for contests of who can eat the most.

This onetime dragon realm is now a human land. (“Eskorn” is a shortening of Eskornamundyr, the name of its deposed draconic ruler.) Widely seen elsewhere in Returned Abeir as a backward, wilderness realm in name only, Eskorn is lightly ruled. The king moves his court from castle to castle, keeping order with his swift-riding knights. The king’s law often extends only as far as the points of the knights’ swords.

Except at market-moots (located where roads meet, or a trail crosses a navigable river), outlanders and nonhumans are rare sights, even though dragonborn were also once slaves of Eskornamundyr. When

THE STORM RUNE

The Storm Rune is a cabal of a dozen or so wealthy Stormhar merchants and landlords who meet in secret and keep their identities hidden from their agents, who are lower-ranking members. Agents never commit violent or overtly unlawful deeds; working through spies and intermediaries to protect its members’ identities from betrayals, the Rune hires outlander adventurers for such work on a task-by-task basis.

Nuth Harandal, a wily and calculating poisoner and merchant of sail, rope, cord, and tent, heads the Storm Rune. He is assisted by Belaskur Hallowdryn, a haughty racist and superb actor who deals in fine gowns, lace, scents, gloves, and hats. When it comes to dark deeds, Nuth and Belaskur are the most energetic thinkers and doers in the Rune, and they can always call on the muscle of the coldly murderous horse trader Mordrar Hammesk and the cruel wagonmaker Ostral Bardwick.

The Storm Rune isn’t interested in ruling Eskorn, but its members are very interested in enriching themselves and gaining more power by manipulating the knights of Eskorn and by slowly shaping popular beliefs. They encourage everyone to share their view that merchants are the people’s true friends because they make everyone wealthier and more comfortable, whereas the king and his knights, for all their talk of righteous laws, are really the oppressors.

Whenever the Rune can goad a knight, or any courtier or royal agent, into acting or speaking in a harsh or high-handed manner, it seeks to do so. Whenever its agents can make the king’s edicts or the knights seem overly violent or tyrannical, they try to paint them in that light. They also take care that no one starts to see merchants as a unified threat. The cabal works against nonmembers, using theft, vandalism, and occasional arson, so that Rune members prosper while other merchants of Eskorn tend to struggle.

the dragon emperor of Eskorn fell, the dragonborn departed to aid their kind in Skelkor.

ESKORN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: Eskorn was delivered from the talons of the dragons, not just by the heroics of human slaves everywhere rising in revolt, but thanks to the specific deeds of adventurers led by the strong and tough warrior Aunglass Roaryl, from whom the current line of kings is descended. Since the Deliverance, as this event is called, five human dynasties have ruled. Four of the dynasties ended violently.

Eskorn is known as the Wild Dragon Realm, not for its draconic past or any prevalence of wild dragons, but for the Wilddragons, one of its former ruling families. Most sages believe that the Wilddragons were exterminated by the usurping Haylraevyn clan, but legends have always insisted that they live on, scattered Eskornar ignorant of their own lineages, who spawn many successful adventurers (and outlaws). One day the Wilddragons will return to the throne, ushering in a time of greatness for Eskorn. Some of the eldest and most learned wizards of Returned Abeir have declared that the legends, not the sages, are correct.

History DC 15: A few of Eskorn’s ruins still hold fabulous treasures. Tombs of ancient dragon emperors litter the land, not to mention a single colossal structure rising miles into the steely sky that is said to have housed a Dawn Titan that was never defeated during the Rule of Dragons. However, no one has ever managed to so much as scratch the stone gates that seal the mammoth spire.

Streetwise DC 10: Eskorn’s major exports are lumber, corks of medicines and forest-plant jams (notably the tart brown spread known as *tharrum*), cured hides, and salted meat. Game includes oxen, boar, venison, and groundfowl, a term used by the Eskornar to refer to locally abundant wild turkeys that can grow as large as human children.

Streetwise DC 15: Ornan, the current king of Eskorn, is a red-faced, rugged but aging veteran who has spent many years in the saddle fighting outlaws, would-be usurpers, and monsters. He is a gruff man who wants to be just and fair, but he has little time for those who defy him or anyone who deceives. King Ornan likes plain talk, honest dealings, and subjects who are kind to and supportive of each other. Under his rule, murderers are executed, and thieves are flogged, their crimes proclaimed widely, and made to pay back what they took twice over (providing work service under his knights’ supervision if they have no other way to do so).

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Much of Eskorn is rolling, wooded hills, studded with small steadings shared by several families. Trails are frequent, but roads are few and signposts unknown; it is easy country to get lost in. Streams, marshes, and many tiny ponds abound, shrouded in mists at dawn and dusk. Aside from the knights and the rauren (the king's spies and envoys), only peddlers and hardy drovers know the routes and landmarks of the countryside well.

Eskorn is most populous and most heavily patrolled along the coastal roads that connect the royal keeps. As one travels east, the land gets wilder and more perilous; roaming beasts and outlaw bands are numerous. Eventually inhabitants, trails, and law all fade away into the Hargleth Forest. Everyone knows there are ruins in the forest, but few Eskornar know anything accurate about them (except any ruins near where they dwell).

STORMHELM

Capital City; Population 18,000

Eskorn's capital is a sprawling, unwalled stone city rebuilt by humans from the rubble of ancient dwarven buildings that dragons once laired in. It is named for a legendary human warrior who died gloriously fighting for freedom from the dragons a century before the successful human revolt.

Stormhelm has muddy wagon roads flanked by gravel footpaths, a haphazard layout, and many trees and undeveloped areas rather than dense, crowded blocks of buildings. Its largest building is a barnlike stone fortress called the Throne Hall, home of King Ornan Roaryl. When traveling, Ornan leaves his lord herald, the kindly but doddering Mreskan Haundle, seated before the throne to hear subjects' pleas and

ROYAL KEEPS

The royal keeps of Eskorn are little more than single, moated stone towers surrounded by villages. Despite the name, each is really only a haven for sellers of small and valuable items, moneylenders, and wealthy folk who want to live in safety. Many are populous enough to have a "high society" that is small, jealous of "those highchins" in Stormhelm, and desperately eager to learn and emulate that same highchin fashion.



complaints. The king and his herald communicate often by means of an Eskornan state treasure, the Seeing Stones.

King Ornan has buried three wives but has three grown children. Crown Prince Imrar Roaryl is a hot-headed, proud, and capable warrior who sneers at his younger brother. Prince Flandarr Roaryl hates Imrar and schemes to become king with the backing of a loose cabal of greedy Eskornan traders and many of the king's longtime, trusted spies. Most of the realm's increasingly restless nobles, however, back Princess Dorna Roaryl, Ornan's intelligent, just, and diplomatic youngest child.

The knightly families of Calath, Hornlar, and Sardron are secretly opposed to any Roaryl ascending to the throne when Ornan dies. The King's longtime rival, the shrewd and sophisticated Amaunthur Sardron, wants his glib, superb actor of a son, Arangur, to be king, and is willing to hire anyone or enter into any alliance to achieve this. Darryn Calath doesn't care who is king, as long as the real ruler is himself, and he seeks a hold over every knight of consequence (often through intimidation or threat of blackmail).

Most Eskornar have some affection for their king and believe that threats to his rule are the work of sinister outlanders or overly ambitious knights. In Stormhelm, however, daily life is dominated by intense interest in the ever-changing intrigues, influence, and relative social standing of all courtiers and knights. Stormhelm has no guilds but long ago developed a counter to the cruelties of some of the more high-handed knights: the mysterious Storm Rune.

Stormhelm is home to the wealthiest Eskornar families. The knightly families keep walled mansions in the city. Fashion, gossip, gaming (such as dagger-tossing and various card games), and hobbies all across the Wild Dragon Realm are all determined by

what's ruling the parlors in Stormhelm. Stormhelm is the only place in Eskorn whose dwellings have ornate entry halls and adjacent parlors, which are lavishly furnished and used only for entertaining guests.

IRONHAR

Royal Keep

Ironhar is the largest of the royal keeps. Several wealthy collectors dwell here and often hire adventurers to serve as their grasping hands in the backlands.

The patron most likely to hire a group of adventurers in Ironhar is Dramar Lornen. She is obsessed with dreams of the Dawn Titan's Spire (page 207) and has concocted a many-pronged plan to gain entry. It is said that many do her bidding in Eskorn and elsewhere, all accomplishing small goals that eventually will provide Dramar the key she seeks to enter the Spire.

MISTSHAWS

Royal Keep

Known for a rich local history of superb singers, minstrels, and instrument-makers, Mistshaws has recently become a center of vandalism, arson, and attacks on royal agents, though no villains have yet been apprehended. Locals increasingly believe that certain knightly families are hiring outlander bandits and ruffians, but no one yet dares proclaim names. Hunting for sport and food in the Hargleth Forest is particularly good near Mistshaws, and local hunters

THE EMINENCE OF ARAUNT

A network of portal pathways hidden to all but undead underlie Nornglast. To a living creature, an arch or door with three vertical slashes above it leads normally into a catacomb tunnel or crypt, but to a sentient undead that knows the significance of the marks, the same passage might well lead to another catacomb or graveyard somewhere else in Returned Abeir. Called deathways, these routes are most utilized by a self-organizing group of undead headquartered in Eskorn that calls itself the Eminence of Araunt. (See page 252 for more details of this organization.)

The Eminence of Araunt exists as a network of portal pathways whose paths form a placeless kingdom of the dead. The portals penetrate more territory every year, and indeed, the Eminence believes that every crypt, every royal tomb, every forgotten corner of the world where undead shamble to protect the whims of masters long gone is actually a far-flung, if small, principality of Araunt.

In the catacombs beneath Nornglast, the undead known as Lod and Meremoth hold court.

often hire adventurers as guards when the frequency of monster or outlaw attacks rises enough to become a real problem.

The keen-eyed but old Umel Shorntooth of Mistshaws has been seeking a group to guide him, despite his advanced age, to a ruin that he and long-dead compatriots explored when they were still young. Umel has a fragment of an old map and fading memories to guide hirelings to a place called Savanfast, a place where, as Umel says, "The lights in the earth sing to you with voices of perfect purity."

NORNGLAST

Royal Keep

This smallest and most remote of the three royal keeps of Eskorn is named for its founding family, the formerly prominent but now extinct Nornglast clan. The knightly Nornglasts rose to amass fabulous wealth, and are reputed to have spent much of their coin on a family project they would not tell outsiders about. Many locals talk of the "Nornglast Secret"—really just a way of saying that the Nornglasts are different, but no one knows how.

One fact seems clear: Nornglast seems particularly haunted by spirits from its past, spirits that some say still pursue their aims in life, sometimes reaching far beyond Eskorn to accomplish these ends. As an Eskornar saying puts it, "Nornglast is ruled by ghosts." In truth, the Eminence of Araunt has staked out the catacombs below the keep as one of its central principalities. See page 252 for more on the Eminence of Araunt.

RONDEVAL

Market-Moot

The largest market-moot of Eskorn bears the name of a legendary, long-dead stage performer known for his wit, charm, and womanizing ways. Rondeval built a good inn where springs of sweet, pure drinking water arose beside a road junction. Since then a trading town has developed that lacks all government except for the inn owners and their hired hands. It is now the best place to find skilled craftworkers in the realm.

Rondeval is a place of constant gossip and intrigue, and where the coinless and get-rich-quick folk gather to try to wrest fortunes—or just a living—out of anyone who is willing to hire them. Outlanders can buy a bewildering assortment of "treasure maps" in Rondeval—or hire skilled artists to create fanciful new ones.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Argul: This long-riven castle was built by dragonborn slaves to be the lair of their draconic master, a gigantic dragon named Argularragh. The slaves

called that great wyrm Argul, and over centuries, that became the name of the lair. The castle was torn apart by rival dragons seeking treasure (and dining on the dragonborn slaves left behind) after Argularagh disappeared. Most dragons thought the wyrm perished in a mishap or battle over the sea, plunging to a watery grave, but others believe that Argularagh learned how to change form and lives in various guises to this day. Another legend purports that the great dragon was drawn into a magic item and remains trapped.

Belprin's Hold: This small, fire-gutted stone keep is of forgotten human origin. It bears the name of a famous outlaw who dwelt in this ruined shell centuries ago, gathering many outlaws to join him. Brigands have been scoured out of the keep many times by various Eskornar kings and knights. The brigands always seem to return, leaving inevitable tales of hidden treasure in their wake, all centered on the ruin. Predatory monsters have begun to prowl the vicinity, seeking to dine on the next outlaws or treasure-seekers to visit Belprin's Hold.

Dawn Titan's Spire: This monolithic structure rises two miles into the sky, like a slender, milk-white fang. It is constructed of what appears to be marble, though it is actually harder than iron. Whether of a unique substance naturally too hard to mar, or magically bolstered marble, no would-be explorer has ever been able to determine. Most believe that a Dawn Titan resides within the massive fortress, one of the primordials of ancient days that the dragons were unable to defeat but that retired from the world all the same. Other such structures are rumored to exist, such as the county-sized citadel of burning ice that brooded over the savage continent of Shyr to the east, before the Blue Breath of Change altered the world forever and Shyr faded to obscurity. What has become of Shyr and is primordial despot Karshimis is unknown and perhaps unknowable.

Firetrees: The scorched, tumbled stones of this collapsed, once-impressive fortress lie in a "scar" of burned tree trunks and fire-blackened rocks where no new plants will grow. In darkness, eerie glows drift about the stones, and magic that changes the senses, abilities, and shapes of living creatures is rumored to be very active there.

Firetrees was once the site of the fortified dragonborn prison of Raurokh, named for the dragon who ruled it. Raurokhymdhar kept and bred dragonborn here. Beneath Raurokh are still deeper hollows: a long-abandoned dwarven city named Durlyndbold. The city was emptied of its builders an age ago by a sentient magic that rotted flesh. Faced with death if they stayed, the dwarves scattered to many small cavern homes across Abeir. Monsters, fell magic, the sentient plague that drove off the dwarves, and

a few lost hoards of lesser dragons might be found there today, as well as dragonborn escapees of Raurokh who have lived all their lives in the hollows of Durlyndbold.

Oroth: Long known as the Hollow Mountain, this large but low, collapsed volcanic peak is overgrown with thick forest. Oroth is hollow no more: The area teems with monsters of all sorts that keep even the boldest adventurers at bay. As Eskornar history demonstrates, the knights of the realm won't venture near Oroth even if royal heirs are endangered.

The elder black dragon Lhargloroth, formerly a loyal servant of Melauthaur the Undying One (page 210), fled to Oroth long ago and resides there still. The dragon continues his crazed experiments without the watchful eye of his master upon him. He lives comfortably in the caverns deep inside Oroth, continuing to experiment on living creatures with powerful magic of his own making, creating horrific new monsters.

Most of Lhargloroth's creations are unique, sterile horrors, but a few successes breed true. Some of the dragon's failed experiments (most of which are gibbering beasts) sometimes escape to prowl forested Oroth, devouring each other and all intruders.

Savanfast: The ancient dwarves of Durlyndbold had outposts beneath the earth from which they watched for marauding dragons during the first few millennia of the Rule of Dragons. One such outpost was built within the hollow of a natural stone dome. Cunning windows of magic that did not exist from the outside were carved in the sides of the natural formation, allowing the dwarves to see far across the surface. Every now and again, creatures from the exterior world accidentally trigger access into Savanfast by circling the hillock in the prescribed manner. Within are nodes of magic light that sing in warning whenever intruders come near, as well as tunnels that lead far beneath the earth, perhaps to Durlyndbold and other places the dwarves once made. The warren is also haunted by creatures who found their way in but were unable to get back out again.



FIMBRUL

Fimbrul, the Land of the Giants, is a cold, trackless, and seemingly endless region of mountains. It is dominated by soaring, snow-clad peaks, howling blizzards, deep chasms, and narrow, hidden valleys. Below its mighty peaks are lengthy cavern networks with meltwater rivers and lakes where most living things in Fimbrul dwell.

The land is so vast and mazelike that nearly anything could hide there, even Dawn Titans. When storm-driven snow doesn't sting the eye, clouds pour across the ground, cloaking everything in a damp, clinging fog that blocks all vision and weirdly distorts sounds.

Fimbrul's hidden high valleys are full of boar and elk. Its rocks hold the richest known veins of raw metal ores and gemstones in all the world, accessible by thousands of unmapped, unnamed caverns.

FIMBRUL LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: A handful of oni appeared in Fimbrul just ten years ago. They began gathering the scattered, desperately foraging surface orcs into formidable war bands, each consisting of two dozen disciplined raiders. The oni and their forces hunt mountain goats when their raids to the south fail. They rarely venture into the tunnels below the ice-scoured highlands.

History DC 30: Primordials dream in Fimbrul, self-entombed in solid rock and only vaguely aware of happenings around them. Certain deeds or unleashed magic have awakened them in the past and caused them to take a hand in events—but legends only hint at just what these triggers were, and if they might work again in the future.

Streetwise DC 10: What other Abeirans would term “winter” lasts all year across Fimbrul. During winter across the rest of Returned Abeir, Fimbrul

experiences shrieking ice storms that prevent flight—even by dragons. These storms turn overland travel into a series of bone-breaking falls. High summer brings a two-month-long “season of fogs” that is mild enough to allow minimal life to return to the stunted trees that grow, leafless and with strangely reaching branches, in the high mountain valleys. In the caverns below, there are no seasons.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Among its endless Howling Mountains, Fimbrul is known for a few landmark peaks, and some communities hidden in its snowy, stormswept interior.

DARRAWN

Capital City; Population 6,600

In a cluster of great caverns deep under three towering peaks known as the Thunderfangs lies Darrawn, the capital—and only—city of Fimbrul.

The city is inhabited by earth giants and galeb duhrs. Structures are not so much built as coaxed from natural rock, creating cavern wonderlands of rock draperies, cunning boxwork walls, silica falls, glowing crystalline stalactites, and other wonders.

Fimbran giants spend their lives hunting the far caverns and snowy surface of Fimbrul, especially the valleys. What they catch, they eat after immersing it in flesh-softening broth rather than cooking with fire. The giants wage an endless war against dragons, rebel galeb duhrs in far caverns, and recently, the oni-led orc bands. Until recently, the giants hunted orcs as food; now they hunt them out of wrath. Fimbran earth giants also make a powerful alcoholic drink, *gulluk*, from fermented cooking broth flavored by much use.

BLACKHOLD

Trademoot Cavern; Population 800

Blackhold is an island of warmth and comfort for humanoids in the harsh land of Fimbrul. Its



ADAM GILLESPIE

population rises and falls as traders and adventurers arrive and depart, all treating it as a neutral meeting ground; it is the only haven for leagues where one can rest, trade, and recover. Blackhold is seldom assaulted by orcs, dragons, or giants, and is thus considered relatively safe.

Dwarves of the xenophobic Forgefires community come to Blackhold to meet the wider world that they won't allow in their home. Here they trade Forgefires-fashioned coins, weapons, armor, and ironware. Humans and other adventurers use the Hold for resupply, rest, and recruitment.

Blackhold's dwellings are chains of narrow, linked side chambers, cut by dwarves into the walls of its main cavern. The main area is dominated by beast pens, "podium" rocks, a stinking midden, and the deep Drinkwater Pool.

FORGEFIRES

Dwarf Cavern Stronghold; Population 400

No one who is not a dwarf is allowed near this heavily guarded string of caverns. Its dwarves purposely keep the tunnels that lead to it too small for giants or dragons to negotiate. Even unfamiliar dwarves who approach Forgefires are treated with suspicion. Tales warn that the stronghold has hundreds of hidden tunnels and doors, with armed and armored dwarves ready behind most of them.

In the deepest cellars of the dwelling-caverns in Forgefires are volcanic rifts where dwarves forge all manner of tools, coins, weapons, and armor. The rifts make Forgefires a warm, wet place; condensed water is collected and used for washing, dyeing, and cooking.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Court of Rorn: In the deepest caverns of Fimbrul is the sleeping court of a Dawn Titan called Blazing Rorn the Fury. (See "The Court of Rorn" on page 242 for more information.) Some whisper that Rorn and his court are rousing toward full wakefulness after millennia of silence and slumber.

Dragonbones: This long and reputedly bottomless chasm is where dragons fly when they feel death is near. Tales say that they crash down into it, perish, and so mingle their bones with those of their ancestors, kin, and even rivals. When a dragon dies elsewhere, an Abeiran carries one of its scales or bones to Dragonbones, casting it down into the gulf for luck. No spellcaster has yet succeeded in drawing upon the restless magical energy that roils in the gulf.



Glaedorn: Somewhere in the Howling Mountains are at least six entrances to a single glittering cavern whose walls are lined with huge gems. Glaedorn was the dwarf who first found it long ago. The crystals are said to be the severed fingers of a Dawn Titan, fingers that sometimes stir of their own accord.

Rimlost: A high tower rises on Fimbrul's northern cliffs, a tower around which the storms howl with special fury. Rimlost is a secret known only to a very few, for it houses one of the cults in Returned Abeir that worship the Dawn Titans, in direct violation of the dragons' edict. The remaining dragons of Returned Abeir will drop all concerns to hunt down and exterminate anyone they believe is involved in such worship, for they have no desire to see their old masters roused from eons-long sleep on this continent, as happened in lost Shyr.

KEY INHABITANTS OF BLACKHOLD

Blackhold has no government or ruler, but is home to some prominent longtime fixtures.

Motherless Longfingers: An aging, still graceful dancer and onetime stunning beauty who knows and mothers all of Blackhold, Iskh "Longfingers" Lammarask has striking gold eyes under fierce black brows in an age-wrinkled face. She runs Iskh's Rest, a bathing and sleeping den where she serves endless bowls of stew and keeps keys, small items, and secrets for patrons.

The Blade: Also known as "Old Tusk," the taciturn, one-eyed and scarred proprietor of the Crossed Blades outfitting shop, Bleys "the Blade" Orltusk never cheats a customer but always gets even with those who cross him. A thousand colorful tales are told about the dwarf's heritage and evil deeds.

The Cloaked: The only known resident wizard of Blackhold is always swathed in a hooded black cloak and robes, under which he or she wears a black gauze head-shroud—and under that, some sort of personal aura of magical darkness that hides the skin beneath. The Cloaked performs rituals for a fee but never goes adventuring or leaves Blackhold for any reason.

MELABRAUTH

Oldest of the surviving dragon empires of Returned Abeir, Melabrauth is a vast, wild jungle. Roamed by savage monsters, the jungle echoes with roars, alarm calls, and death-shrieks day and night. Ruined stone piers slump into the seas in natural harbors along its coast. Tales speak of lost, overgrown ruins deep in the jungle. These edifices are the only sign that dragonborn or other humanoids ever lived in the region, for none now do. It is a land of dragons and monsters.

Melabrauth is ruled by Melauthaur the Undying One, an ageless, gigantic black dragon.

MELABRAUTH LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: When the Blue Breath of Change came, the Undying One's empire nearly fell to its dragonborn slaves who rose in rebellion. Melauthaur did nothing to prevent lesser dragons who served him from being slaughtered by dragonborn who wielded dragonbane amber. When the rebellion was put down, the Undying One allowed the jungle to overrun his lands, and he took no new humanoid slaves.

Streetwise DC 30: Melauthaur is actually a rune-scribed dracolich who continues to strengthen his undead powers. Sometimes he sends his dragon subjects to distant parts of Returned Abeir, apparently looking for clues regarding a relic that was lost during the war between the Estelar and the Dawn Titans in ancient days. Called *The Shadow of Ao*, the relic is said to have the power to twin the world anew.

MELABRAUN OVERDRAGONS

Of the thousand-odd dragons who dwell in Melabrauth, perhaps twenty are powerful enough to be overdragons who control territories of their own. A few of these overdragons are discussed briefly below.

If any overdragon becomes too ambitious, or plans actual treachery, Melauthaur always seems to know it and immediately orders four other overdragons to attack and slay the traitor. Otherwise, Melauthaur allows them to pursue their own goals, which often include hunting humans and dragonborn for sport.

Roroaros: This elder black dragon delights in slaughtering those who defy him but is careful to consult with Melauthaur often. He rules a coastal territory, and often has to deal with intruders from the sea.

Naeryndroth: Cunning and a masterful actor, this adult black dragon has a cache of magic items that grant a plethora of illusions and deceptions.

Sarakror: An adult green, this sly, fawning hisser of contradictory orders often sets underlings into conflict.



SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

There are no known settlements, roads, or trails in Melabrauth. Its many rivers are navigable for some distance inland, but fierce and persistent monster attacks face every visitor to the Jungle Empire.

No dragonborn serve Melbraun dragons. Menial duties are given to dragonspawn, young dragons, and other creatures. No one knows where Melauthaur dwells, though outsiders suspect that he has several lairs, most of them in the mountains.

The Fang: This toothlike, monster-infested, coastal peak is used by sailors for navigation.

River Vypaeryn: The inky, placid waters of Melabrauth's largest river, and its numerous side swamps, hide many deadly aquatic predators.

Starspire: This lone peak seems to pierce the very firmament. There are many tales about its fabulous treasures and secrets, but the few caves in its flanks hold only traps and the corpses of fallen invaders.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Djerad Kusold: One of the stone ruins of the Jungle Empire was a dragonborn slave city that became a rebel fortress when the Blue Breath of Change briefly bequeathed Returned Abeir with dragonbane amber. The dragonborn of Melabrauth managed to slay nearly one-quarter of the Undying One's dragons. But the Undying One tapped a store of Dawn Titan lore, causing the earth to swallow Djerad Kusold, all its dragonborn defenders, and its yellow crystal. The place is now referred to as the Swallowed City. Many dragonborn die every year looking for it.

Sometimes called the Barrier Realm, Relmaur lies between the dragon empires of Melabrauth and Skelkor. Relmaur is a harsh land of mountains, high valleys, cliffs, rugged ravines, and waterfalls. It is warmer and lower-lying than Fimbrul to the north, and thus is cloaked in thick conifer forests. Wild herds of elk, sheep, boar, wolves, and more fearsome beasts roam Relmaur. It is studded with squat, spartan stone towers that seem mostly abandoned. (A map of Relmaur is included in the map of Fimbrul on page 209.)

Caves riddle the Relmorn Mountains, home to goblins, hobgoblins, and two dominant races who wage endless war on each other: dragonborn and orcs. The dragonborn have better weapons, wits, and discipline, whereas the orcs breed quickly and hunt or fight almost from birth, trumping their foes in aggression and sheer numbers.

RELMAUR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Relmaur, long free of draconic control, has for centuries welcomed escaped dragonborn slaves of other realms. Though life is hard in the orc-contested land, it was one of the few places dragonborn could live free until the Blue Breath of Change.

Streetwise DC 15: Dragonborn build and maintain mountain-top towers as patrol way stations, and to give encroaching dragons something to attack. The dragonborn dwell in and under the mountains, ever vigilant against marauding orcs and prospecting dwarves. Dwarf explorers seek the rich veins of metals and rarer but fabulous gem deposits found in the deepest Relmorn caverns.

Streetwise DC 25: Relmorn dragonborn are of three main clans: Belarrak, Garandorn, and Urlingscar. The Urlingscars rule, but the current High Crown of Relmaur, the stern Harangor Urlingscar, benevo-

lently reigns through a Crown Council of six Crown-swords, two from each clan.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

There are no surface settlements or roads across Relmaur. Relmorn dragonborn dwell underground, in cavern complexes that have many entrances guarded by elaborately constructed gate-rooms. Ownership of the labyrinthine Undercaverns of Relmaur sometimes changes hands in the ongoing dragonborn-orc wars.

ROKTHORL

Dragonborn Capital; Population 800

Whichever cavern the High Crown currently inhabits is called Rokthorl, the capital of Relmaur. The dragonborn try to maintain at least two other cavern settlements near the eastern and western borders: Harone Thar and Arangthral, respectively.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The seemingly endless Undercaverns have several levels of caves and subterranean lakes. In addition to orcs and dragonborn, oni and Fimbran galeb duhr spies roam the dark, as well as voracious snakes.

Poison Sea: One subterranean aquifer beneath Relmaur was home to a clan of genasi who lived on a crystal island in the center of the isle. These genasi, called the Saqr, claimed that the crystal was the petrified heart of a slain god. They sought to draw power from the crystal, hoping to give one of their own the power of a god. But something went wrong—the crystal went dark, and most of the Saqr were destroyed, though a few were transformed into hulking crystalline creatures of undeath.

Shrieking Chasm: Few orcs or dragonborn venture near the cavern that holds a formation called the Shrieking Chasm. The sounds that emerge from the dark hole in the cavern's floor are said to be the screams of a mad Dawn Titan, imprisoned far below by its ancient peers for the crime of aiding the Estelar.



SKELKOR

Skelkor is *the* evil empire of Returned Abeir. It is the land most feared, hated, and shunned by free people.

Belying the dire reputation of the place, Skelkor's landscape is largely open, rolling plains of lush grass roamed by various herd beasts. Some herds are tended by dull-eyed dragonborn, human, and halfling slaves; other beasts forage wild (such as scathebeasts; see page 272). Ribbonlike forests run along rivers and encircle small, rare marshes. Yet the air above is rarely clear of dragons hunting for their next meal; sometimes a squealing herd beast, and other times a dragonborn shepherd.

Skelkor is ruled by Gauwervyndhal (Gauwer for short), the Empress Dragon, from her impressive mountainlike fortress Marangor. Gauwer spawns clutch after clutch of wyrmlings whose lives are short and brutal—only the strongest of each clutch survives to adulthood. The Empress Dragon is served by dragonborn slaves and by dragons directly related to Gauwer that survived the horrific winnowing process to become adults. These suzerains, as they are called, dwell in great stone halls in the fortified slave towns that ring the realm.

SKELKOR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: Most creatures in Returned Abeir know that in the wake of the Blue Breath of Change, the earth was rent and split. Afterward, amber crystals were discovered across the land, whose mere presence weakened dragons nigh unto death. These amber crystals were most prolific in Skelkor, though they were also found in lesser quantities in other lands. Dubbed “dragonbane amber,” the substance

DRAGON DREAMING

The Empress Dragon commands that a small percentage of her suzerains pursue forgotten snippets of lore in the dreams granted by arambar (page 200). She performs a secret ritual on these suzerains prior to their dreaming that grants them especially deep congress with ambient energy of the long-dead Dawn Titan. Sometimes these dragons wake with knowledge of current or past events useful to Gauwer. Most of the time, they learn nothing.

On rare occasions, one of these ritual-prepared dragons fails to wake. Such dragons fade to wraithlike, incorporeal glowing white spirits called rathrea. (The dragonborn call them ghost dragons.) The Empress Dragon prizes rathrea greatly, for each is able to prophesy the future in a limited area and span but never for long. Within weeks at most, most rathrea “ascend” (fade away).



was seized upon by the slave races. Many dragons were killed then, and some ancient empires tumbled. The Empress Dragon survived only by fleeing her own land with a ragged guard of suzerains.

History DC 20: Fortunately for the dragons of Returned Abeir, dragonbane amber is limited in quantity. Once used, a crystal crumbles into useless dust. Over the decades, every known store of dragonbane amber was used up. The heady days of great rebellions are over. Nowadays, tiny bits of dragonbane amber are sometimes still discovered in old ruins, but rarely in a large enough quantity to harm even a single dragon, let alone bring down a draconic empire.

History DC 25: Centuries before the appearance of dragonbane amber, a particularly able clan of dragonborn slaves rebelled and managed to hold an entire outlying province of Skelkor for itself for nearly two centuries. The rebels named this province Tymanchebar, and lived free, though they were constantly threatened by flights of dragons. Then the Blue Breath of Change shook the land. When the skies returned to their silver hue, all saw that the heart of Tymanchebar, Djerad Thymar, was gone. Though the remaining free dragonborn fought to retain their autonomy, their spirit was broken. Even armed with dragonbane amber, they failed to topple the Empress Dragon's rule.

Streetwise DC 15: Recently, the Empress Dragon empowered a handful of human and dragonborn slaves as envoys to the free lands of Returned Abeir. These are led by Hael Darandar, a tall, polite diplomat who has the reputation of being able to charm the scales from a snake. Darandar's envoys apparently seek to set up trade with the free lands. They offer to exchange slave-grown food and slave-made items for goods produced elsewhere. Few trust Darandar or his envoys, thinking they are merely spies for Skelkor, and the first part of a devious and deep plot of the Empress Dragon's evil devising.



SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Rolling plains and slave cities predominate in Skelkor. Few foreign dragons or humanoids seek to enter the realm of the Empress Dragon. Yet stories of undiscovered fields of dragonbane amber regularly draw the foolish, who find only an untimely death.

MARANGOR

City of Dragons; Population 7,600

The capital city of Skelkor is an impressive mountain-like fortress of concentric stone walls rising in the center to provide hundreds of dragons with covered lairs. It was built and expanded for thousands of years by dragonborn. The City of Dragons is Gauwervyndhal's seat of power. It has been often assailed, and was even taken once by rebellious dragonborn brandishing lances tipped with dragonbane amber. But with the aid of rathrea prophecy, the Empress Dragon fled with a strong guard of suzerains, waiting for the rebellion to burn out its limited resources. Afterward, she returned in fury, slaying nine out of every ten slaves, and torturing the rest into broken shells.

Only 800 or so dragons dwell in Marangor, plus some 400 dragonets (young dragons who have not yet become suzerains), alongside thousands of dragonborn, humans, and halflings, and a handful of genasi. Beneath the lairs of the lesser dragons and suzerains lies the Clutch Nursery. This complex of caves is covered in thousands of years' worth of eggshell

THE WYRMCROWN

Gauwer wears a magic crown that apparently allows her to poison any dragon related to her, or even any dragon whose blood she has tasted. The Wyrmcrown's range seems to span the continent of Returned Abeir. Few dragons dare to defy Gauwer, even those unrelated to her. All live in fear that she has somehow managed to obtain a sample of their blood and tasted of it.

fragments and the bones of unlucky wyrmlings. It echoes with the cries of barely more fortunate wyrmlings attempting to stay clear of their older, hungry siblings. Every few months, the Empress Dragon descends to the nursery to lay a new clutch of eggs, and to select one of the older survivors to ascend with her to serve as an apprentice suzerain.

Below the Clutch Nursery, Marangor's hidden hoard vaults are stuffed full of riches gathered during the Empress Dragon's evil, lustful rule.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Hollowbold: The ancient dwarven realm of Hollowbold lies under much of what is now Skelkor. Miles of corridors, forgotten and sealed long ago, wind through darkness far below the plains where dragons hunt. They connect to crumbled dwarfholds, mostly empty, though some might indeed contain ancient wealth unlooted by dragons and their servitors.

Mount Cormanda: This smoking volcano is home to a demon lord named called Cormanda, which was one of the first demons to discover Returned Abeir in the wake of the Spellplague. However, the demon is trapped in the volcano: Its lower body was fused to the stone of an empty lava tube when a pocket of Spellplague flared up and snared it. A creature of fire and evil, now plaguechanged and with the power of lava at its command, Cormanda is yet unable to win free of its prison, and its hunger for release grows each year. An empty lava tube in the volcano's caldera is the only entrance to where Cormanda rages. If any being finds it—dragon, humanoid, or other creature—Cormanda promises almost anything for its freedom. The demon incinerates with lava those who do not agree to aid it.

SWORD LANDS

Humans in Returned Abeir flourish in the small, verdant lands that lie along the banks of the navigable Sword River. These counties are sometimes called “boast realms” because they are small, relatively poor and lawless, and often die or rise with the lives of individual leaders. The Sword Lands have always lacked a single ruler—and Swordlanders like it that way.

Humans dwell undisturbed in this great valley of rolling hill-farms bordered with hedgerows rooted in stones and stumps cleared from the fields. The farmland is interrupted frequently by temperate hardwood stands and small wild forests.

Life in the Sword Lands for common folk is good, if they can avoid becoming casualties in the latest galloping skirmish between the armed, ambitious, and mighty. Food and drink is plentiful, the countryside is pleasant, and there’s no shortage of craftsfolk who make just about anything required in life. Those who dislike farming can hunt, trading game for produce. Prices for everything except the finest tools and

weaponry are low, and gossip is plentiful. Perennial hot topics are which lord is about to defeat which other lord, whose heir is about to run off with the child of a hated rival, and the search for the lost Dragonheir (see below).

Why no dragon has ever claimed the area is the source of many ballads, wizards’ research projects, and children’s tales. Whatever the reason, humans long ago found they could make lives for themselves there and remain free from enslavement by dragons.

SWORD LANDS LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Stories are important in the Sword Lands, and a favorite one is of Amra, the nation that once existed there. Amra had a human king who successfully stood up to the Empress Dragon, winning a promise from her that no dragon would ever attack Amra. That promise remains kept to this day, even though Amra crumbled hundreds of years ago at the hands of an assassin. Amra fell upon itself as each lord claimed the prerogatives of the former king. War followed, and many grand castles and keeps were brought low by human hands, not by dragons. To this day, the ruins of ancient Amra visibly litter the bucolic countryside.

