CORE1-15

Where Dragons Die

A Dungeons & Dragons® *Living Forgotten Realms* Adventure

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Netheril's influence is expanding alarmingly and the Silverstars of Selûne are becoming desperate. The task of recovering a weapon suitable for battling this expansion has fallen to you and your only clues take you to a place where mortals dare not tread. A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set near Netheril for characters levels 11-14. Third part of the *Bane of Shadows* trilogy.

Based on the original Dungeons & Dragons® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new Dungeons & Dragons game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First, it is an official game, tracked under your play history. Second, DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DM Rewards program. DMing this adventure is worth one (1) point.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31 2012.

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Preparing for Play

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

Reading Monster Stat Blocks

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

Important DM Information

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms*

adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 – 4 hours; try to be very aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

Appropriate Character Levels

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 11 - 14. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

Each adventure has a low-level version and a high-level version. The low level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the lower levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the higher levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group agrees to do so; however, some of the rewards may not be available to them. Conversely, a group may decide to play the low level when their levels are more suited to the high level if everyone in the group agrees; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

Reading the Numbers: Each encounter has a level and sometimes other values (such as XP or skill check DCs) listed with two numbers divided by a slash. The number before the slash is always the value for the low-level version of the adventure; the number after the slash is the value for the high-level version of the adventure.

Failing to Defeat an Encounter

If a group fails to defeat an encounter – that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success – they are only awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

Character Death

If a PC dies during the course of the adventure, the player of that character and the rest of the group have two options, provided that they have access to the Raise Dead ritual (either a PC has it and can use it or the characters return to civilization), they have access to the body, and it is possible to return the dead PC to life.

- **Pay the component cost for the ritual.** If the group chooses this option, the cost should be divided evenly among the group (500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). Using a source outside the group to cast the ritual costs 20% more than the component cost. Total cost when using an outside source is 600 gp for heroic tier, 6,000 gp for paragon tier, and 60,000 gp for epic tier. A PC that dies and chooses this method of return gains full (or half, if the party was defeated) experience points from the encounter in which the character died, but no experience points for any encounters that were missed while the character was dead. If there are encounters remaining, the PC continues to earn experience as normal, and receives a normal cut of the rewards at the end of the adventure.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group cannot afford to pay for the ritual (or doesn't desire to do so), the PC can choose to return to life at the end of the adventure. Doing so forfeits all rewards (including treasure and story rewards) earned for the adventure except experience points gained prior to the character's death (the character receives the experience point award for the encounter in which they died). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

Milestones

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. **Encounters that do not give out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone.** Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

Lasting Effects

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't easily resolved before the end of the adventure. The two most common lasting effects are the death penalty and diseases.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life by the Raise Dead ritual, that character suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until they have reached three milestones. The player should simply record the adventure where the character died on their adventure log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, they no longer suffer the penalty.

Diseases: Diseases take hold of a character and last until they are cured or they reach their final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of the adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cure or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may decide to aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

Other Lasting Effects: Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Any effects that last for a specific period of time (that end after a certain number of days or a certain number of extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified). Effects that use some sort of adventuring benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's logsheet and tracked across adventures.

Adventure Background

CORE1-15 Where Dragons Die represents the culmination of Dernan Moonbrow's quest for the *Last Grasp of Shadowbane*. Dernan is a silverstar (priest) of Selûne (goddess of the moon) who has been on a quest to find a legendary weapon capable of destroying the servants of Shar (goddess of darkness). He is particularly concerned about the shades of Netheril, mostly humans who merged their bodies with the shadows of Shadowfell acquiring power in the process.

In *CORE1-10 Dancing Shadows* Dernan sought clues for the whereabouts of the weapon from the oracle of Spellgard. The party aided Dernan directly helping him escape the predations of the young black dragon Terror who was working for a Netherese agent. *CORE1-12 Songs of the Heart* brought party members again into contact with Dernan as he attempted to inquire of a local bard in Evereska who claimed to have infiltrated the location of the artifact only to be turned back by its denizens. Again Dernan owed a debt to the party as they saved the bard and Dernan's source of information regarding entry into the Well of Dragons.

The Well of Dragons once was the last resting place of all dragons, but now it is the primary strongholds of the Cult of the Dragon. The Cult of the Dragon is devoted to concept that dragons are meant to rule the world eternally and they take any actions to ensure this future. The Well contains many ancient treasures, but they are well guarded by several powerful black dragons and dracoliches.

Dernan is finally prepared to acquire the relic, but circumstances beyond his control are requiring him to rely on other agents to accomplish his mission. To make matters worse, he learned that the Netherese have learned of the weapon and its location. If Dernan does not hurry, it is likely the weapon falls in the hands of his enemies. Still, he has some time since the Cult of the Dragon does not part lightly with even the most worthless of objects in their hoard. At the moment the Netherese are camped outside the Well, still negotiating the terms for the delivery of the weapon.

A desperate Dernan, knows the relic he seeks is in danger of falling into the hands of the very enemy he intends to use it against. He called upon the Oracles of the Moon, seers for Selûne, to advise him on how he might acquire his prize. The Oracles examined the night sky and discovered that a time was soon approaching during which the strength of the Cult of the Dragon would be at its weakest especially around

the Well of Dragons. This event is actually the convergence of several fortuitous events that allow the party access to the otherwise impenetrable and lethal fortress in the mountain. Dernan, knowing that he had no chance to get away from his Netherese enemies, sent encrypted maps to a group of people who had helped him in the past and some that he knew by reputation only.

Now all he can do is hope they bite and get the weapon for him...

DM's Introduction

This adventure utilizes story awards **ADAP04** from *ADAP1-4 Scepter Tower of Spellgard*, **CORE02** from *CORE1-1 Inheritance*, **CORE19** from *CORE1-10*, **CORE15** from *CORE1-8 Taken*, **CORE23** and **CORE24** from *CORE1-12*. Check whether any of the PCs has any of these (or similar) story awards before running the adventure.

PCs who have earned CORE19 and/or CORE24 are on the Bane against Shadows major quest, which is also important at the Conclusion. CORE02 and ADAP04 can be a boon when dealing with the Netherese in Encounter 2. CORE15 and CORE23 poses a hindrance in Encounter 2 since it means the PC is well known by the Netherese. You can give PCs the same benefits or penalties if they have similarly worded story awards from other adventures.

The adventure starts with the characters somewhere in the Realms resting in between two adventures. A magical letter is delivered that asks them to travel to the Well of Dragons to meet Tairen, a halfing were-rat in the service of Dernan and Selûne and to retrieve a weapon from the Well. Assuming the PCs choose to accept the summons, the party journeys to the Well of Dragons. Tairen meets them there and he briefs the PCs on what is going on.

