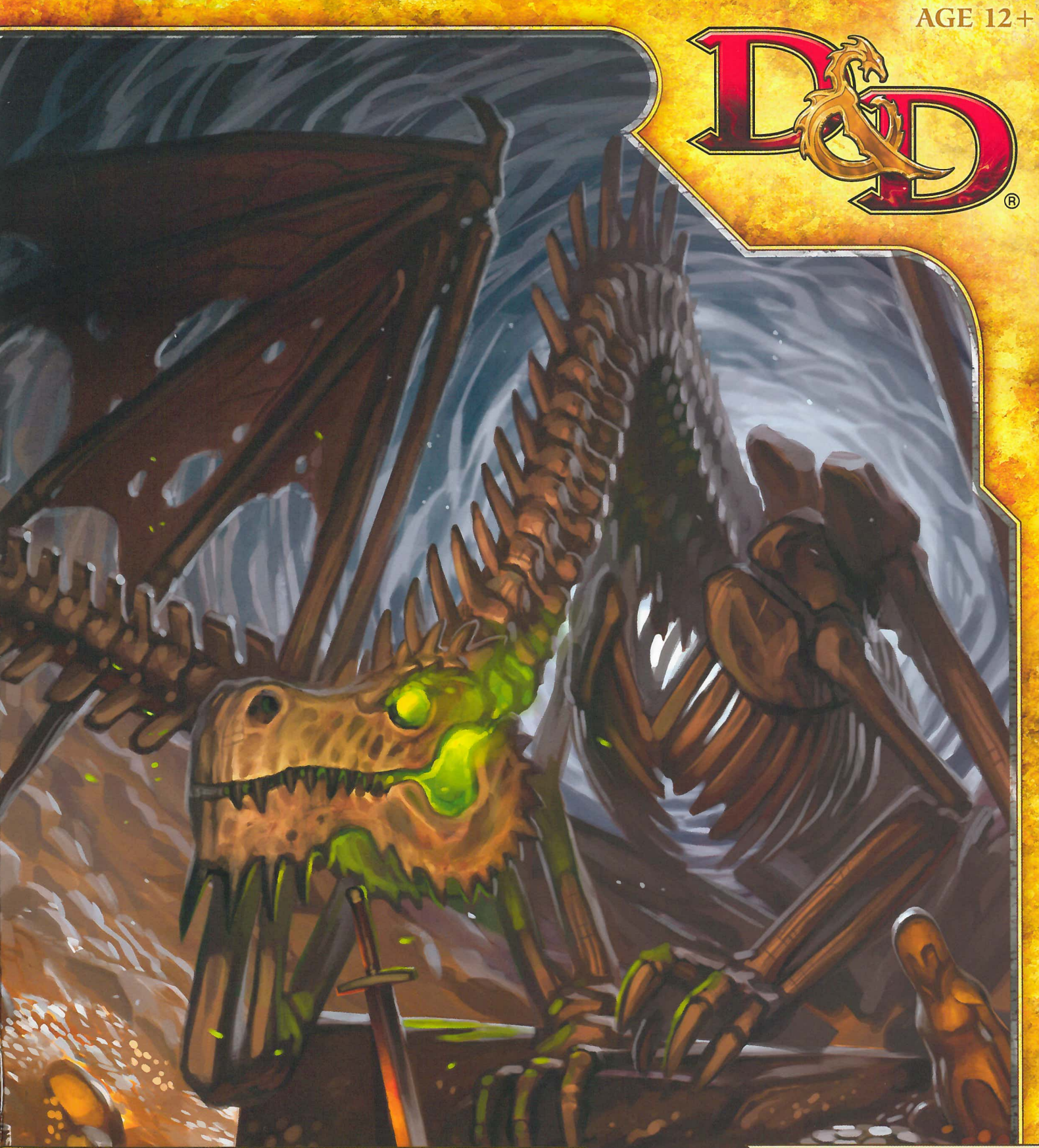
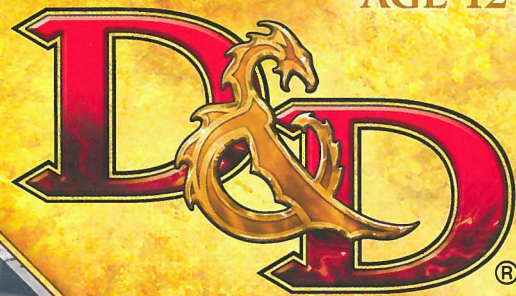


AGE 12+



VAULT OF THE DRACOLICH™

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 4TH LEVEL

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PLAYABLE WITH

D&D® NEXT
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game Day, an exciting official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS event.

Vault of the Dracolich™ is a D&D® Next adventure designed for four to six 4th-level characters. This adventure is intended to be playable in 2 to 5 hours at your local Wizards Play Network location. The Dungeon Master should receive this adventure in advance of the event.

Playtesting D&D Next

This adventure is intended for use with the online playtest packet available at dndnext.com. Throughout the adventure, some monster names are in **bold** to indicate a monster that is available using the playtest packet.

Prior to running this adventure for D&D Game Day on June 15, follow these preparation steps.

1. Visit dndnext.com and sign up for the playtest.
2. Download the playtest packet and review the documents, paying close attention to the How to Play file and the DM Guidelines file.
3. Download or print the Bestiary. This file contains statistics blocks for all the monsters mentioned in this adventure.
4. Familiarize yourself with the adventure, and get ready to run some D&D!

BACKGROUND

Thousands of years ago, the elven realm of Uvaeren was home to magic and knowledge beyond measure. The elves stored and protected their lore in vaults spread throughout what is now the Dalelands, then attuned these vaults to various keys that could unlock their secrets. The *Diamond Staff of Chomylla* is one such key, containing the information required to locate and unlock the lost lore of Uvaeren. However, this key lies in the clutches of one of the most feared beasts in Cormyr—the dracolich Dretchroyaster.

In a twisted lair built within vast underground chasms and a forgotten temple of the dead god Bhaal, Dretchroyaster and his allies from the Cult of the Dragon have only recently discovered the connection between the *Diamond Staff* and the lore of Uvaeren. The dracolich does not simply want to access that lore, however. Using the staff as a focus for the eldritch energy of his vaults, he hopes to absorb all the power of lost Uvaeren—becoming a creature beyond the natural world and unleashing his might against the gods themselves.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Imani, a Turmishan wizard and former adventurer, seeks the aid of heroes to infiltrate Dretchroyaster's lair and recover the *Diamond Staff of Chomylla*—the key to powerful magic and wisdom locked away for thousands of years. In addition to his own sagely interest in the lore of lost Uvaeren, Imani recognizes the dangers of such powerful magic falling into evil hands.

The dracolich has secured the staff in his lair's central chamber, using ancient wards of protection that can be bypassed only by four artifact-idols once belonging to a cult of Bhaal. Each group of adventurers enters the dungeon through a different section of the dungeon—a forgotten temple of Bhaal, a vast underground lake, a troglodyte village, or Dretchroyaster's vaults.

Dretchroyaster's lair is no simple set of caverns and ancient ruins. It sits atop a source of great power and energy, which the dracolich and his Cult of the Dragon allies hope to use to unlock the secrets of the staff. Only by undertaking a unified assault against Dretchroyaster's lair can the adventurers hope to recover the *Diamond Staff* and survive the dracolich's fury.

The adventurers must make their way through the lair and recover the Bhaalite idols that will help unlock the *Diamond Staff*, all the while dealing with the lair's creatures and avoiding the dracolich as he pursues intruders. Entering the Chamber of the *Diamond Staff*, the heroes must overcome its magical wards and claim the staff before being slain by the dracolich and his servants.

CONNECTIONS TO D&D ENCOUNTERS

The events in this adventure lead up to the summer season of D&D Encounters, *Search for the Diamond Staff™*, starting on June 19. A player can take his or her surviving character from this adventure to *Search for the Diamond Staff*, provided that the D&D Encounters season is being run using D&D Next. The character keeps all XP gained through this adventure, and can retain up to one magic item.

CHARACTER CREATION

Participating players should create 4th-level characters prior to the event, either at home or at the store. Players who don't create characters for the event can use one of the pre-generated characters, which are available from the event organizer or online through the D&D Next playtest at dndplaytest.wizards.com. Players should use the standard array for generating ability scores (15 14 13 12 10 8).

RUNNING THE EVENT

This adventure is written for one to four groups of players and characters, though it can support up to seven groups if necessary. Due to the style of the adventure, each group might have a significantly different play experience. Interaction is a key component of the adventure, since sharing information, coordinating exploration, and distributing resources is critical to the success of the overall mission. Though it can still be fun for one table, this open-ended adventure is most effective when multiple groups work together.

Several people facilitate this interaction between player groups: the event coordinator, the Dungeon Master (DM), and the team captain. The following sections are divided into the most relevant information for each role. Every DM and every event coordinator should read all the sections in the front matter to prepare for the event.

Event Coordinator

An event coordinator facilitates the interaction between different groups, playing the role of Imani and tracking the action in Dretchroyaster's lair.

Before the day of the event, the coordinator's responsibilities include:

- ◆ Determining which sections of the dungeon each DM prepares. Ideally, each Dungeon Master can read the entire adventure, but if time is short, the coordinator can delegate sections. These sections determine where each adventuring group starts. This adventure uses four primary starting locations: Area 1: Bhaal Temple Entryway, Area 12: Waterfall Entrance, Area 25: Guard Huts, and Area 31: Summoning Chamber.

When more than four groups are playing the adventure, use the following additional entrance points: Area 5: Guard Hall, Area 16: Pillar of Sun, Area 22: Chief's Cavern

On the day of the event, prior to the start of the adventure, the coordinator's responsibilities include:

- ◆ Organizing DMs and players at the start of the event. If there's confusion about who is playing in each group, consider dividing up players based on class (ensuring an even distribution of different types of classes) or based on adventuring style preference (exploration, combat, interaction).
- ◆ Ensuring that all the players have characters of the appropriate level and edition.
- ◆ Determining how many Bhaalite idols are required to lower the wards on the *Diamond Staff of Chomylla*. If only one group is participating in the event, then only one idol is required. For two groups, two idols

are required. If three groups are participating in the event, three idols are required. For four or more groups, all four idols in the dungeon will be necessary to lower the wards. Communicate the number of idols required to the DMs.

- ◆ Reading the following introductory material:

In response to a summons, you have come to the village of Hap in Battledale, where a Turmishan wizard named Imani is seeking adventurers. As you enter the wizard's tower, you see that your group is not the only one to have answered his call. You recognize only some of these fellow adventurers, but all appear as well seasoned and well traveled as you.

"Hail heroes!" Imani calls out from the front of the hall. "I have gathered you here today at great expense. Some years ago, I traveled with an adventuring group known as the Company of the Sunlit Sea. Like many of you, we hunted for treasure and lore. One item in particular caught our attention—the fabled Diamond Staff of Chomylla. Said to unlock the ancient secrets of the elf loremasters of Uvaeren, this item was tracked to a forgotten temple of the dead god Bhaal. We had no idea what trouble we would find inside.

"The Cult of the Dragon and one of their terrible creations, the dracolich Dretchroyaster, have possession of the staff. My friends and I braved the dangers of the dracolich's chambers and caverns in search of a way to claim the staff, but we were forced to turn back when I triggered a trap that left me burned beyond healing.

"My divinations of late have revealed that Dretchroyaster and the Cult of the Dragon are pouring eldritch energy into the staff in an attempt to unlock the secrets and power of all Uvaeren. We cannot let the ancient knowledge of the Lorelands fall into the hands of the cult. Such magic in the service of evil would have untold consequences to our world. I have brought you together to do what I and my adventuring companions could not. You must enter the vault of the dracolich as a single overwhelming force and recover the Diamond Staff. The fate of the Dalelands may rest in your hands.

"You must travel separately into and throughout the lair, lest Dretchroyaster deduce that you work together. I have for you copies of a map penned by my former rogue adventuring companion, Hadarr. Some details might be outdated, but this should aid you in determining your course for entering the lair of the beast.

"Tymora lend you speed and good fortune."

Ask each table to select its team captain. Each team might also want to choose a name. The team captain will be responsible for tracking his or her group's progress and communicating with the other parties.

At this point, the DM at each table takes over.

During the event, the coordinator's responsibilities include:

- ◆ Notifying groups when events take place, such as when Dretchroyaster first becomes active in the lair,

or when players swap tables as a result of the Bhaalite portals (see page 5).