Streetwise DC 10: Today, the valley of the Sword Lands is filled by a string of small, warring lands each ruled by a lord from his castle. The lords feud constantly, but lack coin enough to raise large armies to overwhelm any foe. When one invades another, the other lords ally with the invaded one for fear of one lord rising to supremacy over all.

Scheming and spying are ever-present. Assassination of wizards, lords’ retainers, and lordly heirs and spouses goes on energetically in feuds that are now so tangled and deep-rooted that they end only when a family line is extinguished and a new lord arises.



FLOWMUD

Flowmud is a rarity found only in small ravines in the southern and eastern Sword Lands. Short-lived rivers of warm mud boil to the surface, giving off poisonous gases, and flow for about the length of a well-shot arrow before cooling into earth and eventually blowing away in storms. Inhaling the gases typically causes dizziness, and with prolonged exposure, even death. Lumps of pure metal ores are sometimes found in flowmud, so such eruptions are eagerly sought after.

KIERAN YANNER

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Lordships come and go, but the largest settlements along the Sword River endure, no matter who claims to rule them. Swordlanders are suspicious of visitors from port cities and watch them closely.



ALDRETH

Riverport Town; Population 6,000

The largest and most sophisticated (or, in the opinion of upriver Swordlanders, most snooty) of the Sword Lands towns, Aldreth has always had the best markets, the most wealth, and the greatest variety of goods, travelers, and strange curios from afar. Its wealthy senior merchants decide who shall be lord through financial support (and careful assassination), and also like to think that they control the direction and flavor of life in the Sword Lands in which they invest.

Years ago, upriver Swordlanders started hiring adventurers to thwart “the old men of Aldreth”—and the Aldran merchants have recently started hiring adventurers to hit back.

FANEDOWN

Riverport Town; Population 4,000

Traditionally home to many minstrels, jesters, and wits, Fanedown is one of the few places in Returned Abeir where books are published. The town is ruled by a flamboyant fop, Lord Hansibran Maerl.

FAERIE POOLS

In recent decades, many tales have circulated of fey creatures luring humans to faerie pools for a tryst or a fatal encounter, but the truth has nothing to do with the Feywild at all.

Faerie pools are small pools of water tainted with some odd new mineral in the rocks (possibly introduced by the Blue Breath of Change). These pools sometimes produce gases that cause an “air frost” (white sparkles like snowflakes that rise into the air and fade away in moments). The vapor is otherwise invisible. If inhaled, it causes brief but vivid hallucinations. Some use the hallucinations for divinations; it’s said that strong-willed persons can control the subjects of their visions.

HARIMMON

Fortified Riverport Town; Population 5,700

Just “Rimmon” to Swordlanders, this crumbling former castle is now a warrenlike town crammed with shady dealers. The town is a magnet for sell-swords, rumors, and stolen goods.

RORST

Riverport Town; Population 3,600

Settled by outlaw warriors, Rorst is a longtime center of weaponsmiths and hard-drinking swordswingers.

ULARK

Riverport Town; Population 3,800

“Ulark-town” to Swordlanders, this is a merry, tolerant home of many brothels and swindlers.

DRAGONHEIRS

A Dragonheir is anyone who has inherited the powers of a Dragonmaster—a human who can control dragons by gaze, voice, or touch. Only human bloodlines seem to manifest these powers. Some wonder if the last king of Amra was a Dragonmaster, one so potent that the promise made by the Empress Dragon remains kept centuries later.

Legends say that the greatest Dragonheirs can cause actual harm to dragons by gaze or by touch. Some tales say a true Dragonheir can “drive down” a dragon by confronting it, a feat that forces an affected wyrm to flee wildly to a remote place and then sink into a torpor. Then again, these stories could be wildly exaggerated.

Swordlanders often talk of “the lost Dragonheir.” A favorite story has it that Dragonheir blood flows in the clans of Horndragon, Arkeld, Relguld, and Marlserpent. Today, few of the Arkeld and Relguld clans are still alive, and the other two have been wiped out (though supposed blood descendants keep proclaiming themselves).



TARMALUNE

Sometimes called Tarmalune Great Port in Abeiran accounts, this bustling, cosmopolitan port city rivals Waterdeep for wealth, activity, tolerance, variety among both citizens and visitors, and the sheer number of constantly unfolding opportunities. It is home to almost 70,000 folk, and it grows more crowded and wealthy by the day, despite steadily increasing prices. Every passing month brings updates in fashions, new ways of making things or doing business, and new faces holding the center of attention in society or real power among investors and traders.

Despite its freedom from dragons, Tarmalune is also known for being less than kind to escaped slaves of dragon-ruled realms. Money talks here, and run-aways have nothing. More important, locals do not want to become a destination for escaped slaves, lest a dragon decide to eradicate such a nexus.

Tarmalune is famous for the 100-foot-tall pillar of fire that burns, day and night, in the city center. The flaming pillar burns without fuel, and it cannot be quenched by rain, snow, or sand. Sometimes tongues of fire leap out and ignite buildings even hundreds of feet distant.

TARMALUNE LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: Tarmalune and the surrounding Windrise Ports were long in thrall to a Dawn Titan called Achazar, which manifested as a swirling column of fire that burned so hot that even fire-breathing dragons feared to come too near. As the millennia wore on, Achazar moved less and less, troubling its slaves on fewer and fewer occasions. Even before the Blue Breath of Change, Achazar's pillar had stopped responding to inquiries from the humans, genasi, dwarves, and other slaves of the quiescent Dawn Titan. Eventually, the slaves declared themselves free, fearfully at first, then with greater confidence when Achazar did not rouse and incinerate them for their effrontery. Even then, dragons from other lands stayed away in case Achazar had laid a centuries-long ambush. Most locals don't know what the burning pillar in the center of Tarmalune really is, or they haven't fully realized its significance.

Streetwise DC 10: Tarmalune is ruled by the wily and fair-minded Hamminas Dorn, a retired adventurer who established a governing council and a personally led police force called the Vigilant. Dorn wars endlessly with defiant merchants, thieves, tax-

avoiding shippers, and council members who believe he should be their mouthpiece and nothing more.

Streetwise DC 15: The twenty-strong Council of Tarmalune is composed of merchants from a wide variety of trades. The council recently made its only universally popular decision thus far: establishing the Firequench Order, a dozen-strong group of wizards dedicated to swiftly dousing fires. Some say the wizards also tend the pillar of fire in Tarmalune's center, seeking some sort of communion with it.

Streetwise DC 20: Opposition to Dorn's authority coalesces around Rathgar Malynd, a battlemaster who runs his own mercenary company, providing guards for shops, homes, and warehouses as well as personal security to all paying customers. Malynd is publicly critical of the competence of the Vigilant and the meddling of Dorn in what he insists makes Tarmalune truly great. He is fond of saying that a truly free city should have no lord, other than commerce, and no one who seeks to be as grand as a dragon.

CITY DISTRICTS

The streets of Tarmalune are broad but choked with wagons, carts, and folk mounted and afoot. Most city houses are narrow, high-peaked stone buildings four stories tall, bristling with dormers. Businesses typically occupy converted houses, with a shop in the cellar, another at street level, and rooms for rent on the upper floors. Exterior back stairs lead down into alleys, and most dwellings have their own small rear stables.

Tarmalune is crowded and noisy, day and night; its folk are ambitious and energetic, living for the dream of achieving great wealth. They live hard, delighting in revelry and daring, and the shops of Tarmalune sell all manner of wares.

ARENDERMORE WARD

Tarmalune's "Noble" Neighborhood

The haughtiest district of the city is Arendermore, named for the now-dead dwarf builder Arender, who raised many of its magnificent turreted mansions. Trendy "new-coins" prefer to dwell in fashionable Dawnside, which is crowded with dance halls and salons.

CITADEL FIREQUENCH

Wizards' Guild of Firewatchers

Across from the pillar of fire in Tarmalune's center stands a massive basalt citadel where the Firequench Order keeps its headquarters. The mandate of the order is to keep an eye on the spontaneous fires that are so frequent in Tarmalune. To many, the Firequench Order wizards are heroes.



What most don't know is that the wizards have taken it upon themselves to study the pillar of flame more deeply. They know it is the remaining physical manifestation of Achazar. They probe with rituals to see if any sentience yet remains within, with the stated goal of putting out the flame for good. But those who work on this project might be more interested in learning the secrets of the Dawn Titan's power than in destroying it.

FISHSTINK WARD

Tarmalune's Nastiest Neighborhood

The worst district of the city is Fishstink, named for the reek of the fish sold there daily; the poorest in Tarmalune dine on gulls killed there by younglings with slung stones or nets and clubs. Gangs roam Fishstink, and runaway slaves from other realms who arrive penniless in Tarmalune often end up there. Most never make it out. Tarmalune isn't known for its charity.

HALAGOTHTRA'S HOUSE

Tarmalune's Resident Healer

Halagothra the Healer is a crotchety old woman who can heal by laying on hands in a manner none can emulate or understand. She sometimes takes coin in payment for her services; other times she requires quests. Halagothra lives in a secure mansion given to her by Rathgar Malynd. Some years back, Dorn's security force failed to prevent an agent of the Empress Dragon from kidnapping the healer, whom the citizens revere as a local treasure. She was eventually recovered by Dorn and his Vigilants, but Rathgar gained much fame for his grand gesture.

SCALE SEEKER HOUSE

Dragon Cult

Freedom-loving Tarmalune tolerates a group of citizens who worship dragons to learn secrets of power and riches. Frowned upon by most, the Seekers of Scales meet in a high tower on the edge of the city. Members include the herbalist Mokaer Morntarn, the darkly handsome proprietor of Morntarn's Miracles on Duth Street, and the dwarf Anratha Harrowstorm, owner of Harrowstorm Fine Gowns on Winterwood Way.

The cultists believe that their herb-enhanced rituals temporarily allow celebrants to attune with the thoughts of a nearby dragon. Most believe they are merely deranged. In truth, the cultists actually wish to learn how to *become* dragons and so ascend to power.

THE WINDRISE PORTS

Tarmalune is the largest, wealthiest, and most socially prominent of the Windrise Ports, independent cities on the eastern shore of the Dragon Sea.

Harglast: Harglast merchant shippers are terse and practical. Their spartan stone city, ruled by the dragonborn Lord Merchant Belror Tethel, reflects this attitude. Cut stone and dried figs are the major local exports.

Imdolphyn: This is a soaring stone city of narrow, steep, winding cobbled streets. A wealthy port, Imdolphyn has long been Abeir's foremost shipbuilding center. The city is ruled by a famous trader in textiles and scents, now retired (or so she says), Lord Othmeera Talask.

Ramekho: This ramshackle city is built around the silty mouth of the River Sundarra. Ramekho is ungoverned, lawless—and surprisingly peaceful and popular. Its merchants hire adventurers to deal with troublemakers.

Sambral: The Sambrese are blademasters who enjoy florid speech. They love scents and are given to the use of cosmetics, elaborate hair treatments, and dramatic clothing. Sambral is ruled by the Twelve Lords, many whom are members of the Seekers of Scales.



THE UNDERDARK

The Underdark is a network of subterranean tunnels, caverns, seas, and rivers that spans the entire world. Lightless but far from lifeless, the Underdark is home to a dizzying array of creatures, from the civilized but unforgiving drow to carnivorous monsters that haunt the darkness.

THE UPPERDARK

Comprising approximately the first 3 miles of depth, the Upperdark is a realm shared by drow, duergar (gray dwarves) and other dwarves, and deep gnomes. Here the races of the World Above (as Underdark dwellers call the surface lands) intermingle with those who dwell in darkness. Encounters here range from drow or dwarf patrols to all manner of wandering monsters and humanoid hunting parties. The largest concentration of plaguecaves (see below) are encountered in the Upperdark.

THE MIDDLEDARK

The larger drow and deep gnome cities are located in this layer, 3 to 10 miles below the surface. This area was relatively insulated from the effects of the Spellplague, so many of the drow cities remained unchanged and plaguecaves are rare here. However, the concentration of *faerzress* (see below) increases dramatically in the Middledark.

THE LOWERDARK

Below 10 miles lie the most dangerous and alien reaches of the Underdark—places that even drow seldom venture into. There are more dead ends and

isolated vaults in the Lowerdark, and the *faerzress* here is more powerful, covering larger and larger areas with more arcane effects the deeper one descends. The walls between planes can be thin in the Lowerdark, with tunnels reaching into the Nine Hells, the Abyss, the Shadowfell, and other domains of chaos and evil.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The Underdark is a whole world of its own, with dangers magical and mundane, and a varied ecology that supports millions of sentient beings and ravenous monsters.

FAERZRESS

This magical radiation, a remnant of a work of dark high magic, is scattered at random throughout the Underdark. *Faerzress* interferes with spells and the effects of magic items in often unpredictable ways, but has the most detrimental effect on divinations, teleportation, and most other forms of magical travel.

Faerzress can take a variety of forms, from clusters of glowing rocks to a barely discernible change in temperature. Natives of the Underdark know to look for colonies of magivores, a form of life somewhere between a plant and a coral that feeds off the magical radiation. Magivore colonies and their airborne seed spores provide a ready source of food for the lower forms of animal life in the Underdark.

Particularly talented wizards are capable of rituals that can alter the form of a pocket of *faerzress* in specific ways, but those rituals tend to attract the

CLANHOLDS

The Upperdark and the Middledark are dotted with scattered tribes of orcs, goblins, kobolds, and other humanoids. Their cave dwellings, called clanholds, are almost always hidden, their tunnels sealed and guarded to protect the noncombatant females and young of the tribe. Underdark clanholds send out scouting and hunting parties, and they sometimes fortify the approaches to their holds with walls, ambush points, domesticated monsters, and traps. The sophistication of a clanhold depends on the intelligence and wealth of the tribe, ranging from a stinking cave with a couple of scattered fire pits and maybe a water supply, to a true underground village.

EXILES AND HERMITS

Occasionally, a humanoid native of the World Above is chased from its home or wanders into the Upperdark. Many such beings never find their way out, and some choose not to try. These exiles, hermits, outlaws, and castaways can be found living with tribes of humanoids or holed up in caves alone. Some are violently protective of their privacy, others desperate for a way back to the surface, and still others simply mad. These wild outcasts could be valuable allies because of their intimate knowledge of their surroundings, or dangerous cannibals eager for an easy meal.



attention of the creatures that feed on magivores—and the creatures that in turn feed on them.

EARTH NODES

Earth nodes are valuable sources of raw magic, collected from the deepest core of Toril, which flow into a central point indistinguishable from the surrounding territory. They are difficult to find but enormously valuable. Whole Underdark cities, and no small number of jealously guarded citadels, have been built around earth nodes to harness their power. See “Earth Nodes” on page 51 for more about these magical phenomena.

Earth nodes sometimes generate random effects, such as creating localized earthquakes or granting a *stoneskin* effect to creatures nearby. In the last several decades, numerous efforts by drow arcanists have resulted in a network of earth node portals that ignore the effects of *faerzress*.

PLAGUECAVES

The Spellplague passed through the Upperdark, affecting the creatures, and terrain there in many of the same ways it altered the World Above. Plaguecaves are areas where active pockets of Spellplague were trapped in enclosed spaces, over time twisting the natural structure of caves and tunnels into bizarre domains. Here streams flow through the air, water falls upward, and earthmotes float about like fish in a bowl.

Some Underdark residents embrace plaguecaves, especially the spellscarred illithids known as the Mindplagued. Most Underdark residents stay away from plaguecaves—drow in particular avoid them at all cost.

ABYSSES

Surely the most dangerous of the Underdark’s natural formations, these deep pits, holes, and chasms don’t just appear bottomless. Some empty into other planes of existence, including realms such as the Abyss itself and the Nine Hells, out of which crawl many twisted creatures that inhabit the Underdark.

SEAS, LAKES, AND RIVERS

Water is plentiful in the Underdark and takes as many forms belowground as it does above. Streams of fresh water meander through tunnels, collecting into pools or joining with other streams to form rivers that empty into lakes or seas to rival some of the larger inland seas of the surface. Some caverns are entirely submerged, home to aquatic monsters and humanoids, and waterbound aboleths.

CLIMATE

Though most of the Underdark stays at a constant, cool temperature, with air circulating through shafts and tunnels, parts of it can experience something like weather. Cold areas and hot spots, wind tunnels, and strange, billowing mists appear at random intervals.

DEEP WASTES

The areas of the Underdark beneath the Dalelands and the Moonsea are sparsely populated and full of monsters. The ruins and wilderness areas far outnumber anything resembling civilization.

DEEP WASTES LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Dungeoneering check.

DC 25: Aberrant creatures are more widespread in the Deep Wastes than in other Underdark areas. Some of them form gruesome tribes, while others hunt the darkness alone. Destrachans are numerous in the east, and beholders are common in the west. Perhaps this aberrant concentration can be attributed to the past presence of the extinct phaerimms. Whatever the case, the Deep Wastes are far more dangerous than some troglodyte-infested deep.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

The gloomy wilderness of the Deep Wastes is punctuated by only a few locales that can be called settlements.

SSCHINDYLRYN

Drow City; Population 15,000

Cormyr's eyes are turned toward Netheril while the dark threat of Sschindylryn lurks far under the roots of the King's Forest. Also known as the City of Portals for the many magic gateways that connect it to elsewhere in the Underdark, Sschindylryn has a far reach in trade and war. The city is built on kuo-toan ruins in the shallows of Lake Thalmiir. It has submerged sections, including underwater portals.

Skilled merchants, prospectors, slavers, and ritual casters, Sschindylryn's drow have built their strength for more than a century after a failed attempt to conquer Menzoberranzan. They are expanding their territory in the wilds of the Deep Wastes, working toward perhaps retaking the ruins of Maerimydra. Lolth's priestesses in Sschindylryn also cast their dark thoughts toward sunlit lands.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Brikklext: Named for a goblin warren that once existed here and had enough infamy to be known even on the surface, Brikklext now refers to the entire loose confederation of goblins in this region. Most of the area is within 1,000 feet of the surface, and large portions are flooded by a poorly dammed freshwater spring. All of it is a part of a plagueland that extends to the surface. Whether this plagueland started in

Brikklext's tunnels or on the surface is unknown, but the old goblin town did have a reputation for strange magic.

Led by vicious and often mad bugbears and magically talented goblins, the twisted folk of Brikklext are spellscarred or plaguechanged monstrosities. The magicians of the confederation work tirelessly to harness plagueland energy and further sculpt the warriors and beasts of the tribes under their influence. They raid to capture untainted humanoids and monsters for use in foul experiments. Rumors swirl about pits of glowing liquid said to be common throughout the Brikklext region of the Earthspur Mountains.

Brikklext has no doubt been the source of terrible monsters that descend from the Earthspurs to trouble Impiltur's borderlands. The goblins seem to have amassed enough power to experiment on trolls and other creatures that normally push them around. The goings-on here have attracted the attention of accordants from the Order of Blue Fire, and it's entirely possible that sharns work among the Brikklext goblins.

Lorosfyr: This long chasm in the Underdark is the sole domain of a runescribed dracolich named Anabraxis the Black Talon. The acknowledged leader of the Cult of the Dragon (page 246), Anabraxis flies the length of Lorosfyr regularly, stopping at various lairs she has established. Through the bottomless abyss, which is really just one huge natural portal, she also passes into the Shadowfell at will, conducting her affairs as she wishes. Anabraxis brooks no interlopers aside from her underlings in the cult. Horrifying undead prowl the ledges of Lorosfyr, and spirits flit through its gloom. A tribe of death giants that owes the dracolich fealty lives in the deep regions of the chasm.

Maerimydra: Lost in religious war during a period when Lolth was silent to her followers, Maerimydra was once the greatest drow city of the region. A powerful priestess of the drow goddess of the undead (who was slain by Lolth long ago) seized the city, aided by goblins and fire giants.

Fire rules supreme in Maerimydra now. Giants have cemented their control under their queen, the fire titan Hledh. The giants and their servants have rebuilt most of the city to proportionate size and expanded the vault in which it was built. Azers and hell hounds patrol the nearby Underdark, and the giants keep hundreds of drow as slaves.

One needn't go to Maerimydra proper to find giants. All the outposts that once policed the surrounding Underdark are also under the control of Hledh's clan. Her territory secure, Hledh might start to ponder whether she can succeed in conquering part of the Dalelands.

Mines of Tethyamar: Once legendary for their wealth and splendor, the mines of the dwarven realm of Tethyamar are now a den of evil. Goblins, ogres, giants, and demons drove the dwarves out of the mines under the Desertsouth Mountains and into the Moonsea region and the Dalelands. As quickly as the horde won the day, it broke into greedy and squabbling factions. Almost all the treasures of Tethyamar's dwarf lords remain within the halls here, among the hoards of the conquerors.

The power of Netheril rises in the west, and these monsters might be gathered under that banner one day. However, the arrival of a fomorian lord from the Feywild might have some influence here as well. Shadar-kai emissaries work among the tribes of the deeps, culling the weak by playing on tribal hatreds and making choice assassinations. Cyclops parties have been scouting the deepest shafts, conquering the denizens there and setting up mining operations.



BORDER AREAS

Other Underdark regions border the Deep Wastes, connected enough that some even consider them part of the same territory.

Buried Realms: Below Netheril are the empty caverns that once housed the phaerimms, immense wormlike sorcerers that had no greater wish than to rid the world of lesser species. They succeeded in ruining ancient Netheril, indirectly forming the Anauroch Desert, but the armies and mages of returned Shade hunted them to the last. Those rulers of Netheril command much of the Underdark now, unearthing ancient sites and relics. However, these primeval deeps house more than even the shades know, including ancient undead sarrukh that watch patiently from their elder halls.

The Glimmersea: Deep under the Sea of Fallen Stars is the Glimmersea, known also as the Sea of Starry Night. This vast underground salt lake is 20 miles below the floor of the Sea of Fallen Stars, its waters provided at least in part by ribbon falls that issue from the vaulted ceilings. Those same ceilings often contain luminous minerals or flora, making them look like a starlit night sky that reflects off the water below. The Glimmersea's shores extend under some nations, such as Aglarond, while parts of the Sea of Fallen Stars have no Glimmersea beneath.

BURIED REALMS

These sites under Netheril border the Deep Wastes.

Ooltul: This city of beholders fell to free phaerimms long ago. During their campaign against the phaerimms, the modern Netherese discovered and annihilated Ooltul and other phaerimm holds at great cost. In so doing, they secured the grudging allegiance of other beholder clans in the area.

Luminous minerals and gems brighten the bell-shaped cavern to a perpetual twilight. It still contains the shattered remains of massive stone formations once carved through with beholder hives. A lake at the cavern's center is dotted with islands formed from pieces of what must have been a tremendous cave column. Living beholders prowl the passages nearby, and Ooltul contains restless spirits and undead from both sides of the conflict, as well as opportunistic creatures that are willing to share the large vault with ghosts.

Tomb of the Thaaluds: Legend says that the original creator of the thaaluds—the demilich called the Keeper of Thaal—maintains a vault deep under Netheril where his creations that yet serve him bring him magic items they collect. This cache has been the target of bold delvers across the centuries, but few have found it, and fewer still have lived to escape it. (See page 262 for more information about thaaluds.)

The “tomb” is actually an ovoid demiplane about 2 cubic miles in size. Its only portal constantly shifts location and requires a unique adamantine key to open if one isn't a thaalud loyal to the demiplane's creator. Within is a huge cavern filled with floating earthmotes topped by strange buildings and surrounded by floating boulders. Moving about the cavern requires using the boulders as bridges, as the thaaluds do, or flight, which many of the undead that serve the Keeper possess.

EARTHROOT

Beneath the nations of Aglarond, the Great Dale, Narfell, Thay, Thesk, and Murghôm, as well as the Hordelands, lies the Underdark domain of Earthroot.

EARTHROOT LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Dungeoneering DC 25: Humanoids inhabit parts of Earthroot. Drow maintain a sprawling and unusual metropolis called Undrek'Thoz under Thay. The cruel duergar live under the Sunrise Mountains, occasionally harassing the Rashemi and the nomads of the Endless Wastes. The most numerous aberrant creatures of Earthroot are the cloaklers of the Ramparts of Night, where Earthroot passes into the Shadowfell. Reclusive shadar-kai live in the Ramparts as well, hiding from their lords in Netheril.

History DC 30: This land below, like the surface realms above it, is a place of lost empires. Ancient Narfell and Raumathar established holds here. Mulhorand built a secret necropolis in the deeps while it yet controlled Thay. Even the Imaskari of old survived the ruin of their empire by retreating into Earthroot.

Streetwise DC 35: Deep Imaskar still exists in Earthroot, but the Spellplague was a disaster there. Somehow, the Imaskari managed to survive and rebuild, and unlike Halruaa, Deep Imaskar never became a plagueland. Rumor has it that the Imaskari wizards have had some success cleansing the plaguelands and even curing the spellscarred.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Earthroot is the home of much strangeness. Its deeps offer dangers few upon the surface can imagine.

THE COLD SEA

Subterranean Freshwater Lake

The Cold Sea lies directly beneath Lake Ashane in Rashemen, and water from that lake feeds into it from above. The connection to Rashemen is significant, because the Cold Sea has strong ties to the Feywild. Strange fey inhabit the waters and the surrounding caverns. Fomorian holds exist in glittering caves on the western side of the sea, their realms reaching as far west as underneath the eastern arms of the Dunwood and the Forest of Lethyr.

DEEP IMASKAR

Imaskari City; Population 15,000

When their civilization fell to the incarnations of their slaves' gods, a few Imaskari fled into the Underdark, led by the wizard-lord Ilphemon. Using incredible magic, Ilphemon and his retinue created the Great Seal, enclosing them in a huge vault. The Great Seal hid Deep Imaskar, at the same time allowing the Imaskari to grow food, enjoy fresh air, and bask in bright light.

The Spellplague was hard on Deep Imaskar. Blue fire erupted in the city. Buildings fell, and extradimensional spaces collapsed. Many great wizards went mad and ran amok. Spells used to imprison criminals failed. The government collapsed. Thousands died, and hundreds more were spellscarred. Deep Imaskar survived only because its unpredictable wards channeled much of the rampant magic out of the city.

Empress Ususi Manaallin and other High Imaskari came to the aid of the beleaguered realm. With their help, the remaining Deep Imaskari cleansed their city and rebuilt, refusing to leave what they considered their homeland. They killed spellscarred creatures or drove them away. Spellscarred Imaskari who retained their faculties, however, were accepted into the new society.

Much of the city's recent history is tied to the realm of High Imaskar. Deep Imaskar remains linked to its aboveground counterpart, but it is an independent state. Many of the most adventurous Imaskari have returned to the surface, and those who remain in Deep Imaskar tend to be conservative and insular—some might even say paranoid. Distrust and resentment create tension between the upper and lower realms.

City Structure: Deep Imaskar occupies a vault 3 miles long, 1 mile wide, and half a mile high. Magic allows buildings to stand on the curving walls of the vault and connects them through peculiar walkways or arcane bridges. Thus, the city of Deep Imaskar is actually about 2 miles across.

Deep Imaskari use magic to alter the space within their buildings as well, so they hold more than their

KEY FIGURES OF DEEP IMASKAR

Deep Imaskar is not subject to the rule of High Imaskar's leader, Ususi Manaallin. Instead, High Lord Planner Yannu Hywillan governs with the aid of a wizards' council known as the Planners.

The High Lord Planner directly commands Lady Approhender Synnis Naramixna, who is an intelligence officer as well as manager of the city's protection wards.

Yannu also has Lord Enactor Vardyn Xalzussi to handle law enforcement and military matters.

outer shells suggest. Relatively small domes, common to Imaskari architecture, often enclose immense spaces that seem like daylit outdoors. The actual size of the city is impossible to calculate, since it changes as regularly as citizens wish it to—with the permission of the Planners.

Magical gardens produce food for the Deep Imaskari, who are all vegetarian. Pure water and air constantly flow to the city by similar means. The Spellplague forced Deep Imaskar to rely on High Imaskar for a short time, and limited trade and travel exists between the two realms. Deep Imaskar deals with no one else.

The Great Seal: The physical form of Deep Imaskar's Great Seal no longer exists. In its place, the northern wall of the vault has a perfectly circular hole 2,000 feet wide. This void allows Deep Imaskari into the greater Underdark, and it still bears thousands of renewed wards that protect the city. No spellscarred creature can cross the city's threshold without proper passwords.

Lodge of Retribution: Within Deep Imaskar is a new lodge for an old Imaskari sect known as vengeance-takers. Counterparts to the individuals of the same title in High Imaskar, vengeance-takers bring justice to those who harm Deep Imaskar or any other thing they have sworn to protect. The major goal of the lodge in Deep Imaskar is driving the Masters of Absolute Accord (see below) out of the former Lodge of the Retributive Masters.

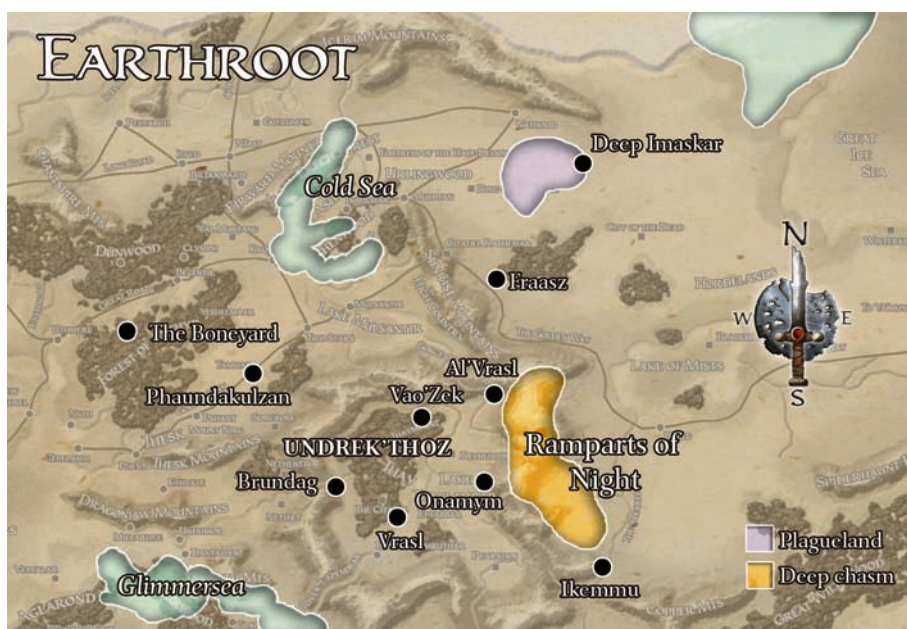
FRAASZ

Duergar City; Population 5,000

When the earth-shattering displacement of Thay devastated their earlier hold, the gray dwarves of Fraaszummdin founded a new settlement in a nearby vault. Located under the Sunrise Mountains of Eastern Rashemen, Fraasz is surrounded by a maze of tunnels that the duergar call the Wandering. The settlement is so isolated and well defended that it has no real rivals nearby.

The duergar of Fraasz have a knack with underground beasts. Bearing the same name as the city, the leading clan oversees trade and watches its rivals. Clan feuding is common in the fractious community, and outsiders take sides whether they want to or not—often just by dealing with a specific duergar.

Other than animal training and herding for a living, the duergar prospect for minerals, sometimes



vying with Rashemi near the surface. Slavery is also an accepted business, and the dwarves here raid goblin holds, kobold warrens, and remote settlements of more civilized races for fun and profit.

RAMPARTS OF NIGHT

Shadow Abyss

Under the Hordelands and the eastern Sunrise Mountains near Thay is an immense abyss. The Ramparts of Night expanded during the Spellplague to swallow much of Earthroot under the Copper Mountains in Murghôm. No part of the abyss reaches the surface, but it is bottomless—the whole expanse connects to the Shadowfell. Creatures of shadow infest its walls, and anyone brave enough to do so can pass through to a canyon on the Shadowfell.

Outposts of free shadar-kai are common throughout the Ramparts of Night, far from Netheril and the reach of the Princes of Shade. These shadar-kai harvest worldly valuables from the Underdark. They also raid, harrying Thayan and Hordelands settlements as well as the drow of Undrek'Thoz.

IKEMMU

Shadar-Kai City; Population 8,000

The largest enclave of shadar-kai exists in this burned and broken city that they established on the edge of the Ramparts of Night. Cloakers were the settlement's only natives, and called the place Sphur Upra ("Gloaming Home"). Much of the city is vertical. The shadar-kai use their shadow powers to more easily traverse it, while the native cloakers fly.

Half of Ikemmu exists now in the canyon that reflects the Ramparts of Night in the Shadowfell. Shadar-kai use it as a major trade point between the planes, and they even allow outlanders here. Only



those approved by the authorities can pass into the Shadowfell side of the city.

Some come to Ikemmu to research its mysterious past. The shadar-kai didn't build the city, and the architecture is like nothing seen elsewhere. Carvings remaining in the place depict delicate winged humanoids along with cloaklers, and fire damage

BORDERLAND: DEEP RAURIN

Beneath the Raurin Desert and the Plains of Purple Dust is a sister region to Earthroot known as Deep Raurin. The Raurin Desert is itself remote and desolate, and the Underdark beneath it is unknown to most civilized folk. But it is a region filled with history, magic, and malevolence.

Adder's Heart: Secreted in Deep Raurin is a vast temple and necropolis complex once dedicated to the god Set, who is now Sseth. Serpentine portals connect Adder's Heart to other temples, the Shadowfell, and the Towers of Night. Although serpentine creatures, basilisks, medusas, and even a few yuan-ti haunt the halls of the temple, the structure is primarily a center for Sseth's human and nonreptilian worshipers. Its chambers house cultists of varying power, as well as hateful and toxic magical secrets. The necropolis contains honored dead, imprisoned spirits, and undead guardians.

Groundwork of the Purple Emperor: The Palace of the Purple Emperor once stood within Raurin. It vanished into the Celestial Nadir (see page 140) in the final days of the Imaskari, and returned in the years before the Spellplague. Ususi moved the palace, over many years, to its current location. It is now called Skyclave. However, its original foundations and sublevels remain underneath the dust and sand. Even with the establishment of High Imaskar, these ruins have never been reclaimed.

An efreet karadjin named Zonaggati now rules the foundations from a rich hall in Deep Raurin. His legions of fire creatures and other elementals work to open the underhalls of the old Imaskari seat and to ferret out mighty sorceries. With the power he has gathered, Zonaggati is a rising threat that commands the fealty of numerous other efreet within Raurin.

The Vuthivyr: Settlements of ancient Imaskar lie buried under Raurin and the Plains of Purple Dust. Some of these old sites have open vaults and passages that form the uppermost layer of Deep Raurin. A race of subterranean lizardfolk intermixed with troglodytes, calling themselves the Vuthivyr, rule in the western reaches of these ruins. Corrupted by age-old eldritch energy run amok during the Spellplague, these creatures are beyond reason, and they bear spellscars and include aberrant creatures among them. They also possess fantastic powers and treasures garnered from Imaskar's lost legacy. Some stories have arisen suggesting that the Vuthivyr are pawns of a bipedal sarrukh or some other primeval being.

suggests the blue flames of the Spellplague. Mysterious doorlike arches graven with ritual symbols are carved into walls in one of the city's open markets. Learned observers speculate that the former inhabitants used these doors to enter another world, perhaps with foresight of the coming Spellplague.

UNDREK'THOZ

Drow Metropolis; Population 50,000

The so-called Segmented City is actually a confederation of drow settlements, called segments, spread across the Underdark near Thay and linked by portals. These communities were once separate and isolated, but they allied centuries ago for mutual defense. Since then, individual traditions and social practices have blended to become a single norm.

Because of its geographic position, Undrek'Thoz suffered greatly during the Spellplague and the subsequent rising of Thay. Tectonic and volcanic activity destroyed two segments under Thaymount; quakes buried and allowed the nearby Cold Sea to drown another segment under Lake Mulsantir. Magical backlashes destroyed yet another under the ruins of Delhumide. The chaos left all the segments damaged and opened the door to drastic change.

A rebellion broke out during the cataclysm. An alliance of the Blackened Fist (an independent clan of drow monks), Archmage Nurymm Zek, Vyrald Zek, and Matron Harthel Vrasl attacked all the other major houses of the city. The rebels were successful, raising arcane power and male drow to prominence within Undrek'Thoz.

Portal Travel: Members of the Blackened Fist stand guard, check papers, and collect tolls at portals throughout Undrek'Thoz. Papers stating identity and intent are required for any sort of travel through the portals, and those who lack such identification can be arrested, enslaved, or killed. Tolls must be paid as well, with these proceeds funding portal maintenance and increasing the coffers of the Blackened Fist, the archmage, and House Zek. This monitoring system helps control traffic, as well as contributing to the capture of escaped slaves and fleeing criminals.

Al'Vrasl: Matron Vrasl's old home is now a trade center that maintains exits into the Sunrise Mountains for raiding into the Hordelands and limited trade with Thay. Necromancy is widely practiced here.