After the briefing the PCs must find a way to infiltrate the Well itself. The Netheril camp and their negotiators offer a great opportunity for doing so. Once inside the Well, the PCs need to travel to the vaults, deal with its guardians and then flee before the defenders overwhelm them. Luckily Tairen tells the PCs about a secret exit, but even this path is not save. Its entrance is guarded by a couple of volcanic dragons, and it is a virtual maze inhabited by a purple dragon on the lookout for prey and loot. Once those are dealt with the PCs get out of the Well, hopefully with the *Last Grasp*. Here a Netheril agent tries the PCs to switch sides, fleeing if confronted with any violence, allowing the PCs to travel to safety and give the Last Grasp to the church of Selûne and finish a quest begun at *CORE1-10*.

Player's Introduction

The adventure starts some time after the last adventure the PC was involved in, where the PC is and whether the PCs are all together is up to the individual players. Note that if they are not together they meet either on the road or at the Well of Dragons.

Regardless the following happens when the PC wakes up while at an inn - if the PC prefers the wilderness adjust the text accordingly. If you have the time, feel free to run it as a full encounter, otherwise summarize it, assuming the PC touches the paper and accepts the mission.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

It has been days since your last adventure. You are as well rested as you could hope to be, when one morning you notice a strange sealed letter addressed to you personally that has been left inside your room. The seal shows two female eyes surrounded by seven stars, the symbol of Selûne, goddess of the Moon.

The handwriting on the envelope is somewhat difficult to decipher and it has been written in haste, likely by a man. The paper is of a good quality. A DC 23 Arcana check senses faint magic on the letter (and NOT the seal) that is the result of some kind of ritual. The magic is not powerful enough to involve some kind of attack, but without seeing the effects it is impossible to determine what kind of ritual has been used. PCs who destroy the letter or the magic, find a new one the next morning, but after that it stops. If anybody besides the addressed PC opens it, they just see a blank page, if the PC does so, read or paraphrase the following:

Upon opening it you suddenly find yourself standing on a grassy plain under the light of the full moon. A man dressed in the robes of a cleric of Selûne stands right next to you, staring at the moon. Before you can react, he addresses you.

"Please," he pleads with a desperate voice, "travel to the Well of Dragons and be there on the morning before the next full moon. Meet my servant, Tairen, there for additional details. You need to retrieve a weapon against Netheril before it is too late. You will be rewarded."

At that, the image fades away and you are left with a white tear shaped pearl in your palm and a

map of what appears to be the border region south of Netheril with the Well of Dragons clearly marked.

Players who have played *CORE1-10* or *CORE1-12* recognize the man in the vision as Dernan. The stone they have received is a symbol of his willingness to pay them and is worth 100 gp. A DC 23 Arcana check realizes that it was likely a modified version of the Sending ritual. Taking the date into account the PCs need to travel to the Well immediately.

A DC 20 History check reveals the following information on the Well of Dragons:

- The Well of Dragons is an ancient dragon graveyard.
- Against tremendous resistance the Cult of the Dragon managed to free an ancient guardian and build a fortress on the site.
- A powerful death knight and a lich oversee the operations of the Cult within the mountain.

Little more can be learned at this point, although any silverstar of Selûne verifies the importance of the message. Proceed with Encounter 1 if the PCs accept, otherwise the adventure is over.

Treasure

The tear shaped pearl that each character earned is worth 100 gp.

Encounter 1: The Tormented Servant

Setup

Tairen, male nervous wrack halfling wererat.

After following the cryptic maps that were handed to the adventurers in the weeks prior, they arrive at a small copse of trees amidst a vast rocky field. The Well of Dragons towers in the distance. A giant rat hobbling as if injured approaches them.

You have arrived at small grove amidst a vast rocky field. In the distance stands the imposing Well of Dragons - its volcanic shape a distinct silhouette against the skyline. The landscape around the mountain for miles is barren.

A disturbance in the shrubs nearby draws your attention. Limping out, a goblin-sized rat approaches and pauses. In rather uncharacteristic movements, the rat lifts its limping claw to reveal a symbol of Selûne.

Allow the PCs a few moments to react before proceeding.

In the blink of an eye the rat's skin tears away and the sounds of snapping bone can be heard over an awful hissing noise emanating from the rats mouth. The hissing rises in pitch until it resembles the scream of a young child. Where the rat was, a halfling now crouches attempting to catch his breath. Upon succeeding the halfing speaks urgently, "What has brought you here?"

Tairen's demeanor is that of an individual on the brink of insanity. This is the furthest and longest journey he has taken from his master. When answering questions he often becomes distract by his baser needs. He is twitchy and may jump at sudden movements. If too many questions are asked at once, he may recite a butchered prayer to Selûne.

Assuming the PCs haven't resorted to violence, Tairen speaks plainly about his needs. He remains reserved with any PCs who have not received story awards CORE19 or CORE24. Once satisfied that they are trustworthy, Tairen shares the following:

- Tairen is a wererat. He is attempting to rid himself of the curse by devoting himself to Selûne.
- Dernan would have come himself to greet the party, but Netherese agents are dogging his steps.
- The party has been summoned here because the Oracles of the Moon have determined that a convergence of events is taking place in the next twenty-four hours that represents the best chance to acquire the relic that Dernan seeks.
- Little is known about the relic other than it is a great weapon against shadow that has remained dormant for many years. It is believed to be a sword of phenomenal power. It has been in the care of the Cult of Dragons for some time inside the Well of Dragons.
- Tairen intended to find the hidden entrance mentioned in *CORE1-12*, but had no luck. The hidden entrance supposedly dumped into the central chamber of the mountain. It is likely to be the easiest way out once the PCs are in and have gained the blade.
- He has no idea of how to enter through a direct route, but does make mention of a very large Netherese encampment several miles from the mountain.
- Netherese patrol the ground around the camp while dragons patrol the sky frequently.
- In addition to the normal scouting patrols Tairen has noticed that the encampment sends daily couriers to the mountain presumably to barter for the relic.
- If asked he suggests that the party attempt to infiltrate the encampment to find a way in. They may have more information about penetrating the mountain.
- He believes the whole mission to be suicide.
- Tairen has a crude map of the tunnels once inside the mountain leading to the Chamber of Ascension. This map can be used to find the way out once the party finds the tunnel.

Ending the Encounter

Once the PCs accept Tairen's mission, he wishes them well and gives them a single *hat of disguise*. He offers them Selûne's blessing as they leave, but doesn't follow them.

Treasure

Tairen gives them a *hat of disguise* should the party accept the mission.