- ◆ Using the octopus paper clings that come with the D&D Game Day kit to track the location of the dracolich, each adventuring group, and rooms that have been explored. The clings are placed on the large poster map of the dungeon, which comes as part of the D&D Game Day kit.
- ◆ Determining when and where Dretchroyaster's simulacra appear (see also "Dretchroyaster's Attacks").
- ◆ Making suggestions to team captains to encourage interaction and offering helpful advice on behalf of Imani if a group is confused or not sure what to do.
- ◆ Inserting players into group after the event has begun. A player can join the adventure at any time, so if a player arrives after the start, the coordinator helps place that person.
- ◆ Watching to make sure the event finishes on time. If time is running short and not all the groups have acquired the Bhaalite idols, the event coordinator can expedite the final encounter. For example, the coordinator might determine that one of the groups stumbles upon a group of monsters carrying the remaining idol. Try to leave 30 to 60 minutes for the final encounter, and plan accordingly.
- ◆ Setting up groups for the final encounter and overseeing the different tables during it.

WHEN TABLES COME TOGETHER

Groups should be encouraged to come together in the dungeon for brief periods to exchange resources and information—but multiple groups traveling together as a single oversized party is detrimental to the play experience. A single DM running too many players means each player has less time to shine, the DM becomes overworked, and the challenge of specific encounters can quickly be thrown out of balance.

When tables come together, consider running any combat as a battle on two fronts. Players remain at their normal tables, with enemy forces attacking the adventurers from different sides. Each DM runs half the monsters (adding extra monsters as necessary). At any point (and at the discretion of both DMs), two players from different groups can swap tables, representing the close proximity of their groups. When characters switch groups, they swap initiative counts.

If having different tables fighting together creates headaches for DMs, the coordinator can have Dretchroyaster focus on the areas in which those groups have assembled (see also "Dretchroyaster's Attacks," page 6).

Team Captain

Imani lends each group a *circlet of limited telepathy* that allows telepathic communication with other characters wearing circlets. Each group selects one player to serve as a team captain. That player's character receives the circlet. **The captain's responsibilities include:**

- ◆ Tracking what a group learns and communicating relevant information to the other groups, such as the location of the dracolich, tactics suggestions, requests for or offers of assistance, and so on.

Information can be shared in several ways, such as having a sheet of notes passed between the tables, using messaging on mobile devices, or holding periodic meetings to discuss findings. DMs should encourage this communication, particularly if a Bhaalite idol or a useful magic item has been gained by one group, if a table needs healing or magical resources, or if a strategy has been decided that affects another group.

Dungeon Masters

Each Dungeon Master runs a table for a group of three to seven players. This section details some important characteristics of the adventure for a DM to keep in mind.

Before the event, the DM's responsibilities include:

- ◆ Reading the adventure, or at least the section assigned to him or her by the event coordinator.
- ◆ Becoming familiar with the D&D Next rules.

At the start of the adventure, the DM's responsibilities include:

- ◆ Ensuring that the team captain understands his or her responsibilities.
- ◆ Supplying each player with the map from Imani. Each player should receive a map (see page 24 for a copy). These maps contain hints and clues about the dungeon, as well as a few red herrings.
- ◆ Communicating the following information (as Imani) to the players prior to starting the adventure.

Bhaalite Idols: The *Diamond Staff of Chomylla* is located near the center of the dungeon. It's too dangerous to try to take the staff until the wards have been lowered. The Cult of the Dragon has seized ancient wards once used by the Bhaalites who built the temple. These wards take the form of small idols scattered throughout the dungeon. **The characters must recover the idols and bring them to the chamber containing the staff.** Tell the group how many idols among all the groups participating in this event are required to lower the wards. (If you don't

know, the event coordinator should be able to tell you the number).

Dracolich Is Dormant: Imani has been observing the lair and can inform the adventurers that the dracolich has been recently dormant, creating a perfect opportunity to strike.

Beware the Dracolich: Dretchroyaster is an ancient and powerful creature, and defeating him is probably impossible and is not a goal of this expedition. The dracolich is paranoid, and favors slaying intruders by generating magical simulacra of himself. If Dretchroyaster awakens, the adventures should hope they have to deal only with the magical duplicates and not the real dracolich.

Resting: Characters can take short rests but not long rests. The assault must be secret and swift. If the characters are forced to leave the lair to regroup, the Cult of the Dragon will reinforce its defenses and make another such attack impossible. As a result, there are no long rests during the adventure. If a character leaves the dungeon, the player should switch to a new character.

Scrolls of Identify: Each party is given five scrolls of *identify*, which Imani has also enchanted with a *read magic* spell, allowing anyone to use one.

Treasure: The characters are welcome to keep all the spoils except the staff, which Imani asks be returned to him. The treasure in the lair alone should be payment enough for the adventurers' participation.

Imani can offer no additional details about the dungeon beyond what is contained on the map. He visited many dungeons during his time as an adventurer, and details of his experiences are hazy. The map better reflects the contents of the dungeon than his rusty memory.

When the players are ready to start, read:

Seeing that you're ready to depart, Imani has you stand in a teleportation circle. "I've spent years preparing the resources for this assault," he says. "You'll be teleported to a safe location in the dungeon. From there, it's up to you to explore the area, find the Bhaalite idols, and disable the wards. Once you or your fellow adventuring groups have the staff, leave the dungeon with all speed, and I will meet you outside."

Seeing that you have no more questions, Imani speaks words of magic as the chalk outlines of the teleportation circles illuminate in purple light. The wizard's tower fades away, replaced by much different surroundings.

At this point, read the description of the starting location for your group, as determined by the event coordinator prior to the beginning of the event.

During the event, the DM's responsibilities include:

- ◆ Letting the event coordinator know when the party moves to a new area of the lair.
- ◆ Informing the event coordinator when the player characters have done something to attract the dracolich's attention. Examples include triggering explosive traps, dealing damage to the dracolich's treasure or to the elven vessel, claiming one of the four Bhaalite idols, and defeating Silakul the high priest.

Moving through the Dungeon

You don't normally need to worry about the speed at which a particular group of characters explores the dungeon relative to other tables. If timing does matter (such as when one group attempts to reach another group engaged in combat), assume that a group takes 2 rounds to move through each numbered area.

Character Death

Vault of the Dracolich is a lethal adventure. When a character dies, a player can select a new pregenerated character and rejoin the group. It is assumed that Imani continues to send in new adventurers to help those already in the lair.

For players who have grown attached to their characters, the powerful magic permeating Dretchroyaster's lair creates another option. If a player so chooses, a character who dies can return to life with full hit points and spells, animated by the power that infuses the ancient caverns. That resurrection affects the character's vitality even as the magic of the dungeon bestows a subtle blessing. Roll once on the table below and inform the player of the result. Each time a character dies, a player can roll a new result.

If not killed in combat, a dead character returns to life in 1 minute of game time. In combat (or any other round-by-round play), a dead character makes a DC 10 Constitution check at the start of each of his or her turns to come back to life.

The effects of the resurrection last until someone casts *remove curse* on the character.

Total Party Kill

In the event that all characters in a group are defeated at the same time, the bodies and mundane gear remain in place. At the DM's discretion, intelligent creatures in the dungeon might steal valuable items and magic from the fallen, relocating such items within the lair.

Bhaalite Portals

Centuries ago, priests of Bhaal built permanent portals in their temple and the surrounding caverns, using them to hide their movements to and from the surface. The magical energy of an ancient earth node below these caverns has continued to power the portals in the centuries since the death of Bhaal and the demise of his cult. The Cult of the Dragon now uses the portals to move throughout Dretchroyaster's lair, though some portals are used only infrequently.

Each portal is a 10-foot-diameter circle of well-worn stone, glowing red and surrounded by a 1-foot-high raised stone edge. Each portal has a default destination:

- ◆ The portal in area 7 leads to area 23.
- ◆ The portal in area 14 leads to area 20.
- ◆ The portal in area 20 leads to area 27.
- ◆ The portal in area 23 leads to area 7.
- ◆ The portal in area 27 leads to area 14.

When a creature steps into a portal, it is normally teleported to the associated location. However, the portals have degraded over time, and there is a small chance of teleportation error. Whenever a character passes through a portal, have that character's player roll a d12. On a roll of 1, alert the event coordinator. The event coordinator should then have each player in the event roll a d12. The character of the player with the lowest result (rerolling ties) is teleported, swapping locations and parties with the character who entered the portal.

BACK FROM THE DEAD

d6	Description	Drawback	Benefit
1	Monstrous return	The character returns as a wight and immediately attacks*	None
2	Withered flesh	Maximum hit points reduced by 5	Resistance to necrotic damage
3	Walking dead	Speed reduced by 10 feet	When dying, stabilize after one successful death saving throw
4	Not quite all there	Roll a d6 for initiative	Advantage on rolls against being charmed
5	Possessed by a Bhaalite spirit	On a natural 1, reroll attack and target a random ally	Advantage on rolls against being frightened
6	Undead affinity	Must succeed on a DC 10 Charisma saving throw to attack undead	Undead avoid attacking you when possible

*After being slain (again), the character can roll again on the table and return as normal.

The players of the two affected characters should immediately swap tables.

With a successful DC 15 Intelligence check or a *detect magic* spell, a character becomes aware of a portal's teleportation magic. An *identify* spell reveals that the portal is part of a network scattered across the lair, and that the runes are used to select a destination portal.

If the result of the Intelligence check is 20 or higher, or if *identify* has been used on the portal, a character can tell that it is possible to manipulate the destination of the portals, though it would require the proper magical specifications (probably located on a book or scroll).

A book in the vestry (area 6) contains the necessary information to adjust the portals so that they connect with all other portals in the lair.

Bhaalite Idols

During the construction of the Bhaalite temple, four high priests manipulated the energy of the earth node beneath this region to create unique artifacts—four small idols of Bhaal, each representing an aspect of murder: poison most foul, a foe rendered harmless, murder through another's hand, and the unseen murder.

The Bhaalites' central treasure vault was protected with overlapping magical fields attuned to the idols. Dretchroyaster and his cultists have modified those magical wards to protect the *Diamond Staff of Chomylla*. Attuning the fields so that only he and his high priest Silakul can breach them, the dracolich then scattered the four idols throughout his lair. Recovering the idols provides the adventurers with the keys to shut down the wards and reach the Chamber of the Diamond Staff.

The black stone idols are each 5 inches tall and carved in lifelike detail. Though seemingly delicate, the idols cannot be harmed by any means. If an idol is ever lost beyond the reach of the adventurers (falling down a rift, for example), it reappears in its original location. If all the members of a party are slain while in possession of an idol, it might be moved by nearby intelligent creatures along with the possessions of the fallen party.

Each idol has its name inscribed along its base in Common, and has a blood-red rune on its underside. With a DC 15 Intelligence check or a *detect magic* or *identify* spell, a creature knows that once per day, a creature can trace the rune on an idol, and doing so causes it to appear upon the tracer's forehead. That person can then use the magic of the idol. The rune and its magic endure until the creature dies or another creature traces the same idol's rune.

Dretchroyaster

A venerable green dragon before his undead transformation, Dretchroyaster appears much as other dracoliches. Runes of power are etched into his thick,

cracked bones. When he speaks, his voice is raspy yet booming, like stone scratching against glass. Dretchroyaster sees himself as greater than a dragon—even greater than a dracolich. He believes that he was meant to soar across the Astral Plane, traversing the domains of the gods and exploring beyond the boundaries of the mortal world. Dretchroyaster hopes to realize his potential with the help of the lost lore of Uvaeren and the power of the *Diamond Staff*. Use the statistics for the **green dracolich**.

Dretchroyaster is dormant during the adventurers' early exploration of the lair. He awakens only after the first Bhaalite idol has been claimed.

How the Dracolich Fights Back

Dretchroyaster avoids direct confrontation with adventurers. Instead, he sends magical simulacra of himself through the Bhaalite portals to deal with the adventurers. These simulacra have the same statistics as Dretchroyaster, but they retain their form for only 2 rounds in combat before dissolving into mist.

When the dracolich appears for the first time, the event coordinator announces Dretchroyaster's arrival and places the dracolich cling from the D&D Game Day kit on the large poster map to indicate his location. When he appears again at any later time, his arrival and movements are kept secret from the players. (Rather than making an announcement that can be heard by players, the event coordinator can notify a DM about the dracolich's appearance in an area where the characters are located by whispering to the DM or using some other method of communication, such as a text message.) Each time a new simulacrum appears, Dretchroyaster regains the use of any expended abilities, such as his poison breath.