Brundag: Brundag was a hobgoblin city, and those same hobgoblins have been slaves of the drow for centuries. Thay's rise and the burning of Amruthar almost spelled Brundag's end, but the segment was rebuilt. It has benefited from access to geothermal and volcanic activity since. The caverns of the city are warm and wet, rich in Underdark fauna. Thermal vents and lava provide mechanical power.

The House of Lightless Truth, the citadel of the monks of the Blackened Fist, is the most prominent building in Brundag. To avoid the ire of the Spider Queen, and to keep an eye on the priestesses that serve her, the monks house a large temple to Lolth within the stronghold. Haznyn Tellen'hez, leader of the Blackened Fist, is the most powerful male drow in Undrek'Thoz. His wife, Matron Huirann Tellen'hez, once a commoner, intends him to remain so.

Onamym: With the fall of House Jenn'Yxir, former namesake of this segment, House Onamym rose to prominence. Onamym has exits into the Sunrise Mountains that lead to Thay and Murghôm. Raiding and slaving are still the leading vocations here.

Phaundakulzan: Under the easternmost part of the Thesk Mountains, this settlement is the largest and most prominent in Undrek'Thoz since the Spellplague. House Phaundal rules here with the backing of the ubiquitous Blackened Fist monks. The segment has a long-standing tradition of arcane power, and many of its prominent inhabitants are sorcerers, swordmages, warlocks, or wizards. Phaundakulzan also manages a complex throughout Mount Nirg in the Thesk Mountains (page 183).

Vrasl: This segment, once known as Trun'zoy'zl, is the religious center of Undrek'Thoz. The lich Matron Harthel Vrasl oversees the temple complex in the city. Undead augment the ranks of soldiers, spiders, demons, and Blackened Fist monks that defend this segment.

Vao'Zek: The stabilizing that saved Eltabbar and Lake Thaylambar in Thay also spared this segment, which was once called Mezrylornyl. The segment is the seat of the Archmage of Undrek'Thoz as well as that of House Zek, ruled by Matron Vyrald Zek. Wizards of Vao'Zek maintain the portals that connect the segments.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The Boneyard: Built by Mulhorandi necromancers more than a millennium ago under Thesk near the Forest of Lethyr, the Boneyard is a necropolis properly called Pholzubbalt. It gained its common moniker from a group of explorers that discovered it and retreated after marking its location on a map. Pholzubbalt's expansive passages and vaults once housed several very powerful necromancers and undead both sentient and bestial. The Spellplague destroyed many of these in bouts of blue fire.

Espera, a genasi necromancer, had already tied herself to Shar's power of shadow. She died in the conflagration but was resurrected as a larva mage. Having been given her fondest wish—to become undead—Espera went about ritually reconstituting the Boneyard's undead and creating lieutenants. Several skull lords now serve her, as do demons, boneclaws,

and a unique skeletal creature constructed from the remains of a dracolich. She has also achieved an alliance with a nightwalker, another of Shar's servants, and thereby has a cadre of bodaks at her disposal.

With such a force, Espera's hatred for the living might soon spur her to war against even mighty Undrek'Thoz. If she were to conquer that city, she could then take her armies to the surface in Thay, Murghôm, and the Hordelands. The nightmare would only worsen if the charismatic Szass Tam convinces Espera to join him.

The Cure: Wizards in Deep Imaskar are sending probes into the plaguelands and experimenting on the spellscarred. They even welcome outsiders who are willing to brave the plaguelands to bring back samples and test countermeasures. They've had some success in cleansing the area closest to Deep Imaskar and reversing some spellscars, especially on those recently afflicted.

Deep Imaskari Plagueland: The Underdark around Deep Imaskar and even the surface above the city is a seething plagueland full of spellscarred, both monsters and a few mad Imaskari. Approaching the city from underground is a treacherous task that seldom ends with admittance to the city. Those welcome in Deep Imaskar usually arrive through portals to the surface, most of which lie in High Imaskar.

Masters of Absolute Accord: Near Deep Imaskar, where the Lodge of the Retributive Masters once existed, is a place of madness. Vengeance-takers and wizards of Deep Imaskar sequestered within three mighty arcanists driven mad during the Spellplague, aided by one of the lodge's elder members. Trapped, the mad mages and the elder vengeance-takers melded into one another, forming a quaternary entity known as the Masters of Absolute Accord. See "Order of Blue Fire" (page 264) for more information.

The Masters reach out from their prison to manipulate nearby creatures and terrain. They can sometimes form and send forth humanlike bodies or spirits of lesser power. Every once in a while, they direct an attack at Deep Imaskar. Wild tales say the Masters have spoken to people and even manipulated events in plaguelands across Faerûn. Nobody knows their purpose, but without any basis, many believe they are malevolent.

Many spellscarred beings, especially those of the Order of Blue Fire, have visions or visitations associated with the Masters. Those who know of the Masters seek them as if they were messianic figures or even faces of a deity. Few have any inkling where the Masters reside, and fewer still could manage the dangers of approaching this bizarre being.



GREAT BHAERYNDEN

Beneath the vast Underchasm and the majority of southern Faerûn, the Underdark realm now known as Great Bhaerynden yawns. Much of this region was destroyed in the formation of the Underchasm, which displaced and destroyed numerous outposts and settlements. Like the World Above, Great Bhaerynden recovered in time, even though much of it is now a twilight world burned by the sun during the middle of the day.

GREAT BHAERYNDEN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful History check.

DC 40: Few know that the collapse of the Underchasm is a cataclysmic echo of events long past. Fewer still know what was truly lost in that great gap's creation.

The region was the original homeland for two of Faerûn's great races—the dwarves and the drow. The dwarves named the caverns of the south Bhaerynden, and they maintained a realm there for thousands of years. Bhaerynden fell when the drow descended into the Underdark and founded the domain of Telantiwar. In a merciless war, they drove the dwarves out of their ancient home and into many other regions of Faerûn. For reasons lost to time, the caverns containing much of Telantiwar collapsed less than two millennia later, forming the Great Rift. The drow scattered, and soon after, dwarves returned and settled the Great Rift. Underchasm's fall shattered part of the Great Rift and crushed many of the remaining drow realms, no doubt burying valuable antiquities and irreplaceable historic records. East Rift is almost all that remains intact.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Though few would expect it after the fall of the Underchasm, the deeps of Great Bhaerynden offer a wide array of life.

PORTALS

Earth's End contains a number of portals. Most common among them are restricted portals that let in light from the World Above but don't allow physical objects to pass through. Portals to the Elemental Chaos bring in fresh air and water regularly, as well as removing waste. Major portals allow passage to the elemental realm of Root Hold and the Ilmatari Monastery of the Yellow Rose in the Earthspur Mountains of Damara.

EARTH'S END

Town; Population 1,500

More than 20 miles beneath northeastern Halruaa, Earth's End is a community inhabited by earth creatures, genasi, and Halruaans who escaped the magical conflagration that destroyed their nation. The town has always been a nexus of elemental activity because of a planar portal within it. However, it was an isolated realm, far from the surface. The arrival of humans intent on staying and the creation of the Underchasm changed that situation.

Wizards altered Earth's End to be a comfortable home for humans. Where pockets in the earth once allowed passage only to those who could somehow move through rock and soil, the wizards made a town of elegant passages and magically lit rooms. Once reachable only by those who had the power to descend through or teleport into the earth, the settlement now has an exit into the Underchasm.

For the sake of conventional trade and travel, citizens sculpted a road across the treacherous rubble of the Underchasm to the East Rift, coincidentally extending their reach to Delzimmer. Earth's End has access to valuable minerals, as well as many magic portals, but its remoteness protects it as much as its citizens do.

Genasi: Genasi, most of whom have earth-related abilities, are common in Earth's End. They enjoy a special position of power as go-betweens for elementals and humans, and they hold influential positions within the town. Most police are genasi, and the town council always elects a genasi mayor called a *speleosa*—an approximation of the Primordial word for monarch. The *speleosa* oversees the town and votes to break deadlocks in the council, and usually has some power related to nature or the elements.

Humans: The humans of Earth's End are few in number but great in power. Seven wizards, along with their kith and kin, escaped the Spellplague by fleeing to Earth's End. The tradition of wizardry and respect for elemental beings runs strong among the humans. A youth often undertakes a voluntary rite of passage by going out into Faerûn and seeking fortune, a suitable spouse, and other respectable folk who might want to return to the town. Earth's End is a source of adventurers, as well as a destination for them.

Others: Earth creatures of all sorts coexist with the humans and genasi of Earth's End. Only the wicked and the destructive are kept out. A group of earth-infused dwarves, who call themselves *urdunnir* and cleave tightly to the philosophies of Grumbar, is a significant portion of the population, as are other dwarves. Small numbers of other nonhumans have also come to Earth's End over the years.

FLUVENILSTRA

City; Population 10,000

Fluvenilstra, 11 miles beneath the Shaar Desolation, is known to only a few on the surface. Some identify it as the Garden City of Great Bhaerynden, because the settlement has the greatest abundance of edible and useful Underdark flora in the region, if not all of Faerûn. Fluvenilstra benefits from water that no longer reaches the desert above. It is also home to a large number of genasi who mix water and earth abilities. Genasi who display or wish to hone similar inborn talents often come to Fluvenilstra to learn.

Other courageous souls, genasi or otherwise, seek to serve among the Circle of the Depths, priests of Silvanus who run the Garden City. Still others are tourists who wish to visit the underground jungle that is Fluvenilstra, lit only by luminescent fungi. Mundane plants aren't all that one can see here. Myriad plant creatures inhabit and guard the city, including sentient fungusfolk called myconids. Magically enhanced plants form buildings and living defense systems.

A few hundred soldiers also protect the city, but peaceful visitors are welcome here, even those from unusual places. Fluvenilstra maintains contact with and portals to Gulthandor, the Amtar Forest, and other regions. The city's citizens sometimes use portals to travel to the surface or to explore the wider Underdark and Underchasm.

T'LINDHET

City; Population 20,000

The largest drow enclave in Great Bhaerynden, T'lindhet has spent decades recovering from the uprising in and loss of Dambrath. Located 3 miles below the Gnollwatch Mountains, the city sprawls along a flat rise within a great cavern. A river flows around that rise, so the city has ample water.

Having learned a hard lesson at the hands of the rebellious Dambrathans, the sixteen houses of T'lindhet actively vie for power. The drow of the city enjoy their creature comforts and their bloody sacrifices. Although the road from Dambrath to T'lindhet was sealed and never reopened, the drow have secret ways to reach the surface to hunt humans and the elves of Amtar. They also stalk the Underchasm, regularly raiding the road between Earth's End and East Rift.



PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The Oozing Ruin: Smashed beneath the crushing weight of the earth, the drow city of Llurth Drier is no more. In its place are fields of rubble and fallen stone. Spaces and gaps within the ruin still allow access to the remains of drow holds. Monstrous oozes and twisted aberrant creatures lurk in the shadows there. Rumors suggest that an amorphous creature of hideous proportions dwells in a vault that yet lies open—and that this creature is an avatar of Ghaunadaur.

Lightdrinker: The abyss known as Lightdrinker extends from near the surface to an unfathomable depth, passing into the Shadowfell. Light pierces the gloom that enshrouds the chasm only to half the normal distance, and traveling within Lightdrinker is akin to traveling abroad on a brisk winter day. World-weariness hangs about the place. Creatures of shadow prowl the deep, and the cave dwellings of dark ones dot the abyss's cliffs. A mighty nightwalker holds court somewhere in Lightdrinker or the adjoining Shadowfell, and the creature's bodaks hunt the yawning reaches.

Wild Drow: Llurth Drier died, but thousands of that festering city's drow survived. Those who were able and willing fled to other drow holds, such as T'lindhet. Others spread like vicious rats, attacking any place they thought they could hold. Some even managed to take Underhome from the dwarves of the East Rift. Now, refusing to cooperate enough to build any major settlement, wild drow clans wander the Underchasm, a plague to any who brave the place.



MENZOBERRANZAN

Contained in a huge natural cavern deep in the Underdark, Menzoberranzan, the City of Spiders, is home to some 25,000 drow and almost that many slaves. It is the center of the worship of Lolth, the Queen of the Demonweb Pits.

MENZOBERRANZAN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 12: Menzoberranzan was founded more than five millennia ago by priestesses of the Spider Queen, and ever since has been ruled by a rigid matriarchal theocracy devoted to their dark goddess. The city was rocked in the early 1370s DR by the sudden withdrawal of Lolth from her worshippers, and Menzoberranzan sent an expedition to the Demonweb Pits to appeal to their silent goddess. What they found was a great cocoon and a transformed Lolth, more powerful than ever.

Streetwise DC 15: Life in Menzoberranzan can be cruel and short for those not willing to embrace the drow ways of deception, manipulation, and submission to the matron mothers.

But all is not cruelty and brutality in the City of Spiders. Ambitious female drow of lesser houses, or even from the peasantry, can rise to the highest levels of power—or at least better their place in the stratified realm. But males are limited in how high they can rise in the matriarchal society, especially those who have lost the protection of one of the noble houses.

CITY DISTRICTS

The entire city of Menzoberranzan is carved into towering stalagmites and huge stalactites hanging from the cavern's thousand-foot-high vault, intricately carved and aglow with eldritch flame.

THE BAZAAR

Ever-Changing Market

A circle of bare bedrock about 750 feet in diameter, the Bazaar is a marketplace full of stalls and carts

MATRON MOTHER QUENTHEL BAENRE

The most powerful matron mother in Menzoberranzan is Quenthel Baenre, the Mistress Mother of Arach-Tinilith, who was on hand in the Demonweb Pits for the rebirth of Lolth. Returning to the City of Spiders as a dark heroine to her fanatical people, it took her only a decade to push her sister Triel into a confrontation the weaker sister couldn't hope to win.

where the drow of Menzoberranzan can buy and sell just about everything imaginable. The Bazaar is a peaceful and open place patrolled by house guards and punctuated by street performers and hucksters.

Merchants are not allowed to place their carts or stalls in the same place for more than a day, so the layout and mix of vendors is always different.

THE BRAERYN

Stenchstreets

The garbage-strewn alleys and spider-infested shanties of the least of Menzoberranzan's neighborhoods are the domain of houseless males, defrocked priestesses, maimed soldiers, and ruined merchants. Life is cheap in the Stenchstreets, and wealthy drow sometimes go there for drunken hunts, chasing down escaped slaves and dishonored drow for sport.

EASTMYR

Working-Class District

Though not too far a step down from Manyfolk, Eastmyr is a poorer neighborhood of struggling merchants, lesser tradesfolk, and mercenaries. None of the major ruling houses are located there, but the ruins of Houses Oblodra and Freth, and the abandoned House Kenafin compound, are home to squatters and escaped slaves.

MANYFOLK

Trade District

If there's such a thing as a middle class in the City of Spiders, it lives in the winding thoroughfares of Manyfolk, which sports the highest concentration of permanently housed tradespersons and merchants in the city.

Inns, taverns, higher-class festhalls, and an array of fine massage salons are sprinkled through this neighborhood. The streets here are crowded with drow and their slaves going about their daily business.

THE CLAWRIFT

This claw-shaped chasm is one of three that mar the surface of the City of Spiders, but the Clawrift has the most storied past and most frightening reputation.

The former Third House of Menzoberranzan, House Oblodra, was once located in a huge and luxurious compound between the first and second "fingers" of the Clawrift. After a prolonged war with House Baenre, Oblodra was pulled into the seemingly bottomless crevasse by Lolth's own monstrous claws.

Now a breeding ground for kobold slaves and one of many safe houses for Bregan D'aerthe mercenaries, the Clawrift stands as an enduring symbol of House Baenre's power.



NARBONDEL

The Broad Streets District

This exclusive neighborhood of large manor houses and fashionable shops is the showplace of Menzoberranzan. The stalagmite towers here are more masterfully carved, and more intricately adorned with magical fire, than those in any other part of the city.

Narbondel is home to numerous gem-cutters and jewelers, including the bitter rivals Hondel Belek'tyr and Juron Shadalun (son of Mritt Shadalun, found dead in Belek'tyr's vault in 1463 DR),

who trade in the most exotic jewels from all over Toril—and worlds beyond.

As famous as their jewelers, the perfumers of Narbondel sell only to the finest drow in Menzoberranzan, and their scents are woven with magical compulsions that make them more than simple cosmetics. In the right hands, such a perfume is the key to power and influence—two of any drow's favorite things.

Narbondel: This huge stalagmite is magically heated every evening by Gromph Baenre himself. The heat rises from the base of the pillar to the tip over the course of 12 hours, and then it cools for the same length of time. Through this glowing tower of rock the Menzoberranyr mark the passage of time in the sunless Underdark.

NOTABLE MERCHANTS OF MANYFOLK

Rhauvais del'Ygana deals in exotic weapons, including the poison-tipped darts and hand crossbows that traditionally define the drow warrior. She claims to know a million different ways to conceal a weapon on any drow.

The slaver Hrong Freedman bought his freedom after two decades in the gladiatorial pits of West Wall. He stayed on in the city to sell kobolds, goblins, and more exotic humanoids, including the odd human, to Menzoberranzan's most discerning slave owners.

The female drow Sh'aun Darnruel sells exquisite gowns of the finest spidersilk to the matron mothers and to those who hope one day to join their ranks.

HOUSE BAENRE COMPOUND

As befits the First House of Menzoberranzan, the impressive Baenre compound is a collection of twenty stalagmites and thirty stalactites surrounded by a fence of enchanted silver web and guarded by the finest army in the City of Spiders.

The central mound conceals a chapel dedicated to Lolth in which Matron Mother Quenthel holds court. Her predecessor's cavernous audience chamber at the top of the mound was sealed at Quenthel's orders—with the rotting corpse of her sister entombed within.

QU'ELLARZ'ORL

The Place of Nobles

This tall shelf on the southern end of the city overlooks the rest of Menzoberranzan, and from that lofty perch, the massive compound of House Baenre looks down on the rest of the city.

A massive forest of giant mushrooms adds a strange beauty to the plateau, which is patrolled by guards from Houses Baenre, Xorlarrin, and Mizzrym. All three of those houses drill their troops and wizards across the open expanses in a show of force to the rest of the city.

Off one wall of the western end of Qu'ellarz'orl is a small, well-guarded cave, the Chamber of the Ruling Council, in which the matron mothers of the eight most powerful houses meet.

TIER BRECHE

The Academy

Dominating the northern reaches of the city, the great stairway of Tier Breche is the largest structure in Menzoberranzan. The approach is guarded by myriad deadly traps, an honor guard of two Melee-Magthere upperclassmen, and two 15-foot-tall jade spiders that can animate to protect the place.

Atop Tier Breche are the three branches of the Academy, the center of learning and the source of drow "justice" that both serves and controls the matron mothers, as their powerful leaders see fit.

Arach-Tinilith: Housed in a building in the shape of a giant spider, Arach-Tinilith is the most powerful branch of the Academy. Since the rise of Quenthel Baenre, it is even more closely allied with the First House. Quenthel has not officially relinquished her title of Mistress Mother of Arach-Tinilith, despite the fact that it is unprecedented for a matron mother to hold both titles.

Female drow are sent to Arach-Tinilith at the age of forty to complete five decades of training in the cruel and demanding service of their demon goddess.

GROMPH BAENRE

The Archmage of Menzoberranzan, Gromph Baenre, is the brother and chief rival of Quenthel. The two have never seen eye to eye and still occasionally try to kill each other, though Gromph has remained loyal to the matriarchy throughout some difficult times. If he was ever going to seize control of Menzoberranzan, it would have been during Lolth's Silence, when he was the most powerful spellcaster in the city. But Gromph likes to lead from the shadows, secretly pushing and prodding the city in his chosen direction.

He maintains a sanctum that might be in the tower of Sorcere or in a pocket dimension of his own creation. Gromph prefers not to say.

There they learn to summon, control, and mate with demons.

Melee-Magthere: This martial arts school produces some of the most gifted and cunning hand-to-hand combatants in all of Toril. Those who are selected to undertake the ten-year course are mostly males. The building is an unadorned stone pyramid.

Sorcere: A slender and graceful tower houses the wizard school of the Academy, overseen by the Archmage of Menzoberranzan. Drow (mostly males) who show a talent or inclination for magic are identified at a young age, then sent to Sorcere at the age of twenty-five to complete thirty years of training.

WEST WALL

The Old Quarter

This neighborhood of lesser houses and wealthy merchants is a quiet place where little of interest ever happens—and the residents like it that way. Some of the neighbors indulge in esoteric pursuits: gambling over slaves who are forced to fight to the death, collecting arcane magic artifacts from across the multiverse, or hunting and capturing strange creatures from the World Above. Anyone walking the streets of West Wall would never know of these activities, though. Discretion is the watchword here.

THE RULING HOUSES

Eight of the most powerful drow clans form the Ruling Council, and they keep a firm hand over everything that transpires in the City of Spiders.

HOUSE BAENRE

The First House

House Baenre has held its position for so long that no drow alive remembers any other First House, but it has expended considerable effort over the centuries to fend off attempts to change that status. Houses

THE DARK DOMINION

Within the vast chamber of Menzoberranzan, the rule of the noble houses brings relative peace and security, but the City of Spiders is still a part of the Underdark. Numerous caves lead off from the city into the endless maze of tunnels and chambers of the Underdark, collectively known as the Dark Dominion. Only a few steps out of the city, this subterranean wilderness takes hold.

Drow use the tunnels for clandestine meetings in places such as the Glowstones, a cave of luminescent stones to the north, or the Cavern of the Severed Tentacles to the south, so named for a long-ago battle between drow and illithids. Areas of *faerzress* interfere with magic, strange creatures stalk any warm-blooded prey, and drow sometimes meet with other races to discuss betrayals, assassinations, and trade agreements.

such as Oblodra, Do'Urden, and Agrach Dyr have crossed paths with the Baenre matrons, and all have fallen by the wayside.

The First House effectively controls all three branches of the Academy and holds firm alliances with most of the other ruling houses. Still, power draws attention in Menzoberranzan, and the attention of any drow can be a dangerous thing. House Baenre remains forever on its guard.

HOUSE BARRISON DEL'ARMGO

The Second House

Matron Mother Mez'Barris Armgo and her three surviving daughters quickly filled the gap left by disgraced House Agrach Dyr to become the Second House. Though home to fewer priestesses than the other ruling houses, Barrison Del'Armgo has collected a staff of house wizards second to none in Menzoberranzan.

The house tends to keep its own counsel, eschewing close alliances or open conflict with any of the other houses. Rumors that Mez'Barris and Gromph enjoy some kind of intimate relationship have persisted for decades, but none dare attempt to confirm them.

HOUSE XORLARRIN

The Third House

In the days following the end of Lolth's Silence, House Xorlarrin enjoyed the favor of Triel Baenre for its tireless and close military alliance against duergar invaders and the upstart Agrach Dyr. That favor was enough to help Matron Mother Zeerith Q'Zorlarrin leapfrog over House Faen Tlabbar to capture the rank of Third House.

Like Barrison Del'Armgo, House Xorlarrin employs a greater than average number of wizards,

BREGAN D'AERTHE

Bregan D'aerthe is a company of mercenaries, assassins, and scouts founded and still led (though from afar and through intermediaries) by Jarlaxle Baenre (page 251). The company absorbs houseless males and unaligned graduates of Melee-Magthere, making their services available to the highest bidder—and sometimes to every bidder. It's not at all uncommon for Bregan D'aerthe agents to be working on both sides of a struggle between warring houses, but they never side against House Baenre. Jarlaxle is smarter than that.

Bregan D'aerthe actively pursues contacts with thieves' and assassins' guilds of the World Above, sometimes providing drow mercenaries to supplement their operations.

The current master of Bregan D'aerthe is Jarlaxle's trusted lieutenant, Kimmuriel Oblodra, whose mastery of the psionic arts makes him a cold and calculating killer, and so a valuable asset to his clients.

all based out of the lofty Spelltower Xorlarrin, which stands adjacent to House Baenre on Qu'ellarz'orl.

HOUSE FAEN TLABBAR

The Fourth House

The priestesses of House Faen Tlabbar, led by Matron Mother Ghenni'tiroth Tlabbar, are among the most devout in Menzoberranzan. So fanatical are they that even some of the high priestesses of Arach-Tinilith are made uneasy by their wild orgies with demons and mass sacrifices in the name of their twisted goddess.

HOUSE MIZZRYM

The Fifth House

A close ally of both her Qu'ellarz'orl neighbors Baenre and Xorlarrin, Matron Mother Miz'ri Mizzrym is a wily and duplicitous negotiator who has trade contacts throughout the Underdark and even in the World Above. Much of the slave trade in Menzoberranzan is controlled by House Mizzrym, as well as the trade in illicit magic items.

HOUSE FEY-BRANCHE

The Sixth House

Fey-Branche is one of the oldest of the ruling houses, having been among the top tier of drow clans for over four thousand years. It credits much of that longevity to its having played the lackey to the other houses for so long. Though Fey-Branche occupies the rank of Sixth House, Matron Mother Byrtyn Fey fully expects that both Melarn and Vandree will soon challenge it, and the house will most likely have to accept the eighth rank once again.

HOUSE MELARN

The Seventh House

The youngest of the ruling houses by far, House Melarn was formed from a union of Houses Horlbar and Kenafin a decade after the end of Lolth's Silence, and named in honor of Lolth's Lady Penitent, Halistra Melarn. It has absorbed a trickle of survivors from the original House Melarn, which fell in the destruction of Ched Nasad, but the matron mother, Zhindia Melarn, is the daughter of House Horlbar's Matron Mother Jerlys Horlbar.

HOUSE VANDREE

The Eighth House

After killing her ineffectual mother Troken'ther in 1388 DR, Matron Mother Fiirnel'ther Vandree has clawed her way from Seventeenth House, threatened by the more powerful Barrison Del'Armgo, to a place on the Ruling Council. It's possible that even Fiirnel'ther doesn't know how many drow she had to kill to make that happen.



NORTHDARK

Stretching from the Sword Coast in the west to the edge of Netheril in the east, and from the Spine of the World in the north to Baldur's Gate in the south, Northdark is among the Underdark's longest settled and most "civilized" regions.

NORTHDARK LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Streetwise check.

DC 10: The largest and most dominant city in Northdark is the drow metropolis of Menzoberranzan, seat of the worship of the Queen of the Demonweb Pits. The drow share Northdark with other Underdark races and are constantly at odds with the dwarven halls of the Spine of the World.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Cities, villages, and scattered clanholds abound in Northdark, and miles of natural tunnels have been mapped as caravan routes.

AMMARINDAR

Small City; Population 7,000

Once connected to the World Above through the lower reaches of Hellgate Keep, Ammarindar was sealed off from the surface after a decade of infighting that followed the disappearance of the cambion Kaanyr Vhok. Vhok's Scoured Legion, an army of tanarukks (demonic orcs), eventually came under the control of one of their own, Warchief Ghaarzhvex. The tanarukks of Ammarindar are led today by High Warchief Ghiirvox. The tanarukks sometimes raid their neighbors and other times hire out as mercenaries. The mysterious Bloodreaver Jervaan has brought the fervent worship of Tempus's exarch Garagos to Ammarindar.

CLANHOLD OF THE GRIZZLEFANG TRIBE

Village; Population 275

The kobolds of the Grizzlefang Tribe are led by Chief Gvurzz and his mate Klaah, who directs the tribe in worship to the archdevil Mammon. The tribe makes its home in a series of caves, the ceilings of which are rarely more than 5 feet high—comfortable for the kobolds, but confining for the larger races they're smart enough to avoid. Their caves are located roughly halfway between Eryndlyn and Araumycos, whose siren dream-calls constantly trouble them.

ARAUMYCOS

Without doubt the largest single life form on all of Toril, Araumycos might also be the oldest. This massive fungal colony encompasses hundreds of square miles of the Upperdark under the High Forest. It is a haven for fungus creatures, especially myconids, who hide amid its gray-white mass.

During the Spellplague, something happened to Araumycos. Even before the disaster, rumors told that the colony had already achieved a rudimentary awareness. Those stories have now been confirmed. Often referring to itself as King Araumycos, the sentient mass of fungal growth has brought thousands, perhaps millions, of myconids under its domination. It sends tendrils and spores throughout the Upperdark, forcing cities such as Menzoberranzan, Ched Nasad, and Yathchol to guard many of their approaches against fungal incursion.

Still its alien influence can be felt. Araumycos assails any sentient creature within hundreds of miles with strange nightmares—dreams of the comfort of the mass will and the hopeless chaos of individuality the drow call *golhyrrl' fhaazht* ("the Dream Trap"). Only the illithids seem utterly immune to its influence. Countless drow, deep gnomes, tanarukks, and others have succumbed to its siren call, never to be seen again.

BLINGDENSTONE

Small City; Population 5,000

Abandoned by its original deep gnome population, Blingdenstone has hosted everything from clouds of sentient magical dust, to deep gnome wererats, to any number of wandering monsters, to drow and human scavengers in search of the treasures the former burrow wardens left behind. For the past four decades, though, led by Most Honored Burrow Warden Kargien Dissengulp, the original inhabitants of Blingdenstone have been moving back in, enjoying support from surprising corners, including Silverymoon and Mithral Hall.

CH'CHITL

Small Town; Population 500

Once a reasonably civilized illithid settlement ruled by an elder concord after the death of its elder brain, Ch'Chitl was turned inside out in the Year of Blue Fire. Now the cavern it resides in has become a plaguecave of the most surreal kind. Three of the elders were combined into a hideous, mutated beast that became Ch'Chitl's new elder brain. Its body died, but its mind lived on in a pulsing mass of gray matter traced with sizzling lines of blue fire.

The illithids of Ch'Chitl have become the Mindplagued, spellscarred creatures capable of extraordinary feats of psionic power, fueled by and

intermingled with the inherent magical abilities of their spellscars.

CHED NASAD

Small City; Population 7,500

Destroyed in the chaos following Lolth's Silence, Ched Nasad has needed a century to reclaim its place among the drow cities of Northdark. Many of the city's structures that once clustered on great thoroughfares of calcified webs remain in ruin. Faathryll Teh'Kinrellz, Matron Mother of the First House of Ched Nasad, is firmly in control of the city and its six other new or restored houses. One concession they have made is a continuing close association with the Jaezred Chaulssin.

GRACKLSTUGH

Large City; Population 30,000

This large and well-defended Middledark city is home to a huge population of duergar and their slaves and allies. The city is nestled in a large cavern on the edge of the Darklake. The duergar fish the Darklake from their flat-bottomed boats but avoid the deeper waters for fear of the many ferocious creatures that call its depths home.

The city is defended by one of the largest and best-equipped armies in Northdark, but the soldiers have dangerously little arcane and divine support.

The duergar king is young, having inherited the post from his father in 1372 DR, but Horgar Steelshadow V is a capable warrior, if a bit slow to make decisions and rather quick to lose his temper. Some say the king is illiterate but manages to hide that fact.

YATHCHOL

Small Town; Population 1,000

Actually a cluster of nine separate thorps, the chitine community of Yathchol is a Middledark house of horrors. These freakish spiderlike creatures, exiled from failed experiments in Ched Nasad, have formed a society of their own centered, like that of their former mistresses, around the worship of Lolth.

The town's population has doubled in the last century, and its patrols range as far east as the Deep Wastes and south to the edge of Old Shanatar. No one is sure what evil the chitines are planning—perhaps final revenge against Ched Nasad, but no one can possibly predict the desires of these beings.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

Gauntlgrym: This legendary home of the Delzoun dwarves continues to obsess dwarves from all over the North. Efforts to reclaim the place have failed, but the stories of extraordinary treasures cached there continue to make it a popular tavern tale and the ultimate prize for the greediest adventurers.



Skullport: Once a city of slavers, pirates, and unscrupulous merchants, Skullport is now a ruined city home to the absolute dregs of Northdark, from houseless drow wretches to spellscarred kobolds driven mad by a magic they can't understand. Human adventurers who have braved its rotting streets and lived to tell the tale have describe it as "like Luskan, but not as sunny."

Spellcaves of Eryndlyn: Eryndlyn was once a thriving drow city, but religious infighting and threats from without left it nearly abandoned. An earth node near the city absorbed the effects of the Spellplague and has made the cavern the deepest plaguecave in Northdark.

JAEZRED CHAULSSIN

This insidious band of half-shadow dragon drow assassins took full advantage of Lolth's Silence, working its shadowy tentacles into much of Northdark. But with its defeat in the Siege of Menzoberranzan, it was ultimately unable to maintain control of the restoration of Ched Nasad. The Jaezred Chaulssin has returned to the abandoned city of Chaulssin, which exists half in and half out of the Shadowfell. The assassins have become tense allies of the Netherese, from whom they accept contracts, but they have so far resisted being absorbed into the empire.

OLD SHANATAR

A region of the Underdark once settled by glorious dwarven kingdoms, Old Shanatar has become a place of bizarre civilizations and dark rituals.

OLD SHANATAR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful History check.

DC 10: The ancient dwarven realm of Old Shanatar was once home to thousands of peaceful dwarves, but only one of the eight great kingdoms stands today.

SETTLEMENTS AND FEATURES

Old Shanatar has more artificial spaces—mines, cities, and impressive works of dwarven craftwork and architecture—than any other part of the Underdark.

GUALLIDURTH

Large City; Population 16,000

One of the largest, and certainly the oldest, of the southern drow cities, Guallidurth was a place where the worship of Lolth was left to numerous competing sects, and as many as two hundred noble houses vied for power. But in the years since Lolth's Silence, a new order has come to Guallidurth.

The various temples were united under the snake-headed scourge, Mistress Mother Fizzri Khaven-Ghell, who systematically cleansed the warring houses until only twenty-four remained, led by First House Loor'Tchaan. This period of "transition" (no one now dares call it a civil war) checked Guallidurth's expansion for several decades, but in the past thirty years, Guallidurthan patrols have begun to range farther and farther from the confines of their city.

ILTKAZAR

Small City; Population 4,500

Iltkazar is the last remaining dwarven enclave in Old Shanatar. This impressive, multilevel underground fortress city is a monument to the greatest dwarf miners who ever lived. It is a place of towering statuary and sweeping staircases wide enough to march an army down. The city is lit by silver-blue lichen that lines the ceilings throughout.

What is most poignant about Iltkazar is how empty it feels. Miles and miles of corridors stand in silence, and the population has been reduced to a tiny fraction of its ancient glory.

The kingdom is ruled by a silver dragon, King Mith Barak, who came to power in 66 DR, then was lost for a time when his astral form was captured by

Tiamat in 1367 DR. He was restored to life only two years ago, having been a prisoner for a full century while a string of regents ruled in his place and the population of Iltkazar continued to shrink.

King Mith Barak has vowed to return Iltkazar and all of Old Shanatar to its full glory, but he has a very long road ahead of him.

MALYDREN

Small City; Population 6,000

The top of the highest of the many stepped pyramids that make up the sunken city of Malydren is 50 feet below the still waters of the Lake of Radiant Mists. The mystically lit architecture of the izxans (a race of intelligent rays), and the steam from their furnaces, give the lake its name.

Hidden from the prying eyes of all but the most adventurous explorers, Malydren is a city of wide avenues. The izxans enslave any sentient beings that come near, granting them the ability to breathe underwater as long as they serve with total devotion. Punishment takes only one form: drowning at a depth of 150 feet or more.

RRINGLOR NOROTH

Small City; Population 8,000

The City of Soaring Shadows is the largest cloaker community in the Upperdark. Separated into rigid castes, the cloakers of Rringlor Noroth continue to experiment with the idea of living together in something like a city.

What brought them together was the Shadowspan, an enormous bridge built by a race that predated the dwarves of Old Shanatar. One end of the bridge begins in the middle of the Lake of Radiant Mists, and the other emerges from a similar lake deep inside the Shadowfell. In between, the span is collapsed and in need of repair.

From time to time, a mysterious creature known only as the Emissary emerges from the Shadowfell. It whispers alien wisdom into the ears of the dozen cloaker lords who form the Shadoworb Conclave. They have been laboring to repair the Shadowspan

PLAGUECAVE OAXAPTUPA

Very few know what this place once was. Rumors abound of a once great civilization of insectoid creatures who called this huge cavern home. All memory of these beings was erased when the Year of Blue Fire brought Abeir into conjunction with Toril. That civilization was either destroyed or transported wholesale to Abeir.

Whatever became of that civilization, if it existed at all, Oaxaptupa is now a massive plaguecave where the laws of physics are ever-changing, and colossal insects—not the least bit civilized—prey on anything that bleeds.



for more than two centuries; when complete, it will cross the entire distance between the lakes.

SLOOPDILMONPOLOP

Large City; Population 12,000

This was once a holy city of the kuo-toan deity Blib-doolpoolp, but the once-mighty shamans haven't heard from their god in a long while. Many of the kuo-toas have turned to the worship of Ghaunadaur, Bane or Istishia. Into this confusion came thousands of kuo-toa refugees, fleeing the tyranny of the Abolothic Sovereignty.

Priest-King Ni-Gool-Veen Viboolkugoorg has fully converted to the service of Ghaunadaur and ignores all other faiths. He secretly wonders if he has chosen the wrong side, though, and is as eager to be proven wrong as right.