Encounter 2: Choices

Skill Challenge Level 11/13, Complexity 2 (1200/1600 XP)

Setup

Goal: The party must find a way to infiltrate the camp of the Netherese to acquire the necessary information to pose as Netherese envoys and safely enter the Well of Dragons, all on time for whatever event the Oracles of the Moon predicted.
Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)
Primary Skills: <varies per scene>
Other Skills: <varies per scene>
Victory: The party gains the necessary information, potentially shifting blame of their theft onto the Netherese, and able to enter the Well without triggering an alarm.
Defeat: The party gains entrance to the Well, but lacking important information and leaving doubt in the minds of the cultists about who they represent, the party only receives half experience. In addition the cultists rearrange the guardians of the vaults to increase the protection of the Bane of Shadows (see Encounter 3).

This skill challenge has been broken up into four sections. Scene 1 and Scene 4 are optional. If the players don't believe Tairen, Scene 1 affords them the opportunity to take a look for themselves. It gives them additional information about the area as well. Scene 2 is the infiltration of the Netherese camp. Scene 3 allows the party to search the encampment for details on the Well of Dragons as well as a way into the Well. Scene 4 allows the party to create a rift between the Netherese and the Cult of the Dragon by convincing the Cult that they are truly part of the Netherese. This has a greater impact once the party has stolen from the Cult.

The typical Netherese soldier dresses in a black uniform with rank and unit designations in purple. The symbol of Shar adorns their shields. The priests of Shar are often found in dark purple robes bearing the black circle of Shar and traveling in small groups throughout the camp. The priests appear to be only of human or shadar-kai origin. Laborers and servants wear light grey woolen garments.

Any PC who has received story awards **CORE15**, **CORE23** and/or similarly worded story awards receives a -5 penalty to all checks in Scene 2 and Scene 3 unless they succeed in a DC 16/17 Bluff check (properly disguised; does not generate a success or failure). Also PCs may use story awards **ADAP04** (utilizing a spy of the Harpers amongst the Netherese), **CORE02** (showing the coin to the Netherese) or similarly worded awards to remove a failed check. Viable uses of rituals count as automatic successes for the challenge.

Upon leaving the shade of the copse, you are faced with finding the way into the mountain. Perhaps the wererat's suggestion to infiltrate the Netherese encampment is correct or perhaps there is a better way. There are small scouting patrols venturing out from the encampment, but with night coming on perhaps a more direct infiltration is an option.

A DC 15 History check reminds the PC that the Netherese have a fairly strong dislike of the lesser races. Consisting primarily of human and shadar-kai, they have a particular distrust for dwarves and elves. Netherese worship Shar and as such the priests of Shar appear wherever the Netherese go.

The encampment, some 500 strong, has been setup for several weeks. Daily envoys are sent by the camp into the mountain to negotiate for the artifact. Additionally scouting parties are sent out at regular intervals. Initially the mountain, roughly three miles away, was imposing to the infantry. But the initial excitement has worn off and the troops are becoming complacent. Were it not for the Shadovar inside the camp all sense of order would be lost. The skill level of the average force is no match for the party, but should the whole camp become alerted the party's chance for success is lost.

Note that the information as presented is somewhat bare bone. Feel free to add the necessary details, such as for example the personalities of the Netherese soldiers the PCs interact with.

Scene 1: Scouting

Primary Skills: Perception, Stealth
Secondary Skills: Arcana, Insight, Nature
Required successes: 0

This scene is designed to be informative for the players, especially if they are having trouble figuring out where to start. No successes can be earned during this scene. It is optional and should be summarized and skipped if you are playing under a time constraint.

Arcana DC 25 (0 success, 0 maximum)

The PC detects magical wardings placed around the mountain. In finding them the character determines that their placement appears to be fixed and not being used to cover any entrances.

Insight DC 17/18 (0 success, 0 maximum)

In watching the Netherese patrols, the PC discovers their loyalty borders on fanaticism. While they do appear bored they aren't susceptible to bribes and their actions are those of a well-trained military. Additionally you have estimated the numbers of the camp to be approximately 500 strong.

Failure leads the character to believe that bribery could be an option.

Nature DC 17/18 (0 success, 0 maximum)

The PC realizes that the land around the mountain for many miles appears as though it has been intentionally cleared of cover. This makes scouting the area difficult with constant dragons patrolling overhead.

Failure means the land in this region appears normal for what is expected in a wasteland.

Perception DC 17/18 (0 success, 0 maximum)

There appear to be no visible entrances save the main gates. Dragons from the mountain are patrolling the skies while the Netherese encampment patrols the ground. Groups of uniformed individuals are seen visiting the mountain from the encampment as well.

Failure means that while they do learn the above, they nearly exhaust the party dodging patrols.

Scene 2: Getting into the Camp

This is a required scene. Once the party has attained two successes they gain entry into the Netherese encampment and progress to Scene 3. There are two primary ways to gain entrance although the players can always come up with their own alternative.

Option A: Stealth into the Camp

Primary Skills: Stealth
Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff, Streetwise (note that the bonuses these skills provide do not stack)
Required successes: 2

Acrobatics DC 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The character contorts into a small space that guards would normally overlook and grant a +2 bonus to your Stealth check during this scene.

Failure means the PC doesn't move gracefully enough and have knocked over something arousing the guards' suspicions, giving the PC a -2 penalty on the next Stealth check.

Athletics DC 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The PC moves quickly enough to avoid the guard's notice granting a +2 bonus to the character's Stealth check during this scene.

Failure means the guard catches a glimpse of movement in the corner of his eye and moves to investigate, giving the PC a -2 penalty on the next Stealth check.

Bluff DC 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The PC creates an effective diversion attracting the guards away from your intended entry point. This grants a +2 bonus to all Stealth checks during this scene.

Failure means their diversion went overboard and brought additional guards into the area. This grants a -2 penalty to all Stealth checks during this scene.

Stealth DC 17/18 (2 successes, 2 maximum)

Once the party has prepared, all party members are required to make this check. So long as half or more of the party make the check, their entry goes unnoticed and this counts as two successes.

Failure means they gain entry but have put the camp on high alert by doing so.

Streetwise DC 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The PC studies the guard patrol patterns and determines the timing for greatest success. This grants a +2 bonus to all Stealth checks during this scene.

Failure means the characters have misjudged the pattern and are not attempting the penetration of the camp at an ideal moment. This grants a -2 penalty to all Stealth checks during this scene.

Option B: Bluff into the Camp

Primary Skills: Bluff, Insight, Intimidate
Secondary Skills: History, Religion, Streetwise
Required successes: 2

This option is based on the intent of the party to gain entry by impersonating a scouting patrol. It has two parts. First the party must capture and existing Netherese patrol and then the party must talk its way into the camp.

First give each party member the option to use any reasonable skill for assaulting a scouting party. The DC for all checks made to accomplish this is

17/18. If half or more of the party succeeds they obtain scouting uniforms.

Failure means that they barely captured the scouts and each party member lost a healing surge. Also the uniforms are tattered enough now to arouse suspicion giving a -2 penalty on rolls dealing with the camp guards.