Each simulacrum appears at the portal nearest to the original location of the most recently discovered idol. It then moves to engage the adventurers who have claimed that idol. The magical nature of the simulacra allows them to move without a problem through the narrow corridors of the lair.

A new simulacrum always shows up when any group of adventurers takes possession of an idol. At the discretion of the event coordinator, the dracolich's appearance might also be triggered by characters who get involved in some kind of commotion other than combat, such as setting off a trap or an explosion or destroying items that Dretchroyaster values.

The dracolich moves through one numbered area of the lair each round. If combat is not already taking place, Dretchroyaster and the adventurers roll initiative normally when the dracolich arrives at the characters' location. If the party is currently in combat, Dretchroyaster acts last in the initiative order.



VAULT OF THE DRACOLICH
 One square = 5 feet

DRETCHROYASTER'S LAIR

The lair of the dracolich consists of four sections—the forgotten temple of Bhaal, the underground lake, the troglodyte village, and Dretchroyaster's vaults. The *Diamond Staff of Chomylla* lies in a chamber near the center where these sections converge.

Each area description contains a passage in *italic* type that is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased to the players when their characters enter that area, telling them what the characters can immediately sense about the location. You might need to modify some of that information depending on the characters' point of entry or direction of travel.

FORGOTTEN TEMPLE OF BHAAL

These chambers were once a temple of Bhaal, before the Lord of Murder was destroyed in the Time of Troubles more than a century ago. Now this area is the domain of the Cult of the Dragon.

The cult was the architect of the green dragon Dretchroyaster's transformation into an undead creature. Its members see Dretchroyaster as an important part of the ultimate goal of having dracoliches rule the world. They act as his eyes and ears across the Dalelands as they attempt to unlock the secret knowledge of Uvaeren with the help of the *Diamond Staff*.

The Cult of the Dragon uses hired mercenaries to protect the temple and the rest of Dretchroyaster's lair. These mercenaries don't follow the doctrine of the Cult of the Dragon out of faith; they serve for money. Crafty adventurers might capitalize on this tenuous alliance as they interact with the mercenaries and the cultists.

The cultists also have only a loose alliance with the neighboring troglodytes. Though the cultists see Dretchroyaster as a physical manifestation of the power of the Cult of the Dragon, the troglodytes view the dracolich as a true deity. This difference of perspective has led to conflict between the groups in the past—a conflict that the adventurers might be able to turn to their advantage.

The high priest of the Cult of the Dragon is a twisted and cunning human named Silakul. A human of sixty years with a bald pate and a deeply lined face, Silakul has pale gray eyes whose emptiness speaks to his unending fanaticism. He leads the cultists that directly serve the dracolich. Silakul wants to unlock the dracolich's true potential as he increases the influence of the Cult of the Dragon in the Dalelands.

Silakul is brutal and pitiless when dealing with enemies of the Cult of the Dragon. He has the statistics of a

dark priest, and has the benefit of the *Murder Through Another's Hands* Bhaalite idol (see area 8) even though he is not carrying it. Silakul loses this benefit if the idol's rune is activated by a character.

When Silakul is first encountered (in area 8 or 9), he attempts to retreat if his current hit point total is half his maximum. If he gets away, he then is restored to full hit points and spells and stalks the adventurers in the company of 1d6 + 1 **dark adepts**. Whenever a group enters a room in the temple after Silakul has fled, roll a d4. On a result of 1, Silakul and the adepts wait in ambush in that room. If the fight goes against him again, Silakul flees once more, regaining full hit points, replenishing spells, and gaining new dark adept allies each subsequent time he succeeds in retreating.

General Features

Throughout this section of the lair, the following information applies except when an area description says otherwise.

Light: Bright illumination prevails, from iron-banded torches set into wall sconces.

Ceilings: Most of the ceilings in the temple are 20 feet high.

Doors: The doors in the temple open easily but are closed when the adventurers first explore this section. When a door is closed, it blocks sound from adjacent areas unless the sound is as loud as shouting or combat.

Stonework: These worked stone chambers and corridors are clearly centuries old, and were long abandoned before the Cult of the Dragon took over.

MASQUERADING AS CULTISTS

The dark adepts of the Cult of the Dragon all wear gray robes. If the characters defeat any of these cultists and don the robes, they might be able to pass themselves off as cult members (perhaps for the purpose of avoiding a battle) in encounters with other denizens of the lair. If the characters attempt to fool a cultist in this manner, the cultist receives a +4 bonus on any check to discern the ruse.

1. Entryway

The corridor leading to this chamber is one of the primary starting locations for the adventure. Before the characters can enter area 1, they need to contend with a trap just outside the entrance. The trap can be noticed by a character who makes a DC 10 Intelligence check and disarmed by one who makes a DC 10 Dexterity check.

Blade Trap in Corridor: At the northern end of the passageway leading to area 1, pressure plates in the stone floor release flying blades from slots in the walls. Creatures in the passageway are caught in the hail of blades (+4 to hit, 2d6 damage), which clatter loudly against the stone.

From a cleft in a remote hillside, you have followed a passageway to a large chamber of roughly worked stone. Colored stones set across the floor depict the scarred image of a large skull, faded fire burning in its eyes and chunks of red stone like drops of blood spread in a circle around it. Tapestries adorn three of the chamber's walls. To the west, a wide staircase leads down to a darkened area.

After you describe the area to the players, have them declare how many minutes they intend to spend examining the room. (If they move quickly into one of the adjoining areas, they can avoid a fight in this room.)

Creatures: If the trap goes off, a force of six **dark adepts** from area 4 comes to investigate 2 minutes later, arriving through the eastern door. If the characters avoid the trap, there is a 1 in 3 chance (1-2 on d6) that four dark adepts on patrol arrive in this chamber 1 minute later. The adepts immediately attack any characters present.

Skull Insignia: Any character recognizes the faded skull marked out on the floor as the sign of Bhaal, also known as the Lord of Murder.

2. Audience Hall

This area once served as a hall of offerings for the followers of Bhaal. Now the Cult of the Dragon uses it as a planning room for its expeditions across the Dalelands. A character who listens at the door and makes a DC 10 Wisdom check detects voices if enemies are present. If combat occurred in area 1, the occupants of this room (if any) are on alert when the adventurers enter.

A macabre pile of skulls and bones sits atop a broad stone slab on the west side of this rough chamber. A large map of the Dalelands sits unrolled on an oak table at the center of the room.

Creatures: Much of the time (1-4 on d6), a **dark priest** can be found here with eight **human warriors** (mercenaries), preparing for an expedition into the wilds.

Offering Pile: The pile of bones exudes a dark aura discernible to a character who uses an effect that detects magic or alignment. A character who makes a DC 10 Wisdom check realizes that someone who places a dead body on the pile gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls for 1 hour. This effect can be activated once per hour.

3. Kitchen

Once a private meeting room of the worshipers of Bhaal, this chamber now serves as the kitchen for Dretchroyaster's cult. If the cook is present, a character who listens at the door and makes a DC 10 Wisdom check hears a steady *thwack* of steel slicing into flesh.

A large boar on a spit turns slowly over a blazing fire pit. Nearby, bowls of greens and casks of wine are spread across a long table. Another boar hangs on a hook nearby.

Creature: If the party has remained undetected so far, the cook (a **human warrior** wearing a large white hat and apron) is here, using a cleaver to butcher a boar hanging on a hook.

Sounding the Alarm: If the adventurers have previously engaged in combat in any adjacent area, the cook has already fled and raised an alarm. The cook yells to the guards in area 5 when he sees intruders, then flees to the sleeping quarters (area 4) to wake the priests and mercenaries there.

4. Dormitory

Light: A single torch burns in the southwest corner, leaving most of this chamber in dim light.

The walls of this long chamber are lined by rows of wooden cots, each spread with a straw mattress and a dark wool blanket. A large oak chest sits at the end of each cot.

Creatures: Six **dark adepts**, four **human warriors**, and two trained **wolves** sleep in this chamber. If the trap in area 1 goes off, the dark adepts in this room move to intercept the intruders. The warriors and the wolves remain in this area and are on alert. If the characters enter this room without raising an alarm, all the creatures are present and sleeping.

A character who makes a DC 10 Dexterity check and uses a light weapon can kill one sleeping creature without waking any of the creatures in the room.

Treasure: The chests here contain a total of 1,324 gp, two longswords, a mace, and a suit of chainmail.

5. Guard Hall

This area is one of the secondary starting locations for the adventure. Before the characters can enter area 5, they need to contend with a trap just outside the entrance. The trap can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check and disarmed by one who makes a DC 15 Dexterity check. If the trap is detected, characters can circumvent it by stepping carefully over the tripwires and thus do not need to disarm it.

Crossbow Trap in Corridor: The passageway leading from the southeast is set with tripwires that activate a crossbow trap (four attacks against random targets in the passage, +5 to hit, 2d8 damage).

The corridor leading into this area from outside is brightly lit, letting the guards see characters approaching from that direction. If a group starts in this location, the guards are crouched down behind the overturned tables and waiting.

Two overturned tables face toward a corridor leading to the southeast, blocking it off. A smaller table holding a deck of cards and a cask of mead sits in the northwest corner of the room. A cache of badly maintained weapons is piled to the east.

Creatures: Four **human warriors** protect the lair's southeast entrance from attackers. Unless they are alerted by the cook or by combat in adjoining areas, they are not expecting intruders from the north or west.

Roleplay: These guards can be fooled into believing that the characters are mercenary reinforcements or (if they are wearing gray robes) members of the Cult of the Dragon. If anything arouses their suspicions, the guards attack.

6. Vestry

This area was originally a meeting chamber for the cultists of Bhaal, but now serves as the Cult of the Dragon's library and study.

Bookshelves line the walls of this ornate chamber. Weathered tomes are scattered across four desks and a table.

Books: Numerous texts discussing the history and geography of the Dalelands line these shelves. A character who makes a DC 10 Intelligence check notes that none of the books are particularly valuable.

Poison Glyph Trap: Silakul has placed magical wards on the books to ensure that only his cultists can read them. If any noncultist touches a book before the wards are disarmed, a cloud of poison erupts from the center of the room. Before the cloud dissipates, each creature in the area takes 3d10 poison damage (DC 15 Constitution saving throw for half damage). The magical wards can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check or casts a *detect magic* spell, and can be disarmed by someone who makes a DC 20 Intelligence check.

Secret Door: A character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence or Wisdom check discovers that a bookcase on the east wall covers a secret passage to area 25, used by the cultists to interact with the troglodytes.

Treasure: In a case of old maps and scrolls, Silakul has placed a *scroll of protection from undead*, as well as

spell scrolls of *bleed*, *haste*, *mage armor*, *remove curse*, and *shield*. The case also holds an old parchment of the cult of Bhaal that explains the Bhaalite portals, including their destinations. With a DC 10 Intelligence check, a character learns how to manipulate the portals' magic so that each one can connect to any other portal in the lair (as opposed to the normal fixed destinations).

7. Altar to Bhaal

This former sacrificial chamber now serves as the primary headquarters of Dretchroyaster's cultists. Silakul conducts his services and rites here. This area contains a Bhaalite portal that normally leads to area 23.

The symbol of the dead god Bhaal can still be seen on the weathered floor of this broad chamber, but a more recently installed draconic skull hangs above the altar to the north. Vestments hang to either side, emblazoned with the clawed symbol of the Cult of the Dragon. Rows of long benches stand to the north, while a red circle in the southwest glows with a mysterious light.

Creatures: Twelve **dark adepts** are found here in prayer or study. If the cultists have been alerted to an attack, six **human warriors** join the adepts to defend this area.

Necrotic Glyph Trap: The unlocked door that leads west is magically warded by a glyph placed on it. Any noncultist who touches the door while the ward is active is subject to a wave of necrotic energy (+5 to hit, 4d8 necrotic damage, half damage on a miss). This trap can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check or casts a *detect magic* spell, and can be disarmed by someone who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check.