TZARAZ

Small City; Population 7,000

Fully 20 miles below the surface, under what is modern-day Darromar, lies an enormous hive of beholders. Though the permanent population is between 5,000 and 10,000, gatherings of beholder clans can swell the population to almost 50,000 during breeding season, when chaos and violence reigns.

Tzaraz is surrounded by huge expanses of *faerzress*, and a particularly large earth node lies directly in the center of the hive, from which young beholders draw nourishment for the first decade of their lives.

The slaves that are dragged into this awful pit lead the most miserable existences imaginable. The beholders have no regard for life, and a hapless slave is as likely to be used for vivisection as for hard labor.

PLOTS AND ADVENTURE SITES

The Fallen Tombs: When an earthquake struck the Lowerdark under the ruins of the elven city of Myth Rhynn, deep in the Wealdath, a section of the city's ancient tombs were pushed into the dark

reaches between the Middledark and the Lowerdark. The tombs are said to still be intact, and still full of the riches of the once-great city, but no one has yet found them.

Rrinnoroth: Once a dwarven stronghold protecting the crucial water supply of the Lake of Radiant Mists, Rrinnoroth long ago fell to ruin. Not long afterward it became the abode of a particularly unpleasant red dragon by the name of Charvekannathor the Scarlet.

"Char" has allied with tribes of thoquas, trolls, and various other lower denizens of the Middledark. They serve as his guards, protecting the approaches to Rrinnoroth from those who come in search of his magnificent treasure hoard while the dragon is out hunting in the skies above the Giant's Plain.

Xenfyrrth's Abyss: This black pit, a hundred feet in diameter, opens into the center of a long-abandoned dwarfhold. The surrounding structures appear to have been blown out and away from it in a circle, as though something huge dug up from below. The abyss empties into a dark realm of bleak gray landscapes pelted by acidic rain. No one knows the name of this forgotten plane, or the long-dead god that once called it home.

This abyss is named for the wizard Xenfyrrth, who was the sole survivor of the adventuring party that discovered the hole in 1418 DR.

THE UMBER HULKS OF NEZCHENZÛR

Clanhold; Population 500

Though most umber hulks prefer the life of solitary nomads, wandering the Underdark in search of prey, the clanhold of Nezchenezûr, located about 120 miles northeast of Sloopdilmopolop, is becoming an active, if rough and dangerous, place for this misunderstood race to meet and trade. Though not yet open to trade with any but their fellow umber hulks, their merchants are growing in sophistication every day.



THREATS

TORIL HAS always been dangerous, and it has become even more so with the changes wrought in the past century. Monsters hunt its reaches, both untamed or civilized, picking off the unwary and threatening life as most people know it. Some of these creatures alone would be enough to satisfy those eager to face danger or thwart evil. But peril takes many shapes in the world.

Many sentient beings across Toril harbor only hatred for good folk. Goblins and more brutish humanoids prey on and subjugate the defenseless. Drow weave cruel webs deep in the earth, hoping to bind all under Lolth's yoke. The shades of Netheril view the world as their rightful possession, but they must contend for rulership with the serpentine sarrukh and their yuan-ti progeny. Planar malignance seeps into the world: demonic infestations, devilish plots, and elemental savagery. Szass Tam yet reigns in haunted Thay and aims for omnipotence, potentially at every other being's expense.

The creatures, organizations, and villains presented in this chapter will help you to create a game tailored to your preferences.

SWORDMAGE NPCS

You can apply the swordmage class from the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide* as a template for NPCs, using the process for applying class templates described on page 182 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The swordmage is an elite soldier with the following abilities and characteristics.

Power Source: Arcane

Defenses +2 Will

Saving Throws +2

Action Point 1

Hit Points +8 per level + Constitution score

Weapon Proficiency Simple melee, military light blades, military heavy blades, simple ranged

Armor Proficiency Cloth, leather

Trained Skills Arcana plus one other skill from the swordmage class list: Athletics (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Endurance (Con), History (Int), Insight (Wis), and Intimidate (Cha)

Class Features Swordbond, Swordmage Aegis
Implements Any light blades or heavy blades



CHURCH OF BANE

The Black Lord consolidated his power during the Spellplague. His church, a well-honed weapon of conquest and tyranny, has grown more dangerous. Bane wants all beings subjugated under his authority, and his organization often works openly toward this end.

CHURCH OF BANE LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Fzoul Chembryl died defending Zhentil Keep against the shades of Netheril. Despite his failure, Bane then took Fzoul as an exarch. Since that time, Fzoul's followers have focused on maintaining Bane's influence in the Moonsea region. At Fzoul's direction, they work against Netheril.

Religion DC 15: Bane suffered a setback when the shades razed Zhentil Keep and the Citadel of the Raven, annihilating the backbone of the Zhentarim. But what he lost then, he has more than regained. Not only did he assimilate the goblin deities under his authority, but he also gained the worship of evil dwarves through Abbathor. Thwarting Shar's desire to take over the sphere of revenge, Bane sheltered and subjugated Hoar. He furthered his power by taking Loviatar as a consort, uniting the two faiths. Even great Tiamat now serves Bane.

ORGANIZATION

Bane expects his followers to maintain order. All in his church have a set place and path of advancement, making unusual activities easier to detect.

Headquarters: House of the Black Lord, Mulmaster, Moonsea region (page 150).

Hierarchy: Bane's authoritarian religion maintains a strict chain of command. His temples resemble fortresses as much as houses of worship, and each has a single leader, usually a powerful priest, known as a preceptor. Preceptors report to high preceptors, one in each nation, and they in turn report to the grand preceptor, the Chosen Tyrant of Bane in Mulmaster.

Members: The Church of Bane seeks out those in power and guides them to the Black Lord's path, offering gifts and showing the value of authority. Capable individuals with less influence still make valuable agents or priests. Most prized are those who turn from good to serve Bane. Vile initiation rites and watchful eyes ensure such a devotee's loyalty.

FZOUL CHEMBRYL

FZOUL CHEMBRYL WAS ONCE THE CHOSEN TYRANT OF Bane, commander of the Zhentarim (page 282) and

the most feared individual in the Moonsea region. In death he is greater still, risen to serve Bane as an exarch. He now has many new followers, and some of the Zhentarim still follow his word. His task is to reclaim what he lost, opposing Netheril. Having failed Bane once, Fzoul can't afford to fall short again.

Fzoul Chembryl		Level 28 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium immortal humanoid		XP 26,000
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +23	
Tyrant's Eye (Psychic) aura 5; an enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 5 psychic damage.		
HP 500; Bloodied 250; see also <i>dark majesty</i>		
AC 44; Fortitude 43, Reflex 42, Will 46		
Resist 15 necrotic, 15 poison		
Saving Throws +2 (+5 against fear and charm effects, and against effects that immobilize, restrain, or slow)		
Speed 6, fly 8		
Action Point 1		
⚔ Scepter of the Chosen Tyrant (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic, Weapon		
+33 vs. AC; 1d10 + 9 damage (crit 6d10 + 19), and the target takes ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends). Fzoul can't be disarmed of this weapon.		
⚔ Scepter of the Chosen Tyrant (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Psychic, Weapon		
Ranged 5; +32 vs. AC; 1d10 + 9 force damage (crit 6d10 + 19), and the target is pushed 1 square and takes ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends).		
⚡ Excoriating Decree (standard; encounter) ♦ Thunder		
Close burst 10; targets enemies; +33 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 9 thunder damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Fzoul's next turn.		
⚡ Ruling Command (standard; recharge ⏳ ⏳) ♦ Charm, Psychic		
Ranged 20; +34 vs. Will; 2d6 + 10 psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage and is dominated (save ends both, with a -2 penalty to the saving throw). Fzoul can dominate only one creature at a time.		
⚡ Judging Strike (minor; recharge ⏳ ⏳ ⏳)		
If Fzoul hits with his next <i>Scepter of the Chosen Tyrant</i> attack (melee or ranged), the attack is treated as a critical hit.		
⚡ Restore the Faithful (standard; encounter) ♦ Healing		
Close burst 10; Fzoul and each of his allies spends a healing surge and regains one-quarter of maximum hit points (125 hp for Fzoul).		
Dark Majesty		
Until bloodied, Fzoul gains a +4 bonus to all defenses against opportunity attacks.		
Alignment Evil	Languages All	
Skills Arcana +23, Bluff +29, Diplomacy +29, History +23, Insight +28, Intimidate +29, Religion +23		
Str 26 (+22)	Dex 25 (+21)	Wis 28 (+23)
Con 21 (+19)	Int 18 (+18)	Cha 30 (+24)
Equipment <i>Scepter of the Chosen Tyrant</i> (see page 57)		

FZOUL'S TACTICS

Troops always accompany Fzoul, including his ever-vigilant bodyguard—a level 28 evil dread wraith. Fzoul preaches the edicts of Bane in battle, speaking an *excoriating decree*, then wades into melee. His scepter hurls bolts of force, and Fzoul can also use *ruling command* to attack at range.

BANELAR NAGA

WICKED AND MAJESTIC, BANELAR NAGAS have long been allied with the Church of Bane.

BANELAR NAGA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Religion check.

DC 20: Many banelar nagas betrayed Bane, defecting to Cyric's sect, when the god died during the Time of Troubles. Bane was reborn, and he empowered loyal banelars to find and destroy disloyal ones. Now, almost every banelar is affiliated with Bane, even if it does not directly serve Bane's church.

Banelar Naga		Level 18 Solo Controller
Huge immortal magical beast (reptile)		XP 10,000
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +17; darkvision	
HP 825; Bloodied 412; see also <i>dark majesty</i>		
Regeneration 20		
AC 36; Fortitude 38, Reflex 29, Will 34; see also <i>baneful utterance</i>		
Resist 15 acid, 15 poison		
Saving Throws +5 (+8 against fear and charm effects, and against effects that immobilize, restrain, or slow)		
Speed 6, swim 6		
Action Points 2		
⚔ Sting (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
Reach 2; +24 vs. AC; 2d6 + 10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).		
↗ Forceful Word (minor; at-will) ♦ Charm, Psychic		
Ranged 10; +22 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.		
⚔ Skewer (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
The banelar naga makes two sting attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target is also unconscious (save ends). An unconscious target can't save against the ongoing poison damage until the unconscious condition ends.		
↗ Banelar Arc (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +22 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). The arc attacks up to two secondary targets within 10 squares; +22 vs. Reflex; 1d4+8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
↗ Baneful Utterance (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack; at-will) ♦ Charm		
The banelar naga makes an attack against the attacker; ranged 10; +22 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends) and slides 3 squares.		
Dark Majesty		
Until bloodied, the banelar naga gains a +4 bonus to all defenses against opportunity attacks.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic, Supernal	
Skills Arcana +19, Bluff +22, Insight +17, Intimidate +22		
Str 30 (+19)	Dex 13 (+10)	Wis 16 (+12)
Con 21 (+14)	Int 21 (+14)	Cha 26 (+17)

BANELAR NAGA TACTICS

With haughty ferocity, a banelar faces its foes directly. It speaks a *forceful word* to keep dangerous opponents at bay while it stings and bites attackers, lashing out with *baneful utterance* when an enemy lands a blow. It is content to use *banelar arc* when foes are out of reach.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Those faithful to the Black Lord enjoy the aid of a faction within the Zhentarim. Loviatar's worshippers serve as a part of Bane's hierarchy. Bane's followers now also include a huge number of goblins, as well as evil and avaricious dwarves. Through Tiamat, numerous evil dragons serve Bane's ends.

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,300)

- ♦ 1 hobgoblin Hand of Bane (level 8 elite soldier)
- ♦ 4 hobgoblin warriors (level 8 minion)
- ♦ 2 ogre skirmishers (level 8 skirmisher)
- ♦ 1 flameskull (level 8 artillery)



CHURCH OF SHAR

Shar's worshipers form a highly secretive network of priests, mages, and warriors dedicated to darkness. The church's philosophy is one of nihilism, so life and even existence are of little value. Thus, Shar's agents are very dangerous, willing for the faith's sake to sacrifice themselves and any number of nonbelievers.

CHURCH OF SHAR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: Worship of Shar has existed since the earliest days, but in secret. During past times of strife, such as the Time of Troubles and the Spellplague, the Dark Goddess moved openly against her enemies and killed them. Shar's faith has enjoyed a revival since the rise of Netheril, and her hand in the death of Mystra has only strengthened her influence.

Religion DC 15: Shar was once a being of darkness, created at the beginning of time. She and her sister, Selûne, fashioned the universe in which Toril exists. Since then, only strife has existed between Shar and her lighter twin. Selûne desires unbridled creation and light, but Shar longs for a return to primeval nonexistence. Toward this end, she works to eventually snuff out all other gods and to subvert all creation.

ORGANIZATION

The Church of Shar is actually a complex network of independent cells and hidden temples. Besides Netheril, few lands tolerate the open veneration of the Mistress of the Night. Shar's faithful work in the shadows to undermine authority and to corrupt the good.

Headquarters: Dome of Night, Shade Enclave, Netheril (page 164).

Hierarchy: The church as a whole has no one leader. The most capable local priest, runs a particular Sharran cell. Seeking higher station within the church is forbidden, but turnover among members, usually through death, is commonplace.

Novitiates in the church are simply called "initiates." Those

who make it through training call one another "dark brother" or "dark sister" when appropriate. Leaders take the title "dark father" or "dark mother."

Members: Sharrans seek new members with zeal, striving to make good works seem pointless and even foolish. They uncover and use dark secrets to manipulate and harm others. Sharran plots bring sorrow and hopelessness to potentially valuable followers, then nurse dark emotions until their targets willingly come to Shar. Most of Shar's followers are normal people who have surrendered to despair.

New recruits must prove their loyalty by performing evil acts, such as the sacrifice of a sentient being. Accepted members must obey Shar's will, as dispensed by superior clergy, without question.

DARK MOON MONKS

OTHER FAITHS MAINTAIN KNIGHTLY ORDERS, but Shar's sect favors stealthy, terrifying assassins. These fanatics not only work for the church, they also police Shar's clergy and other followers.

Headquarters: Dark Moon Monastery, Purskul, Amn.

Hierarchy: A monastery's leader adds "abbot" or "abbess" to the end of the parental title common for Sharrans; for example, "dark mother abbess."

Members: Dark Moon monks come from among Shar's faithful, but no ordained priest can train in the order. The group prefers those who also have a talent for arcane or shadow powers. Most of the order's monks have also mastered a few dark rituals.

When they are not within a Sharran temple or monastery, these monks keep secret shrines and training grounds in remote areas. They also form sleeper cells within settlements where Shar's worship is unwelcome, maintaining hideouts for fellow Sharrans.

DARK MOON MONK TACTICS

Dark Moon monks begin a battle with *shadow tentacle* to gain an advantage, sustaining it each round and moving it to strike at other targets. A monk then takes the enemy apart with unarmed strikes. A Dark Moon monk can spontaneously create a shadow ghost shuriken to throw, but reserves this attack for foes who avoid melee.



Dark Moon Monk		Level 6 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 250
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +10	
HP 68; Bloodied 34		
AC 22; Fortitude 16, Reflex 20, Will 18		
Speed 7		
⊕ Unarmed Strike (standard; at-will)		
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
⤵ Ghost Shuriken (standard; at-will) ◆ Cold or Necrotic		
Ranged 6/12; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 3 damage plus 1d4 necrotic or cold damage (monk's choice).		
⤵ Shadow Tentacle (standard; sustain minor [see text]; encounter) ◆ Conjuration, Necrotic		
Ranged 10; the monk conjures a shadow tentacle in an unoccupied square within range, and the tentacle attacks adjacent creatures on the monk's turn: +10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). The tentacle can grab only one target at a time, dealing 1d6 + 3 necrotic damage to the grabbed foe each round the monk sustains the grab. As a standard action, the monk can change the target and can move the tentacle up to 5 squares.		
⊕ Gloom Fist (standard; recharge ☹ ☹ ☹) ◆ Necrotic		
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage and is dazed (save ends both).		
⊕ Dark Moon Strike (minor; encounter)		
The next time the monk hits with a melee attack, the attack is treated as a critical hit.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Chondathan ^{PG} , Common	
Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +12, Stealth +13		
Str 18 (+7)	Dex 20 (+8)	Wis 14 (+5)
Con 12 (+4)	Int 10 (+3)	Cha 16 (+6)

KIR-LANAN

KIR-LANANS ARE MYSTERIOUS WINGED HUMANOIDS that appeared after the deaths of a few evil gods during the Time of Troubles. They now serve Shar.

KIR-LANAN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Arcana DC 15: Kir-lanans live in communities they call rookeries. Since Shar often requires them to work with her other devotees, however, kir-lanans can be found in Sharran enclaves across Faerûn.

Arcana DC 20: Kir-lanans have a caste-based culture. Members of the lowest caste are called wings. Elite wings, called eyes, have powers that enable them to serve as spies and killers. Through the highest caste, called voices, kir-lanans learn Shar's will.

Religion DC 20: When they first appeared, kir-lanans were outside divine influence and hated all deities. However, they formed temporary alliances with the servants of wicked divinities, mainly Shar. Many kir-lanans liked Shar's doctrine of ultimate dissolution. Over time, the race fell under Shar's sway.

KIR-LANAN TACTICS

Kir-lanans prefer to attack from the air or high ground, from hiding if possible. A kir-lanan wing launches *enfeebling ray*, then repeatedly swoops to attack.

Kir-Lanan Wing		Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +6; low-light vision	
HP 52; Bloodied 26; see also <i>necrotic healing</i>		
AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 17, Will 15		
Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 5, fly 8; see also <i>mobile melee attack</i>		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will) ◆ Necrotic		
+10 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage plus 1d4 necrotic damage.		
⊕ Mobile Melee Attack (standard; at-will) ◆ Necrotic		
While flying, a kir-lanan wing can move up to half its speed and make one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The kir-lanan wing doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of its attack.		
⤵ Enfeebling Ray (standard; recharge ☹ ☹) ◆ Necrotic		
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).		
Combat Advantage		
The kir-lanan wing deals an extra 1d6 damage on attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Necrotic Healing (immediate reaction, when damaged by a necrotic attack; encounter) ◆ Healing		
The kir-lanan wing regains 13 hit points.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Kir-Lanan	
Skills Stealth +10		
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 9 (+1)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 12 (+3)

VOICES

A kir-lanan voice is a controller (leader) of 6th level or higher, focusing on Charisma rather than Strength. It can recharge *enfeebling ray* on a 4 or higher. A voice also has *shadow devotion*, *word of loss*, and *shadow's call*. These last three powers are described below. You can use the information in Chapter 10 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to flesh out a kir-lanan voice.

Shadow Devotion aura 5; allies in the aura gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls; shadow allies in the aura also gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls.

⤵ **Word of Loss** (standard; recharge ☹ ☹ ☹) ◆ **Psychic**

Ranged 10; [level +5] vs. Will; [low normal] psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the kir-lanan voice's next turn.

⤵ **Shadow's Call** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Necrotic, Sleep**

Close burst 3; [level +4] vs. Will; [low normal] necrotic damage, and the target falls unconscious (save ends).

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

The Church of Shar has few allies. Sharrans can find plentiful assistance in Netheril. Many evil creatures, especially those of the Shadowfell, willingly serve or work with Shar's faithful. Disciples of Talona and Sseth recognize Shar's devotees as kindred spirits.

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,400)

- ◆ 1 kir-lanan voice (level 7 controller [leader])
- ◆ 2 Dark Moon monks (level 6 soldier)
- ◆ 1 shadar-kai chainfighter (level 6 skirmisher)
- ◆ 2 kir-lanan wings (level 4 skirmisher)

THE COURT OF RORN

Blazing Rorn the Fury, also called Rorn of the Rages, is only dimly remembered as a name of terror in colorful Abeiran legends. A Dawn Titan (primordial), Rorn was an unstoppable blaze of light brighter than the sun when his wrath burned hottest. However, like many Dawn Titans, Rorn grew weary of the war over the world, and after Abeir was divided from Toril, he grew quiescent and slept away the ages.

Now Rorn is rousing, though he is not yet fully conscious. His followers, already awake, have begun their master's work, dealing with lesser enemies of the Dawn Titans. Here and there, priests go missing, as do lesser dragons. Holy sites and dragon hoards are mysteriously destroyed. Dragon kings and the gods themselves will fall before the fury of Rorn—when he wakes.

COURT OF RORN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful History check.

DC 25: Blazing Rorn the Fury was one of the most notorious Dawn Titans. Rorn was known for his rages, during which he slew gods, exarchs, and fellow primordials with unmatched ferocity. Before Ao twinned the world, Rorn was among the primordials that the gods most hated and feared. For his part, Rorn returned violence with violence, anger with rage, and insult with atrocity, a slave to his inner fury.

DC 30: When his primordial nature was not inflamed to starlike fury, Rorn knew prudence, tolerance, and compromise. In such moments of clarity, Rorn declared his desire for peace with primordials and gods alike. However, the Dawn Titan had killed too many divine beings for the Estelar (gods) to forget him. Rorn grew to hate the gods, whether he was raging or resting.

DC 35: After Abeir was split off from Toril, Rorn thought his rages were concluded. Then the dragons rose up, claiming Abeir for their own. Rather than wake his fury anew over the dragons' betrayal, Rorn chose to sequester himself and his servants, awaiting a changed world. He and the creatures of his court slept away the ages, hidden in the very roots of Fimbrul, in a deep stasis in which they neither aged nor deteriorated.

DC 40: Rorn stirred in the tumult of the Blue Breath of Change, when Abeir and Toril violently reshaped each other in a chaos that killed many primordials and countless lesser beings. For decades he has reached toward mobility and consciousness, his dreams growing more troubled with each

passing year. Rorn's courtiers are now conscious beneath Fimbrul and preparing for their master's full awakening.

ORGANIZATION

In the absence of their master's direct command, the Court of Rorn makes preparations to claim Returned Abeir and, from there, the world.

Leader: Rorn. However, the great primordial still drowns on the edge of wakefulness, communicating fitfully with his court only through dreams.

Headquarters: The deepest caverns of Fimbrul (page 208) in Returned Abeir.

Hierarchy: Rorn's most powerful courtiers are mordrins (earth giants and earth titans altered and augmented by Rorn to be his champions). Strange creatures preserved through the ages also reside with the dreaming Dawn Titan: haraevors and felljaws (primeval reptilian cave guardians), and tentacled torments (the eyes, ears, and grasping fingers of the hidden court).

Members: Below the immediate court is a growing organization of servitor creatures, spies, informants, cultists, and sellswords across Returned Abeir, many not even aware of who ultimately pays them. Rorn's followers proceed without him, thinking to curry their master's favor when he does finally rouse.

The first order of business is dealing with the dragons who presume to rule Returned Abeir. The Court of Rorn seeks to destroy or enslave at least the lesser of these. Now that Abeir (or at least this part of it) is again within reach of the hated Estelar, the gods too must be confronted. So far the court has proceeded cautiously, learning what gods have survived and what new ones seek worshipers. By discovering the gods' powers, aims, and ideals, the Court of Rorn can best plan their eventual destruction.

BLAZING RORN THE FURY

RORN IS A GIGANTIC DRAGON-HEADED, tailed humanoid with skin the texture and color of cooling lava.

RORN'S TACTICS

Rorn begins a fight with his *earth chains* power, pulling enemies into range of his *blazing aura* and within reach of his melee attacks. He uses a minor action each round to repeat this attack as long as necessary to keep enemies within range. Then he blasts them with *dominion of flames* while they are stripped of any fire resistance. With another minor action, he lays about with his tail smash. He continues to attack with claw and tail, using *dominion of flames* whenever it is available, until he is bloodied. Once in his Gargantuan blazing star form, he uses *blazing action* to destroy a badly damaged enemy after its turn ends.

Blazing Rorn the Fury Level 33 Solo Primordial
 Huge elemental humanoid (earth, fire) XP 155,000

Initiative +23 **Senses** Perception +25; tremorsense 100

Blazing Aura (Fire) aura 10; creatures within the aura lose resistance to fire. Each creature that starts its turn in the aura is pulled 2 squares at the start of its turn. While Rorn is bloodied, each creature that starts its turn in the aura also takes 20 fire damage.

HP 1,545; **Bloodied** 772; see also *fury of burning stars* and *blazing action*
AC 50; **Fortitude** 51, **Reflex** 45, **Will** 48; see also *volcanic reaction*
Immune attacks by characters below level 20; fire

Saving Throws +5; whenever an attack applies an effect to Rorn that a save can end, he makes an immediate saving throw. If it succeeds, he is unaffected by the effect. Rorn makes saving throws at the end of each of his turns as normal.

Speed 10, climb 10; earth walk; phasing (through earth or lava only)

Action Points 2

 ⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +38 vs. AC; 3d8 + 12 damage. While Rorn is bloodied, the target also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

 † **Tail Smash** (minor; at-will)

Reach 4; +36 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 12 damage, and the target is knocked prone. While Rorn is bloodied, the target also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

 † **Earth Chains** (minor; recharge ☞ ☞)

 Ranged sight; +36 vs. Fortitude or Reflex; 2d6 + 13 damage, and the target is pulled 10 squares. A flying creature hit by this attack is slowed (save ends). While Rorn is bloodied, the target also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends both). *Failed Save:* The creature can't fly, and falls if it's already flying (save ends).

 ⚡ **Dominion of Flames** (standard; recharge ☞ ☞) ♦ **Fire**

Close burst 20; +36 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 13 fire damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

 ⚡ **Volcanic Retort** (immediate reaction, when hit by an attack; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

Close burst 2 (burst 5 while Rorn is bloodied); +36 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 13 fire damage.

Threatening Reach

While bloodied, Rorn can make opportunity attacks against all creatures within his reach (3 squares).

Fury of Burning Stars (when first bloodied; encounter)

Rorn changes to his blazing star form. His size increases to Gargantuan, and he pushes creatures within his new space to the nearest adjacent square. He takes an extra turn right after the turn of the character who bloodied him, then resumes his normal place in the initiative order. He remains in his blazing star form until the end of the encounter.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** All; telepathy 100

Skills Diplomacy +31, Endurance +34, Insight +30, Intimidate +31, Nature +30, Religion +31

Str 35 (+28) **Dex** 24 (+23) **Wis** 28 (+25)

Con 37 (+29) **Int** 21 (+21) **Cha** 30 (+26)

FELLJAW

FELLJAWS ARE SLATE-GRAY, LIMBLESS, WINGLESS SERPENTS. Their heads are akin to those of dragons, and their skin resembles interlocking slabs of stone.

FELLJAW LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 25: A veteran explorer of the deep caverns of Returned Abeir once called these creatures “the ravening wolves of the Underdark,” which aptly describes the ruthless pack behavior of felljaws.

DC 30: Felljaws are a type of dragonspawn, savage monsters created from the unwholesome mingling of dragons and other creatures. Their lineage is a mixture of dragon (perhaps black) and fire titan.

Felljaw Level 25 Soldier
 Large natural beast (reptile) XP 7,000

Initiative +21 **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision

HP 250; **Bloodied** 125

AC 41; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 37, **Will** 34

Resist 20 fire

Speed 8, climb 4

 ⊕ **Jagged Fangs** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

+31 vs. AC; 1d10 + 10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire damage.

 † **Tug of War** (standard; at-will)

The felljaw makes a basic attack. Another felljaw adjacent to the target can make a basic attack against the same target as an immediate reaction. If both attacks hit, the target takes an extra 10 damage and is grabbed by both felljaws (until escape).

 † **Rending Fangs** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

Grabbed target only; +30 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 30 (+22)

Dex 25 (+19)

Wis 14 (+14)

Con 26 (+20)

Int 2 (+8)

Cha 20 (+17)

FELLJAW TACTICS

Felljaws attack in groups of two or more, choosing the largest and toughest opponent. The pack tries to encircle the target, grabbing it with their slavering jaws and trying to pull it apart. All the while, dripping magma scorches their prey.

HARAEVOR

A HARAEVOR RESEMBLES A 20-FOOT-LONG CROCODILE with four identical necks and fanged heads, an upper pair and a lower pair, growing out of its massive shoulders.

HARAEVOR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 30: Haraevors are a type of dragonspawn, savage monsters created from the unwholesome mingling of dragons and other creatures. Their lineage is a mixture of dragon (perhaps gray) and earth titan.

DC 35: In the banned tome *Primordials and their Servitors*, printed by the Order of the Dawn cult, haraevors are described as “sudden, crushing death from earth.” This description hints at their ability to strike at intruders through solid stone.

Haraevor	Level 26 Elite Lurker	
Large natural beast (reptile)	XP 18,000	
Initiative +24; see also <i>four heads</i>	Senses Perception +14; tremorsense 20	
HP 375; Bloodied 187		
AC 42; Fortitude 42, Reflex 39, Will 37		
Vulnerable critical hits; see also <i>four heads</i>		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 8, burrow 8		
Action Point 1		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) +31 vs. AC; 1d12 + 10 damage.		
← Bite Flurry (standard; at-will) Close blast 2; +30 vs. AC; 1d12 + 10 damage.		
First Strike		
A haraevor has combat advantage against any creature that has not yet acted in an encounter.		
Combat Advantage		
The haraevor deals an extra 3d10 damage with attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Four Heads		
A haraevor rolls initiative four times (once for each head) and uses the highest result. A haraevor loses a head whenever it suffers a critical hit. If it is reduced to no heads, it instantly dies. Heads never grow back.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 30 (+23)	Dex 25 (+20)	Wis 14 (+15)
Con 26 (+21)	Int 2 (+9)	Cha 20 (+18)

HARAEVOR TACTICS

Haraevors travel widely under cover of stone and prefer to begin an attack by emerging suddenly from the earth, thus gaining combat advantage. A haraevor uses *bite flurry* as often as it can until bloodied, at



which point it begins to fight more stealthily, moving in and out of stone. Once it has an advantageous position, a haraevor uses its action point to repeat the attack. Although not too bright, the creature has enough sense to burrow to safety when its life is in danger.

MORDRIN

A MORDRIN IS A 30-FOOT-TALL CREATURE of rough, crudely assembled stone, somewhat similar to an earth titan but larger. A halo of swirling stones and boulders constantly orbits it.

MORDRIN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 35: Mordrins are the eldest of the earth titans, the first to be formed in the shaping hands of primordial eager for servitors. They are always calm, even when in pain or dying, and are unshakably loyal to Rorn.

Mordrin	Level 28 Elite Brute	
Gargantuan elemental humanoid (earth, giant)	XP 26,000	
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +17; tremorsense 20	
Halo of Stone (Earth) aura 2; a creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura takes 10 damage.		
HP 636; Bloodied 318		
AC 43; Fortitude 43, Reflex 37, Will 38		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Point 1		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will) Reach 4; +31 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage.		
↓ Sweeping Fists (standard; at-will) The mordrin makes a slam attack against two different targets within reach.		
✳ Hurl Stones (standard; at-will) Area burst 1 within 20; +29 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 9 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
← Earth Shock (standard; encounter) Close burst 2; +30 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 9 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the mordrin's next turn. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage, and the target is not stunned.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Giant, Primordial	
Str 29 (+23)	Dex 12 (+15)	Wis 17 (+17)
Con 28 (+23)	Int 16 (+17)	Cha 19 (+18)

MORDRIN TACTICS

Like an earth titan, a mordrin hails rocks down upon foes until they close to melee, at which point it pounds them with its stony fists. When enough enemies are nearby, it spends its action point to use *earth shock*, stunning them so it can continue battering them with its *halo of stone*. Mordrins stand their ground even when faced with a losing battle.

TENTACLED TORMENT

A **TENTACLED TORMENT** IS A FLOATING BLACK SPHERE some 10 feet in diameter bristling with black spines, around which “swim” dozens of eyes—drifting, twinkling points of light that can cluster to stare at something.

TENTACLED TORMENT LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 35: Ancient creatures of aberrant seed, tentacled torments were thought to have been wiped out in the Dawn Era. However, Rorn kept a few hidden away, and these have served him ever since.

DC 40: Tentacled torments have developed a natural mind link with zairtails (page 280) and sometimes use these creatures to spy on those who train them.



Tentacled Torment	Level 29 Controller
Large aberrant magical beast	XP 15,000
Initiative +22	Senses Perception +19; darkvision
HP 262; Bloodied 131	
AC 42; Fortitude 39, Reflex 41, Will 44	
Speed 4, fly 8	
⊕ Tentacle (standard; at-will)	
Reach 4; +32 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 8 damage.	
⊕ Commanding Tentacle (standard; at-will) ◆ Charm, Psychic	
Reach 4; +32 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 11 psychic damage, and the tentacled torment chooses one of the following secondary attacks.	
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +33 vs. Will; the target moves its speed away from the tentacled torment.	
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +33 vs. Will; the target makes a basic attack against a creature of the tentacled torment's choice as a free action.	
⌘ Healing Tentacle (minor; recharge ☐☐☐☐) ◆ Healing	
Ranged 4; the target heals 33 hit points.	
Invisibility (minor; encounter) ◆ Illusion	
The tentacled torment and up to two allies within 20 squares become invisible until the end of its next turn.	
Alignment Evil	Languages understands Primordial; telepathy 20
Str 18 (+18)	Dex 27 (+22) Wis 21 (+19)
Con 22 (+20)	Int 18 (+18) Cha 32 (+25)

TENTACLED TORMENT TACTICS

If possible, a tentacled torment prefers to find a lone individual and sneak up on it invisibly, then use *commanding tentacle* to direct the creature's actions. It causes the most dangerous melee combatants to flee from it, while forcing ranged threats to attack their own allies instead.

It prefers to work with allies, which can get into advantageous positions while they are invisible, perhaps to steal an important item or document. It uses *healing tentacle* as needed to keep its allies healthy. If caught alone by a group of powerful foes, a tentacled torment flees.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

The courtiers of Rorn are mostly likely encountered deep below Fimbrul, but as they grow bolder, a strike group could appear nearly anywhere. One day soon, Rorn himself will wake to a rage unparalleled.

Level 29 Encounter (XP 73,000)

- ◆ 2 felljaws (level 25 soldier)
- ◆ 1 haraevor (level 26 elite lurker)
- ◆ 1 mordrin (level 28 elite brute)
- ◆ 1 tentacled torment (level 29 controller)

CULT OF THE DRAGON

Some faiths hold that dragons are destined to rule the world, but the Cult of the Dragon takes such beliefs to an extreme: Only undead dragons are truly immortal and deserve that role. The cult helps fate along by influencing dragons to become dracoliches, which the cult refers to as Sacred Ones. Cultists idolize dragons as nearly divine, and more than a few dragons take up the cult's offer of immortality.

CULT OF THE DRAGON LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 30: Half a millennium has passed since the Cult of the Dragon formed under the mad archmage Sannath. He gathered followers who were drawn by his delusional visions that prophesied the eternal rule of Faerûn by undead dragons. He then formulated a process to create the first dracolich, which he recorded in his work *Tome of the Dragon*. Sannath is dead, but his sinister legacy endures.

Streetwise DC 30: The Cult of the Dragon needs exotic goods to perform its dark rituals, and that means it needs money. Thus, it is as much a criminal and trade organization as it is a magical cabal. Some of its members are legitimate merchants who use their money to fund cult projects. Others engage in criminal activities, from peddling vice to smuggling, blackmail, extortion, and kidnapping. Some cells engage in open banditry and espionage.

ORGANIZATION

Highly secretive, the Cult of the Dragon maintains a loosely connected web of autonomous cells. Its beliefs and methods are frowned upon in most civilized areas. Therefore, the cult commonly uses fronts and dupes to divert attention from its real goals.

Leader: The cult has no true leader, but a rune-scribed dracolich named Anabraxis the Black Talon is revered as the group's ultimate authority. Anabraxis lairs in the bottomless chasm of Lorosfy, in the Deep Wastes of the Underdark (page 220).

Headquarters: The most well-known cult outpost is Dragon House in Murghôm, which is really just a branch operation of the Tower of the Talon (see page 155). It also has a stronghold at the Well of Dragons (see below). The cult recruits dragonborn through its Wyrms Academy, hidden in the ruins of Unthalass within Tymander. It also maintains Redhorn, a major hold in the Dragonspine Mountains.

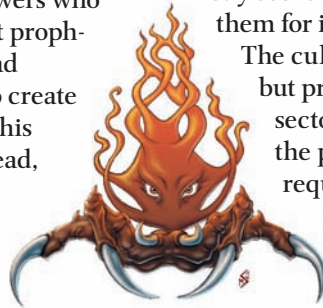
Hierarchy: Most cultists hold a position based on their purpose and the goals of the individual cell. Few refer to one another by any religious title. Some cells confer no titles other than that which denotes a leader to all cultists—Wearer of Purple.

Wearers of Purple, so named for their violet ceremonial robes, are leaders of cult cells. The smaller a cell, the fewer Wearers of Purple it has. Some cells have only one. Many such leaders are entrusted with the secret of creating a dracolich. They control the cell's treasury, direct the collection of riches, and create magic items, all with the goal of bribing dragons. If a cell shrinks too much, Wearers of Purple coordinate recruiting. They also lead cells in battle against their enemies.