Second the party needs to talk their way through the gate. During this part each party member must make at least one of the primary skill checks. Success is achieved so long as half or more of the party succeeds. This counts as two successes.

Failure means that the party gains entry but has aroused suspicions and may be followed as they proceed through the camp granting a -2 penalty to all checks during Scene 3.

Bluff DC 17/18 (Up to 2 successes, no maximum)

This is one of the primary skills and contributes to the overall success of the scene if succeeded.

With success the guard believes that the PCs belong in the camp, otherwise he gives them a hard time before allowing the PCs to pass.

History DC 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The PC remembers obscure cultural habits of the Netherese and can now act as though they belong among the Netherese granting a +2 bonus to all Bluff and Intimidate checks during this scene.

Failure means the character neglects some minor nuances of Netherese society granting a -2 penalty to all Bluff and Intimidate checks during this scene.

Insight DC 17/18 (Up to 2 successes, no maximum)

This is one of the primary skills and contributes to the overall success of the scene. With success the PC responds to the guards' reactions correctly and gains entry to the camp, otherwise he makes notes in a small book about them before letting the PCs pass.

Intimidate DC 17/18 (Up to 2 successes, no maximum)

This is one of the primary skills and contributes to the overall success of the scene. With success the characters convince the guards that they are their superiors and gain entry, otherwise the guards become suspicious alerting their direct superiors later about the meeting.

Religion DC 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The PC recalls certain symbolic pieces of uniform that indicates a soldier as a greater devotee of Shar. Wearing such a symbol causes the guards at the gate to give the characters less hassle. This grants them a +2 bonus to a primary skill check during this scene.

Failure results in a -2 penalty as there is something obviously wrong with the uniforms.

Streetwise DC 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The character recognizes the language that makes the guards the most comfortable and is able to converse with them smoothly granting him a +2 bonus to a primary skill check during this scene.

Failure means the character comes off awkward to the guards and their harassment causes the PCs to have a -2 penalty to a primary skill check during this scene.

Scene 3: Gathering Information

Primary Skills: Bluff, History, Perception, Streetwise
Secondary Skills: Religion, Stealth, Thievery
Required successes: 4

This scene is the primary scene for gathering information to enter the Well of Dragons. Through the scene the party should gather details about and uniforms for the envoys and details about the mountain itself.

Bluff DC 17/18 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PCs convince some soldiers who have been on previous treks inside the mountain to share details of their experience with them. This gives the characters a valuable layout of the interior as well as the knowledge that the envoys typically visit in the morning.

Failure means the soldiers realize their motives are not clear and clam up.

History DC 17/18 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC's previous studies remind the character that the Netherese military are very precise and always use the same layout for their camps. This knowledge allows the PCs to move through the camp with purpose.

Failure means the character's memories were wrong and after a bit of wandering the PCs appear lost and attract unwanted attention.

Perception DC 17/18 (0 success, 2 maximum)

You discover the tent to the officer leading the envoys into the mountain. Inside the officer appears to have fallen asleep on his desk covering some of the notes regarding the Well of Dragons. His hand clings to an unlabeled bottle. This unlocks the use of the Thievery skills.

Another Perception check locates the robes used by the envoys as they have been hung on lines to air out near their tents. This unlocks the use of the Stealth skill.

Failure means the PCs find the tent and/or the robes, but in doing so they are witnessed and attract unwanted attention granting a -2 penalty on Stealth and Thievery checks (which can be offset by a successful Bluff check).

Religion DC 17/18 (0 success, 0 maximum)

The PCs realize that the priests of Shar are given less scrutiny about the camp due to their divine connections. Dressing as such allows the PCs more freedom to move about and leave the camp.

Failure means the PCs notice the favored status of the priests, but are unable to effectively utilize it.

Stealth DC 17/18 (1 success, 1 maximum)

A successful Perception check must be made in order for this skill to be accessed.

The PCs manage to steal appropriate robes for the envoys.

Failure means the robes grabbed are not quite right and may not pass closer inspection. In addition, servants spot them. Unless the PCs convince them otherwise either through lies (Bluff), bribes (Diplomacy) or threats (Intimidate) they shortly afterward warn their superiors of the theft.

Streetwise DC 17/18 (1 success, 1 maximum)

As the PC passes through the camp you pick up many details about both the mountain and the treks to it.

Failure means the character doesn't get a clear picture about what is happening inside the mountain.

Thievery 17/18 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC manages to pilfer the maps of the Well and notes regarding the envoy missions from underneath the officer.

Failure means that while the character snags the paperwork, the officer wakes and he backhands the character before collapse back into his drunken slumber. The PC looses one healing surge.

Once the PCs have completed Scene 3, it is early morning and time to approach the mountains.

Scene 4: Entering the Well

Primary Skills: Bluff
Secondary Skills: History, Insight, Religion
Required successes: 0

This scene is for gaining entry into the Well of Dragons and if the party chooses to do so, implicating the Netherese in the theft. If you are playing under a time constraint this section can be summarized and skipped.

As the earliest rays of dawn stretch across the sky, you have begun the short trek to the Well of Dragons. High overhead you see the unmistakable silhouette of a dragon circling through the air towards the mountain. This brings your attention to the entrance in front of you. The imposing double-door would be suitable for even the largest of beasts, standing a full 50 feet high and 30 feet wide. Upon the battlements of this fortress carved into the mountain rest enormous ballistae. It is apparent from the scarring on the stone that this fortification is not just for show. As you approach the gate a smaller pair of doors yawns open and two human guards step out into the first rays of sunlight. They offer you greetings and request an explanation of your purpose here.

The skill portion of this scene is primarily for convincing the Cult that the party members are indeed Netherese. If successful the party drives a significant wedge between the two factions. If the challenge is failed, the Cult has enough doubt in the party that the Netherese can salvage the relationship between the two. The Cult was not expecting an envoy today as their leadership has traveled to a ceremony at the Cult's base of operations.

At this point the gate guards verify the group and their intentions.

Bluff DC 17/18 (0 success, 0 maximum)

Each party member must make a Bluff check. So long as half or better of the party succeed then the scene is a success.

Failure means the Cult guard believes something is odd about the PCs.

History DC 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The PC recalls proper customs regarding Netherese interactions with other groups. This knowledge helps to appear more Netherese to outsiders. This grants an additional +2 to Bluff checks during this scene. People from Netheril automatically succeed at this check.

If failed, the character incorrectly interprets the customs leading to appear less Netherese. This grants a -2 to Bluff checks during this scene.

Insight 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The character realizes that the Cult guard has little desire to deal with condescending Netherese personnel. By keeping the answers curt the PCs gain more credibility with the guard. This results in a +2 bonus to Bluff checks for this scene.

In failing the PCs believe the guard wants to hear polite explanations and he sees this behavior as odd for a Netherese. This results in a -2 penalty to Bluff checks for this scene.