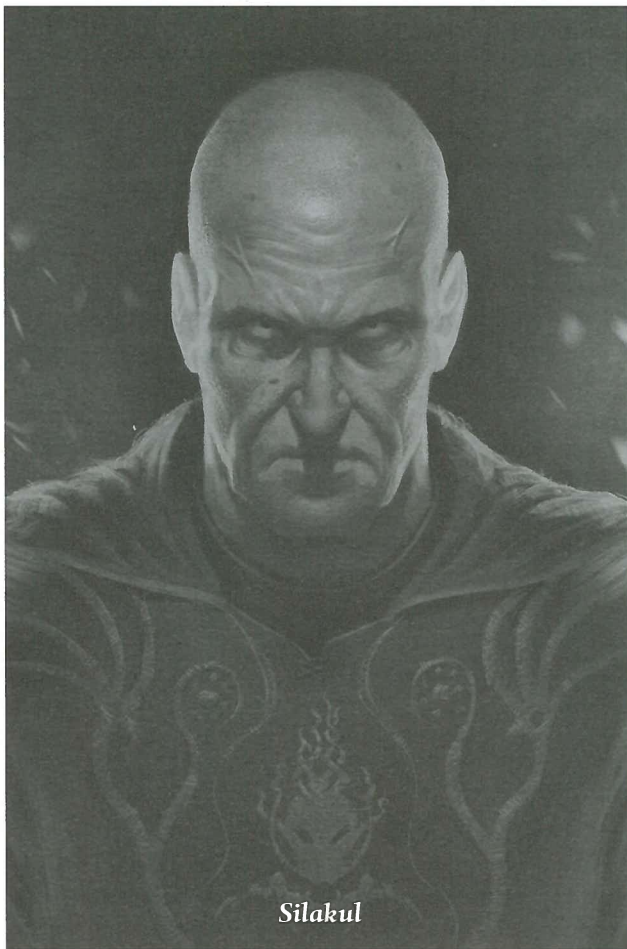
8. Room of Preparation

These are the personal chambers of Silakul the high priest. The large room divider is used to conceal his living quarters from the east side of the chamber, where cultists pass through on their way to and from the audience chamber (area 9).

Ancient carvings of daggers dripping blood mark the upper walls of this lush chamber. A beautiful and intricate foldable room divider is painted with the image of a red dragon destroying a city. To the west of the divider stand a large bed, an oak chest, a dresser, and a desk.

Creatures: This room is guarded by five **skeletons**, each one a former adventurer who tried to slay Silakul and failed. The skeletons attack anyone who isn't wearing the robes of a cultist.

If he is aware of the adventurers' presence in the lair but none of the characters have yet entered area 9, then Silakul is waiting for them in his chambers with a



Silakul

guardian **flesh golem** at his side. He hides behind the screen until the characters have engaged the skeletons, then attacks. .

If any characters enter area 9 before Silakul is encountered in his chambers, then he moves to that area and joins the fight.

Lightning Glyph Trap: Silakul's chest is unlocked and protected by a magical glyph of lightning. A character who opens the chest before the glyph is disarmed takes 6d6 lightning damage, as does any other character in the room who is wearing metal armor (DC 15 Dexterity saving throw for half damage). This trap can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check or casts a *detect magic* spell, and can be disarmed by someone who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check.

Necrotic Glyph Trap: The unlocked door that leads east is magically warded by a glyph placed on it. Any noncultist who touches the door while the ward is active is subject to a wave of necrotic energy (+5 to hit, 4d8 necrotic damage, half damage on a miss). This trap can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check or casts a *detect magic* spell, and can be disarmed by someone who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check.

Double Doors: The double doors to the north have an inscription that has recently been carved into them: "And coiled around shattered thrones, dead dragons shall rule the world."

Treasure: The chest contains a +1 *dagger*, a *scroll of protection from undead*, a *potion of remove curse*, and the *Murder Through Another's Hands* Bhaalite idol. The room divider stands 6 feet tall, can be folded down to a 6-foot bundle 2 feet on a side, and is worth 5,000 gp.

Murder Through Another's Hands: This idol shows a priest of Bhaal manipulating a humanoid puppet. While the rune bearer can see an ally, the rune bearer has resistance to all damage. Damage not taken as a result of this resistance is instead inflicted upon a random ally the rune bearer can see.

9. Dretchroyaster's Audience Chamber

Dretchroyaster meets with priests of the Cult of the Dragon in this audience chamber. A rough stone wall leads up to the northeast platform. Dretchroyaster's huge pile of coins makes the surface of the platform difficult terrain.

The natural walls of this chamber rise to a height of nearly fifty feet. In the northeast corner of the room is a platform fifteen feet above the floor. Gold coins are heaped in a gleaming pile on the platform, spilling over to the floor below.

Creatures: Six **dark adepts** and six **human warriors** protect the wealth here and guard against intrusion from the hydra in area 15 when the dracolich is absent. If aware of the adventurers' approach, they are prepared for battle.

If Silakul has not been previously engaged (in area 8), he is in this chamber with a **guardian flesh golem**.

Necrotic Glyph Traps: The doors to the east and north are trapped by Silakul's dark glyphs. If any creature touches a door without disarming its glyph, each creature in the audience chamber is subject to a wave of necrotic energy (+6 to hit, 8d8 necrotic damage, half damage on a miss). A glyph can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check or casts a *detect magic* spell, and can be disarmed by someone who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check.

When a character brings one of the Bhaalite idols close to the northern door, the idol bearer sees the glyph's energy flare up, then fade, and recognizes that it is now safe to open the door. If the glyph is not disarmed, it resets 1 minute after the idol is more than 10 feet away.

Treasure: 436 pp, 15,382 gp, 1,937 ep, 2,022 sp, and 23,145 cp are piled on the platform and the floor. Dretchroyaster uses these coins as a bed.

10. Chamber of Screams

Once a torture chamber for the cultists of Bhaal, this area is the Cult of the Dragon's supply room, well stocked with rations, wine, and mundane gear.

An iron portcullis blocks the passageway between areas 10 and 11. A creature that makes a DC 15 Strength check can lift the portcullis, and one that makes a DC 10 Intelligence check can locate the weighted switch that lifts the gate.

Large rusted hooks jut from the walls of this dismal chamber, which is piled high with crates and barrels. From the northwest corner comes the sound of running water.

Creatures: Roll for a potential patrol in this area using the encounter table below.

d8	Encounter
1-4	No encounter.
5	2d4 dark adepts enter the area, loudly mocking the ignorance of the neighboring troglodytes.
6	1d6 dark adepts argue with 1d6 human warrior mercenaries over money. The group attacks, but the adventurers might be able to persuade the mercenaries to stand down.
7	2d6 human warriors enter the area, grumbling about the poor food provided by the cultists.
8	1d4 cult dark priests reprimand 6 dark adepts.

Floor Grate: The sound of running water comes from the other side of an iron grate set into the floor. The grate covers a narrow tunnel, 6 feet in diameter and covered in 3 feet of water, that leads to the upper lake (area 13). A creature can break through the grate with a DC 15 Strength check, but doing so makes noise. For each attempt after the first, roll again on the encounter table above.

Treasure: The crates contain mundane gear and supplies. If the characters look for a specific mundane item, they can find anything with a value of 5 gp or lower that exists on the Adventuring Gear table in the "Equipment" document.

11. Red Cells

The Cult of the Dragon uses this chamber as a prison and latrine, as did the cult of Bhaal. The stench of filth and decay is noticeable as the characters approach. If the guards here have not been alerted, the adventurers also hear the taunts of the adepts torturing their drow prisoner.

Rusted iron cages line the west side of this grim prison chamber, while shackles hang from deep spikes on the south. Tables covered with torture apparatus stand to the east. The walls here are stained red-black with blood.

Portcullis: See area 10, above.

Creatures: Four human warriors guard this chamber, along with two dark adepts who interrogate Stryke. If previously alerted to the incursion of the temple, they stand prepared for battle. One of the adepts carries the keys to the cells.

Floor Grate: An iron grate set into the floor covers a narrow tunnel, 6 feet in diameter and covered in 3 feet of water, that leads to the upper lake (area 13). The water of this tunnel is fouled with litter and human waste, but is safe to wade through. The grate can be broken through as the grate in area 10, above.

Stryke: At present, the red cells have one occupant—a drow named Stryke. He is a male of House Jaezred, a secret patriarchy of dragonblooded assassins. He is heavily scarred and wears his hair cropped short. Sent by his masters to uncover the plots of the Cult of the Dragon, Stryke tried to steal the *Diamond Staff* but was unsuccessful. If the adventurers rescue him, Stryke warns them of the magical wards that protect the *Diamond Staff*, as well as two other threats of your choice in the lair.

Stryke is happy to trade his knowledge of the dracolich's lair for his freedom, but he wants no more of this place. When freed, he claims the weapon and armor of a fallen mercenary or cultist. Stryke is a capable warrior, but he breaks off from the party at the first opportunity and tries to leave the lair as soon as possible. If he must do battle, Stryke fights using the statistics of a drow, except that he fights with a spear (1d6 piercing damage) or a mace (1d6 bludgeoning damage).

UNDERGROUND LAKE

This entrance to the dracolich's lair follows the course of a river that burrows into the side of a rocky hill. Tumbling rapids flow through a narrow passageway that widens into the underground lake. The characters enter by way of rocky banks along the water's edge. They can continue to explore these caverns along the banks, or they can travel by water using lightweight canoes. (These have been carted and stashed here by the same servants of Imani who have been watching the lair.) Each two-person canoe has AC 8 and 25 hit points, and provides half cover to creatures inside it.

A canoe requires little skill to navigate, and characters do not need to make checks to use a canoe outside combat. During combat, a character who wields a paddle in two hands can move the canoe up to 20 feet.

A hostile ecology thrives in the underground lake. Fish, animals, and the occasional explorer are swept into these black waters, where the creatures native to the caverns devour them. The primary threat in this section is the hydra in area 15. The other creatures of the lake avoid that area, and they flee whenever the hydra swims out. The lizardfolk from area 17 are the

only intelligent creatures in the lake caves. They have seen members of the Cult of the Dragon dumping prisoners into the hydra's den, but otherwise have no connection to the cult or Dretchroyaster.

General Features

Throughout this section of the lair, the following information applies except when an area description says otherwise.

Water: The cold water of the underground lake flows slowly south to north and is 15 feet deep. A character can swim through the water without needing to make checks to do so. Climbing from the water to an adjacent bank requires 15 feet of movement.

Slippery Banks: The moist, slippery earthen banks alongside the water are difficult terrain. A character that hustles or that rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll slips and falls into the water.

Light: No source of light exists beneath the surface of the underground lake. A source of bright light held at the surface of the water sheds dim light that sometimes allows the lake bottom to be seen.

Ceilings: The cavern ceilings are roughly 40 feet high. Ceilings in the passageways that connect to areas 10 and 11 are 20 feet high.

12. Waterfall Entrance

This area is one of the primary starting locations for the adventure. This waterfall cavern is the main entryway to the underground lake. The characters can easily clamber down the banks alongside the rapids (carrying canoes if they have them).

Rushing rapids cascade down into a large underground lake. Thick stalactites hang from the ceiling above, the black waters continuing north into a wider cavern and darkness beyond.

Water: The water here is only 5 feet deep, but the it's fast-moving. A character who enters the water near the base of the waterfall must succeed on a DC 15 Strength check or be carried along into the upper lake (area 13).

Foul Tunnel: Characters who move east along the bank discover a 3-foot-deep flow of water heading into a side tunnel (which leads to area 11). The water is fouled with litter and waste but is safe to wade through.

13. Upper Lake

The water here is 30 feet deep. Bright light held at the surface of the water does not illuminate the bottom. With a DC 10 Wisdom check, any character who looks into the water sees a faint glow near the center of the area (see "Treasure"). A character actively looking around can make an Intelligence check instead. This check automatically succeeds if no other light is shining in the cavern.

The cavern widens out into a large underground lake. The water here is calm, with pale green vines floating a foot beneath the surface.

Deadly Vines: The vines are part of a single enormous plant rooted at the bottom of the lake. They pull down and drown living creatures, after which the plant's roots feed off the decaying bodies. A character who makes a DC 10 Wisdom check knows the nature of these vines.

At the end of each of its turns, any creature in the water must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be grabbed by the vines. On a second failed check, the vines grapple the creature (escape DC 10) and pull the creature 10 feet below the water.

Treasure: A +1 *longsword* lies at the bottom of the lake, where its glow, from its beacon property, has brought many adventurers down into the drowning depths. Scattered alongside it are gems and coins worth 600 gp. A character who descends to the lake bottom can gather 100 gp worth of treasure as an action.