Members: Despite its desire for secrecy, the Cult of the Dragon always needs new members to carry out its plans. It recruits most of these from relatives and acquaintances of current members. It also quietly seeks out ideal prospects and patiently grooms them for initiation.

The cult seeks capable individuals of all stripes but prefers those with talent in the financial sector. It holds in highest regard those who have the power to master and perform the rituals required to make a dracolich. It bribes such potential Wearers of Purple with access to the fabled works of Sannath.

Plenty of cultists join the organization only for power and coin. Others are just morally lax or enjoy macabre rituals. Members who see a dracolich or witness the creation of one often become fanatical true believers.



THE WELL OF DRAGONS

In the canyonlands near the Sunset Mountains, north of the River Reaching, is an extinct volcano known as the Well of Dragons. Legend holds that this was a dragon graveyard—a place where old dragons go to die. That story is true.

The Cult of the Dragon found the Well of Dragons and freed its ancient guardian, an undead shadow dragon. Despite resistance from many factions, the cult built a fortress on the site, guarding the entrance to subterranean hollows left by the volcano. Although most old dragons now go elsewhere to breathe their last, some still come to the Well of Dragons to bargain for immortality.

Within the citadel and its underground levels, the cult has stored many treasures left by dying dragons. It also maintains a vast room called the Chamber of Ascension, where the ritual to transform a dragon into a dracolich is performed. The Well of Dragons is heavily guarded, since it suffers continual attacks from fortune seekers, spies, and outraged dragons. Prominent among the cult's sentinels are Arsekslyx

(a female adult red dragon), Amnemis (a female adult black dragon), and Enixtryx (a male adult black dragon).

The lord of the Well of Dragons is the human death knight Naergoth Bladelord. His equal, and the ceremonial master of the Well of Dragons, is the lich Vargo the Faceless. When he was human, Vargo used a ritual to infuse himself with black dragon blood. His resultant powers focus on acid, and the black dragons of the Well are completely loyal to him.

FETTERED DRACOLICH

THE CULT OF THE DRAGON REVERES DRAGONS and customarily allows the dracoliches that it creates to retain free will. Sometimes, though, it has need of a dracolich that is subservient to the cult's desires. Such a creature can act as an agent of terror without requiring a reward.

Fettered Dracolich	Level 12 Solo Controller	
Large natural magical beast (dragon, undead)	XP 3,500	
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +10; darkvision	
HP 620; Bloodied 310; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>		
AC 30; Fortitude 31, Reflex 27, Will 27		
Immune disease, fear, poison; Resist 20 necrotic; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Saving Throws +5		
Speed 8, fly 10 (clumsy)		
Action Points 2		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage. Against a stunned target, this attack deals an extra 2d8 necrotic damage.		
⚡ Breath Weapon (standard; recharge ⏏; ⏏) ⚡ Necrotic		
Close blast 10; +16 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the fettered dracolich's next turn. <i>Miss</i> : Half damage, and the target is not stunned. <i>Hit or Miss</i> : The target loses any necrotic resistance it has (save ends).		
⚡ Bloodied Breath (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)		
The fettered dracolich's breath weapon recharges automatically, and the dracolich uses it immediately.		
⚡ Crazed Lashing (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves into a position that flanks the fettered dracolich; at-will)		
Reach 2; the fettered dracolich makes a tail slap attack against the enemy; +18 vs. AC; 2d4 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.		
⚡ Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ⚡ Fear		
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the fettered dracolich's next turn. <i>Aftersave</i> : The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the encounter.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages understands Common and Draconic	
Skills Endurance +16		
Str 22 (+12)	Dex 18 (+10)	Wis 9 (+5)
Con 20 (+11)	Int 9 (+5)	Cha 16 (+9)

FETTERED DRACOLICH LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Religion check.

DC 25: Some cult cells have taken to capturing young dragons and putting them through a modified ritual of ascension. This ritual ties the dragon's will to whoever holds its phylactery, resulting in a fettered dracolich. A fettered dracolich can understand Common and Draconic but is unable to speak.

DC 30: A fettered dracolich's intellect and perception are diminished, but it retains a strong force of personality that struggles to resurface. As a result, its behavior is unpredictable and destructive. If its phylactery is returned to it, a fettered dracolich is released from its slavery. It becomes a standard dracolich.

FETTERED DRACOLICH TACTICS

A fettered dracolich cows the weak-willed with its *frightful presence*, then wades into combat, unleashing its fury like a wild beast. It breathes a coruscating blast of necrotic energy whenever it can affect more than one enemy, otherwise lashing out with tooth and claw.

If the dracolich regains its phylactery, it is a much more calculating and dangerous foe. It is likely to take revenge on the cultists who enslaved it, once it has removed the most threatening opponents.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

The cult enjoys a formidable alliance with draconic beings. Although few cells actually center on a Sacred One, repeated dealings with the cult might eventually lead to a dracolich.

Some living dragons ally with the cult, interested in its philosophy and power, and cultists who seek to recruit living dragons willingly act as their agents. Dragonborn are also common among cells, their militaristic ideals complementing the cult's ideology.

The Cult of the Dragon has no end of undead minions and allies, and some Wearers of Purple are themselves sentient undead.

Level 7 Encounter (XP 1,654)

- ◆ 1 human mage death master (level 4 elite controller)
- ◆ 1 skeleton (level 3 soldier)
- ◆ 1 young black dragon (level 4 solo lurker)
- ◆ 9 human rabble (level 2 minion)



DROW

The drow of Faerûn are undisputed masters of the Underdark as well a scourge of surface lands. Their realms extend across the underworld, poking to the surface here and there like deadly fungi. Over the last century, they have been driven out of ancient elven dominions, taken tremendous losses in Lolth's campaign against other drow deities, and suffered setbacks in the wake of the Spellplague. But now, united under Lolth's authority, the drow are one of the most potent threats in the world.

DROW LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Dungeoneering DC 20: The center of drow power in Faerûn is the Underdark realm of Northdark, wherein lies the mighty city of Menzoberranzan (page 228). Other major drow settlements exist there as well, such as Ched Nasad.

History DC 15: The drow took advantage of the Elven Retreat from the Forest of Cormanthor in the middle of the last century. Several drow factions, House Jaelre and the Auzkovyn clan chief among them, invaded abandoned settlements and places where resistance was weak. Jaelre drow settled in old elven holds, while the Auzkovyns were content to roam the woodlands. Ilsevele Miritar drove the drow back into the Underdark when she retook Myth Drannor, but they remain a problem in areas beneath Myth Drannor and the Dalelands.

History DC 20: Millennia ago, the Ilythiiri elves launched a war of conquest, battling other elven nations in Faerûn. During these clashes, the Ilythiiri called on the power of evil gods, including Ghaunadaur and Lolth. In the end, the Seldarine (the elven gods) cursed the Ilythiiri and their elven allies, making sunlight painful to them. Within months, the *dhaeraow* ("traitors" in Elven) retreated to the Underdark in what was named the Descent.

Even after the Descent, the drow continued to wage war to claim subterranean territory. In so doing, they earned the enmity of dwarves and other underground races. Since then, drow have spread across the Underdark, bringing war, oppression, and strife to their neighbors and the surface world. They still nurse a deep grudge against the Seldarine, whom they believe cursed the drow because of jealousy of their successful ancient campaigns.

Religion DC 20: Araushnee was once Corellon's consort, the Weaver of Destiny and patron to all elves who shared her lovely dark features. But near the beginning of recorded history, she betrayed the Seldarine and attacked Arvandor with the aid of

Ghaunadaur and other malevolent deities. She lost the battle and was cast into the Abyss, where she took the name Lolth, Queen of Spiders.

DROW CULTURE

Drow live in an iniquitous society ruled by a matriarchal theocracy dedicated to Lolth. Priestesses of Lolth hold the greatest authority. The female heads of noble houses, called matron mothers or simply matrons, also wield great influence, because each noble house maintains its own military forces. Such a noble is often a priestess of Lolth, but this isn't always the case.

LAW

No law truly governs the drow. Those who have power do as they will. A drow's ability to act with impunity is limited only by her ability to defy others who might wish to stop her. The only authority that drow are reluctant to cross is the Church of Lolth. Even these priestesses must tread with care, though they have the right to condemn whomever they wish—harming another drow always carries the risk of retribution.

POWER

Drow society rewards passion and authority. The ability to amass and retain personal power is the only measure of any drow's worth. Therefore, drow settlements are full of internal struggles for dominance barely concealed under a veneer of normalcy.

Subjugation of the weak and deference to the mighty are drow social norms. Slavery and abuse are also traditions. Add to these an unhealthy mix of black magic and evil religion, including blood sacrifice and trucking with fiends, and the result is an unthinkably twisted culture.

Although drow do ally to aid one another in pursuing a common goal, none of them truly trust the others. Requesting aid means being in another's debt, a potential difficulty in the future. But refusing to help—or failing in the attempt—invites vengeance or punishment.

STATUS

Advantages of birth aid some drow in their power-hungry society. Since drow society is matriarchal, females have their gender as an edge over males. Because having power makes it easier to obtain the same, those born to higher station have a leg up on their lowlier counterparts. But even the lowly struggle for what power they can acquire.

Gender roles are a special issue among drow. No male is allowed to be part of Lolth's clergy, and males are therefore shut out of the culture's upper ranks.



Further, females in a family have authority over male relatives, as well as better opportunities than males. Males gain power through accomplishments in military or magical fields, or by wooing and winning the right female.

LUXURY

Drow love comfort and indulge their desires whenever they can. Debauchery and depravity are widespread; common entertainments include blood sports, the use of potent intoxicants, and the sacrifice of sentient beings. Drow take what they want from the weak, enslaving other creatures to avoid physical labor, which is repugnant to them.

DRAEGLOTH

LOLTH'S CONNECTION TO DEMONS has long been an influence on drow society. The drow exploit this malevolent power to serve personal ends, using fiends as shock troops, guardians, and gruesome pets. Draegloths are fiendish creatures born of drow priestesses.

FRANCIS TSAI

Draegloth		Level 13 Elite Brute
Large elemental humanoid (demon)		XP 1,600
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +11; darkvision	
HP 316; Bloodied 158		
AC 27; Fortitude 29, Reflex 26, Will 24		
Resist variable 10 (MM 282)		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6, jump 5		
Action Point 1		
⊕ Claws (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage; see also <i>quick bite</i> .		
† Quick Bite (free, when the draegloth hits with a claw attack; at-will)		
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d6 + 7 damage.		
† Sweeping Claw (standard; at-will)		
The draegloth makes a claw attack; on a hit, it can make another claw attack against a different target that is within reach and adjacent to the first target.		
⤵ Darkfire (minor; encounter) ♦ Radiant		
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Reflex; until the end of the draegloth's next turn, the target grants combat advantage to all attackers, and the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment.		
✱ Lolth's Blight (standard; daily) ♦ Necrotic		
Area burst 4 within 20; targets enemies; +14 vs. Will; 2d6 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). <i>Miss</i> : Half damage, and the target is not dazed.		
⬅ Cloud of Darkness (minor; encounter) ♦ Zone		
Close burst 1; this power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of the draegloth's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the draegloth. Any creature entirely within the area (except the draegloth) is blinded.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Abyssal, Elven
Skills Religion +12, Stealth +15		
Str 24 (+13)	Dex 19 (+10)	Wis 10 (+6)
Con 18 (+10)	Int 12 (+7)	Cha 16 (+9)

DRAEGLOTH TACTICS

A typical draegloth is a vicious combatant that loves the thick of a bloody battle. It prefers to attack from stealth, using *cloud of darkness* to cover its approach. Staying in the midst of its foes, it lays about with its claws and fangs. If pressed, it uses *Lolth's blight* to create an explosion of black, spider-shaped energy motes centered on itself to punish any who dare to assail it. It might take advantage of that power to cover its retreat.

Draegloth Favored One		Level 16 Elite Controller
Large elemental humanoid (demon)		XP 2,800
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +21; darkvision	
HP 308; Bloodied 154		
AC 32; Fortitude 30, Reflex 28, Will 32		
Resist variable 10 (MM 282)		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6, jump 5		
Action Point 1		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +22 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage; see also <i>quick bite</i> .		
⊕ Castigation Beam (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
Ranged 10; the draegloth favored one attacks two targets; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		

<p>‡ Quick Bite (free, when the draegloth favored one hits with a claw attack; at-will) Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage.</p>		
<p>☞ Darkfire (minor; encounter) ◆ Radiant Ranged 10; +20 vs. Reflex; until the end of the draegloth's next turn, the target grants combat advantage to all attackers, and the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment.</p>		
<p>☞ Lolth's Blight (standard; recharge ☞ ☞) ◆ Necrotic Area burst 4 within 20; targets enemies; +18 vs. Will; 2d6 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). Miss: Half damage, and the target is not dazed.</p>		
<p>☞ Overshadow (standard; daily) ◆ Necrotic, Zone Area burst 5 within 10; affects creatures without darkvision in the area: +20 vs. Will; 1d4 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded (save ends). This power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of the favored one's next turn.</p>		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Elven	
Skills Religion +14, Stealth +17		
Str 22 (+14)	Dex 19 (+12)	Wis 26 (+16)
Con 18 (+12)	Int 12 (+9)	Cha 16 (+11)

DRAEGLOTH FAVORED ONE TACTICS

Although she is more reserved than an ordinary draegloth, a favored one doesn't shy away from battle. She likes to stay out of melee, behind ranks of drow soldiers, and use her *castigation beam* and other ranged powers rather than her claws. *Lolth's blight* is her opener, and she uses it whenever possible. *Overshadow* is a perfect mid-battle ploy to throw foes off balance just when they think they have overcome drow darkness.

ABYSSAL FURY

Some very powerful draegloths can tap into the power of the Abyss to call up a reserve of demonic rage. Such advanced draegloths have the *abyssal fury* power, described below.

Abyssal Fury (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)
The draegloth spends a healing surge and regains one-quarter of its maximum hit points. For the rest of the encounter, the draegloth takes a -2 penalty to all defenses, and its claw attack deals damage equal to its Strength modifier on a miss.

Favored ones rarely develop this ability—they prefer dark magic to brute force.

DRAEGLOTH LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Some among Lolth's faithful, especially newly ordained clergy, perform a ritual that enables mating with a demon. On rare occasions Lolth blesses the unholy union, and the priestess later gives birth to a draegloth.

DC 20: Draegloths are the favored of Lolth, and corrupt drow culture indulges their desires in every way. Although they do not need to eat, they love feasting on the flesh of living victims.

A draegloth usually stays with its mother and follows her orders. Like its drow kin, however, it doesn't hesitate to execute a well-timed betrayal to avoid the loss of its privileged position.

DC 25: Rarely, a female draegloth is born with better mental faculties than others of its kind. Such a "favored one" is groomed to become a priestess that physically embodies Lolth's ideals.

BREGAN D'AERTHE

Mercenaries unaffiliated with any house, yet powerful enough to enjoy prosperity and the indulgence of matrons, the drow of Bregan D'aerthe hold a unique position in the Underdark.

A character knows the following information with a successful Streetwise check.

DC 30: Bregan D'aerthe mercenaries and assassins are a wild card in drow politics, seemingly an untouchable class of sellswords. The group has outposts in Underdark settlements across northern and western Faerûn. Its members have been found working for surface interests in western lands from Luruar to Tethyr, and as far to the northeast as Impiltur.

ORGANIZATION

Bregan D'aerthe originated in the city of Menzoberranzan. Its founder, Jarlaxle Baenre, has cunningly spread his philosophy to other drow cities, and now his society, which once had only a few hundred, has more than a thousand members. Few drow care to move against Bregan D'aerthe, because the organization has its uses—especially in gathering information from the Underdark and the surface world.

Hiring Bregan D'aerthe mercenaries also has its risks. As might be expected in a drow organization, the contract goes to the highest bidder—often the patron who offers the group the biggest advantage when events sort themselves out. Bregan D'aerthe forces have switched sides in the middle of more than one battle, or played both sides, to the ruination of those they have double-crossed.

Leader: Jarlaxle, ultimately, but his trusted lieutenant Kimmuriel Oblodra runs the organization during Jarlaxle's frequent and long absences.

Headquarters: Menzoberranzan.

Hierarchy: The most accomplished, charismatic, and discerning resident member runs a particular Bregan D'aerthe cell, although exceptions exist.

Members: Well-equipped and skilled drow from fallen houses, including a few disenfranchised priestesses, form Bregan D'aerthe cadres dedicated to professional soldiery and mutual protection. Bregan D'aerthe is known to accept individual drow who are skilled in any of a variety of combat methods. However, the group has no active recruiting effort.

Jarlaxle and Bregan D'aerthe have contacts in surface cities such as Waterdeep, Baldur's Gate, Athkatla, and Darromar, as well as Mulmaster and Lyrabar. A few underworld guilds even consider Bregan D'aerthe an ally. Through this set of connections, Jarlaxle and his followers expand their influence and grow ever richer.

JARLAXLE BAENRE

BREGAN D'AERTHE SEES THE DEBONAIR JARLAXLE as its ultimate inspiration. The drow himself is haughty and brash, possessing talents that back up his willingness to brazenly flout drow traditions. Jarlaxle affects a fun-loving demeanor, smiling and joking more than any drow should. He dresses flamboyantly, even wearing an unnecessary eye patch that he switches from one eye to the other as it suits him.

A survivor, Jarlaxle always seems to be on the right side of any arrangement, even when dealing with Lolth's church. He indulges in the pleasures of life whenever he can. Battle doesn't diminish his jovial manner, but Jarlaxle is deadly and cruel to his enemies. Even so, the drow does whatever is necessary to ensure his continued existence.

TACTICS

Jarlaxle keeps mobile in combat, dancing around adversaries and nimbly switching hands to lead with one or the other of his fearsome blades. He stays at close quarters with most enemies, using his ranged attacks against elusive or formidable foes. He uses his *cape of the mountebank*

only if he thinks the threat justifies the response. Ever resourceful, he brings specialized magic items (beyond those listed in his statistics block) on specific missions.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Dark elves of Toril are rightly feared for the vicious attacks they launch from the Underdark.

Level 14 Encounter (XP 5,100)

- ◆ 1 drow priest (level 15 controller [leader])
- ◆ 1 draegloth (level 13 elite brute)
- ◆ 1 drow arachnomancer (level 13 artillery [leader])
- ◆ 3 blade spiders (level 10 brute)



7

Jarlaxle Baenre	Level 21 Elite Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid	XP 6,400
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +23; darkvision
HP 392; Bloodied 196	
AC 39; Fortitude 34, Reflex 38, Will 35	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 8	
Action Point 1	
⬇ Rapier (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon	
+27 vs. AC; 1d8 + 14 damage (1d8 + 20 against a bloodied target) (crit 5d6 + 22, or 5d6 + 27 against a bloodied target).	
⬇ Dagger (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon	
+26 vs. AC; 1d4 + 13 damage	
⌘ Thrown Dagger (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +26 vs. AC; 1d4 + 13 damage.	
⬇ Ambidextrous Fencer (standard; at-will) ◆ Necrotic, Weapon	
Jarlaxle makes one rapier attack and one dagger melee attack. If both attacks hit the same target, that target is dazed until the end of Jarlaxle's next turn.	
⬇ Flashy Disarm (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ◆ Weapon	
+27 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 14 damage, and the target drops one weapon it is holding. It lands in a square of Jarlaxle's choice up to 6 squares away.	
⌘ Darkfire (minor; encounter) ◆ Radiant	

Ranged 10; +24 vs. Reflex; until the end of Jarlaxle's next turn, the target grants combat advantage to all attacks, and the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment.

☞ **Cloud of Darkness** (minor; encounter)

Close burst 1; this power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of Jarlaxle's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except Jarlaxle. Any creature entirely within the area (except Jarlaxle) is blinded.

☞ **Cape of the Mountebank** (immediate reaction, when hit by an attack; daily) ◆ **Teleportation**

Jarlaxle teleports up to 5 squares, and until the end of his next turn, he gains combat advantage against the attacker. Jarlaxle takes half damage from that attack.

Whirling Evasion (immediate interrupt, when hit by a melee attack; encounter)

Jarlaxle shifts up to 6 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Abyssal, Elven

Skills Acrobatics +26, Athletics +18, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, Intimidate +23, Insight +23, Stealth +21

Str 16 (+13) **Dex** 28 (+19) **Wis** 17 (+13)

Con 20 (+15) **Int** 18 (+14) **Cha** 23 (+16)

Equipment +4 *cape of the mountebank*, *eye patch of discernment* (+5 Insight and Perception), *handy holding hat* (acts as a *handy haversack*), rapier, 4 daggers

EMINENCE OF ARAUNT

The Eminence of Araunt is a far-flung kingdom of the dead whose citizens across Returned Abeir (and now, Faerûn) are linked not by geography, but by a common ideal. The Eminence believes that every royal crypt and every forgotten corner of the world where undead yet serve masters long gone is actually a principality of Araunt. Sometimes tomb robbers notice the Eminence's symbol (three vertical slashes) and wonder what it signifies, but few ever discover the truth.

EMINENCE OF ARAUNT LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 30: More than five hundred years have elapsed since an undead creature named Lod "founded" Araunt's first principality in an Eskornar dragon's tomb. Lod, a bone naga, recorded a tract on stone tablets called the *Codex of Araunt* in which it prophesied the expansion of its kingdom over the slow creep of centuries.

Arcana DC 35: Rituals inscribed in the *Codex of Araunt* can link widely separated gravesites and mausoleums, creating a portal pathway invisible to those not sworn to the cause. The *Codex* contains other rituals to create undead from the spirits of dead warriors, to free a guardian undead of its binding, and to empower undead with useful abilities. Unknown rituals are whispered to both grant boons to the undead and lay blights on the living.

Streetwise DC 30: Guardian undead creatures hold positions of authority in the Eminence of Araunt. A direhelm or a doomsept almost certainly serves the secret kingdom of the dead.

Streetwise DC 35: The Eminence of Araunt has lately begun to co-opt living humanoids as agents of its shadowy, landless kingdom. The Eminence uses the still-living as spies, trade agents, and procurers of exotic goods required for rituals to link more tombs.

Streetwise DC 40: The Eminence is not friendly with other groups, cults, or nations of undead. It was ascendant in Abeir but has made contact during the last decade with Faerûn. Now Araunt is aware of such groups as the Twisted Rune, the Cult of the Dragon, and Thay. Since then, the secret kingdom has begun a slow campaign to bring all of these, even Thay, into Araunt. More than one skirmish has already been fought.

ORGANIZATION

The mysterious Eminence of Araunt exists through its network of portal pathways, called deathways, hidden to all but undead that have pledged themselves to the kingdom. Few of the living are even aware of the organization, though some who are pledged to Araunt can be led through these portals. The Eminence spreads invisibly like a disease through cemeteries and tombs, then follows up with planned advances and raids.

Leader: The Eminence believes that all members are equals. But even among equals, some citizens stand out, such as Lod himself, as well as Meremoth (an undead lamia).

Headquarters: The Eminence hides in plain sight, in the catacombs of Nornglast in Eskorn (see page 206). Nornglast already possesses a reputation for being "ruled by ghosts," though those who speak lightly of this possibility don't know how right they are.

Within Nornglast's catacombs, Lod and Meremoth hold court in a boneyard hundreds of feet wide, at the crossroads of several dozen deathways.

Hierarchy: Despite the equality of members, some within Araunt are clearly the servants of the others. Direhelms are bound to the kingdom through the ritual of their creation, and they are dedicated to guarding its deathways and scattered principalities.

Members: Those true to the Eminence of Araunt include most undead, especially direhelms and doomsepts. Egotistical and strong-willed undead, especially vampires and liches, rarely join or remain in the Eminence. Those who do retain membership generally seek to control the secret kingdom for their own purposes, and when such activity is discovered, it is culled.

DIREHELM

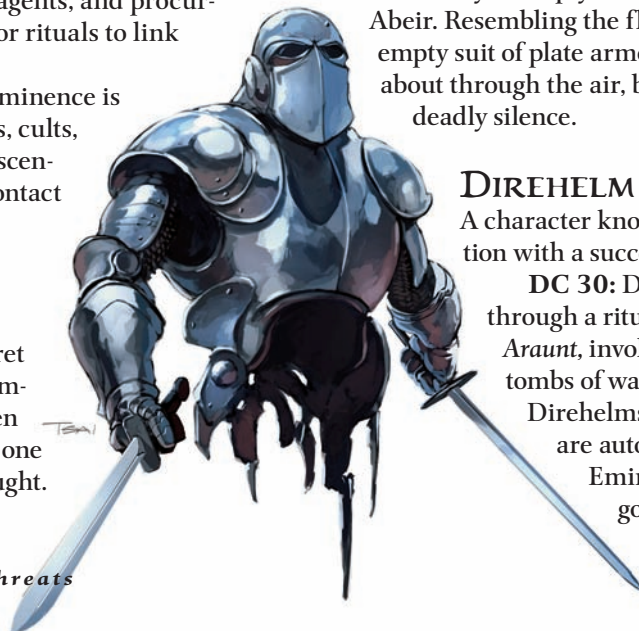
DIREHELMS ARE UNDEAD GUARDIANS found in a wide variety of empty, ruined places in Returned Abeir. Resembling the floating upper half of an empty suit of plate armor, a direhelm glides about through the air, brandishing its weapons in deadly silence.

DIREHELM LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 30: Direhelms are created through a ritual from the *Codex of Araunt*, involving grave dirt from the tombs of warriors fallen in battle.

Direhelms created with this ritual are automatically bound to the Eminence of Araunt and to the goals of the secret kingdom.



Direhelm		Level 15 Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 1,200
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +8; see also <i>piercing vision</i>	
HP 148; Bloodied 74; see also <i>grave strike</i>		
AC 31; Fortitude 29, Reflex 27, Will 24		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed fly 6 (hover)		
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +22 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage.		
⚡ Grave Strike (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon Close burst 1; +22 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Piercing Vision (minor; recharge ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹) The direhelm gains truesight 10 and ignores concealment until the end of its current turn.		
Alignment Evil	Languages –	
Str 25 (+14)	Dex 20 (+12)	Wis 13 (+8)
Con 20 (+12)	Int 9 (+6)	Cha 15 (+9)
Equipment 2 longswords		

DIREHELM TACTICS

A direhelm fights in a straightforward manner. It closes to melee range and uses *grave strike* as soon as it is adjacent to several enemies. Then it strikes at the nearest prone target, attacking until that enemy is out of action before turning to another. It fights to the death, using *grave strike* again once bloodied.

DOOMSEPT

A DOOMSEPT IS A SPECTRAL, GLOWING UNDEAD BEING composed of several spirits. It appears as a silent, chillingly cold, translucent image of human warriors holding wraithlike weapons in flickering, diverse poses.

DOOMSEPT LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 30: A doomsept is a sevenfold spirit, created by one of the rituals in the *Codex of Araunt*. Each spirit provides some small, unique ability to the overall creature.

DC 35: Legends say that if the name of one or more of its contributing spirits is called, a doomsept ceases any activity. The named spirit rises to the surface and answers questions as if affected by the *Speak with Dead* ritual (the questioner must make an Arcana check as though performing the ritual). Once all questions are answered, the spirit sinks again into the doomsept, which attacks its questioner with redoubled fury.

DOOMSEPT TACTICS

A doomsept flits through enemies, striking and moving through their forms, never staying in one place. It uses *manifold strike* as soon as it has the



opportunity, adjusting its position for maximum benefit and flanking whenever possible.

Doomsept		Level 16 Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 1,400
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +10; darkvision	
HP 108; Bloodied 54		
AC 28; Fortitude 28, Reflex 29, Will 24		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic, insubstantial; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed fly 7 (hover); phasing		
⊕ Ephemeral Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage.		
⚡ Manifold Strike (standard; recharge ☹ ☹) ♦ Weapon Close burst 3; targets three enemies in area; +20 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage. The doomsept shifts 2 squares for each successful attack.		
Alignment Evil	Languages –	
Str 22 (+14)	Dex 24 (+15)	Wis 14 (+10)
Con 18 (+12)	Int 12 (+9)	Cha 15 (+10)

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

A raiding party of the Eminence of Araunt includes one or more intelligent undead leaders, supported by direhelms or doomsepts. Occasionally a living commander leads a party.

Level 16 Encounter (XP 7,000)

- ♦ 2 direhelms (level 15 soldier)
- ♦ 1 doomsept (level 16 skirmisher)
- ♦ 1 human fighter death knight (level 17 elite soldier)

THE FIVE COMPANIES

Great Halruaa has fallen, but its legacy lives on in these five bands of roaming mercenaries, smugglers, traders, and buccaneers. Each possesses a magical vehicle known as a *skyship*. Tavern talk has it that each company formed around a wizard who escaped Halruaa.

History DC 30: The stories told by most are not exactly true. Before the Year of Blue Fire, the lizardfolk of Rethild were given three *skyships*—one from merchant houses in each of three Halruaan towns. The lizard king, Ghassis, was supposed to use the vessels to harry the Crinti of Dambrath and pirates on the Great Sea.

After the destruction of Halruaa, wizards fleeing from Maeruhah, along with their few *skyships*, came across the pirate base of Yaulazna. A renegade Halruaan mage had protected the buccaneer haven with powerful magic, but the wards ran amok during the Spellplague, shattering the town and turning part of it into an earthmote. In a brief clash, the refugee Halruaans took the Yaulazna mote and made an accord with the remaining pirates there. During the deal, they learned of Ghassis's *skyships*, which they then wrested from the lizardfolk.

In the end, Yaulazna's folk had five working *skyships* and a small, highly defensible settlement. They made the Yaulazna Pact, an agreement to protect one another. From their position, they set out to assure their survival, and eventually the Five Companies were born.

THE SKYSHIPS

A Five Companies *skyship* looks like an ordinary sea-going ship, fully rigged with three masts and sails. It has two panels on each side that can be deployed for steering and stability, as well as a broad beam that allows it to land on a flat surface without listing.

Magic allows it to climb or descend in the air, but it can sail the seas as well. In either mode, it relies on the wind for forward speed. As long as its magic remains, a *skyship* won't fall from the air or sink.

THE COMPANIES

Descendants of those who made the Yaulazna Pact almost a century ago run the Five Companies as independent but allied groups. As the heirs of Halruaan magic, the mercenaries count a large number of wizards in their membership. A hired *skyship* often provides ranged support from the air or other magical services.



STEVE ELLIS



COMPANY BEZ

Arcane combat is the specialty of Company Bez. Mariss Bez is the current captain of *Storm of Vengeance*, the company's *skyship*, which is known for blistering airborne assaults. The vessel has turned the tide of more than one battle.

COMPANY ERROWD

Company Errowd is the most service-oriented of the five. Its wizards perform rituals and offer other magical services, especially in the areas of containment, smuggling, and fast transport. *Shield of Savras* is the company's *skyship*, is famed for showing up right when needed or wanted. Its captain, Jorrz Errowd, possesses great oracular power.

COMPANY FLURRIG

Although it engages in war for profit, Company Flurrig maintains a stricter contract policy than its fellows. Captain Ianjo Shton, descendant of the Flurrig noble line of Halruaa, prefers the moral high ground. That doesn't mean he and the crew of the *Lamassu* haven't been on the wrong side of the law, though.

COMPANY TUNDAG

The best soldiers of the Five Companies belong to Company Tundag, a mixture of dwarves and humans who originally came up with the idea of the mercenary outfit. Tundag's ship, *Thunder Hammer*, flies under the command of the dwarf Kurkar Randred.

BEN WOOTTEN

COMPANY YARGO

A PROMINENT HALFLING FAMILY, descended from the infamous Pirate King Yargo of old Yaulazna, still leads Company Yargo. The company takes all sorts of work, and its members aren't reluctant to spill blood for the right price. *Buccaneer's Tear*, the *skyship* captained by the brash Shil Yargo, has been implicated in high seas and overland piracy.

Captain Shil Yargo		Level 11 Elite Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid, halfling		XP 1,200
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +11	
HP 224; Bloodied 112		
AC 27 (29 against opportunity attacks); Fortitude 23, Reflex 26, Will 23		
Saving Throws +2 (+7 against fear effects)		
Speed 6; see also <i>deck dash</i>		
Action Point 1		
⚔	Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+16 vs. AC; 1d4 + 8 damage (crit 2d6 + 12, or 2d8 + 12 if Shil has combat advantage against the target).		
⚔	Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +16 vs. AC; 1d4 + 8 damage.		
⚔	Deep Stab (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+16 vs. AC; 2d4 + 8 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Shil's next turn.		
⚔	Whirling Slices (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Shil makes three melee basic attacks. She can shift 1 square before or after each attack.		
⚔	Thigh Cutter (standard; recharge ⏏ ⏏ ⏏) ♦ Weapon	
Shil makes two basic melee attacks. If either hits, the target is also slowed (save ends); if both hit the same target, it is also knocked prone. Shil can shift 1 square before or after each attack.		
Deck Dash (minor; encounter)		
Shil shifts 3 squares.		
Combat Advantage		
Shil deals an extra 2d8 damage on melee attacks against any target she has combat advantage against.		
Second Chance (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)		
Shil forces the attacker to reroll the attack and take the new result.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Halruaan
Skills Athletics +13, Bluff +15, Insight +11, Stealth +16, Thievery +18		
Str 13 (+6)	Dex 22 (+11)	Wis 12 (+6)
Con 16 (+8)	Int 10 (+5)	Cha 20 (+10)
Equipment leather armor, 2 daggers		



TACTICS

Wielding two long, thin knives, Shil fearlessly rushes into combat. She relies on getting into advantageous position, and uses *deep stab* to keep that edge. Shil would rather die or scuttle her ship than let it fall into anyone else's hands.

YAULAZNA

Mote of the Five

Floating Fortress, Population 400

Yaulazna is a stronghold and trade center carved into the seashore rock of its highly magical earthmote, originally part of the coast of Halruaa. A citadel made up of five towers and a central keep rises from the village's central square—one tower for each of the Five Companies, the central keep for House Jordain (see below). The settlement also contains storehouses and merchant holds, as well as housing for the citizens. Old sea caves and excavated pirate hideouts honeycomb the mote.

Government: Ruling Yaulazna is a body known as the Pact Council, formed of ranking members of each company, representatives from the village merchants, and a single member of House Jordain. All council business is conducted in the Halruaan language, which is largely dead outside this enclave.

Defense: Yaulazna's best defense is its mobility. The whole mote floats slowly in whatever direction the Pact Council selects. In emergencies, the mote can temporarily cross into the Astral Sea.

Trade: Yaulazna operates separately from the Five Companies. The town staunchly maintains itself as neutral ground and a center for trade, welcoming all who respect its tenets. It even operates transports to and from the ground when it's open for commerce. The Mote of the Five is usually a welcome site in Faerûnian nations, although it respects closed borders and stays far from hostile territory, such as Netheril and Thay.

HOUSE JORDAIN

THIS GROUP OCCUPIES THE CENTER of the wheel-shaped fortress that dominates Yaulazna. Members of the house are uninterested in Five Companies business. They live to ensure the security of Yaulazna, and the Jordaini member of the Pact Council only guides discussion and never votes except to break ties.

Jordaini enforcers, experts in hand-to-hand combat and defensive techniques, police the Mote of the Five. They are highly skilled at observation and memory, and they have a supernatural ability to redirect attacks aimed at them. They execute the will of the Pact Council against foes of Yaulazna and impose the rule of law even on the Five Companies.

JORDAINI ENFORCER TACTICS

A Jordaini enforcer's skills are not only useful in negotiation but also allow him or her to anticipate enemy moves and create opportunities in combat. Before and even during a fight, an enforcer offers enemies the chance to surrender and attempts to take

foes out of action with dazing effects. Nevertheless, an enforcer is not reluctant to use force and punctuates the point with *exploit opening* whenever possible.

Jordaini Enforcer		Level 7 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 600
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +13	
HP 164; Bloodied 82		
AC 24; Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 20; see also <i>redirect attack</i> and <i>reflective evasion</i>		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 7		
Action Point 1		
⚔ Unarmed Strike (standard; at-will)		
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.		
⚔ Dizzying Blows (standard; at-will)		
The Jordaini enforcer makes two basic melee attacks. If both hit the same target, that target is also dazed (save ends).		
Battle Scrutiny (minor; recharge ⚔ ⚔ ⚔)		
The Jordaini enforcer gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and to Perception checks until the end of his or her next turn.		
⚔ Exploit Opening (standard; recharges after the enforcer uses <i>battle scrutiny</i>) ⚔ Weapon		
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 +5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Redirect Attack (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee or ranged attack; recharges when the enforcer moves)		
The Jordaini enforcer redirects the attack to an adjacent enemy other than the enemy who made the attack (if missed by a melee attack) or to an enemy within 3 squares (if missed by a ranged attack). The creature whose attack triggered this power makes another attack roll using the same attack to determine the success of the redirected attack.		
Combat Advantage		
The Jordaini enforcer deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target he or she has combat advantage against.		
Reflective Evasion		
When an area or close attack would deal half damage on a miss, it deals no damage to a Jordaini enforcer if it misses. In addition, the attacker takes 5 damage of the same type the attack deals.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Draconic, Halruaan	
Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +9, Insight +13		
Str 13 (+4)	Dex 21 (+8)	Wis 20 (+8)
Con 18 (+7)	Int 14 (+5)	Cha 16 (+6)

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Jordaini patrols are common within the halls of the Pact Council's citadel.