Religion 17/18 (0 success, 1 maximum)

The character remembers that the Cult desires to rule the world. As such the characters can pick a bit of an argument with the guards that the Empire of Netheril is truly destined to rule the world. This results in a +2 bonus to Bluff checks for this scene.

Failure results in the PCs misinterpreting the precepts of the Cult. The guard finds them amusing and unknowledgeable, which is not very becoming of Netherese agents. This results in a -2 penalty to Bluff checks for this scene.

Ending the Encounter

As the morning progresses on they are allowed entry into the fortress of the Cult,

The guard treats the party respectfully if they succeeded in encounter 2 and briskly if they failed as the party has somehow insulted him. Regardless of his attitude, so long as the party is not belligerent he leads them inside the courtyard to a waiting room.

The guards motions for you to follow him through the gate. As you pass into the courtyard you notice a pair of large dragons sitting still as death on either side of the gate. Their scales faded to the point where you can barely identify their color. Additionally a large red dragon lays perched atop the Western wall. It watches your approach as you pass through the courtyard. The guard leads you to the interior courtyard doors. As he opens them, he comments "I am not sure why you are here; both the Lord and the Master of Ceremonies have left for the next several days as we informed your military commanders yesterday. In any case, I shall find someone to speak with you."

As he turns to head through the gate a massive blast impacts the wall above the interior gate and the guard is pulverized under a cascade of stone. An alarm sounds and the cry rises from the Eastern wall.

"Enemy dragons approaching!"

In seconds the chaos in the courtyard below is replaced by a trained response. The ballistae start tracking targets as several dragons lift off from the courtyard to meet the aggressors. All attention is away from you. This distraction may not last for long.

Now is the time for the PCs to act. The Netherese map is accurate enough and leads them to the Chamber of Souls where their prize can be found. Once the PCs rush into the Well, proceed with Encounter 3.

Success: The party has smoothly penetrated the fortress of the Cult. If they were successful in Scene 4 the Cult unquestionable believes that they are indeed agents of Netheril.

Failure: Rushed and beset by failure the party penetrates the fortress. The Cult is not sure if they are legitimate or what their real purpose is. In addition, the cultists rearrange the guardians of the vaults to increase the protection of the Bane of Shadows (see Encounter 3).

Experience Points

Each PC receives 240/320 experience points each. Failing the skill challenge the PCs receive half the experience for the encounter (which is partially compensated by the increased difficulty in Encounter 3).

Encounter 3: Chamber of Souls

Encounter Level 10/13 (2800/4000 XP)

Setup

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:
2 marrowshriek skeletons (level 9) (S)*
2 blaspheme disciples (level 10) (D)
1 cadaver golem (level 10) (G)
*If Encounter 2 was failed add an additional marrowshriek skeleton. This adds an additional 400 xp to this encounter.

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:
2 marrowshriek skeletons (level 11) (S)*
2 blaspheme disciples (level 12) (D)
1 cadaver golem (G)
*If Encounter 2 was failed add an additional marrowshriek skeleton. This adds an additional 700 xp to this encounter.

Following the Netherese map the party is able to make their way to the Chamber of Souls. The halls leading to the chamber are for the most part empty. The occasional sounds of running can be heard, but no one is encountered.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

Making your way from the courtyard, you follow the Netherese map deeper into the fortress. By your estimation the chamber containing your prize must be at the back of the fortress. Save but for the echoes of running footsteps, you don't encounter a soul. Finally shaped stone gives ways to a natural chamber with an opulent structure at its center that reminds you of a mausoleum. Sculptures of draconic skulls, carved from exotic materials, adorn the exterior surfaces. This appears to be the resting place of the relic you seek. The only thing barring your way is a single ten foot wide door made of solid marble. Beyond the decorated mausoleum a large tunnel leads further into the mountain.

If the player's were successful at the skill challenge in Encounter 2, they did not raise the suspicions of the Cult when they entered and have a surprise round if they can open the chamber door quickly or quietly. If the party's actions take more than one round, they alert the guards within.

If they failed at the earlier skill challenge, an internal alarm has gone off. In that case the guards inside the Chamber are on alert.

The chamber door can be opened by a DC 30 Thievery check, a DC 25 Strength check, or by battering the door down. The statistics for the large stone door are AC/Reflex: 4, Fortitude 12, hp: 120.

Inside the room they spot the blaspheme, human sized humanoid undead crafted from various body parts stitched together, and a similar large sized creature. The two blaspheme wear purple vestments and the symbols of the Cult of the Dragon. The marrowshriek skeletons are invisible at first, but they look like shriveled up corpses with the yellowed parchment like-skin showing all bones.

Features of the Area

This area has a few important features.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 15 feet high.

Illumination: This area is pitch black except for faint glowing from some vials and the barriers.

Shelves: The shelves contain numerous unlabeled caustic-looking vials. If they are subject to a blast effect, each square of that shelf explodes in a close burst 1 creating a cloud of fuming madness that lasts for one round. The blaspheme disciples are aware of this and avoid hitting the shelves with a blast effect as their master wouldn't appreciate destroyed treasures.

Barriers: The barriers each cover a different chamber with treasures. Standing adjacent to them has no effect. If pushed into the wall a creature takes 2d6 + 5 damage.

Pillar of Death: Any creature with the undead keyword that begins its turn adjacent to the pillars heals 10 hit points. The pillars are indicated on the map by the two statues.

Control Panel: This panel operates the barrier system within the vault. While a PC could choose to attempt the puzzle to unlock it mid combat, such an activity would consume their turns.

Blood Pool: A rain of blood appears to fall from the ceiling into the pool. The 5' deep pool keeps the cadaver golem fresh. Aside from being difficult terrain, the pool has no other effect.

Tactics

The marrowshriek skeletons stay invisible until their first attack against an intruder. After that they tend to lurk on the flanks of the party, turning invisible if they are drawing significant aggression and attacking again once they are in a better positioning. They use their *marrowshriek* power as often as they can.

The cadaver golem's primary goal is to box the party in the entryway or between the shelves if possible.

The blaspheme disciples stay in the back of the chamber combining strikes on ranged and tactical targets such as leaders. They move forward to use their burst powers if the fight goes poorly for the cadaver golem.

Fighting in this area draws a lot of attention. Note down how many rounds the fight takes, and how many short rests the PCs take afterwards.

Scaling the Encounter

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one of the blaspheme disciples.

Six PCs: Add another blaspheme disciple.

Ending the Encounter

Once the PCs defeat the guards, they are able to take a short rest. Proceed to Encounter 4 once the players are ready to contend with the locking mechanism that bars them from the relic.

Note that if the PCs took 7 or more rounds to defeat the guards, or took more then 2 short rests the alarm of their intrusion is raised earlier. See encounter 5 for more details.