14. Pool of Serpents

The water in this area is turbulent, meaning that a character trying to swim must make a DC 10 Strength check to do so. A den of aquatic snakes lurks here, feeding on creatures that get stuck in the current. Because of the turbulence, bright light held at the surface of the water does not illuminate the bottom of the pool.

The west bank of this area contains a Bhaalite portal that normally leads to area 20. The snakes prevent the lizardfolk (see area 17) from accessing this portal, which is rarely used by the cultists. The glowing portal fills this area with dim light.

Where the underground lake narrows, the water swirls in a pool to the west. A section of the rocky bank beyond glows with a diffuse red light. To the east, a narrow and watery tunnel leads away from the lake.

Creatures: The pool contains nine **amphibious giant snakes** with poisonous bites. These snakes attack any creature that enters the water or moves along the western bank.

Treasure: Gems and gold worth a total of 526 gp are hidden in the muck at the bottom of the pool. This treasure can be seen only by a character who dives to the bottom.

15. Hydra's Den

A stench of decay hangs in the air as the adventurers approach this area. This cavern is the den of a fearsome **hydra**—next to Dretchroyaster, the most powerful creature in the dracolich's lair. The earthen bank around this 20-foot-deep pool has been churned to muck by the hydra.

A sloping passageway leads between this area and Dretchroyaster's audience chamber (area 9). The Cult of the Dragon frequently drags prisoners and traitors in through this passage and throws them to the hydra.

Dark, still water fills this large cavern. Bones protrude from reeking muck along the banks of the pool. A sense of dread emanates from the area, its source centered below the water.

Creature: The hydra lurks beneath the water as the adventurers approach. Unless it is spotted (DC 20 Wisdom check), it gains surprise.

Treasure: Gems and coins worth 462 gp sit at the bottom of the pool, along with the *Poison Most Foul* Bhaalite idol. Characters can sense the idol's power even after the hydra is slain.

Poison Most Foul: This idol depicts a hooded and cloaked drow assassin holding a dagger with a wavy blade. Anytime the bearer of this idol hits with a weapon attack, the target takes 1d6 extra poison damage.

A character marked by this idol's rune begins to feel paranoid and fears being betrayed by allies. If the character rolls a 1 on an attack roll, he or she must make a DC 10 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the attack is rerolled and targets a random ally in range.

16. Pillar of Sun

This area is one of the secondary starting locations for the adventure.

A fallen black obelisk dominates the center of this cavern, surrounded by crumbling stalagmites. A shaft of sunlight pierces the gloom from a crack in the ceiling, striking the obelisk to reveal that its surface is etched with intricate Elvish runes. You feel a deep hum in the air.

Magic Obelisk: This obelisk dates back nearly two thousand years but maintains its magic. The Elven runes are unintelligible, but a DC 10 Intelligence check reveals that they are millennia old.

Once per day, a creature that touches the obelisk is overcome with a vision of elves doing battle with devils within a vast and ancient elven city. The creature must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or take 8d8 psychic damage from the vision. On a successful save, the creature gains advantage on Wisdom checks for 24 hours.

17. Pit of Teeth

Lizardfolk swim among these natural stone pillars, adept at attacking from a favorable position before slipping away.

Dozens of stalactites hang from the low ceiling of this cavern. The points of a dozen or more stalagmites protrude from the water, which ripples where it flows around and between these stone teeth.

Creatures: Eleven lizardfolk dwell in this cavern, from where they swim out to the lower lake (area 18) to fish and hunt. They attack any creatures that enter the area, pursuing intruders into the lower lake (but avoiding the hydra). When a lizardfolk is underwater and its attacker is not, it has half cover.

Treasure: The lizardfolk keep a cache of "treasure" in the lower reaches of their pool. Lying among worthless polished stones and bone necklaces is a +1 trident. The wielder of this trident receives a strong intuitive sense that something important is to be found in an area to the east. (This is a reference to area 20, where the remains of an elven ship are embedded in the rock of the cavern wall.)

18. Lower Lake

The current here increases to the north, where the waterway narrows to become a powerful river. Characters can paddle canoes or swim to the banks when they first enter this area, but those who do not are quickly pulled into area 19. The swirling forms are fish and eels that dart away if anyone tries to grab them.

A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom check hears a waterfall echoing from around the bend to the north.

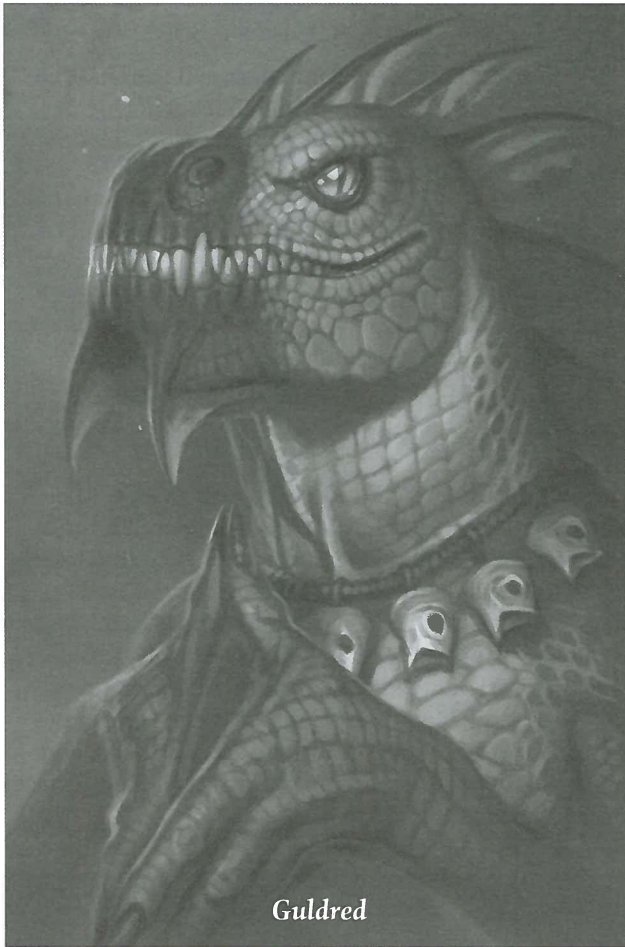
Hundreds of stalactites cover the ceiling where it slopes down to a height of twenty feet. The wide lake begins to flow faster as it narrows to the north, with swirling forms seen in its depths.

Creatures: A nest of twelve stirges hangs among the stalactites here. If they are not spotted (by someone who makes a DC 10 Wisdom check), they attack with surprise.

Stalactite Collapse: Any ranged or area attack aimed toward the ceiling has a chance of dislodging the fragile stalactites in this area. Whenever a character makes a ranged attack against a flying stirge and misses, roll a d6. On a result of 4-6, a stalactite splinters and falls directly down beneath the target of the attack, spraying fragments in a 5-foot-radius burst. Any area attack that hits the ceiling brings down a hail of rock in a burst equal to the area of the original attack. Any creature in a stalactite burst makes a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature on the bank falls prone, while a character in a canoe is knocked into the water.

Guldred: Guldred, a lizardfolk outcast, lurks on the eastern bank of the lake. A character who makes a DC 15 Wisdom check discerns the small lizardfolk as it slinks along the water's edge.

Guldred is cautious of the adventurers, but he approaches them after confirming that the characters are not mercenary guards of the cult. The lizardfolk outcast knows these caverns well, and he has information useful to a group willing to do him a favor.



Guldred

Exiled from the rest of his tribe in the pit of teeth (area 17), Guldred has taken to living a solitary life on the east bank of the lower lake. He is small for a lizardfolk male, only four feet tall, and thin with gangly arms. Guldred knows a good deal about the underground lake, and he is willing to impart this information for a price—the death of his treacherous kin. Guldred can tell the adventurers about the hydra (area 15) and the idol in the hydra’s pool, the tunnel to area 9 through which the cultists throw victims to the hydra, and the waterfall in area 19 (including the ropers that lurk there). Guldred has the statistics of a standard **lizardfolk**.

19. Rift

Crystalline growths fill this area with dim green light. The waterfall pulls anything washed in from the lake down into the rift—including canoes that enter this area and characters trying to swim.

Where the river twists suddenly to the south, it becomes a powerful waterfall, cascading into a jagged rift that plunges down into darkness. Green crystalline growths spread up beyond the edges of the rift and the huge stalactite that has fallen across it to form a natural bridge. Closer to the waterfall, thick, ropy vines hang down from shadow.

Escaping the Rift: Each character in a canoe can make a DC 10 Strength or Dexterity saving throw to jump to the dry bank on either side of the waterway. A character who stays in a canoe or who is already in the water can make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to grab one of the low-hanging vines (see “Creatures”). Any character who does not grab a vine or reach the bank falls into the rift and is killed. (A character who dies in the rift and returns to life can climb out in 1d4 rounds. See “Character Death,” page 5.)

Creatures: Twelve vines hanging over the rift are actually the sticky strands of two **ropers** that lurk 25 feet above the waterfall and grab creatures that flow past them. A character who successfully grabs a “vine” is automatically hit by the roper’s tendrils and grappled.

A character who escapes a roper’s grapple, or who is being grappled by a roper when it is slain, must make a DC 10 Strength or Dexterity check. On a successful check, the character drops 20 feet to the bank. On a failed check, the character falls into the rift and is killed.

Crystalline Growths: The crystals along the banks beside the rift are difficult terrain, as is the crystal stalactite that has fallen across the gap. A character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check identifies the crystals as manifestations of elven magic fueled by the earth node below this region. Any creature that makes a magical attack from the area of the crystals gains advantage on that attack.

Necrotic Haze: The southern passage is filled with an opaque field of necrotic energy that prevents viewing of what lies beyond it. See area 33.

TROGLODYTE VILLAGE

A clan of troglodytes dwells in these caverns. The monsters move out to raid farmsteads and settlements on the surface through a network of tunnels east of Dretchroyaster’s lair. They worship Dretchroyaster as a true god dwelling among mortals, and they build tributes and conduct sacrifices in his name. The Cult of the Dragon uses these primitive humanoids to protect the eastern side of the dracolich’s lair.

Though the troglodytes are fanatic, they are not as stupid as the cultists think they are. The troglodytes understand that the cult doesn’t see Dretchroyaster as a god, but merely as a vessel of power. Urbone, the troglodyte chief, dreams of displacing the cult and making himself the high priest of the dracolich.

The troglodytes often conduct battles against captured beasts and each other to determine the strongest warriors in their tribe. These battles take place in a large fighting pit in the lower village (area 23).

General Features

Throughout this section of the lair, the following information applies except when an area description says otherwise.

Light: Phosphorescent algae clings to the cavern walls, filling the space between the walls with dim light.

Stench: Troglodytes give off a foul odor that warns of their presence in any area where they reside. When the adventurers first enter this area, any character who makes a DC 10 Intelligence check recognizes the troglodyte stench for what it is.

20. Elven Vessel

This ancient elven vessel was buried thousands of years ago within the mountain. Dretchroyaster has used the magic imbued into the ship to fuel his own power, and to aid in unlocking the secrets of the *Diamond Staff*. Spread out alongside the excavation site, elven relics retrieved from the ship await transfer to the temple of Bhaal. Lanterns bathe this area in bright light.

This area contains a Bhaalite portal that normally leads to area 27.

What appears to be a shattered sailing ship lies half buried in the north wall of this broad cavern. Broken rock scattered across the ground is evidence of recent excavation. Green crystalline growths fuse the ship to the rock and spread out around it, while a red circle glows to the west.

Creatures: Twelve **troglodyte** conscripts use rusty pickaxes to excavate the rock surrounding the ship. Four **human warriors** and two **dark adepts** from the cult oversee their labor. The cultists and the warriors attack at once but the troglodytes hang back unless attacked first.

Elven Vessel: Magic imbued in the ship is still detectable after long years. A character who makes a DC 10 Intelligence check confirms that this magical power fuels the crystalline growths.

Crystalline Growths: The crystals along the north wall are difficult terrain. A character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check identifies the crystals as manifestations of elven magic fueled by the earth node below this region. Any creature that makes a magical attack from the area of the crystals gains advantage on that attack.

Treasure: Four elven relics can be found near the ship—a mystical sextant, a rune-scribed stone tablet, a spyglass, and a thick rope woven with silver. The magic of these ancient devices no longer functions, but they remain worth a total of 1,254 gp. A character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check discerns that the runes on the tablet are of an elven dialect at least two thousand years old.