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,475)

- ◆ 1 Jordaini enforcer (level 7 elite soldier)
- ◆ 1 human mage (advanced; level 6 controller)
- ◆ 1 halfling prowler (level 6 lurker)
- ◆ 5 human lackeys (level 7 minion)

GIBBERLING

GIBBERLINGS FORM RAVENOUS, screeching hordes that overrun the Underdark.

GIBBERLING LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Dungeoneering check.

DC 10: Gibberlings are darkness-loving creatures that hibernate beneath the earth. When they awaken, they gather and hunt in huge packs.

DC 15: Outside the Underdark, gibberlings burrow into the soil during daylight hours. The creatures are vulnerable during this time, but they awaken if attacked or as soon as dusk comes. When roused, they emerge in unison and continue their rampage, moving slowly if in daylight.

DC 20: Plaguechanged gibberlings have no affinity for their mundane kin, devouring them as readily as any other prey.

Gibberling Bunch		Level 1 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (swarm)		XP 100
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +3; darkvision	
Gibberling aura 10; enemies in the aura take a -1 penalty to all defenses. Gibberlings can't surprise creatures that aren't deafened.		
Swarm Attack aura 1; a gibberling bunch makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.		
HP 32; Bloodied 16		
AC 13; Fortitude 13; Reflex 15; Will 11		
Immune charm, fear		
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable +5 damage from close and area attacks		
Speed 6 (If a gibberling bunch takes radiant damage, it is slowed until the end of the attacker's next turn; if it takes fire damage, it is immobilized until the end of the attacker's next turn.)		
⊕ Swarming Bite (standard; at-will)		
+4 vs. AC; 3d4 + 2 damage. If a bunch reduces the damage from this attack by 2d4, its target is also knocked prone.		
⊕ Pull Down (standard; at-will)		
+4 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 1 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Stay Down		
A bunch can make opportunity attacks against adjacent targets that stand from prone.		
Bone Stripping		
A bunch deals an extra 2d4 damage against prone targets.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages –
Str 10 (+0)	Dex 14 (+2)	Wis 7 (-2)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 5 (-3)	Cha 2 (-4)

GIBBERLING TACTICS

Gibberlings simply press forward, attacking anything in their path. Plaguechanged gibberlings become even more dangerous when bloodied, exploding with a *bluefire burst* that impedes the escape of prey.

MARK TEDIN

Plaguechanged Gibberling Bunch		Level 6 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (swarm)		XP 200
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +8; darkvision	
Gibberling aura 10; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses. Gibberlings can't surprise creatures that aren't deafened.		
Swarm Attack aura 1; a plaguechanged gibberling bunch makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.		
HP 87; Bloodied 43; see also <i>bluefire burst</i>		
AC 19; Fortitude 18; Reflex 19; Will 15		
Immune <i>bluefire burst</i> (see below), charm, fear		
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable +5 damage from close and area attacks		
Speed 6 (If a plaguechanged gibberling bunch is exposed to sunlight, it is slowed until the end of the attacker's next turn.)		
⊕ Swarming Bite (standard; at-will) ⊕ Force		
+9 vs. AC; 4d4 + 4 damage. <i>Critical Hit:</i> The target takes an extra 1d6 force damage (save ends).		
⊕ Pull Down (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 1 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Stay Down		
A bunch can make opportunity attacks against adjacent targets that stand from prone.		
Bone Stripping		
A bunch deals an extra 2d4 damage against prone targets.		
⊕ Bluefire Burst (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)		
Close burst 2; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 3 force damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages –
Str 12 (+4)	Dex 18 (+7)	Wis 10 (+3)
Con 17 (+6)	Int 8 (+2)	Cha 2 (-1)

GIBBERLING

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Ordinary gibberlings associate only with their own kind. Plaguechanged gibberlings are sometimes found in the company of members of the Order of Blue Fire.



MALAUGRYM

MALAUGRYMS ARE EGOMANIACAL AND DEPRAVED shapechangers that love to toy with, mock, and prey on sentient beings. In its natural form, a malaugrym is a fleshy sphere with three eyes, three hooked tentacles, and a beak.

Each malaugrym is a distinct elite monster, usually of paragon tier or higher. It can have any role but favors artillery, controller, or skirmisher.

ARATHLUTH

Arathluth haunts the Sword Coast under a variety of aliases, posing as a merchant or a hired killer. It takes many forms, almost all of them male humanoids. Arathluth maintains contacts in criminal organizations from Zassespur to Waterdeep.

Arathluth	Level 16 Elite Skirmisher	
Medium aberrant magical beast (shapechanger)	XP 2,800	
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +14; low-light vision	
HP 292; Bloodied 146		
Regeneration 10 (if Arathluth takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn.)		
AC 32 (34 against opportunity attacks); Fortitude 29, Reflex 32, Will 29		
Immune poison		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 2 (clumsy), legged form 6; fly 6 (hover)		
Action Point 1		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+21 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage.		
⊕ Lurching Lashes (standard; at-will)		
Arathluth makes two basic melee attacks. If an attack hits, the target also slides 2 squares. Arathluth can move 3 squares before or after each attack.		
⊕ Mangle (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞☞)		
Arathluth makes two basic melee attacks against the same target. If both hit, it makes a secondary attack against that target. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> 1d8 + 7 damage (no attack roll needed).		
Combat Advantage		
Arathluth deals an extra 2d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ◆ Polymorph		
Arathluth can alter its physical form to appear as any Small, Medium, or Large creature (see Change Shape, MM 280).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Chondathan ^{PG} , Common, Deep Speech	
Skills Acrobatics +20, Bluff +18, Insight +14, Intimidate +18, Stealth +20		
Str 11 (+8)	Dex 25 (+15)	Wis 12 (+9)
Con 20 (+13)	Int 19 (+12)	Cha 21 (+13)

ARATHLUTH'S TACTICS

Arathluth prefers to appear humanoid until it can dishearten its enemies by unexpectedly flying or changing shape. Then it lays about with its lashing tentacles.

LUTHVAERYNN

Operating out of Telflamm in the Dragon Coast, Luthvaerynn is a greedy malaugrym that runs businesses both legitimate and illicit. It prefers female humanoid forms, and in one of its humanoid forms it has a position on the city's Merchants' Council.

Luthvaerynn	Level 15 Elite Artillery	
Medium aberrant magical beast (shapechanger)	XP 2,400	
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +13; low-light vision	
HP 232; Bloodied 116		
Regeneration 10 (If Luthvaerynn takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn.)		
AC 29; Fortitude 27, Reflex 27, Will 29		
Immune poison		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 2 (clumsy), legged form 6; fly 6 (hover)		
Action Point 1		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+20 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.		
✱ Nightmare Slumber (standard; encounter) ◆ Charm, Psychic		
Area burst 4 within 10; targets enemies; +19 vs. Will; 1d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). <i>First Failed Save:</i> The target is unconscious (save ends). <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target is dazed (save ends).		
✧ Sapping Ray (standard; at-will) ◆ Psychic		
Ranged 10; Luthvaerynn makes two attacks; +18 vs. Will; 1d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).		
✧ Pain Ray (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞☞) ◆ Necrotic		
Ranged 20; +18 vs. Will; 3d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target gains vulnerable 10 psychic (save ends). The target cannot attempt a save against this effect while within 10 squares of Luthvaerynn.		
⊕ Mangle (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞☞)		
Luthvaerynn makes two basic melee attacks against the same target. If both hit, it makes a secondary attack against that target. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> 1d8 + 4 damage (no attack roll needed).		
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ◆ Polymorph		
Luthvaerynn can alter its physical form to appear as any Small, Medium, or Large creature (see Change Shape, MM 280).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Chondathan ^{PG} , Common, Deep Speech	
Skills Arcana +17, Bluff +19, Diplomacy +19, Insight +13		
Str 12 (+8)	Dex 18 (+11)	Wis 12 (+8)
Con 20 (+12)	Int 21 (+12)	Cha 25 (+14)

LUTHVAERYNN'S TACTICS

Luthvaerynn prefers to stay behind a wall of lackeys, readily abandoning them if the fight goes badly. From its defended position it launches various attacks that glow with violet energy, starting with *nightmare slumber* to put down foes. Luthvaerynn follows up with *pain ray* and *sapping ray* against melee threats.

MALAUGRYM LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Arcana DC 15: A malaugrym can mimic the shape of a wide variety of creatures, but at least part of the new seeming is illusory, because the creature's

capabilities don't change. In its natural form, a malaugrym has three clawed tentacles and a beak, but it can use magic weapons while in alternate form. In all forms it has distinctive golden eyes.

Arcana DC 20: Although the creatures are genderless, a particular malaugrym favors certain forms and maintains a single personality, often choosing an apparent gender. Malaugryms never die of old age—not because they are immortal, but because younger malaugryms destroy older ones to take their power.

Arcana DC 25: Malaugryms use the term “Shadowmaster” to refer to the most powerful among them. The creatures as a whole are sometimes referred to as shadowmasters. Ironically, many evil forces of Shadow, such as the shades of Netheril, consider malaugryms to be enemies.

Arcana DC 30: Malaugryms live in and travel from the Shadowfell, but that dark place isn't their original home. They hail from a dimension beyond the known worlds. With the reshaping of the planes, malaugryms have been cut off from their home plane and have little chance of conquering Toril as they once intended. Their numbers, always small, are dwindling further, so they seek a way to reconnect with their origin.

History DC 20: The malaugryms appeared in Faerûn more than a thousand years ago, making an enemy of the young Elminster.

History DC 30: Legends suggest that malaugryms are descendants of the wizard Malaug. Supposedly the first human to enter the Plane of Shadow (now part of the Shadowfell), Malaug was never heard from again.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

A malaugrym rarely reveals its true nature but manipulates others to enact its insidious plans. It revels in duping do-gooders into foul deeds, even though evil creatures are easier to fool. Treachery comes naturally to a malaugrym, however, and the creature betrays its followers and comrades capriciously. Thus, malaugryms work poorly with each other.

Level 14 Encounter (XP 5,750)

- ◆ Luthvaerynn (level 15 elite controller)
- ◆ 1 war troll (level 14 soldier)
- ◆ 2 grimlock berserkers (level 13 brute)
- ◆ 3 grimlock minions (level 14 minion)



NETHERIL

Once-fallen Netheril stands again astride northern Faerûn. Peopled mostly by humans, this mighty and arrogant empire threatens every neighboring land with subjugation. If it succeeds in its tyrannical aims, its expansion won't end there.

SHADE LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Most ordinary Netherese are humans, but the mightiest of Netheril's defenders are shades. They are dangerous and extremely capable agents of the empire, but individuals might pursue personal agendas, depending on their status with imperial commanders and rulers.

DC 20: Many shades came along with Shade Enclave when that city returned from the Shadowfell. Others arose when they bargained for or were granted the essence of shadow.

PRINCES OF SHADE

Born before the destruction of ancient Netheril, mighty Netherese arcanists called the Twelve Princes of Shade rule their nation. Thoroughly evil, they seek to broaden the empire's power by any means necessary. They are quite capable of mass destruction and genocide but prefer subversion over outright conquest, leaving the target's infrastructure intact.

Each prince is an epic elite shade controller with unique talents. All have some skill in arcane or shadow techniques. A few specialize in martial or divine powers.

TELAMONT TANTHUL

Telamont is the Most High of the Princes of Shade and father of the others. More than two thousand years old, he has the calm certainty of one who is nearly immortal. His citizens see High Prince Telamont as the embodiment of Netherese ideals, and he too believes that only he can revitalize and expand the empire. These ideas are expressed by his extravagant imperial garb—a black mantle of stylized dragon wings, similar black bracers, and flowing violet robes.

The High Prince venerates ancient Netheril's traditions but also established new ones to survive centuries in Shadow. All are still prominent in regimented Netherese society.

PRINCE RIVALEN TANTHUL

High priest of Shar in all of Netheril, Rivalen is the goddess's most powerful devotee in the world, comparable to the exarchs of other gods. The Most High

rules the Netherese, but Rivalen is their spiritual leader. His Dome of Night in Shade Enclave is the center of Shar's worship in the world. Rivalen's miraculous powers also protect the Princes of Shade from violent death—and he makes sure they know it.

OTHER PRINCES

The other ten sons of Telamont oversee various aspects of the empire, working together to further the aims of their father. Prince Clariburnus is a general of the armies of Netheril, as is his brother Yder, who is also the chief templar of the Dome of Night. Aglarel is the leader of the Most High's private legions and Telamont's personal bodyguard. Brennus, Faould, Lamorak, Melegaunt, and the identical twins Mattick and Vattick manage various government functions. Dethud is head of Netheril's intelligence forces. He has a reputation for quiet wisdom and regularly advises all the Princes of Shade.

SHADES

BECOMING A SHADE IS SEEN AS A GREAT REWARD for service to the empire. The most powerful Netherese are usually shades.

A shade retains its original appearance, but with a gaunt, drawn look. Its skin takes on a dull hue, and its eyes become slightly luminous. It no longer needs to eat or sleep, and its aging slows to a crawl. As a shade grows older, its appearance becomes darker and more monstrous, with strange features such as sharp teeth.

"Shade" is a template that can be added to any humanoid creature; most shades were once human. A shade can fill any role or be a member of any class.

Prerequisites: Humanoid, level 11

Rituals: Any shade who meets the requirements can learn the Shadow Walk ritual (PH 312) from other shades who know it.

Shade	Elite (Any Role) XP Elite
Shadow humanoid	
Senses darkvision	
Benighted Presence aura 10; light-producing effects within the aura whose level is lower than the shade's can create only dim light.	
Defenses +2 AC, +2 Fortitude, +2 Reflex, +2 Will	
Saving Throws +2	
Action Point 1	
Hit Points +6 per level (artillery, lurker)/+8 per level (controller, skirmisher, soldier)/+10 per level (brute) + Constitution score	
Regeneration 10 paragon/15 epic (If the shade takes radiant damage, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn.)	
Shadow Stride (move; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ Teleportation	
A shade can teleport 20 squares but must end its move in dim light or darkness. (More powerful shades might recharge this power more often.)	
Coalescing Darkness	
If a shade moves 3 or more squares by any means, it is cloaked with supernatural darkness, gaining total concealment.	
Skills Shades have a +5 racial bonus to Stealth checks.	

EXAMPLE SHADE: NARAMUS

NARAMUS IS A KNIGHT OF SHADE. He commands squads of shadar-kai, coordinating and sometimes directly overseeing missions. His primary duty is the defense of the city of Shade, although he occasionally provides support for important shadow caravans (page 177).

Naramus	Level 11 Elite Skirmisher (Leader)
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 1,200
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +12; darkvision
Benighted Presence aura 10; light-producing effects within the aura whose level is lower than Naramus's can create only dim light.	
HP 208; Bloodied 104	
Regeneration 10 (If Naramus takes radiant damage, his regeneration doesn't function on his next turn.)	
AC 27; Fortitude 25, Reflex 23, Will 24	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 5; see also <i>shadow stride</i>	
Action Point 1	
⚔ Bastard Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage (crit 1d6 + 17).	
☾ Gloom Chakram (standard; at-will) ♦ Force Ranged 5; +15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 force damage	
⚔ Arcing Swings (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Naramus makes two basic melee attacks and shifts 1 square after the first attack.	
⚔ Disrupting Strike (standard; recharge ☹️) ♦ Force, Weapon +17 vs. AC; 3d10 + 7 damage plus ongoing 5 force damage (save ends).	
Triumphant Cry (free, when Naramus scores a critical hit or reduces an enemy to 0 hit points; at-will) Naramus or an ally within 20 squares can make a melee or ranged attack.	
☾ Shadow Stride (move; recharge ☹️) ♦ Teleportation Naramus can teleport 20 squares but must end his move in dim light or darkness.	
Coalescing Darkness If Naramus moves 3 or more squares by any means, he is cloaked with supernatural darkness, gaining total concealment.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Netherese ^{PG}
Skills Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +15, Insight +12, Stealth +12	
Str 23 (+11)	Dex 18 (+9) Wis 14 (+7)
Con 18 (+9)	Int 12 (+6) Cha 21 (+10)
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, bastard sword	

NARAMUS'S TACTICS

Naramus leads boldly from the front as an example to his followers and prefers to challenge the strongest-looking opponent. Before closing, he launches a *gloom chakram* (a disk of solid shadow). He is mobile in combat, using *shadow stride* to gain the most advantageous position, and smashes a foe with *disrupting strike* whenever possible. Whenever he lands a telling blow, Naramus howls with glee, inspiring his allies.



SERVANTS OF SHADE

Over the long years, the Shadovar mixed shadow essence and even the blood of fiends with human stock to create servitors.

KRINTH

Since their creation, these dour, gray-skinned humanoids have been slaves to the Shadovar. They are capable and nearly fearless warriors who serve their masters with suicidal abandon. But the taint of demonic heritage makes them reckless and bloodthirsty. Since the appearance of the shadar-kai, the krinth population has been declining precipitously and will soon die out altogether.

SHADAR-KAI

The Spellplague and its reshaping of the cosmos had a strange effect on some Netherese. Their acclimation to centuries in Shadow caused them to transform into or give birth to shadelike beings. Prince Rivalen declared this to be a miracle sent by Shar. He dubbed the changed people *shadar-kai*, which has become the common term for the race.

Shadovar youths entering adolescence sometimes become shadar-kai, though this phenomenon is waning. Shadar-kai breed true with one another, and their unions with humans also produce shadar-kai. Rivalen has also devised a ritual to turn any human into a shadar-kai, not unlike that used to create a shade.

Netherese shadar-kai have existed for more than three generations. They are a privileged class, not quite as blessed as shades, but given unique training. Shadar-kai agents work schemes to better Netheril's hold on Faerûn, and gather resources and information from all over. Most of them long to become true shades.

Not all shadar-kai serve Netheril. Many flee the empire to make their own way in the world. Others are offspring of humans who broke with Shade long ago or who refused to cross out of the Shadowfell.

Netheril's shadar-kai usually worship Shar and tend more toward evil behavior than their non-Netherese counterparts. Those of the Shadowfell are given to macabre and thrill-seeking behavior: Many revere Tempus, though a few follow Shar, Cyric, Beshaba, or even Asmodeus. A rare few hold Tymora in highest esteem.

THAALUDS

KNOWN AS "TOMB TAPPERS" TO ADVENTURERS ACROSS Faerûn, thaaluds were first constructed by the ancient Netherese. Now, with the return of the Shadow, the ritual of their creation is once again known to the world, and an increasing number of thaaluds protect Netheril's settlements and roam the Underdark.

Thaalud	Level 20 Elite Soldier	
Huge natural animate (construct)	XP 5,600	
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +16; blind, blindsight 20	
HP 380; Bloodied 190		
AC 38; Fortitude 35, Reflex 31, Will 32		
Immune poison; Resist 10 cold, 10 fire, 10 lightning		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 8 (earth walk), burrow 2 (tunneling)		
Action Point 1		
⊕ Maul (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	Reach 3; +27 vs. AC; 2d8 + 11 damage.	
⊖ Thrown Maul (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	Ranged 10/20; +26 vs. AC; 2d8 + 11 damage. The maul returns to the thaalud's grasp at the end of its turn.	
⊕ Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	The thaalud makes two melee basic attacks.	
⊕ Sweeping Maul (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	Requires maul; reach 3; +20 vs. AC; 2d8 + 11 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and is knocked prone. Hit: The thaalud can make a melee basic attack against another creature within reach.	
✦ Spike Stones (standard; encounter) ♦ Zone	Area burst 3 within 20; +24 vs. AC; 1d8 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). Critical Hit: As above, but the target takes a -5 penalty to its saving throw to end the slowed condition. The zone is difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages understands Common and Netherese ^{PG} ; telepathy 20	
Skills Arcana +21		
Str 30 (+20)	Dex 17 (+13)	Wis 12 (+11)
Con 22 (+16)	Int 22 (+16)	Cha 24 (+17)
Equipment +1 adamantine magic maul		

THAALUD TACTICS

A thaalud can sense vibrations in most substances, and it uses this information to locate and strike enemies. It can even use this ability while below the ground. Thaaluuds try to burrow up under enemies and attack them unexpectedly. A thaalud begins a battle with *spike stones* to reduce its foes' maneuverability, then relies on its devastating melee capability to pound its foes.

THAALUD LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Arcana DC 15: Within Netheril, thaaluds not only serve as guards, but they're also capable builders and even act as siege weapons. They can't speak but understand the languages of their creators. Lesser and greater thaaluds also exist.

Arcana DC 20: All thaaluds have the supernatural ability to mold stone into a desired shape, if crudely. Some are capable of fine craftwork, using mundane tools after the stone is shaped.

History DC 20: With the return of Netheril, a number of free thaaluds that still survived in the Underdark went back to their old masters. Since that time, their numbers have grown tremendously.



FRANCIS TSAI

VESERAB

A **VESERAB** IS A 10-FOOT-LONG, FLYING CREATURE that resembles a cross between an eyeless lamprey and a bat.

VESERAB LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 20: Wild veserabs exist in numbers only in the wilds of the Shadowfell. There they form pairs or small flocks, each led by its largest female member (females are larger than males).

DC 30: Veserabs are trained as mounts for the privileged of Netheril. In Faerûn, the beasts are most common in Sakkors and Shade Enclave, where flying is often a necessity.



Veserab	Level 6 Lurker
Large shadow beast (mount)	XP 250
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +11; blind, blindsight 20
HP 60; Bloodied 30	
Immune <i>noxious breath</i>	
AC 20; Fortitude 20, Reflex 17, Will 17	
Speed 4 (clumsy), fly 8	
⬇ Bite (standard; at-will)	
+11 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.	
⬇ Wing Claw (standard; at-will)	
+11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage; see also <i>diving wing rake</i> .	
⬅ Noxious Breath (standard; encounter) ➡ Poison, Zone	
Close blast 4; +9 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 3 poison damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the veserab's next turn. This power creates a zone of black, noxious fumes that remains in place until the end of the encounter. This zone blocks line of sight, and a creature that enters or ends its turn in the zone takes 5 poison damage. Veserabs are immune to this power's effects.	
⬇ Diving Wing Rake (standard; at-will)	
The veserab makes a charge attack, making two wing claw attacks. After attacking, the veserab moves up to 1 square and lands in an unoccupied space.	
Dark Wings (when mounted by a friendly rider of 6th level or higher; at-will)	
The veserab's rider gains resist 5 poison and is immune to the effects of any veserab's <i>noxious breath</i> .	
Combat Advantage	
The veserab deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 20 (+8)	Dex 18 (+7) Wis 17 (+6)
Con 17 (+6)	Int 2 (-1) Cha 4 (+0)

VESERAB TACTICS

Wild veserabs attack anything they think they can kill and eat; a mount is under the control of its rider. In combat, a veserab first loses its *noxious breath*, then dives to attack targets caught within the area. It usually targets the smallest or weakest-looking creature, hoping for an easy meal. Veserabs stagger the use of their breath weapons when hunting together.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Netherese agents, mostly human or shadar-kai, are involved in plots of every kind, just about anywhere. Shadow creatures and undead, such as wraiths, shadow dragons, death giants, fell wyverns, and even a dracolich, are prominent among Netheril's forces. The empire also has vast numbers of wicked humanoid slaves and makes alliances with similar creatures, such as orcs from the Kingdom of Many-Arrows.

Level 7 Encounter (XP 1,500)

- ◆ 1 shadar-kai gloomblade (level 6 lurker with mount advantage)
- ◆ 1 shadar-kai chainfighter (level 6 skirmisher with mount advantage)
- ◆ 2 veserabs (level 6 lurker, shadar-kai mounts)
- ◆ 2 shadow hounds (level 6 skirmisher)

Level 9 Encounter (XP 2,900)

- ◆ Naramus (level 11 elite soldier [leader])
- ◆ 1 flameskull (level 8 artillery)
- ◆ 1 shadar-kai warrior (level 8 soldier)
- ◆ 1 dark stalker (level 10 lurker)
- ◆ 5 orc warriors (level 9 minion)

Level 21 Encounter (XP 20,300)

- ◆ 1 shade lich wizard (level 22 elite artillery)
- ◆ 1 tormenting ghost (level 21 controller)
- ◆ 2 thaaluds (level 20 elite soldier)



ORDER OF BLUE FIRE

The Order of Blue Fire is widely held to be a benevolent group of spellscarred who wish to help others while learning more about the Spellplague's effects.

ORDER OF BLUE FIRE LORE

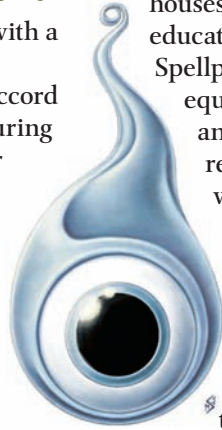
A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 35: The Masters of Absolute Accord formed in or near Deep Imaskar (page 222) during the Spellplague. They are still imprisoned near that Underdark city, and they can manipulate plaguelands and send visions to the spellscarred. Their guidance is more coherent than that of the sharns (see below) but still strengthens and spreads the Spellplague.

Religion DC 30: The order's public face is a front for a more sinister organization. It was originally a cult dedicated to the idea that the Spellplague was a holy cosmic event whose work should be continued.

Sharns are held to be expressions of a Spellplague godhead by those who follow the deepest precepts of the order. At times they issue erratic, contradictory, and even illogical dictates to the cult, leading to miraculous and terrible events that spread and nurture existing active pockets of Spellplague.

Streetwise DC 35: The Order of Blue Fire is actually the origin of many problems it is supposedly trying to solve. Trying to convince anyone of this fact is nearly impossible, though, given the order's good reputation. Its officials disavow knowledge of



the activities of members who seem to be working to foster the Spellplague and its changes.

ORGANIZATION

The Order of Blue Fire has branches in many settlements throughout Faerûn. It maintains hospices for housing and educating the spellscarred. Order houses contain lore collections and teachers to educate the populace about plaguelands and the Spellplague. The houses are also bases for experts equipped to handle out-of-control spellscarred and plaguechanged creatures, usually without recompense. For these reasons the order is often welcome and respected in a community.

Deeper within the order are fanatics bent on changing the world according to the teachings of the sharns and the Masters of Absolute Accord. They work subtly to unleash Spellplague-related problems within civilized areas. Within plaguelands, however, these extremists act with impunity.

Leader: Sharns and the Masters of Absolute Accord are the hidden leaders of the order.

Headquarters: Ormpetarr in the Vilhon Wilds (see page 193).

Hierarchy: Most of the organization is informal, with the most competent or senior members taking a leadership role in a given cell. Commanders care for those in need and are willing to take in Spellplague energies to control them; they often serve as leaders and proselytizers. Loremasters are arcanist philosophers who teach and accumulate knowledge, and knights protect the order's holdings and help control Spellplague manifestations, taking command only in military operations.

Members: Much of the order's membership is made up of spellscarred people, but the service operations of the society accept nearly all capable volunteers. Since working with Spellplague manifestations is part of the order's doctrine, the group's higher echelons include more spellscarred members. Those inducted into the inner mysteries take the title "accordant" in addition to other titles; for example, knight accordant.

Order members also undertake scar pilgrimages to plaguelands, hoping to increase and spread knowledge about such places. Some who venture beyond such territories' twisted borders manage to return with wondrous tales. Those within the order honor such brave pilgrims, whether they survive or not. Few outside the order consider them more than mad or foolhardy.

BLUE FIRE ACCORDANTS

ZEALOTS AMONG THE ORDER OF BLUE FIRE form an inner circle of agents that advance the order's true

EXPANDING THE ORDER'S RANKS

The accordants presented here are archetypal Order of Blue Fire members designed to work with sharns in plaguelands, which are adventure sites best suited to characters in the upper heroic or paragon tier.

It's easy to make other accordants of levels lower or higher than these examples, following the guidelines in Chapter 10 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. For instance, Zhent mercenaries (page 282) could easily be lower-level accordant operatives. You can readily change an accordant's race by adding racial traits and adjusting its ability scores accordingly.

You can also use the information on spellscars in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide* to make unique spellscarred and even plaguechanged NPCs or monsters. The powers of these example accordants are a good starting point for designing original ones. These people are downright weird, so run with that to create fun adversaries for your players.

goals. Only true believers are invited into their ranks, usually after a visit from a sharn or a manifestation of the Masters of Absolute Accord. Especially within plaguelands such as the remnants of Halruaa, accordants are often deranged and behave erratically—loremasters in particular.

Many Blue Fire accordants are capable combatants, trained to work together in small groups. A company of accordants can bring to bear talents as diverse as those of any skilled adventuring group, supplemented by spellscar powers. Knight accordants willingly take orders from commanders, loremasters, and higher-ranked knights.

Knight Accordant		Level 10 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, human, spellscarred		XP 500
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +14	
HP 105; Bloodied 52		
AC 26; Fortitude 24, Reflex 19, Will 22		
Speed 5		
⚔ War Pick (standard; at-will) ◆ Force, Weapon		
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 plus 3 force damage (critical 1d8 + 14 plus 3 force).		
🏹 Longbow (standard; at-will) ◆ Force, Weapon		
Ranged 20/40; +13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 1 plus 3 force damage, and the target is marked.		
🔥 Blue Fire Spike (minor; recharge 3) ◆ Force		
Until the start of the knight's next turn, the knight's weapons become energy, attacking the target's Reflex instead of AC and dealing an extra 1d10 force damage.		
👁 Knight's Eye (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts or an adjacent enemy marked by the knight attacks an ally; at-will) ◆ Force, Weapon		
The knight makes a basic melee attack against the enemy.		
Forceful Critical		
On a critical hit with any attack, the target also slides 1 square.		
Alignment Any	Languages Common, one regional language ^{PG}	
Skills Endurance +11, Intimidate +12		
Str 22 (+11)	Dex 12 (+6)	Wis 19 (+9)
Con 17 (+8)	Int 10 (+5)	Cha 15 (+7)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, war pick, longbow, 20 arrows		

KNIGHT ACCORDANT TACTICS

Knight accordants do whatever it takes to protect more vulnerable allies. They engage opponents in melee and maneuver to provide combat advantage to other knights. A knight accordant uses *blue fire spike* whenever possible to take adversaries down quickly.

Loremaster Accordant		Level 11 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, human, spellscarred		XP 600
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +9	
HP 90; Bloodied 45		
AC 23; Fortitude 22, Reflex 25, Will 23		
Speed 6		
⚔ Force Staff (standard; at-will) ◆ Force, Weapon		
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 force damage.		
🔥 Changing Ray (standard; at-will) ◆ Force, Polymorph		

Ranged 10; a blue ray warps the target momentarily; +16 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 6 force damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the loremaster's next turn.

◀ **Changing Wave** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Polymorph**

Close blast 5; a wave of blue fire sweeps away from the loremaster, warping the forms of those caught in it; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed and weakened until the end of the loremaster's next turn.

👁 **Accordant Vision** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Psychic**

Ranged 20; +15 vs. Will; 1d12 + 6 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, one regional language^{PG}

Skills Arcana +16, Dungeoneering +14, History +16, Insight +14

Str 10 (+5) **Dex** 11 (+5) **Wis** 19 (+9)

Con 17 (+8) **Int** 22 (+11) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment robes, quarterstaff

LOREMASTER ACCORDANT TACTICS

In battle, a loremaster accordant remains behind allied knights, using *changing wave* to weaken multiple targets as soon as the opportunity arises. The loremaster then sends an *accordant vision* to cripple enemies' damage-dealing and defensive capabilities. He focuses on *changing rays* for offense, attacking with his blue-flamed staff only as a last resort.

Commander Accordant		Level 11 Skirmisher (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid, human, spellscarred		XP 600
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +16	
HP 113; Bloodied 56		
AC 25; Fortitude 22, Reflex 23, Will 25		
Speed 6; see also <i>changing shift</i>		
⚔ Spellplague Touch (standard; at-will) ◆ Force		
+14 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 6 force damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 force damage (save ends).		
🏹 Spellplague Orb (standard; at-will) ◆ Force		
Ranged 20; +14 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 6 force damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 force damage (save ends).		
⚔ Spellplague Spirit (standard; sustain standard; encounter) ◆ Force, Polymorph		
The commander becomes a spirit of blue fire. He becomes insubstantial and can enter and move through enemies' spaces and porous obstacles that would otherwise prevent movement (such as a door or a cracked window). The commander makes a melee basic attack against any creature whose space he or she enters but cannot attack a target more than once in this fashion.		
◀ Blue Fire Succor (minor; recharge 3) ◆ Healing		
Close burst 5; one ally within the area regains 11 hit points (spellscarred and plaguechanged creatures also add their Constitution bonus). In addition, that ally gains 1d6 temporary hit points in the form of a shimmering blue aura.		
Changing Shift (move; at-will) ◆ Polymorph		
The commander shifts 2 squares. He or she becomes insubstantial and can move through enemies' spaces until the end of this movement.		
Alignment Any	Languages Common, one regional language ^{PG}	
Skills Arcana +11, Heal +16, Stealth +13		
Str 11 (+5)	Dex 19 (+9)	Wis 22 (+11)
Con 17 (+8)	Int 12 (+6)	Cha 12 (+6)
Equipment hide armor		



COMMANDER ACCORDANT TACTICS

Covered in rippling blue fire during battle, a commander accordant prefers close combat, reserving *Spellplague orb* for elusive enemies. Preaching a litany of *Spellplague* virtues, the commander opens with *Spellplague spirit* to maneuver behind enemy lines and damage multiple targets. She then uses *changing shift* to maintain combat advantage while attacking with *Spellplague touch*. A flanking knight ally is the primary target for *blue fire succor*.

SHARN

SHARNS ARE APPARENTLY IMMORTAL BEINGS formed of merged consciousnesses.

Sharn	Level 12 Solo Artillery
Large aberrant magical beast	XP 3,500
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +16; darkvision
HP 615; Bloodied 307; see also <i>second wind</i>	
Regeneration 10	
AC 28; Fortitude 28, Reflex 28, Will 29	
Immune petrification, polymorph	
Saving Throws +5 (+8 against fear effects, and against conditions that hinder movement); see also <i>independent consciousness</i>	
Speed 4, fly 8 (hover)	
Action Points 2	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage.
⊗ Adaptive Blue Bolt (standard; at-will) ◆ Force (see text)	Ranged 20; +16 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 7 force damage, and ongoing 5 variable damage. The ongoing damage is a type to which the target is most vulnerable (sharn's choice; the damage type doesn't change once chosen). If the target has no vulnerability, the ongoing damage is force.
⊗ Hex Portal (minor; sustain minor [see text]; at-will) ◆ Conjuration	Ranged 5; the sharn creates a hexagonal window of blue light that it can attack through as if it were in that portal's space. As a minor action, it can move one portal up to 4 squares. Portals don't block line of sight, line of effect, or enemy movement. A sharn can maintain up to three such portals at a time with a single minor action; it can close as many as it wishes with a free action.
⊗ Leaping Plaguefire (standard; recharge ☼ ☼ ☼) ◆ Fire, Force	The sharn sends a blast of blue fire against three targets; the first target must be within 10 squares of the sharn, and the other two targets within 5 squares of the first target. Primary Target: +17 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 7 fire and force damage. Secondary Targets: +17 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 7 fire and force damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Independent Action (standard; at-will)	The sharn makes two basic attacks (melee or ranged). If two different kinds of basic attacks hit the same target (such as a claw and a bite), that target is also dazed (save ends).
Second Wind (standard; encounter) ◆ Healing	The sharn spends a healing surge and heals 153 hit points. The sharn gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.
Double Actions	

A sharn rolls initiative twice, gets two turns during a round, and has a full set of actions (standard, move, minor) on each turn. Each set of actions corresponds to a different consciousness. The sharn's ability to take immediate actions refreshes on each of its turns.

Independent Consciousness

A sharn automatically saves against the dazed and stunned conditions and against charm effects that a save can end.

Threatening Reach

A sharn can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares), including through *hex portals*.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

Skills Arcana +16, Insight +10, Religion +16

Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 23 (+12) **Wis** 8 (+5)

Con 23 (+12) **Int** 21 (+11) **Cha** 24 (+13)

SHARN TACTICS

A sharn opens combat with *leaping plaguefire*, causing blue fire to burst from one foe and leap to others. It then sets up a network of *hex portals* to strike its enemies from unexpected directions, especially with opportunity attacks.

SHARN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Arcana DC 30: Sharns dwell in the deep Underdark near earth nodes, but they spend the most time on their home demiplane. They can “rest” certain aspects of their group personality while others still function, so they do not sleep. A sharn reproduces by performing a ritual to absorb a willing living creature. The more advanced a sharn, the more



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personalities it has absorbed. Many among the Order of Blue Fire consider joining a sharn to be the ultimate honor.