Experience Points

The characters receive 560/800 experience points each for defeating the guards. If the PCs failed the skill challenge in Encounter 2 they instead earn 640/920 experience points each instead.

Treasure

Aside from the relic, no treasures of value have been left out in the open in this vault.

Encounter 3: Chamber of Souls Statistics (Low Level)

Blaspheme Disciple (level 10) **Level 10 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium natural animate (construct, undead) XP 500

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
HP 82; **Bloodied** 41
AC 22; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 24
Immune disease; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 10 poison; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Speed 6

m **Unholy Smite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage.

R **Unholy Ray** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 20; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the blaspheme disciple's next turn.

A **Words of Undeath** (standard; recharge 5-6) ✦ **Necrotic, Psychic**
Area Burst 2 within 20; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 necrotic and psychic damage. In addition, undead allies within the burst regain 5 hit points.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Heal +15, Religion +13
Str 13 (+6) **Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 20 (+10)
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 16 (+8) **Cha** 24 (+12)
Equipment vestments, holy symbol

Cadaver Golem (level 10) **Level 10 Elite Brute**
Large natural humanoid (construct) XP 1,000

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 188; **Bloodied** 94
AC 24; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 23
Immune disease, poison, sleep
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; can't shift
Action Points 1

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage and the target is dazed (save ends).

M **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The cadaver golem makes two slam attacks.

M **Assimilate Flesh** (free, when an adjacent enemy becomes bloodied or is reduced to 0 hit points or fewer; at-will) ✦ **Healing**
Targets the triggering enemy; +11 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 4 damage, and the cadaver golem regains 47 hit points.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 20 (+10) **Dex** 10 (+5) **Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 22 (+11) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+5)

Marrowshriek Skeleton (level 9) **Level 9 Lurker**
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 400

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision
HP 77; **Bloodied** 38
AC 24; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6

m **Osseous Thrust** (standard; at-will)
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage.

M **Marrow Feast** (standard; recharge 4-6)
Requires combat advantage against the target; +14 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target is grabbed. Each round that the marrowshriek skeleton sustains the grab, the target takes 15 damage and is weakened until the end of the marrowshriek skeleton's next turn.

C **Marrowshriek** (minor 1/round; at-will)
Close burst 3; targets living creatures; +12 vs. Fortitude; the target is dazed until the end of the marrowshriek skeleton's next turn. If the target is grabbed by the marrowshriek skeleton it is stunned until the end of the marrowshriek skeleton's next turn instead of dazed.

Shadowrought (standard; at-will)
The marrowshriek skeleton becomes invisible until it attacks.

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +15
Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+7)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 6 (+2) **Cha** 9 (+3)

Fuming Madness **Level 9 Lurker**
Hazard XP 400

Hazard: Fumes fill the air with a noxious madness inducing poison.

Perception
DC 14: The character notices the air is filled with vapor.

Nature
DC 19: The character identifies the vapor as madness gas.

Initiative +5

Trigger
Once exploded, the trap attacks each creature in the burst at the start of their turn.

Attack Poison
Immediate Interrupt **Special**
Target: Each creature in burst.
Attack: +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6+5 poison damage, and the target makes a melee basic attack against a random adjacent creature as a free action.

Countermeasures
✦ A character can hold his or her breath to avoid the attack, but if the character takes damage, character must succeed on a DC 19 Endurance check or be unable to hold his or her breath until the start of his or her next turn.

Encounter 3: Chamber of Souls Statistics (High Level)

Blaspheme Disciple (level 12) **Level 12 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium natural animate (construct, undead) XP 700

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
HP 94; **Bloodied** 46
AC 24; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 26
Immune disease; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 10 poison; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Speed 6

m **Unholy Smite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage.

R **Unholy Ray** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 20; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the blaspheme disciple's next turn.

A **Words of Undeath** (standard; recharge 5-6) ✦ **Necrotic, Psychic**
Area Burst 2 within 20; targets enemies; +17 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 necrotic and psychic damage. In addition, undead allies within the burst regain 5 hit points.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Heal +16, Religion +14
Str 13 (+7) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 20 (+11)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 24 (+13)
Equipment vestments, holy symbol

Cadaver Golem **Level 12 Elite Brute**
Large natural humanoid (construct) XP 1,400

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 228; **Bloodied** 114
AC 26; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 25
Immune disease, poison, sleep
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; can't shift
Action Points 1

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage and the target is dazed (save ends).

M **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The cadaver golem makes two slam attacks.

M **Assimilate Flesh** (free, when an adjacent enemy becomes bloodied or is reduced to 0 hit points or fewer; at-will) ✦ **Healing**
Targets the triggering enemy; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 5 damage, and the cadaver golem regains 57 hit points.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 20 (+11) **Dex** 10 (+6) **Wis** 8 (+5)
Con 22 (+12) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+6)

Marrowshriek Skeleton (level 11) **Level 11 Lurker**
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 600

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision
HP 89; **Bloodied** 44
AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 22
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6

m **Osseous Thrust** (standard; at-will)
+16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 8 damage.

M **Marrow Feast** (standard; recharge 4-6)
Requires combat advantage against the target; +16 vs. AC; 2d8 + 11 damage, and the target is grabbed. Each round that the marrowshriek skeleton sustains the grab, the target takes 15 damage and is weakened until the end of the marrowshriek skeleton's next turn.

C **Marrowshriek** (minor 1/round; at-will)
Close burst 3; targets living creatures; +14 vs. Fortitude; the target is dazed until the end of the marrowshriek skeleton's next turn. If the target is grabbed by the marrowshriek skeleton it is stunned until the end of the marrowshriek skeleton's next turn instead of dazed.

Shadowrought (standard; at-will)
The marrowshriek skeleton becomes invisible until it attacks.

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +16
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 16 (+8)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 6 (+3) **Cha** 9 (+4)

Fuming Madness **Level 11 Lurker**
Hazard XP 600

Hazard: Fumes fill the air with a noxious madness inducing poison.

Perception
DC 14: The character notices the air is filled with vapor.

Nature
DC 19: The character identifies the vapor as madness gas.

Initiative +7

Trigger
Once exploded, the trap attacks each creature in the burst at the start of their turn.