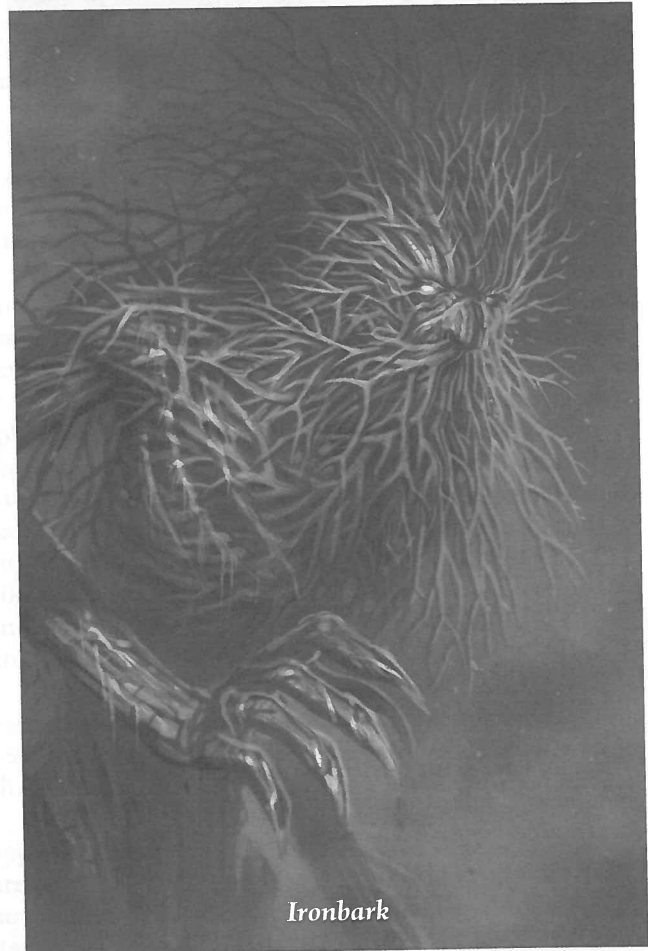
21. Lost Forest

This cavern is Dretchroyaster's personal garden of treants, which are a delicacy for the dracolich. He has already killed two of the powerful creatures but one treant remains alive.

Ancient, petrified trees pierce the dead rock floor of this large cavern, their gnarled branches clawing out toward the walls. Images of faces in their dead bark seem to scream in silent pain.

Creature: The living **treant**, named Ironbark, is nearly insane with pain and fear. He attacks with little provocation.

Ironbark: The treant has become a shadow of his former self as a prisoner of Dretchroyaster. His limbs are thin and spindly, and deep gouges from the dracolich's claws have shredded his bark exterior. Ironbark and two of his brothers were captured by Dretchroyaster twenty years ago. Since then, the dracolich has slowly drawn out the life force of these ancient creatures, savoring their gradual insanity as he consumes them. Both of Ironbark's brothers are now dead, and the treant expects Dretchroyaster to soon steal the last of his life force.



Ironbark

If treated with care and kindness, the treant can be convinced that the adventurers are on his side. Ironbark describes how Dretchroyaster loves to torment treants, draining their life force and leaving them to petrify in this ghastly forest prison. When he learns that the adventurers' goal is to thwart the dracolich's plans for conquest, the treant is bolstered by visions of revenge.

Ironbark knows much about the nearby caverns, describing the ancient elven vessel that crashed here and the earth node below that imbues the dracolich's lair with magical energy. He knows of the Bhaalites that channeled this energy before their cult fell, and he knows that Dretchroyaster is using that same energy to unlock the power of an elven artifact in a chamber to the southwest.

22. Chief's Cavern

This hut houses the chief of the troglodytes. This area is one of the secondary starting locations for the adventure.

Algae clings to the walls and is farmed in large pits in the northwestern part of this cavern. The pits imbue the algae with the power of the earth node below this region, creating a supplement for the troglodytes' diet.

This rough cavern is dominated by a huge mud hut surrounded by a circle of sharp sticks. A giant lizard skull sits atop the hut's roof, with skeletal giant bat wings to either side creating the appearance of some kind of draconic creature.

Creatures: The troglodyte chief Urbone is in his hut, with ten **troglodytes** guarding him and keeping a watch over the tunnel to the northeast. The troglodytes rush to attack any creatures that threaten them.

Urbone: Urbone the troglodyte chief yearns to become the true high priest of Dretchroyaster. A canny warrior, the chief is willing to accept outside help in the troglodytes' struggle against the blasphemy of the Cult of the Dragon. He has the statistics of a **human witch doctor** with the troglodyte's Light Sensitivity and Stench traits.

Urbone rules his tribe with cunning and patience. His face is heavily wrinkled, with bits of moss and fungus growing out of parts of his head. He wears a giant lizard skull as a helmet and has the wing bones of a huge bat arrayed on his back to give him a draconic appearance.

Unlike Dretchroyaster's cultists, Urbone and the troglodytes see the dracolich not just as a symbol of power but as a true deity. Urbone plots to undo the influence of the Cult of the Dragon over Dretchroyaster, so that the troglodytes might worship him properly and make Urbone the dracolich's high priest.

The chief admires stories of courageous deeds, which can sway him into allying with the adventurers

against the cult (though never against Dretchroyaster). Such accomplishments might include proof that the characters fought cultists and protected troglodyte conscripts at the elven vessel (area 20), or that they avoided combat with the guards in area 25 after slaying cultists in the temple. The adventurers can also prove themselves in a battle against monsters and troglodytes in the village's fighting pit (see area 23).

Warded Passage: Neither the troglodytes nor the cultists want the other group using the passage to the chamber of guardians (area 29), which is trapped at both ends. A pit trap at the northeast mouth of the passage is 30 feet deep and lined with poisoned spikes. (For details of the trap at the other end, see area 29.)

The pit trap can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check before traversing this opening. If it is detected, the trap can be circumvented by moving carefully around the edge of the pit. A creature that enters the passage unaware of the trap takes 3d6 falling damage plus 2d6 damage from the spikes, then must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 2d6 poison damage.

Treasure: The chief's hut holds gems, jewelry, and golden plates and goblets worth 2,752 gp. Hidden among that finery is the *Foe Rendered Harmless* Bhaalite idol.

Foe Rendered Harmless: This idol is a warrior wearing plate armor marked by demonic inscriptions. As an action each time, the rune bearer can use *hold person* up to three times per day. However, any time the character uses this ability, he or she must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or become paralyzed for 1d6 + 1 rounds.

23. Lower Village

The lower village of the troglodytes is dominated by the battle pit where troglodyte warriors, prisoners, and monsters engage in brutal combat. The circular pit is 30 feet across and 15 feet deep.

This area contains a Bhaalite portal that normally leads to area 7.

A broad pit takes up most of the west side of this cavern, surrounded by a protective barrier of sharpened sticks. Harnesses hang from large poles along the west wall, where claw marks in the stone suggest that huge beasts have been shackled.

Creatures: Ten **troglodytes** and four **giant lizards** inhabit this area. There is a 1 in 3 chance (1-2 on 1d6) that half the troglodytes and lizards are engaged in battle in the fighting pit. The troglodytes attack at once in response to any aggression (but see "Roleplaying").

Bog: The troglodytes lay their eggs in the foul bog to the northeast, where the bodies of their victims and their own dead are disposed of.

Roleplaying: Depending on how the characters conduct themselves and the nature of their previous interactions with the troglodytes, the troglodytes here are quick to issue a challenge to combat in the fighting pit. If the characters agree, they must fight three battles, each against a different group of creatures. These monsters are herded in from holding pens in the tunnels beyond the chief's cavern, then shackled under guard while they await their turn in the pit. Roll on the following table three times, rerolling any duplicate results, to determine the characters' opposition for these bouts.

d6	Creatures
1	2 ankhegs
2	3 carnivorous apes
3	1 displacer beast
4	2 saber-toothed tigers (great cats)
5	1 owlbear
6	1 basilisk

If the adventurers succeed in battle, the troglodytes of the village are easily swayed to their side—as long as the characters do not reveal that they are dedicated to thwarting the plans of Dretchroyaster.

24. Upper Village

This cavern is the primary village of the troglodytes. Each of the three huts houses twelve troglodytes (a mix of males, females, and young).

In addition to the ever-present stench of the troglodytes, the smell of rotting flesh hangs in the air as the characters approach this area.

Three large huts built of mud and rotting wood are interspersed in this cavern. Along the west wall, humanoid bodies are impaled on large spikes.

Creatures: Twenty troglodytes in this area are warriors that quickly take up arms and defend the village (but see “Roleplaying”).

Roleplaying: These troglodytes are used to interacting with the cultists and their mercenary soldiers, and they can be approached by adventurers who want to avoid conflict. If the characters refrain from revealing that they have come to the lair to fight Dretchroyaster, the troglodytes escort them to the lower village or the chief's cavern (areas 22 or 23), where the heroes can meet the troglodyte chief or engage in feats of battle.

25. Guard Huts

This area is one of the primary starting locations for the adventure.

Troglodyte warriors stationed in these huts keep watch to protect the village to the north, and have been

ordered by the Cult of the Dragon to protect the secret entrance into the forgotten temple of Bhaal.

Three fortified huts of mud and rotted wood stand in this area, placed to prevent easy passage to the north or the east. Humanoid skulls and dark splashes of blood adorn the walls of the huts.

Creatures: Ten troglodytes and four giant lizards guard this area. The troglodytes are armed with steel weapons from the Cult of the Dragon (change their greatclub attack to a battleaxe attack dealing 1d8 slashing damage).

Roleplay: These troglodytes do not attack immediately. They hate their Cult of the Dragon masters, and they can be convinced to stand down by adventurers who have fought (or who claim to oppose) the cult. If intimidated or dealt with diplomatically, the guards might allow the characters access to the hidden tunnel or take them north to the troglodyte village.

Hidden Tunnel: The tunnel that leads west is blocked from view by a sheet of burlap caked in mud. A character who makes a DC 15 Wisdom check, or who passes within 10 feet of the wall, spots the tunnel.

Secret Door: At the end of the hidden tunnel, the secret door to the vestry (area 6) can be found with a DC 15 Intelligence or Wisdom check. Unless the door has already been opened from the other side, opening it from within the tunnel knocks over a bookcase in the vestry, which alerts the mercenary guards in area 5.

Treasure: A sack holding the cult's 315 gp payment to the troglodytes sits in one of the huts.

DRETCHROYASTER'S VAULTS

When the Cult of the Dragon took over these caverns, it enlarged a number of passages between the temple of Bhaal and the troglodyte village to create the chambers Dretchroyaster uses as his personal vaults. Only the dracolich, the high priest Silakul, and the cult's most trusted servants have access to the vaults.

General Features

Throughout this section of the lair, the following information applies except when an area description says otherwise.

Light: These caverns and passageways are brightly lit thanks to magical glowing stones embedded in the walls.

Ceilings: All the ceilings in the vaults are 30 feet high.

26. Alchemical Lab

The stench of sour chemicals hangs on the air as the characters approach this area.

Some sort of alchemical laboratory has been set up in this cavern, its rough walls holding shelves covered with vials and jars. Strange liquids bubble in large vats, swirling through glass tubes and sending clouds of black smoke up toward vent-cracks in the ceiling.

Dretchroyaster's trusted dark priests use this area to brew strange concoctions that help empower the dracolich's undead state.

Creatures: Four **dark adepts** of the Cult of the Dragon attend the alchemical apparatus and experiments here.

Explosive Alchemy: The experiments in this area are incredibly volatile. Whenever a creature makes an attack that misses by 5 or more, that attacker must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the attack disturbs the alchemical equipment and triggers an explosion. Any creature in the room takes 5d6 fire damage (DC 10 Dexterity saving throw for half damage).

Treasure: Six potions can be found among the vials and jars scattered about the lab—a *potion of flying*, two *potions of healing*, a *potion of heroism*, a *potion of speed*, and a *potion of invisibility* (actually a *potion of poison*).

27. Scrying Room

Dretchroyaster's scrying pool is used by cult agents to spy on enemies, keep watch over the troglodytes, and investigate potential clues for unlocking the secrets of the staff.

This area contains a Bhaalite portal that normally leads to area 14.

A large pool of viscous blue liquid sits on the east side of this chamber, the outside of its raised stone edge scribed with intricately carved runes. To the north, a larger circle glows red.