Arcana DC 35: An individual sharn is a “bubble” of collected awareness extruded from its home demiplane, which is strangely connected to all the cosmos. The Spellplague touched this widespread demiplane as well, infecting its inhabitants. Now, all sharns are embodiments of the Spellplague.

History DC 35: Sharns formed in ancient times during the Crown Wars, terrible clashes among the elves and eladrin that led to the birth of the drow, among other horrors. The Dark Disaster, which occurred in -10,500 DR, was a killing storm that engulfed and destroyed the entire realm of Miyeritar, where the High Moor is presently located. Mages tried to quell the Dark Disaster but were consumed by it even as they contained it within a demiplane. Inside that tempest of magical chaos, the first sharns were born as the mages’ bodies dissolved and merged.

PLAGUECHANGED GHOUL

THE SPELLPLAGUE KILLED INDISCRIMINATELY, but it apparently raised some of those it slew, in a hungering form.

Plaguechanged Ghoul		Level 9 Brute
Medium natural humanoid, spellscarred (undead)		XP 400
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +5	
HP 109; Bloodied 54		
AC 21; Fortitude 21, Reflex 21, Will 20		
Immune disease; Resist 5 necrotic, 5 force		
Speed 6, climb 4		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will) ◆ Force		
+13 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 force damage, and the target is pushed 1.		
⊕ Gut Maw (standard; at-will) ◆ Force		
Provokes opportunity attacks; +13 vs. Ref; 2d8 + 3 force damage, and the ghoul can expend a healing surge.		
⊕ Passing Consumption (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack made by an adjacent attacker; recharge ⓈⓈ) ◆ Force		
The plaguechanged ghoul can make a <i>gut maw</i> attack that doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Str 18 (+8)	Dex 19 (+8)	Wis 3 (+0)
Con 21 (+9)	Int 6 (+2)	Cha 17 (+7)

PLAGUECHANGED GHOUL TACTICS

A plaguechanged ghoul pack fights like a group of berserk wolves. The group surrounds a foe as quickly as possible. Staying in close combat, the ghouls push enemies toward packmates or other melee-combatant allies.

PLAGUECHANGED GHOUL LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Religion check.

DC 25: Plaguechanged ghouls look similar to normal ghouls, except for a fiery blue maw the plaguechanged have in their gut. These undead also seem to exist in a state somewhat closer to life than typical undead. Like typical ghouls, they hunger for flesh, showing only a slight affinity for creatures that have supernatural powers and a disdain for eating the spellscarred or plaguechanged.

Left behind by the passing Spellplague, plaguechanged ghouls inhabit remote places and still arise in plaguelands. They have no affiliation with any known extraplanar power, but Orcus would surely like to influence them.

DC 30: Plaguechanged ghouls can be found as minions of the Order of Blue Fire. The order influences the brutes with food and offers of safe haven. Sharns also seem to have influence over the ghouls.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Sharns appear alone, in pairs, or with accordants and their underlings. Accordants work with all sorts of creatures that advance the order’s goals. Most often, allies are other accordants, aberrant creatures, spellscarred creatures, and plaguechanged creatures—such as plaguechanged gibberlings or ghouls.

Level 9 Encounter (XP 2,400)

- ◆ 1 knight accordant (level 10 soldier)
- ◆ 1 plaguechanged ghoul (level 9 brute)
- ◆ 1 foulspawn mangler (level 8 skirmisher)
- ◆ 1 doppelganger assassin (level 9 lurker)
- ◆ 1 destrachan (level 9 artillery)
- ◆ 1 eladrin twilight incanter (level 8 controller)

SCHISM

Although accordants can be of any alignment, most are unaligned, chaotic evil, or evil. That said, the organization has plenty of good-hearted members, especially at lower echelons. Many of these might even come to believe in the organization’s true dogma, but they don’t use evil or duplicitous means to further that creed.

As with any large organization, conflicting plans and operations arise among those willing to further the Spellplague’s changes on Faerûn. Orders from the sharns are erratic, and they often clash with activities inspired by visions sent from the Masters of Absolute Accord. Differing sects within the order thus can end up at odds with each other.

Conflicts within the Order of Blue Fire can provide rich opportunities for using the organization as a recurring villain in a campaign. Coupled with the fact that the order often creates problems it claims to be solving, members might frequently wind up on both sides of a conflict. Subjects might also pursue their own goals in addition to the overall purpose of the order.

REPTILE KINGDOMS

In times primeval, the serpentine sarrukh rose to power and created great empires, shaping many new creatures to please and serve them. Then the sarrukh diminished in number and left Toril, either for eons of sleep or planar exploration. The world still holds a small number of these great reptilian overlords, now awakened and plotting against the beings who rule the world today. Their realm of Okoth (see page 166) still holds records of much of their history.

The intelligent creatures the sarrukh created, known collectively as the Scaled Ones, formed new cultures and new realms after the departure of their creators. Pockets of reptilian activity are common all across Faerûn, but mighty realms ruled by Scaled Ones also exist.

Reptilian humanoid trouble people across Faerûn, but their numbers are largest in the south. Chult, the ruins of Lhesper, and the southern Lluirwood all belong to the yuan-ti. Najara is a dominion ruled by nagas, while Rethild is the greatest realm of lizardfolk in Faerûn. Okoth, like its namesake of old, belongs to the sarrukh.



TERPENZI, GUARDIAN OF NAJARA

ONCE A GREAT IMMORTAL NAGA, the founder and long-time ruler of Najara, Terpenzi lost its life and status long ago. After its demise, horrifying rituals bound its soul into its skeletal body.

Through the power of the *Marlspire of Najara* (see page 57), the ancient undead naga is completely subject to the will of the ruler of Najara. Terpenzi still cares about Najara, its former dominion, but it constantly tests the boundaries of control imposed on it by the *Marlspire*.

Terpenzi lairs in the Snake Pit, the lowest point in the Underdark Najaran city of Ss'khanaja, among the vast treasure of Jarant, the King of Snakes.

Terpenzi	Level 30 Solo Controller
Huge immortal magical beast (undead)	XP 95,000
Initiative +27	Senses Perception +30; darkvision
Captivating Presence (Charm, Psychic) aura sight; while Terpenzi is not bloodied, any enemy that attacks it takes 15 psychic damage or becomes dazed until the start of that creature's next turn (enemy's choice). An enemy that is already dazed becomes stunned instead.	
HP 1,400; Bloodied 700; see also <i>siphon slave</i>	
AC 45; Fortitude 47, Reflex 48, Will 48	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 30 necrotic; Vulnerable 15 radiant	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 6, fly 8	
Action Points 2	
⬇ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
Reach 3; +35 vs. AC; 4d6 + 8 damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).	
⬇ Tail Sting (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison	
Reach 3; +35 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 poison damage, and the target is weakened and takes ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends both). <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target is weakened (save ends).	
⚡ Enslaving Gaze (minor; recharge [1]) ♦ Charm	
Ranged 10; +35 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends). <i>First Failed Save:</i> The target is dazed and cannot attack Terpenzi (save ends both). <i>Second Failed Save:</i> The target is dominated (save ends). All saves to end these effects take a -2 penalty.	
⚡ Soul-Chilling Wall (standard; sustain minor; recharge [2][1]) ♦ Conjuration, Necrotic	
Area wall 10 within 10; conjures a wall of contiguous squares filled with darkness that blocks line of sight for all creatures except Terpenzi. The wall can be up to 5 squares long and up to 2 squares high. The spaces occupied by the <i>soul-chilling wall</i> are difficult terrain. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in the area takes 15 necrotic damage.	
⚡ Siphon Slave (minor; recharge [2][1]) ♦ Healing, Necrotic	
Ranged 20; Terpenzi deals 30 necrotic damage to a creature it has dominated and regains 30 hit points.	
Threatening Reach	
Terpenzi can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Supernal
Skills Arcana +30, Bluff +32, Diplomacy +32, Insight +30, Intimidate +32, Stealth +32 (+40 to hide)	
Str 27 (+23)	Dex 34 (+27)
Con 32 (+26)	Int 30 (+25)
	Wis 31 (+25)
	Cha 34 (+27)

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TERPENZI'S TACTICS

Terpenzi always begins the “dance of death,” as it calls combat, by using *enslaving gaze* to press its crushing will on a chosen foe. Once it has dominated an enemy, Terpenzi divides the battlefield and blocks ranged attackers with a carefully placed *soul-chilling wall*. The great serpent then attacks in melee, keeping the dominated creature nearby to exploit *siphon slave* as necessary.

SARRUKH

Sarrukh are the progenitor race of all serpents and most nondraconic reptilian creatures on Toril. They view those not of such a glorious heritage as weaklings suitable only as slaves.

Each sarrukh is a distinct elite monster, usually of epic tier, with its own powers and goals. It can have any role but favors artillery, controller, or soldier, often with the leader subrole. Some sarrukh use magic items to supplement their own formidable abilities.

SCALED ONES

The sarrukh created almost all of Toril's reptilian creatures. Each of the major varieties is discussed below.

Lizardfolk: The lizardfolk of Toril are less tainted by their creators than many other reptilian creatures. They are as fierce and destructive as any of those in the *Monster Manual*, though, and they are more likely to tend to evil alignment. More than one tribe is ruled by malevolent and even fiendishly corrupted individuals.

Nagas: Guardians like those in the *Monster Manual* exist, but all except Terpenzi are natural magical beasts rather than immortal ones. Banelar nagas (page 239) were created to serve the god Bane and are immortal beings. Many of Toril's nagas are as evil as their progenitors.

Troglodytes: The sarrukh created the troglodytes to explore and guard subterranean realms. Fierce and dull-witted, these creatures quickly became feral without the guidance of their progenitors. They developed a greedy and territorial culture, quickly spreading throughout the Underdark.

Yuan-ti: The sarrukh shaped yuan-ti in their image, and the yuan-ti in turn learned to shape others. The yuan-ti of Faerûn wield great power and influence, though they are diminished from times past. Their great houses once ruled empires alongside the sarrukh, and now they exist among the ruins of those civilizations. Yuan-ti are an insidious evil in Toril, and when they aren't abusing and tormenting other creatures to fulfill their desires for domination, they are working on behalf of the sarrukh toward even worse ends.

Other Scaled Ones: The sarrukh are responsible for the existence of numerous other reptilian beasts and creatures with sentience or strange powers, including behemoths, drakes, and mutated serpents.

BEN WOOTTEN



SARRUKH LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: All creatures have an innate fear of sarrukh that can be quelled only by seeing one near defeat. The sarrukh's primeval splendor allows them to warp an enemy's perception with a look.

DC 20: A sarrukh can take one of two forms: a humanoid body that tapers to a serpentine tail or a bipedal humanlike form, either form topped by a snakelike head. Their dual nature inspired the sarrukh to create such a diversity of creatures.

DC 25: Supernaturally able to avoid danger, sarrukh seem to bend around some attacks. Although they use rituals to do careful shaping, they all have the ability to quickly seal eyes, bend bones, and inflict great pain.

DC 30: Like their creations, especially the yuan-ti, sarrukh once lived in clans or noble houses. Now their numbers are so few that they are unified, with their eyes toward the Emperor of Okoth. Sterile and outnumbered, they move slowly and subtly to reclaim their former glory and birth new generations.

SATH'FISS'ITH THE SKYBINDER

ONE OF THE SARRUKH OF OKOTH, Sath'fiss'ith has earned the title of Skybinder through its mastery of sun, wind, and storm.

Sath'fiss'ith the Skybinder Level 25 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid (reptile) XP 14,000

Initiative +17 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision, see invisible creatures

Serpent Terror (Fear) aura 10; while Sath'fiss'ith is not bloodied, enemies in the aura are slowed.

HP 465; **Bloodied** 232; see also *serpent terror*

AC 42; **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 39; see also *serpentine evasion*

Immune poison; **Resist** 30 fire

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, fly 8; see also *vanishing slide*

Action Point 1

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+30 vs. AC; 1d8 + 9 damage.

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Poison**

+30 vs. AC; 1d6 + 9 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

☞ **Sun Orb** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Radiant**

Ranged 20; +28 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 10 radiant damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

☞ **Hypnotic Eyes** (minor; at will) ◆ **Charm**

Ranged 10; +28 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

☞ **Noxious Whirlwind** (standard; sustain minor; recharge ☞ ☞) ◆ **Poison**

Area burst 1 within 10; +28 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 7 poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). **Miss:** Half damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and is not immobilized.

☞ **Viper Lightning** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Lightning, Poison**

Ranged 20; Sath'fiss'ith makes two attacks against different targets; +28 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 10 lightning damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).

Vanishing Slide (standard; at-will) ◆ **Illusion**

Sath'fiss'ith becomes invisible until the start of his next turn and moves up to his speed.

Serpentine Evasion

When an area or close attack targeting AC or Reflex defense misses Sath'fiss'ith but deals damage on a miss, he takes no damage from the attack.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic, Primordial, Sarrukhar

Skills Arcana +27, Bluff +28, Insight +24, Intimidate +28, Stealth +22

Str 28 (+21) **Dex** 20 (+17) **Wis** 24 (+19)

Con 25 (+19) **Int** 30 (+22) **Cha** 32 (+23)

TACTICS

Sath'fiss'ith deals mercilessly with foes, unleashing the full fury of its mystical powers before turning to claw and fang. It uses *noxious whirlwind* to lift as many foes as possible aloft on green vapors, and *hypnotic eyes* to maneuver without risk from at least one adversary. It blasts opponents with forked emerald bolts of *viper lightning*; against ranged attackers, it launches golden *sun orbs*.

WERESERPENT

A WERESERPENT IS A REPTILIAN LYCANTHROPE that can take on a humanlike form or transform into an oversized snake. Its hybrid form is a bipedal scaled humanoid with slender, flexible limbs and a long tail.

WERESERPENT LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Nature DC 15: Lycanthropy is hereditary, and most wereserpents are born of at least one wereserpent parent. Nevertheless, tavern tales tell of



unfortunates cursed to become such monsters merely from the bite of such a creature.

Nature DC 20: In Faerûn, wereserpents are often integrated into an unknowing society. They're common in or near yuan-ti enclaves, especially in the tropics. Most wereserpents are strangely attractive, easily drawing others to them. As such, they're often part of merchant or criminal interests, or both.

Nature DC 30: Yuan-ti and sarrukh still have the knowledge of changing humans and similar humanoids into wereserpents.

Streetwise DC 35: The Janor family, a fallen noble house of Tethyr, contains a number of wereserpents. The family keeps this knowledge secret, though rumors persist. It maintains its wealth by investing in businesses, legal and illicit, up and down the Sword Coast.

Wereserpent		Level 6 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile, shapechanger)		XP 250
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +9; low-light vision	
HP 60; Bloodied 30		
Regeneration 5 (If the wereserpent takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn.)		
AC 20; Fortitude 19, Reflex 18, Will 17		
Speed 6, climb 4 (in snake form only), swim 4; see also <i>serpentine shift</i>		
⬇ Scimitar (standard; at-will) ⬆ Weapon	+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage (crit 1d8 + 13).	
⬇ Bite (standard; at-will) ⬆ Poison	+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and is weakened (save ends both).	
⬇ Tail Grab (standard; at-will)	+12 vs. AC; the target is grabbed (until escape). A wereserpent can grab only one creature at a time.	
⬇ Drag Foe (move; at-will)	Affects a target the wereserpent has grabbed; +10 vs. Fortitude; the wereserpent can move up to its speed and pull the grabbed target with it.	
⬇ Constrict (standard; at-will)	Affects a target the wereserpent has grabbed; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the wereserpent's next turn.	
Serpentine Shift (move; at-will)		
The wereserpent shifts 4 squares, and serpent allies within 10 squares of it can shift 2 squares as a free action.		
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ⬆ Polymorph		
A wereserpent can alter its physical form to appear as a crush-grip constrictor or a unique human (see <i>Change Shape</i> , MM 280). It cannot use its bite, constrict, or tail grab attacks in human form and cannot make scimitar attacks in snake form.		
Alignment Any	Languages Common, one other	
Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +12, Stealth +12		
Str 20 (+8)	Dex 17 (+6)	Wis 12 (+4)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 10 (+3)	Cha 18 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, scimitar		

WERESERPENT TACTICS

A wereserpent forced into battle prefers its hybrid form, which allows it to use the broadest range of its powers. It bites a dangerous opponent to inject its weakening poison, then grabs that foe with its tail as soon as possible. It continues to constrict that creature while fighting others if it must.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Reptilian creatures are often found together, especially those of serpentine form. Nagas, yuan-ti, wereserpents, and sarrukh are common allies. Even dragons have been known to obey a sarrukh. Many of these creatures easily manipulate nonreptilian beings as well.

Wereserpents: Individual wereserpents develop differing skills, leaning toward soldier or skirmisher roles, with an occasional mage or priest. Like wererats, which are also integrated into civilizations, wereserpents might be found among all sorts of creatures. They attract and are attracted to snakes, and often keep serpentine beasts as pets. Yuan-ti and other powerful reptilian creatures, such as the sarrukh of Okoth, often have wereserpent lackeys.

Level 5 Encounter (XP 1,075)

- ◆ 1 wereserpent (level 6 controller [leader])
- ◆ 2 deathrattle vipers (level 5 brute)
- ◆ 1 iron cobra (level 6 skirmisher)
- ◆ 1 human mage (level 4 artillery)

Level 24 Encounter (XP 32,850)

- ◆ Sath'fiss'ith (level 25 elite controller)
- ◆ 1 great flameskull (level 24 artillery)
- ◆ 1 yuan-ti anathema (level 21 elite skirmisher)
- ◆ 2 giant mummies (level 21 brute)

Level 31 Encounter (XP 109,000)

- ◆ Jarant, King of Snakes (dark naga, level 21 elite controller)
- ◆ Terpenzi (level 30 solo)



SCATHEBEAST

THE SLUGLIKE SCATHEBEASTS ARE GRASSLAND HERD CREATURES. They are found in small wild herds on the tallgrass plains in Returned Abeir, though a few have found their way to Faerûn (especially Tymather). These creatures slide along the ground on acidic slime, leaving a trail of withered, flattened grass in their wakes. Dragons hunt them, but lesser creatures generally stay clear. A lone scathebeast is dangerous enough, but a herd can charge in a crushing stampede when aroused.

Though they are ornery, lone scathebeasts can be captured and, with effort, trained to work with other creatures, such as dragonborn or humans.

SCATHEBEAST LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Nature DC 10: Old Abeiran myths claim that scathebeasts were created from dragonborn slaves by dragons long ago in a great magical transformation. Sages who have examined both dragonborn and scathebeast corpses say this belief is almost certainly untrue, but it persists, making many dragonborn highly reluctant to attack scathebeasts.

Nature DC 15: Scathebeasts have strong family bonds based on scent. They attack any creature that injures or kills kin, or that threatens the herd. Generations of depredations by dragons (who relish their flesh) cause scathebeasts to instinctively fear anything large that swoops down from the sky, and especially any source of fire. Adventurers around campfires have often been slain by stampeding herds of scathebeasts. Sometimes a dragon attacks creatures that molest its preferred herd.

Nature DC 20: Scathebeasts eat by dissolving food and absorbing it directly through their slimy skin. A scathebeast's slime changes according to its food source. It is usually a gentle acid that doesn't kill the roots of the plains grass on which the creature normally feeds. Some scathebeasts have developed a taste for meat. If a scathebeast is hunting live prey or is defending itself and its herdmates, the caustic secretion can dissolve flesh in seconds.

Nature DC 30: Sustained attacks by a particular kind of damage might actually heal scathebeasts, some claim. Even if that assertion is not true, repeated attacks with the same damage type do seem to have less and less effect against a given scathebeast.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Scathebeast herds rarely number more than five to eight individuals. The creatures instinctively avoid destroying grassland through excessive grazing.

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,350)

- ◆ 1 scathebeast bull (level 6 controller)
- ◆ 3 scathebeast adults (level 4 brute)
- ◆ 1 scathebeast watcher (level 4 skirmisher)
- ◆ 1 zairtail swarm (level 3 skirmisher; page 280)
- ◆ 2 scathebeast calves (level 2 brute)

Scathebeast Calf		Level 2 Brute
Medium natural beast		XP 125
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +2	
HP 48; Bloodied 24		
AC 14; Fortitude 17, Reflex 12, Will 14		
Immune poison; Resist variable 5 (MM 282). Each time a scathebeast resists damage, its resistance to that damage type increases by 5 until the end of the encounter.		
Speed 5		
⊕ Crush (standard; at-will)		
+5 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.		
Stampede (standard; encounter)		
As an immediate reaction, one other scathebeast within 5 squares of a scathebeast calf can charge a target that the scathebeast calf charges.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 8 (+0)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 6 (-1)

SCATHEBEAST CALF TACTICS

Only about the size of a pony, a scathebeast calf is dwarfed by adult herd members. Calves are timid if caught alone, but they do not hesitate to attack along with the rest of the herd.

Scathebeast Adult		Level 4 Brute
Large natural beast		XP 175
Initiative +1	Senses Perception +4	
HP 70; Bloodied 35		
AC 16; Fortitude 19, Reflex 14, Will 16		
Immune poison; Resist variable 5 (MM 282). Each time a scathebeast resists damage, its resistance to that damage type increases by 5 until the end of the encounter.		
Speed 6		
⊕ Crush (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 damage.		
⊖ Digest (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂ) ◆ Acid		
+5 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape) and knocked prone. A grabbed target takes 5 acid damage at the start of its turn.		
Stampede (standard; encounter)		
As an immediate reaction, one other scathebeast within 5 squares of a scathebeast adult can charge a target that the scathebeast adult charges.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 9 (+1)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 19 (+6)	Int 2 (-2)	Cha 6 (+0)

SCATHEBEAST ADULT TACTICS

An attacking adult knocks opponents prone, then crushes them under its bulk while its digestive acid goes to work.



SCATHEBEAST

Scathebeast Watcher Level 4 Skirmisher
Large natural beast XP 175

Initiative +8 **Senses Perception** +8
HP 55; **Bloodied** 27
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 14
Immune poison; **Resist** variable 5 (MM 282). Each time a scathebeast resists damage, its resistance to that damage type increases by 5 until the end of the encounter.

Speed 8

⊕ **Crush** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
+9 vs. AC; 2d6 + 1 damage. If a scathebeast watcher has combat advantage against the target, the target also takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends), and the scathebeast watcher can shift 1 square.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +11
Str 13 (+3) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 6 (+0)

SCATHEBEAST WATCHER TACTICS

Every herd contains one watcher. Watchers work in concert with other scathebeasts to gain and maintain combat advantage.

Scathebeast Bull Level 6 Controller (Leader)
Large natural beast XP 250

Initiative +3 **Senses Perception** +5
HP 75; **Bloodied** 37
AC 20; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 17
Immune poison; **Resist** variable 5 (MM 282). Each time a scathebeast resists damage, its resistance to that damage type increases by 5 until the end of the encounter.

Speed 6

⊕ **Crush** (standard; at-will)
+11 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 damage.

⊗ **Spit Slime** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Acid**
Ranged 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 5 acid damage.

↵ **Slime Spray** (standard; recharge ☹☹☹) ♦ **Acid**
Close blast 4; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 5 acid damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the scathebeast bull's next turn.

Stampede (standard; encounter)
Choose up to two other scathebeasts within 5 squares of a scathebeast bull. As an immediate reaction, each of those scathebeasts can charge a target that the scathebeast bull charges.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 13 (+4) **Dex** 10 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 20 (+8) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 7 (+1)

SCATHEBEAST BULL TACTICS

A bull begins combat with *slime spray* to pin down enemies, then leads charges to finish them quickly.

Scathebeast Giant Level 6 Elite Brute
Huge natural beast XP 500

Initiative +6 **Senses Perception** +3
HP 180; **Bloodied** 90
AC 20; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 17
Immune poison; **Resist** variable 5 (MM 282). Each time a scathebeast resists damage, its resistance to that damage type increases by 5 until the end of the encounter.

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Point 1

⊕ **Crush** (standard; at-will)
+9 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage.

↵ **Mass Pin** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Acid**
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape) and knocked prone. A grabbed target takes 5 acid damage at the start of its turn.

‡ **Thrash** (immediate reaction, when a scathebeast giant takes damage from an attack by a creature within 2 squares of it; recharge ☹☹☹)
Reach 2; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target is pulled adjacent to the scathebeast giant and is grabbed (until escape).

Stampede (standard; encounter)
As an immediate reaction, one other scathebeast within 5 squares of a scathebeast giant can charge a target that the scathebeast giant charges.

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –
Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 20 (+8) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 7 (+1)

SCATHEBEAST GIANT TACTICS

Scathebeast giants hunt humanoid creatures, whose flesh they have developed a taste for.



THAY

Thay looms in the east like a killer returned from the grave to finish his dark work. Few in the world know the extent of its ruler's ambitions, but all fear Thay's power and its armies of undead.

THAY LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Religion DC 40: During the civil war in Thay, Szass Tam made a pact with Bane to assure his victory. But Tam now owes Bane the worship of Thay's people, and the Black Lord will eventually claim his soul. Servants of Bane are welcome in Thay, although few of them have any high-ranking position within the hierarchy of Thay's government.

Streetwise DC 40: Thay looked inward for a long time while Szass Tam worked a titanic ritual that would have destroyed the world and remade it as he wished. The lich would have become that new world's greatest god but was thwarted in the attempt. Thay is now unsuitable for the ritual, so Tam will make war on some neighboring land sooner or later. Aglarond and Thesk seem the most likely targets, and Thayan forces have already made successful forays into or near those countries.

DREAD WARRIOR

THAY'S NECROMANCERS ARE AMONG THE BEST in the world, and their undead creations are simply more capable and enduring than others. Thay produces more than its share of shambling corpses, but its

CUSTOMIZING SZASS TAM

As the Regent of Thay, Szass Tam has access to mind-boggling resources and the will to delve into magical mysteries. He can be the ultimate villain in any campaign, and you should adjust his abilities to best challenge your adventurers.

Tam has virtually unrestricted magical knowledge, allowing him to use other arcane powers, whether from other classes or monsters, or those you create yourself. He also has a vast library of rituals, many not known to others, allowing him to prepare any number of world-threatening plots that the characters must stop. He has access to an array of magic items that he can use against foes, including artifacts such as *Thakorsil's Seat* (page 58).

Changing his appearance is a minor task, so Tam can look like just about anyone, though he prefers the form of a robust and tall middle-aged human. He also uses a ritual that sends images of himself to communicate with allies and servants anywhere in the world—and beyond.

Dread Legions contain a significant number of intelligent skeletons and zombies. Known as dread warriors, these evil undead can follow orders, communicate, and fight just as well as a living counterpart, but they do so without fear of death.

"Dread warrior" is a template you can apply to any humanoid creature to represent one of these Thayan monstrosities. Heroic tier soldiers, such as the human guard, are the most common dread warriors.

Prerequisite: Humanoid

Dread Warrior	Elite (Any role)
Natural humanoid (undead)	XP Elite
Senses darkvision	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic, 10 necrotic at 11th level, 15 necrotic at 21st level; Vulnerable 5 radiant, 10 radiant at 11th level, 15 radiant at 21st level	
Saving Throws +2 (+4 against charm effects)	
Action Point 1	
Hit Points +6 per level (artillery, lurker)/+8 per level (controller, skirmisher, soldier)/+10 per level (brute) + Constitution score	

SZASS TAM

THE NOTORIOUS SZASS TAM IS ONE OF THE MOST CUNNING, ambitious, and callous beings alive. Nearly 400 years old, he is arrogant but circumspect. He takes his time with far-reaching plans, but he is unafraid of directly confronting a problem when the need arises, as he showed during Thay's civil war.

Tam is willing to exploit unusual alliances to further his plans, and he has even helped good folk in the past. However, such reliance on or trust in others has caused him grief, in particular thwarting his plot to gain immortality. Now, the old lich is especially careful about making deals.

Well known for his calmness and civility, even when dealing with enemies, Szass Tam is nevertheless forthright about his wishes. He expects all who serve him to obey immediately and severely punishes those who fail him. He never wastes resources, though—some servants are too valuable to simply destroy.



MATTHEW D. WILSON

Szass Tam	Level 30 Elite Artillery (Leader)	
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 38,000	
Human wizard lich		
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +23; darkvision	
Necromantic Aura (Necrotic) aura 5; any living creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 5 necrotic damage.		
HP 388; Bloodied 194; see also <i>indestructible</i>		
Second Wind (standard; encounter) ◆ Healing		
Szass Tam spends a healing surge and heals 100 hit points. He gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of his next turn.		
Regeneration 10 (If Szass Tam takes radiant damage, his regeneration doesn't function on his next turn.)		
AC 45; Fortitude 45, Reflex 43, Will 46		
Immune disease, fear, poison; Resist 20 necrotic		
Saving Throws +2 (+5 against charm effects)		
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)		
Action Point 1		
⌘ Vampire Lance (standard; at-will) ◆ Necrotic	Ranged 20; +35 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 10 necrotic damage, and Szass Tam gains 5 temporary hit points.	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will) ◆ Necrotic	+34 vs. AC; 1d6 + 10 damage, and 10 ongoing necrotic damage (save ends).	
⚡ Soul Strike (standard; daily) ◆ Necrotic	Close burst 10; targets enemies; +35 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 11 necrotic damage. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage.	
Necrotic Master		
Szass Tam can convert any attack power he has to necrotic. Change a power's energy keyword to necrotic, or add necrotic energy to an attack power that doesn't normally deal energy damage.		
⤵ Flensing (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ◆ Fear, Necrotic	Ranged 20; +35 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 + 11 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). All allies of the target within line of sight take a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends). Szass Tam must make a new attack roll against the target when he sustains this effect. He can change the target as a standard action.	
⤵ Resistance (minor; daily)	Ranged 10; Szass Tam or 1 ally within range gains resist 10 against one type of damage until the end of the encounter. Choose from acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, or thunder damage.	
Time Stop (minor; daily)		
Szass Tam gains two extra standard actions, which he cannot use to attack other creatures.		
Shadowflow (minor; encounter) ◆ Illusion		
Szass Tam uses the power contained in his robes to become invisible until the start of his next turn.		
Spellmaster (minor; recharge ⌘⌘⌘)		
Szass Tam regains the use of an expended encounter power.		
Indestructible		
When Szass Tam is reduced to 0 hit points, his body and possessions crumble into dust, but he is not destroyed. He reappears (along with his possessions) in 1d10 days within 1 square of his phylactery, unless the phylactery is also found and destroyed.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Mulhorandi	
Skills Arcana +31, Dungeoneering +28, History +31, Nature +28, Stealth +22		
Str 12 (+16)	Dex 14 (+17)	Wis 27 (+23)
Con 28 (+24)	Int 32 (+26)	Cha 30 (+25)
Equipment orb		

Szass Tam commands the forces of Thay, and he works through servants and intermediaries whenever he needn't be directly involved. Undead generals and necromancers direct Thay's armies at Tam's behest.

TACTICS

Szass Tam is usually accompanied by an army of undead. He fights with a serenity and cold mockery that belie his smoldering rage. He first uses *time stop* to raise his defenses and to fly to the most defensible position, then blasts foes with *soul strike*. He invokes *void curse* to harry those who hang back from battle and *flensing* to torture melee combatants. *Shadowflow* lets Tam make strategic retreats so he can recharge an encounter power, though he might also use it to position himself among nearly dead foes to use *sanguinary repercussions*.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Within the horror of Thay, evil is the norm. Undead of every imaginable kind serve its ruler, and lackeys of Szass Tam run the government. Along with the undead are all manner of evil creatures, from lowly goblin, orc, and groll soldiers to death giants, fiends, and dark angels serving Bane.

Level 6 Encounter (XP 1,426)

- ◆ 1 battle wight (level 9 soldier)
- ◆ 2 groll claw fighters (level 6 skirmisher)
- ◆ 1 tiefling heretic (level 6 artillery)
- ◆ 1 wraith (level 5 lurker)
- ◆ 2 hobgoblin warriors (level 8 minion)
- ◆ 2 human lackeys (level 7 minion)

Level 14 Encounter (XP 5,800)

- ◆ 2 boneclaws (level 14 soldier)
- ◆ 1 sword wraith (level 17 lurker)
- ◆ 1 lich (level 14 elite controller)
- ◆ 6 horde ghouls (level 13 minion)

Level 29 Encounter (XP 88,125)

- ◆ Szass Tam (level 30 elite artillery [leader])
- ◆ 1 death knight (level 25 elite soldier)
- ◆ 2 dread wraiths (level 25 lurker)
- ◆ 7 lich vestiges (level 26 minion)
- ◆ 5 Abyssal ghouls myrmidons (level 23 minion)



WARLOCK KNIGHTS OF VAASA

The Warlock Knights are the nobility of Vaasa's brutal feudal system. Their twisted knightly order is based on an otherworldly being known as Telos that fell to earth during the Spellplague. They wield a variety of powers that deal radiant damage, drawing on the essence of Telos.

VAASA LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Streetwise check.

DC 20: In Vaasa, almost everyone is worse off than the peasants of other lands. A significant portion of the population is made up of humanoid slaves and monstrous creatures that serve the Warlock Knights. Nevertheless, free folk in Vaasa must toil as well, risking life and freedom if they fail to comply with the dark wishes of their masters. The best one can hope for in Vaasa, other than becoming a Warlock Knight, is to be beneath notice or so skilled as to be indispensable.

DC 30: At the center of the Ironfell Council is its thirteenth member and the oldest Warlock Knight alive—the evil human who calls himself the Voice of Telos. He is said to have first discovered Telos's fallen form in the tundra of Vaasa. If Vaasa has a king, it is the Voice of Telos, for all other Warlock Knights bow to his authority.

IRONFELL

Warlock Knights harvest material from the ever-regenerating body of the primordial Telos. They use this material to fashion items and to create constructs called shardsouls. Telos recovers from this mining rapidly, so the Warlock Knights have a nearly endless supply of the material they call ironfell, or simply “the iron.”

Worked ironfell is as hard as steel, though duller in luster and with a crystalline structure. It can easily be made into magic items. The greatest natural power of ironfell is apparent only in the hands of warlocks who have a special star pact with the comatose Telos. Their ironfell weapons deal radiant damage equal to the wielder's Charisma bonus. Other powers that deal radiant damage blaze with a violet, starlight glare. Armor made almost entirely of ironfell grants its wearer resistance to radiant damage equal to his or her Charisma modifier.

As users of arcane power, many Warlock Knights are also ritual casters. They perform unique rituals involving ironfell, including those they use to raise shardsouls. The Pact of the Iron Ring (page 59) is the best known of these.

WARLOCK KNIGHTS

THE MERCILESS LORDS OF VAASA, as well as many of their elite agents, practice the dark arcane arts to supplement other talents. Others almost exclusively use the power gained from their pacts and the bound form of the Master of the Iron Sky.

Like nobles of other realms, the Warlock Knights grant authority to their lessers, but they are the true rulers and owners of Vaasa. Even the lowliest among them has life-and-death authority over the common folk. The twelve most influential Warlock Knights make up the Ironfell Council, which has authority over the entire group.

Leader: The Voice of Telos.

Headquarters: Telos, in Vaasa (page 189).

Hierarchy: The Warlock Knights have a peerage hierarchy based loosely on feudal and warrior traditions common in other lands. Knights without land are known as executors, and these petty nobles serve as emissaries, spies, soldiers, and assassins for greater Warlock Knights. Landed knights, also known as fellthanes, have absolute power over their holdings and maintain private armies. They are vassals to more powerful figures known as vindicators. The greatest vindicators make up the Ironfell Council, which revolves around the Voice of Telos.

Luminaries are members of an independent sect formed by the Voice of Telos, functioning almost as priests do in other kingdoms. They are the most deeply devoted to the pact that binds the Warlock Knights to Telos, and they are found as advisors within most Warlock Knight courts.

Members: Warlock Knights are the elite, chosen from among the most ruthless and capable in Vaasa. A few titles have passed hereditarily, but only to heirs who have demonstrated their worthiness. Those who wish to rise in the ranks must serve the correct interests and cut the right throats only at the proper moments. Once they have proven themselves to those in authority, they become nobles in turn. Every Warlock Knight must keep an eye toward lesser fellows, understanding that any weakness might open a doorway to attack or worse.

All Warlock Knights wear a simple loop of dark, crystalline iron as a symbol of their station and power. Despite rumors of their mind-bending power, these rings have no inherent magical ability. They do function as focuses for some Warlock Knight rituals and powers, and they can be made into magic rings.



Warlock Knight Executor Level 9 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 800

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 194; **Bloodied** 97
AC 25; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Point 1

⊕ **Ironfell Dagger** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Radiant, Weapon**
+15 vs. AC; 1d4 + 6 damage plus 4 radiant damage.

⊗ **Ironfell Shuriken** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Radiant, Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage plus 1d4 radiant damage.

Shard Star Warrior (standard; at-will) ◆ **Radiant, Weapon**
The executor makes two basic attacks (melee or ranged).

↻ **Iron Sky Starfall** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Radiant**
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Will; 1d6 + 4 radiant damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the executor's next turn.