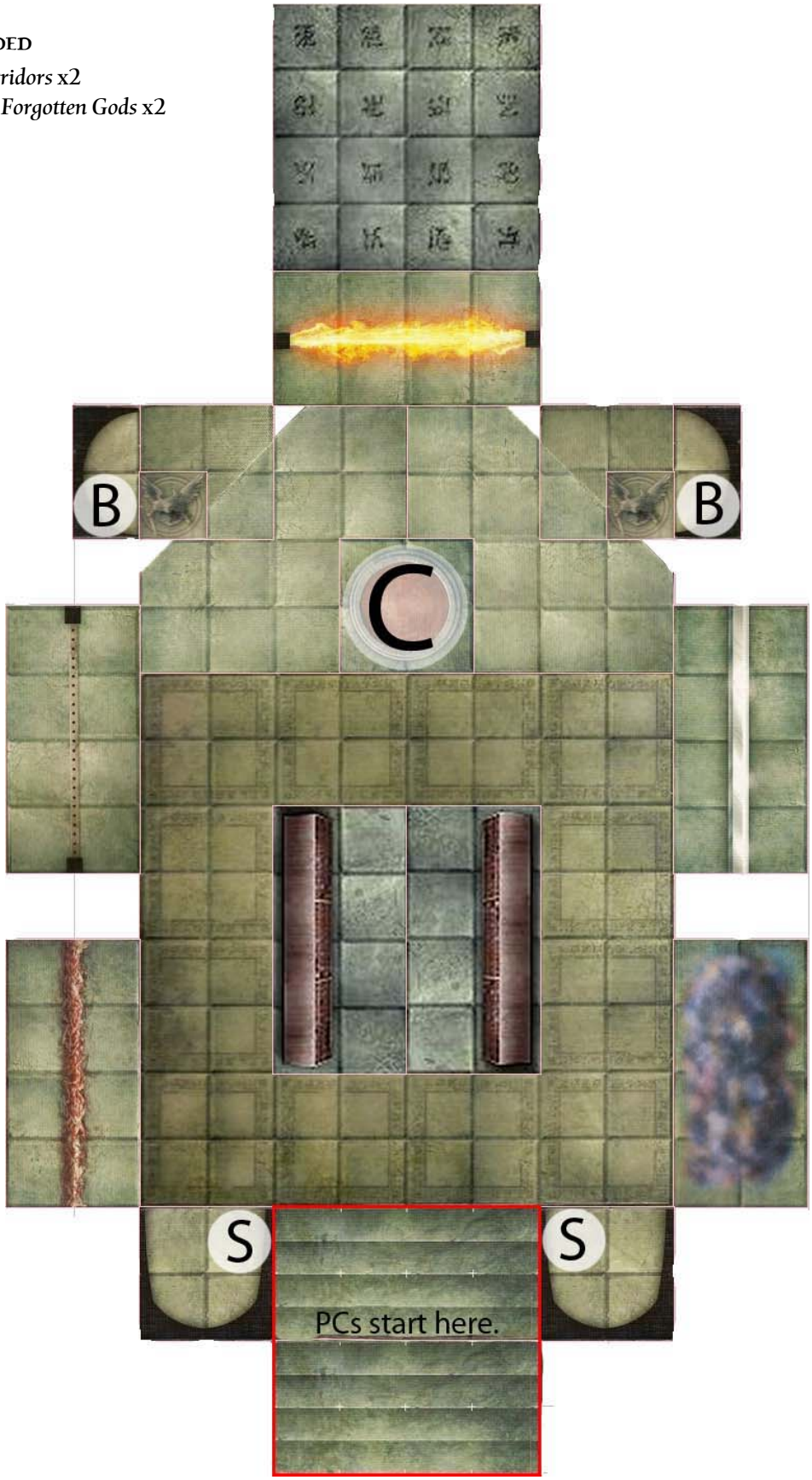
Attack Poison
Immediate Interrupt **Special**
Target: Each creature in burst.
Attack: +14 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6+6 poison damage, and the target makes a melee basic attack against a random adjacent creature as a free action.

Countermeasures
✦ A character can hold his or her breath to avoid the attack, but if the character takes damage, character must succeed on a DC 21 Endurance check or be unable to hold his or her breath until the start of his or her next turn.

Encounter 3: Chamber of Souls Map

Tile Sets Needed

DT2: Arcane Corridors x2
DT7: Fane of the Forgotten Gods x2



Encounter 4: The Vault

Setup

The Chamber of Souls contains five small chambers arrayed around a central hall with two chambers each on the East and the West walls and one chamber to the North. Semi-translucent energy barriers protect all of these rooms. To the East and the West the rooms are filled with assorted treasures and phylacteries. Before the party gets all excited and believes they can wipe out half of the world's liches in a single blow, these are lesser phylacteries belonging to fettered dragons and other servants of the Cult of the Dragon. Most importantly to the North is the chamber containing the relic along with some coin and several other magic items.

A panel on the South wall is the key to unlocking the Northern barrier. Above the barriers are five distinct plaques with arcane designations for different energy types. The control panels contain the arcane designations for different varieties of dragons around the borders as well as pegs with symbols for different energy types on them. A DC 20 Arcana check earns the successful party member Handout 2 which displays the different symbols and their meanings.

As the adventurers start in the area, give them Handout 1 and read:

As the internal alarms suddenly blare, you can be sure that you have only moments before the entire fortress descends upon you.

Around you are five barriers pulsing with energy. As you peer through the swirling surfaces you believe you see your prize behind the barrier to the North. Above the barriers are placards displaying strange symbols. These symbols appear to match the writing style of symbols found on a control panels attached to the Southern wall. Between the symbols a grid of is etched into the stone panels. The largest panel appears to correspond to the Northern barrier. A mockery of a font built into the wall underneath the control panel churns with an ominous grey liquid. Occasionally a hint of a solid white object is glimpsed in the pool.

The grey liquid is merely a solution meant to keep the bone pegs for the lock from deteriorating. It doesn't harm those who touch it. The party needs to pull the ten pegs from the solution and place them in the panel according to which combination over the vault.

The solution to the puzzle is to connect dragons of similar energy types in the energy order listed by the symbols on the plaque over the barrier. They do this by placing a peg in the first desired dragon spot and the connecting it with the dragon of the same energy type elsewhere on the panel. Once two pegs are placed energy pulses in the grooves between the two. If energy types are allowed to cross each other the panel releases its amassed energy into a blinding flash causing the person who failed to be blinded for the next minute or more. This means this character is unable to participate on the next unlocking attempt. The solution can be found below.

The lock can also be disabled with any combination of five Arcane and/or Thievery checks at DC 23/24. Two failures result in the same energy release as entering the wrong combination to the vault.

Once the lock has been bypassed the party has enough time to grab the relic and the assorted items in this one chamber and leave. Impress upon them that the longer they delay the closer the guards get.

You have retrieved the Last Grasp of Shadowbane! There are several other treasures about which you can gather quickly if you choose.