Creatures: Three **dark priests** and three **dark adepts** make use of this area to spy on another group of adventurers elsewhere in the lair.

Scrying Pool: The blue pool is imbued with scrying magic. The pool is attuned to cult rituals and cannot be properly used by the adventurers. An *identify* spell tells the caster that a character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence check can divine the location of one Bhaalite idol that is not currently in the possession of any adventurer.

28. Hall of Trophies

This chamber hosts Dretchroyaster's most valued trophies, each of them representing an opponent defeated in battle. The weapons and armor of adventurers who dared face the dracolich stand alongside the skeleton of the last centaur he feasted on as a living dragon. The runes on the dragon skull signify it as one of Dretchroyaster's rivals, killed hundreds of years ago.

Fire Trap: If any item here is touched by any creature other than Dretchroyaster, a sheet of flame issues forth from the dragon skull. The magical fire does not harm the trophies, but deals 5d6 fire damage to any creature in the area (DC 15 Dexterity saving throw for half damage). This trap can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check or casts a *detect magic* spell, and can be disarmed by someone who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check. The trap resets 30 minutes after it is triggered.

Suits of armor and the bones of great beasts adorn the walls of this chamber. Among the trophies are a centaur skeleton impaled on a spear, and an enormous rune-etched dragon skull sitting on a podium. Three more passageways lead out of this area; the one to the southwest is filled with a dense black haze.

Necrotic Haze: The southwest passage is filled with an opaque field of necrotic energy that prevents viewing of what lies beyond it. See area 33.

Treasure: The trophies in this area include a +1 crossbow and a suit of +1 *chainmail*. A green quiver that once belonged to a Harper agent (DC 10 Intelligence check to identify the origin) contains a single black-fletched +3 *arrow*.

29. Chamber of Guardians

This area serves as a gauntlet of traps for any who might attempt to infiltrate Dretchroyaster's vaults. The chamber is dominated by a statue of a green dragon—a representation of Dretchroyaster before he became a dracolich.

Statues of great winged beasts and powerful armored humanoids line the rough walls of this long chamber. In the center, a huge draconic statue sits on a broad raised platform.

Creatures: Four of the statues here animate into **gargoyles** if anyone passes through the chamber not accompanied by Dretchroyaster or Silakul. A character who makes a DC 17 Intelligence or Wisdom check notices the gargoyles before they transform. The monsters otherwise attack with surprise.

Poison Dart Trap: A poison dart trap protects the short entranceway to the hall of artifacts (area 30). This trap can be detected by someone who makes a DC 15 Intelligence or Wisdom check and can be disarmed by someone who makes a DC 15 Dexterity check. If the trap is not disarmed, when any creature crosses from area 29 to area 30, any creature within 15 feet of the opening between those areas is struck by a fusillade of darts for 3d6 damage and 2d6 poison damage (DC 10 Constitution saving throw for half poison damage).

Warded Passage: Neither the troglodytes nor the cultists want the other group using the tunnel to the

troglydite chief's cavern (area 22), which is trapped at both ends. Any creature that enters the southwest end of the passage without disarming the glyph is subject to a wave of necrotic energy (+6 to hit, 8d8 necrotic damage, half damage on a miss). This trap can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check or casts a *detect magic* spell, and can be disarmed by someone who makes a DC 20 Intelligence check. (For details of the trap at the other end, see area 22.)

30. Hall of Artifacts

Dretchroyaster's artifact vault is where the dracolich's larger treasures are stored.

Ancient artifacts line the walls of this expansive treasure chamber, from gilded mirrors to beautiful statues to paintings of kings long forgotten. Fine carpets are spread before shelves piled high with golden chalices, platters, and other finery are strewn across the floor. To the south, a passageway leads to another chamber.

Creatures: Four wraiths held in gold and ivory funeral urns guard this area. They emerge to attack any creature that touches the artifacts.

Acid Trap: The short passage between this area and area 32 features a mechanical trap hidden in the walls. It sprays out corrosive fluid that douses any creature in the passageway, dealing it 3d6 acid damage (DC 15 Dexterity saving throw for half damage). This trap can be detected by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check and can be disarmed by someone who makes a DC 15 Dexterity check.

Treasure: The treasure here is valuable but bulky. Goods removed from the hall of artifacts have a value of 100 gp per pound.

31. Summoning Chamber

This area is one of the primary starting locations for the adventure. A group that starts here appears in the summoning circle, teleported into the lair by Imani's magic.

This summoning chamber allows Dretchroyaster's cultists to call on extraplanar entities for aid and counsel.

A large runic circle sits in the center of this rough-walled cavern. A deep hum reverberates through the rock around you, as if great and unseen forces were pulling on the area.

Creatures: The summoning circle is set to call three vrocks to protect this chamber. When any noncultist enters the area, the vrocks appear on the circle and attack. (If a group starts in this area, the vrocks appear 2 rounds after the characters' arrival.)

Summoning Circle: *Detect magic* or a DC 15 Intelligence check confirms that the runic circle is imbued

with summoning magic. The summoning circle is attuned to cult rituals and cannot be used by the adventurers. An intelligent creature can disable the circle for 1 week with a DC 20 Intelligence check. Failure triggers the circle and summons the vrocks.

32. Dretchroyaster's Treasure Vault

Dretchroyaster's primary treasure vault is protected against intruders by deadly traps.

Vast piles of treasure fill this chamber. Gems and coins spill out of overflowing chests, while racks of armor inlaid with precious metals line the walls. In the center of the western wall, a glowing scimitar rests on a stone shelf.

Glyph Traps: Three magical glyphs are set around the cavern, each triggering a different trap. One glyph triggers at random the first three times any items in this chamber are touched.

All three of these traps can be detected by a single character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence check or casts a *detect magic* spell. Each one can be disarmed individually by a character who makes a DC 15 Intelligence check.

Glyph of Poison: A thick poison gas fills the chamber. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 3d6 poison damage.

Necrotic Glyph: Each creature in the area is subject to a wave of necrotic energy (+6 to hit, 8d8 necrotic damage, half damage on a miss).

Glyph of Lightning: Each creature in the chamber wearing metal armor takes 4d6 lightning damage (DC 15 Dexterity saving throw for half damage).

Acid Trap: See area 30 for information on the trap between that area and this one.

Treasure: Dretchroyaster's treasure vault holds a *cloak of elvenkind*, a *spellguard shield*, a *flame tongue longsword*, and a +1 *scimitar*. The vault also holds coins and gems equal to 3,624 gp, as well as the *Unseen Murderer Bhaalite idol*.

The scimitar has the song craft property, but the property has become corrupted over time. The item normally sings heroic ballads audible to anyone (not just the wielder) whenever it is held. When a character wields this blade in combat and rolls a natural 1, the blade starts to scream the ballads loudly, attracting the attention of enemies in nearby areas.

Unseen Murderer: This idol depicts a robed figure wielding a curved blade smeared with blood. A creature that uses this idol can use *invisibility* once per day as an action. However, if the creature is not evil, then there is a 50 percent chance that the creature becomes visible at an inopportune moment (such as just before an attack or while sneaking past guards).

33. CHAMBER OF THE DIAMOND STAFF

The Chamber of the Diamond Staff is the focus of the dracolich's quest for power—and the site of this adventure's final battle. The heroes receive a final warning from Imani before entering the chamber: Attempting to recover the staff before all the necessary idols are in the possession of the adventuring parties is dangerous.

The polished walls of this chamber rise fifty feet into the air, interrupted only by a broad platform. Sealed ossuary vaults are set into the walls at regular intervals. In the center of the chamber, a six-foot-long crystalline staff hovers in a scintillating sphere of vibrant colors. Beneath the staff, a deep rift is edged by a green crystalline web. Magic circles set with pulsing arcane sigils are positioned around the room, and a dark priest stands atop each one. The cultists are channeling energy from the staff into an enormous rift in the room.

With the aid of the magic circles, the cultists are transferring power from the earth node into the *Diamond Staff* and Dretchroyaster while attempting to unlock the artifact's secrets.

Four Tasks Remain

The final encounter is divided into a set of tasks that characters must perform to claim the *Diamond Staff* of Chomylla. As many as four parties of adventurers descend on the chamber at the same time.

If the event you're taking part in has more than four groups of players, the event coordinator will consolidate players under four DMs. Each of the four DMs runs one of the tasks, as designated by the event coordinator, with DMs from other tables assisting. The event coordinator can allow players to swap places with players at other tables, if some players prefer to perform certain tasks.

If your event has four or fewer groups of players, then each group takes on a particular task, and no consolidation of players is necessary.

- ◆ **Task 1: Disable the wards** must be undertaken, and it is the only task performed if your event has a single group of players for the final encounter.
- ◆ **Task 2: Hold off the dracolich** is undertaken if two or more groups are playing the final encounter.
- ◆ **Task 3: Distract the undead** is undertaken if three or more groups are playing the final encounter.
- ◆ **Task 4: Stop the simulacrum** is undertaken if four groups are playing the final encounter.

When all groups have their tasks, read:

As you prepare your assault to seize the staff, the priests and their acolytes turn to face you, drawing weapons. The sigils on the floor continue to channel energy into the rift, even as the priests turn their attention elsewhere.

If two or more groups are playing, also read:

At the same time, a roar echoes from the chasm. Huge, bony claws rise up from the darkness as Dretchroyaster emerges. The energy from the sigils flows into him, seeming to create a protective barrier.

If three or more groups are playing, also read:

The ossuary panels set into the walls around the chamber begin to crack and fall away. Skeletons and mummified forms crawl out from behind them and move to attack.

If four groups are playing, also read:

Dretchroyaster growls some words of magic, and from behind you comes a second roar as a duplicate of the dracolich appears.

Features of the Area

This adventure includes a tactical map of this encounter area. For simplicity, if you're using a battle grid, don't worry about tracking the locations of characters at other tables or of enemies not involved in the task you're running.

Rift: This chasm channels the power of the earth node beneath this region. A creature that falls into the rift falls 500 feet to the cavern below and likely dies.

Diamond Staff: The staff hangs suspended 10 feet above the rift. It can be claimed by any adventurer who can reach it. A character without flying magic can make an acrobatic leap, use a rope and a grappling hook, or attempt some other action to recover the staff. The DM can determine the appropriate DC based on the action taken.

A character participating in the final encounter can attempt to claim the staff at any time, but at the start of the encounter it is protected by one or more magical wards. Any creature that touches the staff before the wards are disabled takes 8d6 lightning damage from each ward that is currently active, and if still conscious, must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or release the staff.

Platform: This 20-foot-high platform is where Dretchroyaster normally perches to oversee his priests' work.

Necrotic Haze: The passages that connect areas 19 and 28 to this chamber are filled with an opaque field of necrotic energy that prevents viewing of what lies beyond it.

A creature that enters the haze takes 3d6 necrotic damage, and must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. Anyone who

attempts to rescue a paralyzed character risks suffering the same fate unless using an object, such as rope or a 10-foot pole, is used to push or pull the victim out of the haze. A character who takes an action to do so can disable the haze by force of will for 1 minute with a DC 15 Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check.

If a character brings one of the Bhaalite idols within 10 feet of the haze, the barrier fades, and the idol bearer recognizes that it is now safe to pass through. The haze resets 1 minute after the idol is more than 10 feet away.

Task 1: Disable the Wards

In this task, the characters must battle dark priests to gain access to the sigils and stop the flow of energy by using the Bhaalite idols. Although four sigil circles are depicted on the map, the number of active circles is equal to the number of groups participating in the event.

With a successful DC 10 Intelligence check, a character knows how to disable the sigil circles. As an action, a character standing on an active circle (which is not also currently occupied by a dark priest) can trace the rune from the idol onto the circle to disable it.

Disabling all the wards has beneficial consequences for groups undertaking tasks 2 and 4, as well as the heroes' ability to claim the *Diamond Staff*.

Creatures: One **dark priest** for each adventurer involved in this task. At least one priest stands on each glowing sigil.

Development: If only one group is participating in the event, then this task is the only one that must be performed. However, Dretchroyaster is not about to let the heroes claim his treasure so easily. After the wards are disabled, he emerges from the chasm and rolls for initiative.