Dark One's Own Luck (free, when the executor makes an attack roll, saving throw, ability check, or skill check; daily)
The executor rerolls and uses the better of the two results.

Combat Advantage
An executor deals an extra 2d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target he or she has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Damaran^{PG}
Skills Arcana +10, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Insight +9
Str 15 (+6) **Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 10 (+4)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+8)

Equipment leather armor, 2 ironfell daggers, 15 ironfell shuriken, iron ring

EXECUTOR TACTICS

An executor prefers to travel with an entourage of thugs and minions, pitting such heavies against foes to create a better tactical situation for himself. He uses his arcane powers to gain combat advantage or to open a path for unhindered movement.

Warlock Knight Vindicator Level 15 Elite Soldier (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 2,400

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7
Beacon of Telos aura 5; allies within the aura gain resist 10 against fire, psychic, and radiant damage.
HP 286; **Bloodied** 143
AC 32; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 28
Resist radiant 5
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5; see also *iron sky pursuit*
Action Point 1

⊕ **Ironfell Glaive** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Radiant, Weapon**
Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 2d4 + 7 damage plus 1d10 radiant damage, and the target is marked until the end of the vindicator's next turn.

Iron Sky Pursuit (immediate reaction, when an enemy marked by the vindicator within 5 squares of the vindicator moves away; at-will)
The vindicator shifts up to 4 squares toward the marked enemy.

↓ **Glaive Arcs** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Radiant, Weapon**
The vindicator makes two ironfell glaive attacks.

↵ **Meteor Impact** (standard; recharge [☹]) ◆ **Radiant, Weapon**
Close burst 2; +21 vs. AC; 2d4 + 7 damage plus 1d10 radiant damage, and the target slides 1 square.

↻ **Iron Sky Starfall** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Radiant**
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Will; 1d6 + 5 radiant damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the vindicator's next turn.

Dark One's Own Luck (free, when the vindicator makes an attack roll, saving throw, ability check, or skill check; daily)
The vindicator rerolls and uses the better of the two results.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Damaran^{PG}
Skills Arcana +16, Athletics +17, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +17
Str 24 (+14) **Dex** 10 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+7)
Con 15 (+9) **Int** 18 (+11) **Cha** 20 (+12)

Equipment ironfell plate armor, ironfell glaive, iron ring

VINDICATOR TACTICS

Often the leader of a squad of Warlock Knights and other troops, a vindicator uses the advantage of reach to lead from just behind the front battle line. Whirling her ironfell glaive, she focuses on a marked target until it falls. She turns *eldritch blast* and *iron sky starfall* on opponents who keep their distance.

Warlock Knight Luminary Level 16 Elite Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 2,800

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 245; **Bloodied** 122
AC 30; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 32
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; see also *star trail*
Action Point 1

⊕ **Ironfell Morningstar** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Radiant, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d10 + 1 damage plus 7 radiant damage.

⊗ **Eldritch Blast** (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +20 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 7 damage.

↻ **Double Eldritch Blast** (standard; at-will)
Make two *eldritch blast* attacks against different targets.

✱ **Bands of Telos** (standard; sustain minor; daily) ◆ **Radiant**
Area burst 1 within 10; +20 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 7 radiant damage, and the target is restrained (save ends). The luminary must make new attack rolls when she sustains the effect.

↵ **Iron Sky Meteors** (standard; recharge [☹][☹]) ◆ **Radiant**
Close burst 10; affects two targets in the area; +20 vs. Will; 2d6 + 7 radiant damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the luminary's next turn.

Dark One's Own Luck (free, when the luminary makes an attack roll, saving throw, ability check, or skill check; daily)
The luminary rerolls and uses the better of the two results.

Ironfell Curse (minor; at-will)
The luminary chooses the closest enemy within line of sight. That enemy takes an extra 2d6 damage from the luminary's attacks. A luminary can't curse an enemy already under the effect of *ironfell curse* or another creature's curse.

Fate of Ironfell
When an enemy under the effect of *ironfell curse* is reduced to 0 hit points, the luminary gains a +5 power bonus to a single d20 roll before the end of her next turn.

Star Trail (move; encounter) ◆ **Radiant**
The luminary flies up to 7 squares, landing in an unoccupied space; she becomes insubstantial during this movement. An enemy that makes an opportunity attack against the luminary during this movement takes 10 radiant damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Damaran^{PG}, Primordial
Skills Arcana +17, Bluff +20, Intimidate +20, Streetwise +20
Str 12 (+9) **Dex** 10 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+10)
Con 20 (+13) **Int** 18 (+12) **Cha** 24 (+15)

Equipment robes, ironfell morningstar, iron ring



LUMINARY TACTICS

From the rear of a protective group, a luminary first establishes battlefield control with *bands of Telos*, luminous violet strands that erupt from the ground. She then uses *ironfell curse*, taking a minor action each round to curse as many foes as possible, and burns cursed foes with *flare of the broken mind*. A rain of *iron sky meteors* pummels foes whenever it is available. *Star trail* allows the luminary to briefly travel as a comet of violet light, repositioning for tactical benefit or escape.

SHARDSOUL

FORMED OF EXTRAPLANAR IRON carved from the body of Telos, shardsouls are mad automatons that serve as unflinching soldiers of the Warlock Knights.

Shardsoul Slayer		Level 8 Soldier
Medium elemental animate (construct)		XP 350
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +5; darkvision	
Deranging Aura (Charm) aura 5; enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls. Each enemy whose attack misses the shardsoul slayer must make a melee basic attack against the nearest ally within reach as a free action.		
HP 90; Bloodied 45; see also <i>shardsoul release</i>		
AC 23; Fortitude 21, Reflex 20, Will 18		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 radiant		
Speed 6, jump 4		
⚔ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the shardsoul slayer's next turn.		
⚔ Slaying Frenzy (standard; recharge ⏳ ⏳)		
The shardsoul slayer makes two claw attacks. If either attack hits a target marked by the shardsoul slayer, or if both attacks hit the same target, that target is also dazed until the end of the slayer's next turn.		
Focused Killer (immediate interrupt, when an adjacent enemy marked by the shardsoul slayer shifts; at-will)		
The shardsoul slayer makes a claw attack against that enemy.		
Skyfall Charge		
When a shardsoul slayer charges, it deals an extra 1d8 damage.		
↗ Shardsoul Release (when reduced to 0 hp; encounter)		
Ranged 10; affects one other shardsoul of the shardsoul slayer's level or lower; the target can take one extra standard action on each of its next two turns.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages understands Common and Primordial
Str 21 (+9)	Dex 18 (+8)	Wis 3 (+0)
Con 17 (+7)	Int 6 (+2)	Cha 15 (+6)
Equipment greatsword		

SHARDSOUL SLAYER TACTICS

A shardsoul slayer begins battle with a *skyfall charge*, spreading its *deranging aura* over enemies. It then piles its frenzied attacks on a single target, changing that focus only when seriously hurt by another attacker or when its first foe falls.



No shardsoul shows regard for its own survival. It opens itself to opportunity attacks to gain a better tactical position, and it willingly sacrifices itself to take out an adversary. This can even include pushing an enemy over a precipice or some other suicidal attack.

Shardsoul Avatar		Level 16 Soldier
Large elemental animate (construct)		XP 2,800
Initiative +19	Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
Deranging Aura (Charm) aura 5; enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls. Each enemy whose attack misses the shardsoul avatar must make a melee basic attack against the nearest ally within reach as a free action.		
Starshriek Aura (Psychic) aura 1; an enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 5 psychic damage.		
HP 156; Bloodied 78; see also <i>shardsoul release</i>		
AC 31; Fortitude 31, Reflex 27, Will 27		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 radiant		
Speed 8, jump 6		
⚔ Claw (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +22 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the shardsoul avatar's next turn.		
☀ Ironfell Beam (standard; at-will) ♦ Radiant		
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 radiant damage, and the target slides 1 square.		
⚔ Slaying Frenzy (standard; recharge ⏳ ⏳ ⏳)		
The shardsoul avatar makes two claw attacks. If either attack hits a target marked by the shardsoul avatar, or if both attacks hit the same target, that target is also dazed until the end of the avatar's next turn.		

<p>◀ Meteor Stomp (standard; encounter) ◆ Radiant</p> <p>Close burst 5; +21 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 8 damage plus 1d6 radiant damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage, and the target is not pushed or knocked prone.</p>		
<p>Focused Killer (immediate interrupt, when an adjacent enemy marked by the shardsoul avatar shifts; at-will)</p> <p>The shardsoul avatar makes a claw attack against that enemy.</p>		
<p>Skyfall Charge</p> <p>When a shardsoul avatar charges, it deals an extra 2d6 damage.</p>		
<p>☞ Shardsoul Release (when reduced to 0 hp; encounter)</p> <p>Ranged 10; affects one other shardsoul of the shardsoul avatar's level or lower; the target can take one extra standard action on each of its next two turns.</p>		
<p>Alignment Chaotic evil Languages understands Common and Primordial</p>		
Str 26 (+16)	Dex 23 (+14)	Wis 3 (+4)
Con 20 (+13)	Int 6 (+6)	Cha 20 (+13)
<p>Equipment greatsword</p>		

SHARDSOUL AVATAR TACTICS

A shardsoul avatar charges into combat just as a slayer does and unleashes *meteor stomp* as soon as it can. It prefers to tear foes apart in melee combat, but it uses its violet *ironfell beam* if it can't reach enemies.

SHARDSOUL LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

DC 30: Each shardsoul bears a portion of Telos's essence, and its separation from the primordial

makes it a reckless combatant and a capricious servant. It knows instinctively that when its body crumbles, its animating spirit will reunite with the Master of the Iron Sky. Although it cannot speak, a shardsoul understands Common and Primordial.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

A large number of humans, gnolls, goblins, and orcs directly serve in Vaasa's armies. The Warlock Knights also manipulate or enslave creatures that are more monstrous, such as various beasts, constructs, dragons, fiends, giants, and undead—whatever increases their power and infamy. Some of these are mere allies of the Iron Council, while others are directly subject to the council's will.

Level 9 Encounter (XP 2,450)

- ◆ 1 Warlock Knight executor (level 9 elite skirmisher)
- ◆ 2 shardsoul slayers (level 8 soldier)
- ◆ 1 orc chieftain (level 8 brute)
- ◆ 6 orc warriors (level 9 minion)

Level 16 Encounter (XP 7,650)

- ◆ 1 Warlock Knight luminary (level 16 elite artillery)
- ◆ 1 Warlock Knight vindicator (level 15 elite soldier [leader])
- ◆ 1 shardsoul avatar (level 16 soldier)
- ◆ 3 ogre bludgeoneers (level 16 minion)



FRANCIS TSAI



ZAIRTAIL

ZAIRTAILS ARE SMALL, DARTING LIZARDS COMMON ACROSS Returned Abeir. Some are commensal with the sluglike scathebeasts (page 272), riding in swarms on a single creature's back, their tongues flicking out to catch insects. Others have adapted to different environments across the continent.

Most varieties of zairtail are slender and agile. Their bodies are covered with smooth scales of variously vivid hues. A typical zairtail is about as long as a large human's hand with a tail twice that length; the largest is only the size of a dog. The tail and body blend into a sleek, tapered whole.

Zairtails are vicious and attack almost any creature.



ZAIRTAIL LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Nature DC 10: Zairtails are prized as sources of inks and dyes that are derived from their boiled skins. They are edible, but their fatty flesh tastes oily, heavy, and unpleasant (“like marsh muck”). The corpses of zairtail firetongues burn with a smoky flame and can be used as torches in a pinch.

Nature DC 15: Zairtails lay clutches of five or so round, white, rubbery eggs coated with a foul-

smelling slime. Except for firetongues, which prefer warmer nests, most zairtails dig a hole in loose soil and lay their clutch without ceremony. After burying the eggs, they leave their young's prospects to chance.

Nature DC 20: Zairtail cutters are sometimes trained for use by assassins. The assassin collects the target's scent from a kerchief or other cast-off piece of clothing, then sensitizes one or more cutters to the odor and releases them near the target's home. After the bloody work is done, the assassin collects the creatures, having never set foot in the structure. Unless an investigator is familiar with zairtail cutters, the murder weapon is nearly impossible to trace.

Arcana DC 20: Zairtails have a vague resemblance to dragons, which is not a coincidence. In the same way that drakes are distant relatives of dragons, zairtails are a far more degraded offshoot of that mighty lineage.

THE SILENT KNIFE

This cabal of ship captains and portside merchants has recently come into being in both the Windrise Ports and the Dusk Ports of Returned Abeir. The Silent Knife began as a cartel that started rumors of shortages or arranged to limit supply so as to drive up the prices of their cargo. Now it has taken to killing members of dock gangs and bands of thieves, and is even slaying corrupt lawkeepers and political figures.

The Silent Knife uses trained zairtails to carry messages written on slips of paper or painted on their scales. A member arriving in port releases a zairtail, which goes to a known cage of a member dwelling in that port. After delivering its message, the zairtail returns to the ship for a sugary treat.

Knife members are unaware that tentacled torments (see “The Court of Rorn,” page 242) have natural mindlinks with zairtails. The courtiers of Rorn are now, through the zairtails, watching and subtly influencing Silent Knife operations.

Zairtail Swarm		Level 3 Skirmisher
Medium natural beast (reptile)		XP 150
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +3; low-light vision	
Swarm Attack aura 1; the zairtail swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.		
HP 40; Bloodied 20		
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 18, Will 16		
Resist 5 acid, half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 5 against close and area attacks		
Speed 8; can enter or move through an enemy's space without provoking opportunity attacks		
⚔ Swarm of Teeth (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage plus ongoing 3 damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 7 (-1)	Dex 19 (+5)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 9 (+0)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 8 (+0)

ZAIRTAIL SWARM TACTICS

A zairtail swarm fearlessly rips into its enemy, leaping from the scathebeast on which it rides at the first sign of provocation.

Zairtail Firetongue		Level 3 Artillery
Small natural beast (reptile)		XP 150
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +0; low-light vision	
HP 36; Bloodied 18		
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 12		
Scalding Body When a zairtail firetongue is hit by a melee attack or grabbed, the attacker takes 5 fire damage, and the fire-tongue shifts 1 square.		
Resist 10 fire		
Speed 6		
⚔ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
🔥 Burning Bile (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire		
Ranged 10; +10 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 fire damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 8 (+0)	Dex 19 (+5)	Wis 9 (+0)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 7 (-1)

ZAIRTAIL FIRETONGUE TACTICS

This crimson-hued lizard is the size of a small dog and is scalding hot to the touch. It uses its natural heat to discourage predators, spitting *burning bile* at the most threatening enemies.

Zairtail Gazer		Level 3 Controller
Small natural beast (reptile)		XP 150
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +8; low-light vision	
HP 40; Bloodied 20		
AC 17; Fortitude 12, Reflex 15, Will 17		
Speed 6, climb 6		
⚔ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.		
👁 Disorienting Gaze (standard; at-will) ♦ Charm		
Close blast 5; targets enemies; blind creatures are immune; +7 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the end of the zairtail gazer's next turn.		
Zairtail Alert (standard; recharge ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞)		
All zairtails within 10 squares can move up to their speed as a free action.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 7 (-1)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 9 (+0)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 19 (+5)

ZAIRTAIL GAZER TACTICS

Zairtail gazers have sticky pads on their many-toed feet that allow them to cling to trees, ceilings, and other ideal vantage points. A gazer's bulging eyes make it look cute, but they are a hypnotic weapon for distracting prey while it calls the swarms of its fellows to feed.

Zairtail Bonebreaker		Level 4 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)		XP 175
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision	
HP 67; Bloodied 33		
AC 16; Fortitude 18, Reflex 15, Will 13; see also		
Speed 6		
⚔ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape; see also <i>vise jaws</i>).		

⚔ Drag (standard; at-will)		
Grabbed target only; +6 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the zairtail moves up to its speed, pulling the grabbed target with it.		
Vise Jaws		
A zairtail bonebreaker does not need to sustain a grab. Its grab lasts until the victim escapes or the bonebreaker lets go; the bonebreaker has a +5 bonus to Fortitude defense against escape attempts. Being affected by a condition that prevents the bonebreaker from taking opportunity actions does not end its grab. If the bonebreaker is subjected to forced movement, it pulls the grabbed creature with it.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 12 (+3)	Wis 9 (+1)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 2 (-2)	Cha 7 (+0)

ZAIRTAIL BONEBREAKER TACTICS

The size of a large dog, a bonebreaker has oversized jaws and inward-curving fangs. It lunges to grab a target with its bite, then drag the prey off to eat at its leisure. Once its jaws lock on, nothing but its own death or that of its victim can cause a bonebreaker to let go.

Zairtail Cutter		Level 5 Skirmisher
Small natural beast (reptile)		XP 200
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +4; low-light vision	
HP 58; Bloodied 29		
AC 19 (23 against opportunity attacks); Fortitude 15, Reflex 20, Will 17		
Speed 8		
⚔ Slashing Crest (standard; at-will)		
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.		
⚔ Evasive Slash (standard; at-will)		
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the zairtail cutter shifts 2 squares.		
Slicing Charge (standard; recharge ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞)		
The zairtail cutter moves its speed. It can make a single basic attack against each creature it moves adjacent to during this move.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 8 (+1)	Dex 20 (+7)	Wis 15 (+4)
Con 10 (+2)	Int 2 (-2)	Cha 8 (+1)

ZAIRTAIL CUTTER TACTICS

A zairtail cutter never stands still but darts in and out of battle with its *slicing charge*, using *evasive slash* to gain combat advantage when possible.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

A zairtail swarm is usually encountered with a group of grazing scathebeasts. More often, zairtails form mixed hunting groups, usually including a gazer.

Level 3 Encounter (XP 700)

- ♦ 2 zairtail bonebreakers (level 4 brute)
- ♦ 1 zairtail gazer (level 3 controller)
- ♦ 1 zairtail cutter (level 5 skirmisher)



ZHENTARIM

The Zhentarim, also known as the Black Network, is a group of ruthless mercenaries. Zhents, as they are known, will hire on to almost any job if the money is right, regardless of morality.

ZHENTARIM LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 20: Manshoon, the wizard ruler of Zhentil Keep, founded the Black Network. He created a huge organization that included many evil churches, primarily that of Bane. His activities eventually led to conflict with the ambitious Fzoul Chembryl, who wrested primary control of the network from Manshoon.

History DC 25: Under Fzoul's leadership, the Zhentarim once controlled half of the Moonsea region. The group attempted to control the Dalelands and destroy Myth Drannor but ultimately failed. Fzoul then made an alliance with the phaerimms, which proved to be the Zhentarim's undoing.

During the war of extermination the Shadovar pursued against the phaerimms, they learned of these ties to the Zhentarim. Netheril needed little provocation to destroy the Black Network. It laid waste to Zhentil Keep and the Citadel of the Raven.

Religion DC 20: When Bane's faithful suffered a serious defeat, the survivors bowed out of



the Zhentarim. A strong following of the god Cyric existed in Darkhold, which suddenly became a prominent fortress of the Black Network. The Cyricists quickly gained a hold in the mercenary group that remained, and the Zhents are still prominent allies of the Church of Cyric.

However, Cyric's hold on the Zhentarim is far from solid. Fzoul Chembryl hates the Netherese for their destruction of the Black Network, and this hatred has earned him followers among the Zhents. Although Bane's church isn't formally allied with the Zhentarim, the two groups often have a common purpose and end up working together. A thread of respect and even worship for Bane still exists in the Zhentarim—a thread Cyric's devotees would like to cut.

Streetwise DC 15: Zhent sellswords are most prominent on the Dragon Coast near Westgate and the southern Sword Coast region. They also trouble lands near these regions, such as Cormyr and Luruar. A significant number of Zhentarim bases, boltholes, and strongholds are scattered around the northwestern part of Faerûn.

ORGANIZATION

Zhent mercenaries are widespread, but reach doesn't necessarily equate to power. The organization of the Zhentarim is somewhat loose, and far-flung mercenary cells do not necessarily report back often or even at all.

The Zhentarim offer protection to merchants and arrange attacks against those who don't pay. They engage in a variety of criminal activities, from petty smuggling to open murder to elaborate extortion schemes. Zhents have been caught manipulating, aiding, and leading monsters to threaten peaceful settlements for various reasons—including being hired to drive the creatures off.

Leader: Manshoon.

Headquarters: Stormwatch (see below) and the Dragon Coast city of Westgate.

Hierarchy: Manshoon and all the primary leaders of the Black Network are vampire lords, a fact known to few below the status of intermediate leader. Wizards and other arcanists, collectively known as Black Cloaks, hold the most prominent positions in the Zhentarim, commanding Zhent cells and hatching plots.

Below the Black Cloaks are military commanders, and below them are prominent merchants who are part of the Black Network. Most mercenary officers are professional soldiers. A few are champions of Cyric or some other dark faith.

Members: The Zhentarim expands its numbers by hiring spies and sellswords, as well as enlisting evil priests and arcanists. The mercenary group also welcomes nonhuman members—the more powerful the better. Like the group's leaders, some members of the Zhentarim are vampires.

THE CHURCH OF CYRIC

Since Cyric's imprisonment, the power and sway of his church has waned somewhat across Faerûn. The church remains influential in Amn and Muranndin. It also has great authority among the members of the Zhentarim, having "won" the struggle against Bane's hold on the Black Network when the Netherese destroyed Zhentil Keep. Other than at these focal points, little more than disparate Cyricist cults exist. One day, these separate arms of Cyric's faithful could unite, but for now they remain widely divided.

The Cyricist influence on the Zhentarim fuels the group's destructive behavior. It also leads Zhents to willingly associate with vile creatures and to perform hideous acts. Cyricists within the Zhentarim intend to use the organization's resources to free their god. The Cyricists' devotion to deception helps them work with some subtlety. Agents have even been known to use good-hearted dupes for certain tasks.

ZHENT MERCENARIES

MERCENARY FORCES FORM THE CENTER of the Black Network. The group employs people who have all sorts of talents, but soldiers and wizards, along with priests of Cyric, are most common.

Zhent Soldier	Level 5 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 200
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +2
HP 63; Bloodied 31	
AC 21; Fortitude 18, Reflex 16, Will 16	
Speed 5	
⚔ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the Zhent soldier's next turn.	
⚔ Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.	
⚔ Sly Cut (standard at will) ♦ Weapon	
Requires longsword; affects a target marked by the Zhent soldier; +12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
⚔ Tide of Iron (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Requires shield; +11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square if it is Large or smaller. The Zhent soldier can shift 1 square into the space vacated by the target.	
Zhent Phalanx	
While a Zhent soldier is adjacent to an ally, he or she doesn't grant combat advantage to flanking enemies.	
Marked Advantage	
A Zhent soldier deals an extra 1d4 damage on all attacks against a target that is marked by it.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Chondathan ^{PG} , Common
Skills Endurance +7, Intimidate +9, Streetwise +9	
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 15 (+4) Wis 11 (+2)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 10 (+2) Cha 15 (+4)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts	

ZHENT SOLDIER TACTICS

Zhent soldiers train as cohesive units, forming a battle line to protect each other and more vulnerable allies. They push enemies back to allow the line to maneuver, and they don't hesitate to fight dirty whenever a foe leaves an opening.

Zhent Black Sun Adept	Level 6 Controller
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 250
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +5
HP 67; Bloodied 33	
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 20	
Speed 5	
⚔ Morningstar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 2 damage.	
⚔ Black Sunbeam (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic or Radiant	
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 5 necrotic or radiant damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).	
⚔ Behold the Black Sun (standard; encounter) ♦ Charm	
Close burst 2; +10 vs. Will; the target slides 1 square, is knocked prone, and is dazed until the end of the adept's next turn.	

⚔ Rebellious Limbs (standard; recharge ☐☐☐) ♦ Charm, Psychic	
Ranged 10; +10 vs. Will; 1d4 + 5 psychic damage, and the target slides 2 squares and makes a basic melee attack against itself.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Chondathan ^{PG} , Common
Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Insight +10, Religion +11	
Str 15 (+5)	Dex 10 (+3) Wis 14 (+5)
Con 11 (+3)	Int 16 (+6) Cha 20 (+8)
Equipment chainmail, light shield, morningstar, iron holy symbol (Cyric)	

ZHENT BLACK SUN ADEPT TACTICS

Nearly mad with devotion to Cyric, a Black Sun adept rushes into battle holding aloft the black iron sun that is Cyric's symbol. *Behold the Black Sun* forces enemies into prostration. A dangerous foe can be held at bay with *rebellious limbs*, forcing that enemy to move and open itself to opportunity attacks—or even to attack itself. Adepts keep mobile to use their *black sunbeams*, but they relish the occasional morningstar attack.

Zhent War Mage	Level 6 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 250
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +6
HP 56; Bloodied 28	
AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 18	
Speed 6	
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.	
⚔ Magic Missile (standard; at-will) ♦ Force	
Ranged 20; +11 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 5 force damage.	
⚔ Zhent Flash (standard; encounter) ♦ Radiant	
Close burst 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 radiant damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the war mage's next turn.	
⚔ Fire Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
Area burst 1 within 10; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 fire damage.	
⚔ Black Vapors (standard; daily) ♦ Poison	
Area burst 3 within 20; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).	
Wand of Accuracy (free; encounter) ♦ Implement	
Requires wand; the war mage gains a +3 bonus to one attack roll.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Chondathan ^{PG} , Common
Skills Arcana +13, Diplomacy +9, Dungeoneering +11, Insight +11	
Str 10 (+3)	Dex 16 (+6) Wis 16 (+6)
Con 14 (+5)	Int 20 (+8) Cha 12 (+4)
Equipment robes, dagger, wand	

ZHENT WAR MAGE TACTICS

Most war mages are commanders of Zhentarim units. They are wand-wielding wizards who focus on dealing damage at range to multiple foes and maneuvering to avoid melee. They blast their foes with a golden *Zhent flash* or a smoking *fire blast*, or they breathe out *black vapors* to poison their enemies. A war mage falls back on launching a *magic missile* only when other options are unavailable.



MANSHOON

ONCE THE RUTHLESS LORD OF ZHENTIL KEEP, Manshoon has always been a composed and sly manipulator. It is he who drew the first strands of the Black Network by uniting a cabal of evil wizards he dubbed the Black Cloaks. It is he who expanded the power of the Zhentarim by allying with Fzoul Chembryl and thereby the Church of Bane. But the ambitious Fzoul turned out to be Manshoon's undoing . . . almost.

Fzoul killed Manshoon to seize power, but the wily wizard had laid plans for that contingency. His death unleashed his soul and a dozen or more clones, each believing it was the “real” Manshoon. These clones despised one another, and over time, most of them died in battle until just three remained: one in Undermountain, another who rejoined the Zhentarim, and another who gained influence over the underworld of Westgate and called itself Orbakh. The Zhentarim Manshoon was slain in Netheril's blistering assault on Zhentil Keep. Undermountain's Manshoon died during the Spellplague. Only Orbakh remained.

Having become a vampire, Manshoon renamed himself Orbakh the Night King and established dominance over Westgate's principal thieves' guild, the vampiric Night Masks. But when the Fire Knives purged Westgate of vampires, he retired to a secondary lair, the haunted castle of Stormwatch.

Despite the cleansing of Westgate, Manshoon still maintains ties to the city and its ruling house. For its part, House Bleth occasionally employs Zhent mercenaries and allows Zhent wizards to maintain homes in the city. In return, the Zhentarim helps House Bleth against the invading yakuza.

STORMWATCH

Manshoon's lair stands between Westgate and the ruins of Starmantle, not far from an old road that once connected the two cities. Known to most merely as a haunted castle from which none return, the stronghold is appointed as befits its decadent immortal lord, and deep within are his personal chambers and sepulcher. Manshoon keeps a small force of living Zhents here, but his undead servitors outnumber the living.

A cloak of dark stormclouds hangs over Stormwatch and for a mile around it, no matter what the nearby weather. No sunlight reaches the ground.

CUSTOMIZING MANSHOON

Manshoon is a mighty wizard who has a library that contains a wide range of additional spells to deal with an expected challenge, as well as rituals of every sort. He also has access to many powerful magic items (and he is never without his *bloodmask*).

Manshoon's undead servants vigilantly patrol the land under the pall, while Zhents ride and watch paths east from Westgate and Teziir.

Manshoon		Level 28 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 26,000
Human wizard vampire lord		
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +17; darkvision, see invisible creatures	
HP 500; Bloodied 250; see also <i>blood drain</i>		
Second Wind (standard; encounter) ◆ Healing		
Manshoon spends a healing surge and regains 125 hit points. He gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of his next turn.		
Regeneration 10 (regeneration functions even while Manshoon is exposed to direct sunlight as long as he wears <i>Manshoon's bloodmask</i>)		
AC 45 (47 while bloodied); Fortitude 42, Reflex 44, Will 43		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic, 10 against ranged attacks; Vulnerable 10 radiant (only if not wearing <i>Manshoon's bloodmask</i>)		
Saving Throws +2 (+8 against charm effects; +4/+10 while bloodied)		
Speed 6, climb 4 (spider climb); see also <i>battle teleport</i>		
Action Point 1		
⊕ Staff (standard; at-will) ◆ Force, Weapon		
+31 vs. AC; 1d6 + 8 damage.		
⊗ Arcane Bolt (standard; at-will)		
+33 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 10 damage.		
⊕ Blood Drain (standard; encounter; recharges when an adjacent creature becomes bloodied) ◆ Healing		
Requires combat advantage; +31 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 9 damage, the target is weakened (save ends), and Manshoon regains 125 hit points.		
⤵ Dominating Gaze (minor; recharge ☹️) ◆ Charm		
Ranged 5; +32 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends, with a -2 penalty to the saving throw). <i>Aftersave</i> : The target is dazed (save ends). Manshoon can dominate only one creature at a time.		
✖ Eldritch Tendrils (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ◆ Force		
Area burst 4 within 10; +33 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 10 force damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of Manshoon's next turn. Manshoon makes new attack rolls when he sustains this effect.		
⤵ Bolt Arc (standard; at-will)		
Manshoon makes two arcane bolt attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, it is dazed until the end of Manshoon's next turn and knocked prone.		
⤵ Vascular Purge (standard; encounter) ◆ Fear, Healing		
Ranged 20; +33 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 10 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). All the target's allies that can see the target are dazed (save ends). Undead creatures within 3 squares of the target regain 15 hit points.		
Battle Teleport (move; recharge ☹️☹️☹️) ◆ Teleportation		
Manshoon teleports 4 squares.		
Mist Form (standard; encounter) ◆ Polymorph		
Manshoon becomes insubstantial and gains a fly speed of 12, but cannot make attacks. He can remain in mist form for up to 1 hour or end the effect as a minor action.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Abyssal, Chondathan ^{PC} , Common, Draconic, Elven, Supernal	
Skills Arcana +29, Diplomacy +28, History +29, Insight +28		
Str 12 (+15)	Dex 16 (+17)	Wis 16 (+17)
Con 26 (+22)	Int 31 (+24)	Cha 28 (+23)
Equipment staff, <i>Manshoon's bloodmask</i> (see page 57)		

MANSHOON'S TACTICS

Manshoon keeps his cronies, especially vampire spawn, between him and his enemies in both strategic and tactical situations. On the battlefield, he teleports as needed, and he creates new temporary servants by applying his *dominating gaze*. *Eldritch tendrils* locks down a portion of the field while Manshoon launches *bolt arcs* against enemies held there. *Vascular purge* causes blood to burst forth from its victim, and Manshoon uses it at a crucial moment to aid his undead allies. He reserves the burst of dark energy that is *mind shatter* for when his foes close in, though he's not above teleporting into the midst of his adversaries to use it. He drinks blood only when he must or when an easy opportunity presents itself.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Any capable humanoid is welcome in the Zhentarim, so Zhent agents are of many races. Humanoid creatures such as a doppelganger assassin, an elf scout, or a tiefling darkblade make great Zhentarim. Humanoid minions often show up among Zhent mercenaries as additional but weaker soldiers, or as slaves.

Zhents are despicable, and they're not above using or working with any creature that can further their aims. A Zhent wizard might be found among orc raiders; hobgoblins often wear Zhentarim colors. Vampire spawn or other sentient undead might be found among Zhentarim. More powerful Zhents might be vampire lords or have formidable companions, such as ogres or giants.

Level 5 Encounter (XP 1,200)

- ◆ 2 Zhent soldiers (level 5 soldier)
- ◆ 1 Zhent Black Sun Adept (level 6 controller)
- ◆ 1 Zhent war mage (level 6 artillery)
- ◆ 4 human lackeys (level 7 minion)

Level 5 Encounter (XP 1,240)

- ◆ 1 Zhent soldier (level 5 soldier)
- ◆ 5 human guards (level 3 minion)
- ◆ 1 Zhent Black Sun Adept (level 6 controller)
- ◆ 2 dwarf bolters (level 4 artillery)
- ◆ 1 bugbear strangler (level 6 lurker)

*Zhent war mage,
Zhent Black Sun adept,
and Zhent soldier*





INDEX

Note: This index is meant as a source of inspiration rather than as a comprehensive reference. Most of the entries point to sidebars or to the “Plots and Adventure Sites” sections in Chapter 6, providing the DM with a way to locate the wealth of brief passages in this book that offer intriguing possibilities for adventuring.

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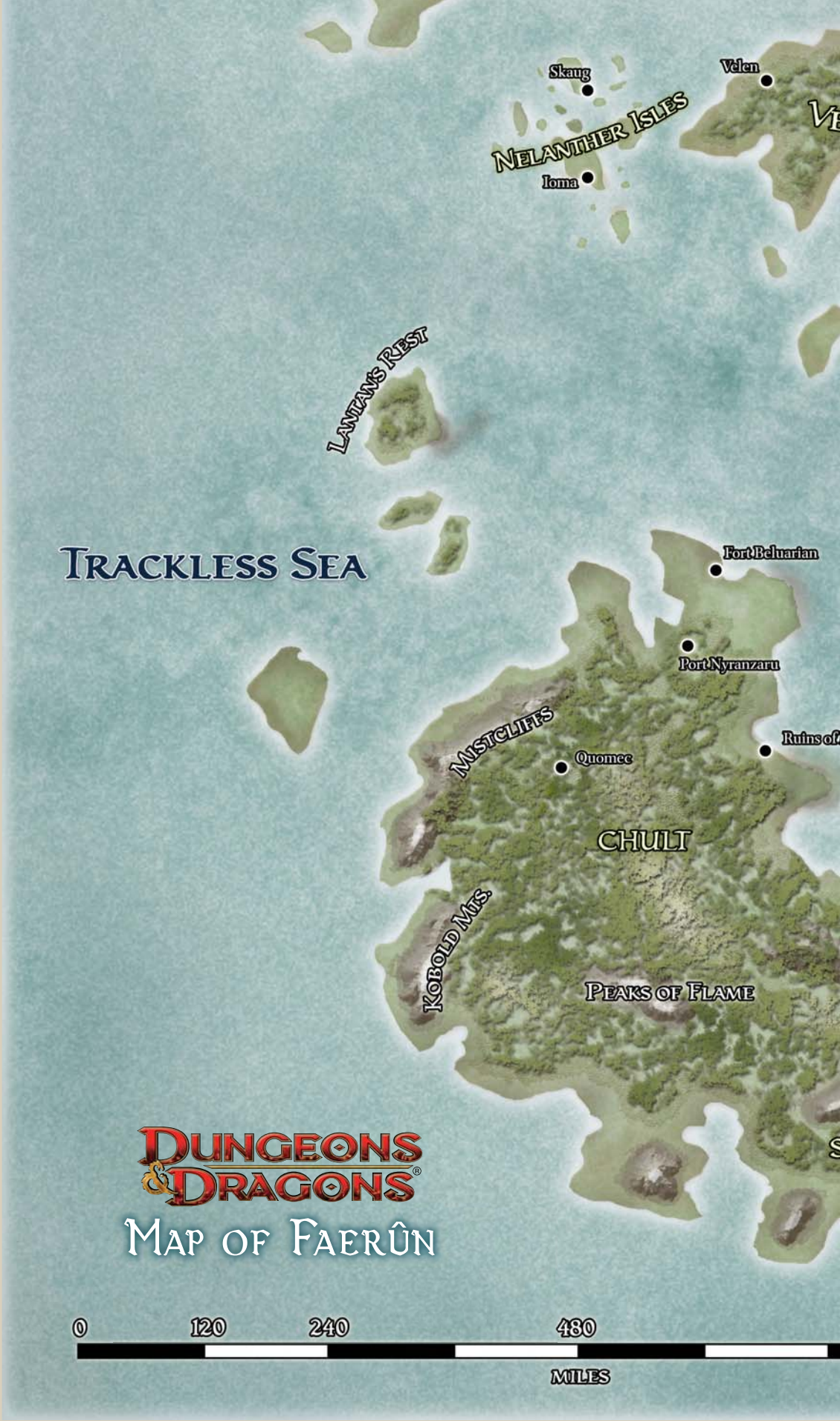
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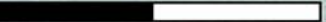
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