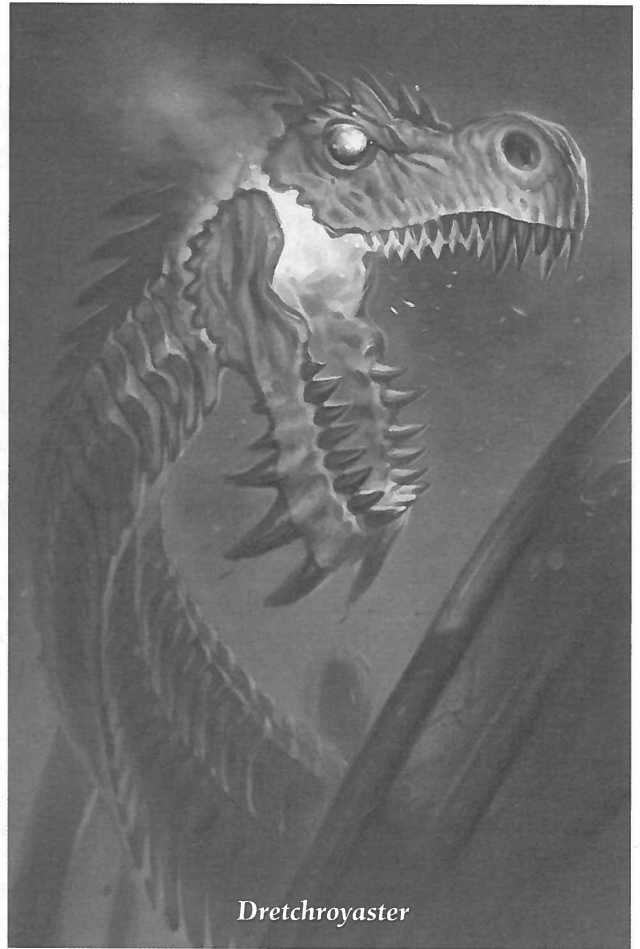
Task 2: Hold Off the Dracolich

Dretchroyaster arrives through the rift in the center of the chamber. He rages for vengeance against those who have defiled his lair and who threaten his power. At the start of the encounter, Dretchroyaster is sheathed in the magical energy of the staff and the earth node below. As such, he has resistance to all damage.

Development: Adventurers must engage the dracolich to keep him away from the adventurers who are focused on disabling the wards that protect the staff.

If the adventurers taking on this task flee or are killed, then Dretchroyaster joins the fight against the heroes who are undertaking task 1.

If the wards are disabled, the energy flowing to Dretchroyaster dissipates and he is no longer has resistance to all damage. Read:



Dretchroyaster

The magical energy coursing through the chamber is fractured in response to the presence of the Bhaalite idols. Dretchroyaster shrieks in rage and pain as the glowing eldritch runes etched into his bones flicker and fade. "Worms! What have you done? You corrupt my power, but that will not save you!"

The dracolich fights on until he drops below one-quarter of his hit points. At that point he attempts to flee into the chasm and to the cavern below.

Task 3: Distract the Undead

Mummies and skeletons emerge from the walls, and if they're not stopped, they'll attack those trying to disable the wards.

Creatures: One **mummy** for every two adventurers involved in this task (round down), and one **skeleton** for each adventurer involved in this task. The creatures emerge in two waves, half in the first round and half at the start of the third round.

If Silakul is still alive, he arrives to fight alongside the undead.

Development: If the adventurers taking on this task flee or are killed, then any remaining mummies and skeletons join the fight against the heroes who are undertaking task 1.

Task 4: Stop the Simulacrum

Dretchroyaster creates one of his simulacra, which adventurers must fight to prevent it from joining the battle and interfering with those who are trying to disable the wards.

Creatures: This duplicate of Dretchroyaster is more durable than those the adventurers previously encountered. It has half of Dretchroyaster's hit points.

Development: If the adventurers taking on this task flee or are killed, then the simulacrum joins the fight against the heroes who are undertaking task 1.

Final Scene: Dretchroyaster Thwarted

When a character claims the *Diamond Staff*, the eldritch energies within the chamber are further disrupted. Dretchroyaster's simulacrum disappears, and the mummies and skeletons collapse. The dark priests and Dretchroyaster fight on, though the dracolich flees if he drops below one-quarter of his hit points.

In the unlikely event that the characters manage to defeat Dretchroyaster, they can take great pride in their accomplishment. They should be reminded, however, that as a dracolich, Dretchroyaster has a hidden phylactery that means he will return at some point.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Depending on how much time remains, the event coordinator can determine whether to play out the adventurers' flight from the lair. This scenario could create a dramatic escape as the dracolich and his minions pursue the characters. Imani waits just outside the lair with a teleportation circle ready to transport the characters back to Hap.

If time is running short, skip ahead and assume the parties are victorious in thwarting Dretchroyaster, removing the *Diamond Staff of Chomylla*, and returning to Imani. The successful heroes are greeted by the wizard in triumph.

"My friends! You have recovered a powerful artifact from the clutches of evil and saved our land from a terrible threat. We must be wary, however. The dracolich and his Cult of the Dragon allies will no doubt attempt to recover the staff and search again for the lost vaults of Uvaeren—and I suspect that other parties will soon seek to recover this artifact once its theft from Dretchroyaster is known."

"Today, however, the victory is ours. The ale is on me!"

Award 500 XP for any players who intend to take their characters into the upcoming D&D Encounters season, *Search for the Diamond Staff*, beginning on June 19. Characters can keep one magic item and an equal share of any wealth they obtained during the adventure.

Thanks to Our Playtesters

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Vault of the Dracolich



Orcs were here. Not anymore, though!



Isteval discovered that black dragons bite hard.

The dragon learned that Isteval bites harder.

Here Be Serpents!

Stone Tells Tales?

Tales of the Drowned?

Jekk almost sank. He was not happy when we laughed.



IMANI

BACKGROUND

Imani is a Turmishan wizard and former adventurer of the Company of the Sunlit Sea. Along with his companions, Isteval, Hadarr, and Jekk, he tried to plunder the Vault of the Dracolich years ago. Imani had a nasty encounter with one of the dungeon's traps, which forced the group to turn back. Now he seeks the aid of heroes to infiltrate Dretchroyaster's lair and recover the Diamond Staff of Chomylla. He lives in a tower outside of Hap in the eastern reaches of Battledale.

ROLEPLAYING

Imani is cordial and wise, and speaks humbly of his days as an adventurer, which led to his facial scar. He opposes evil, and loathes the thought of items of power and knowledge in the hands of monsters.



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SILAKUL



BACKGROUND

Silakul is an ambitious member of the Cult of the Dragon, who aspires to become the wearer of purple in his cult's cell. He was recruited as a youth to the cult and has never known any other life.

He wishes to unlock his dracolich master's true potential and see the influence of the Cult of the Dragon increase throughout the region.

ROLEPLAYING

Silakul has pale gray eyes whose emptiness shows his uncaring fanaticism. He speaks with utter conviction but is a coward at heart. He is brutal and pitiless when dealing with enemies of the Cult of the Dragon.



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STRYKE



BACKGROUND

Stryke is a male drow of House Jaezred, a secret patriarchy of dragonblooded assassins opposed to the rule of Lolth and her priestesses. Stryke is one of several members of House Jaezred, along with his unit leader, Valan, who traveled to the Dalelands to recover items of arcane power.

ROLEPLAYING

Stryke is quick to take action and tries to be agreeable. However, he acts resentful toward females, regardless of whether they're drow. He is pragmatic and conceals his affiliation with House Jaezred unless he comes to closely trust an ally. He speaks in a whisper, owing to months of imprisonment with scant to eat or drink.



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GULDRED



BACKGROUND

Exiled from the rest of his tribe a couple years ago, Guldred has taken to living a solitary life on the east bank of an underground lake. He is small for a lizardfolk male—only four feet high—and thin with gangly arms.

ROLEPLAYING

Guldred is cautious of adventurers, but he will quickly ally with anyone who shows strength and claims to oppose his enemies. He knows the area around his home well, and he has information useful to a group willing to do him a favor. Guldred speaks of himself in the third person, and is meek when addressing those stronger than him.



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IRONBARK

BACKGROUND

An ancient and once-powerful treant, Ironbark has become a shadow of his former self as a prisoner of a dracolich. Ironbark and two of his brothers were captured by the dracolich twenty years ago, and now only Ironbark survives. He once wandered the forests of Cormanthor and was a friend to travelers, though now he has all but lost his will to live.

ROLEPLAYING

Ironbark is cautious and suffers from bouts of insanity owing to his years of imprisonment and torture. He is prone to misinterpreting what others say as cruelty, and periodically talks to himself.

His trust can be earned through care and kindness, though.



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DRETCHROYASTER

BACKGROUND

Dretchroyaster was a powerful and venerable green dragon even before his undead transformation. Death has only increased his might. Dretchroyaster sees himself as greater than a dragon—even greater than a dracolich. He believes that he was meant to soar across the Astral Plane, traversing the domains of the gods and exploring well beyond the boundaries of the mortal world.

ROLEPLAYING

When he speaks, his voice is raspy yet booming, like stone scratching against glass. He is condescending and talks to all creatures as though they were far beneath him. Nonetheless, Dretchroyaster is cautious and fearful of being destroyed—a fact he attempts to hide.



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Vault of the Dracolich™

Orcs were here. Not anymore, though!



Creatures of the Caves

Chief

The Rangers's Arrow?

Camps

Guards

Hidden Wj

Vaults! (Danger!)

Guardians

Guards

Guarded Halls!

Listen...

Cavern Halls

Potions

Yats = Dark Essence

Dark Altar

Wait and watch...

Earth & Sea

Imani found a trap!
Had to turn back.
Wimpy wizards.

Treasure!
(Dragon's Lair?)

Gate?

Prisoners

Gate?

Hang on!

Cloaked One?

??

Treasures of the Drowned?

Here Be Serpents!

Treasures of the Drowned?

Isteval discovered that
black dragons bite hard.

The dragon
learned
that Isteval
bites harder.

Stone
Tells
Tales?

Gate?

Jekk almost sank
He was not happy when we laughed.



Map penned by Hadarr of Calinshan, member of the Company of the Sunlit Sea, DR 1478

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17
Pit of Teeth

20
Elven Vessel

21
Lost Forest

22
Chief's Cavern

18
Lower Lake

19
The Rift

29
Chamber
of Guardians

28
Hall of
Trophies

33
Chamber
of the
Diamond Staff
of Chomylla

23
Lower
Village

16
Pillar of Sun

27
Scrying Room

30
Hall of
Artifacts

15
Hydra's Den

9
Dretchroyaster's
Audience Chamber

26
Alchemical Lab

32
Dretchroyaster's
Treasure Vault

24
Upper
Village

14
Pool of Serpents

31
Summoning
Chamber

8
Room of
Preparation

7
Altar to
Bhaal

25
Guard Huts

13
Upper Lake

4
Dormitory

6
Vestry

10
Chamber
of Screams

2
Audience
Hall

5
Guard Hall

12
Waterfall
Entrance

3
Kitchen

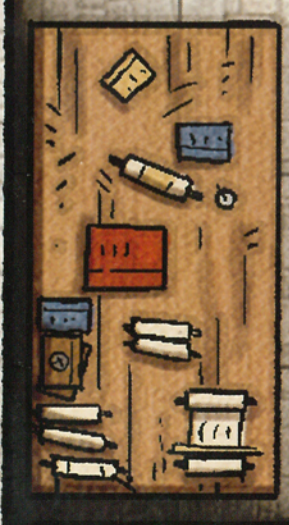
11
Red Cells

1
Bhaal
Temple
Entryway



VAULT OF THE DRACOLICH

One Square = 5 feet





DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

TREASURE AND GLORY AWAIT

Deep in the forest of Cormanthor lies the hoard of the dracolich Dretchroyaster, the prize of which is a diamond staff rumored to unlock the secrets of an ancient elven kingdom. The sage Imani is seeking dozens of adventurers to launch an all-out assault on the undead dragon's lair. The dracolich is a powerful foe—too great for even several parties to conquer—so it's going to take all of the heroes' courage, cunning, and speed to survive the dracolich's deadly vault.

Vault of the Dracolich™ is a **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Roleplaying Game** adventure designed for the June 2013 D&D® Game Day. The challenge draws inspiration from the interactive format used at some gaming conventions. As part of this experience, players and DMs have the opportunity to communicate with other game tables, while the event coordinator takes on the role of the dracolich to menace each group. The adventure includes one full-color, double-sided battle map.

**For D&D Game Day event rules,
visit the official website:**

DUNGEONSANDDRAGONS.COM