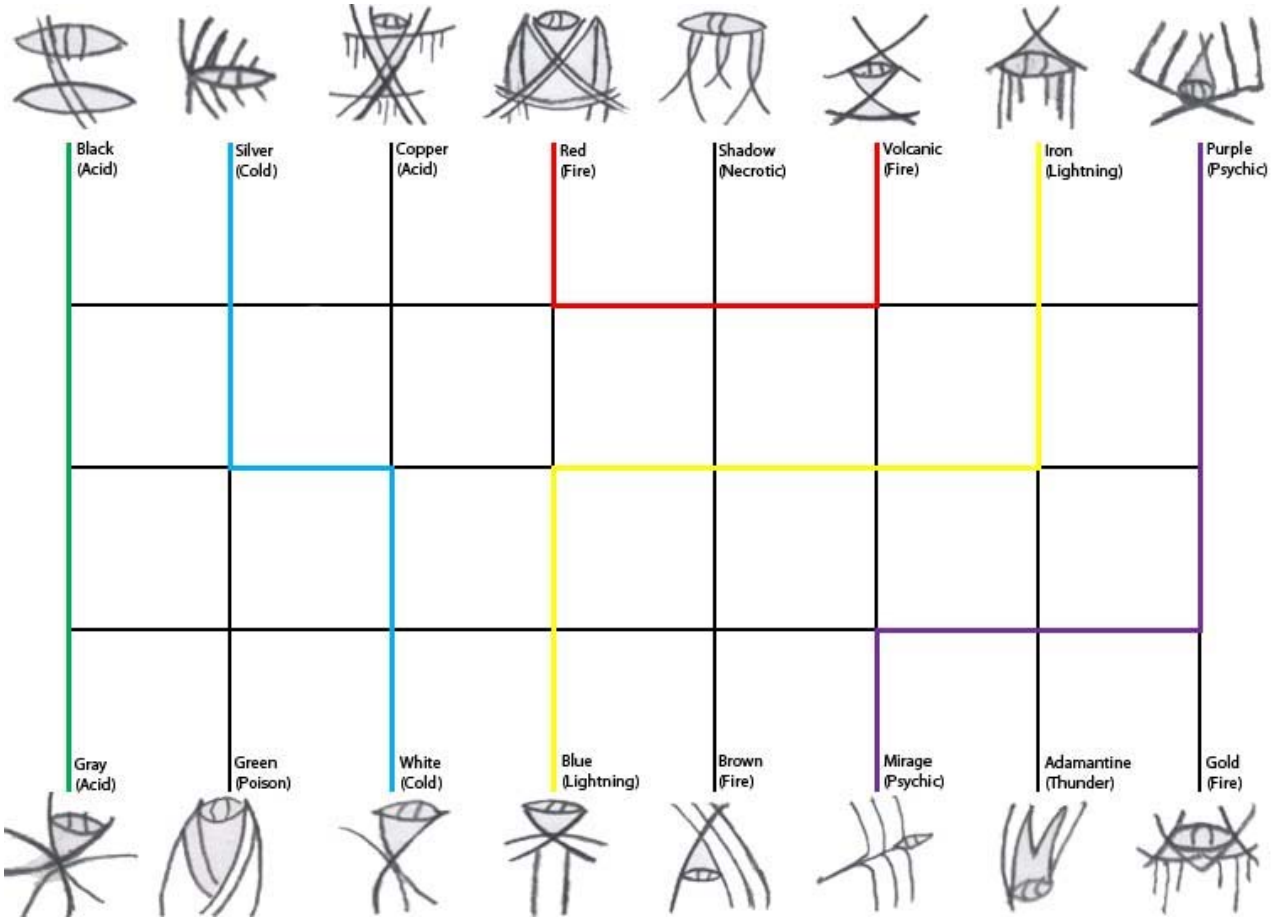
Ending the Encounter

Having obtained their prize the party must now find an alternative route out of the Well of Dragons as the way they came in is now swarming with Cultists. Proceed with Encounter 5. Note that if the PCs took more then 10 minutes to solve the puzzle (including any short rests after the fight in Encounter 4) they have given the Cult more time to react. See Encounter 5 for more details.

Treasure

On the surrounding shelve inside the main vault chamber there is a *bloodstone spider* (low level only), *slick armor +3*, and a *sash of vitality ceaseless*. A couple of bags contain some precious stones worth 800/1550 gold pieces per person. The sword itself is very powerful, but must be awakened in order for its full power to be revealed.

Encounter 4: The Vault Solution



Encounter 5: Chamber of Ascension

Encounter Level 12/14 (3600/4950 XP)

Setup

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:
1 exalted brain in a jar (level 10) (B)
2 adult volcanic dragons (level 11) (D)
4 fire elemental sparks*
* **Note:** If the PCs took 7 or more rounds to defeat the guards in the vaults (Encounter 3) or took more then 10 minutes to get at the treasure there are 2 more fire sparks.

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:
1 exalted brain in a jar (B)
2 adult volcanic dragons (D)
6 fire elemental sparks*
* **Note:** If the PCs took 7 or more rounds to defeat the guards in the vaults (Encounter 3) or took more then 10 minutes to get at the treasure there are 3 more fire sparks.

With the artifact in tow and the sound of guards behind them the party heads deeper into the bowel of the mountain. After a time, they approach the Chamber of Ascension. This area is off-limits to the pursuing guards. They are confident that the residents of this chamber can make short work of the party at any rate.

You race through the tunnel beyond the vault room with sounds of angry cultists filling your ears. After following the twisting tunnel for several minutes and an indeterminate distance, a dim glow ahead reveals the outline of an archway. As you approach the archway you realize the zealous shouts of the cultists fade into a reverent silence. Their footfalls are still keeping pace though. Through the archway, four large pools emit a dim brassy glow piercing the veil of darkness within. A scorching breeze from the arch whips past you immersing you in an uncomfortable cloud of steam.

Give the players a chance to react. The way back is filled with cult members and is not a viable exit. Once they enter the room, read the following only if the PCs have a light source or appropriate vision for a dim area:

A light steam swirls around you and perspiration covers your brow almost immediately upon entering the chamber. A massive altar surrounded by arcane devices and vile bubbling liquids dom0inates the center of the room. Four pools of magma are arrayed around the altar. Giant piles of carefully arranged skulls are placed haphazardly throughout the chamber. The walls are made of black melted stone similar to the floor. From the left a sudden roar followed by another hot blast of announces the unmistakable form of a dragon emerging from the lava pool. As you brace yourselves for the fight to come, a second and equally powerful roar yanks your attention to the right just in time to catch a second dragon emerging from another lava pit!

The fire elemental sparks are hidden in the lava for the moment. Two appear every round after the 1st round of the fight until there are no more elementals left (in other words new elementals appear in round 2, 3 and 4). If the PCs were too slow in Encounter 3 and 4, there appear 3 each round instead.

Features of the Area

This area has a few important features.

Ceiling: The ceiling to this area is a cap over the volcanic 100 feet high.

Illumination: The lava provides dim light throughout the room.

Necrotic Pillars: The pillars around the altar are 10 foot tall pyramids and provide cover. Viscous gray ooze is leaking from the pinnacle and coating the pillars. They are challenging terrain and as such require a DC 20 Athletics check to climb on and a DC 20 Acrobatics check to maneuver on. A failed check pushes the creature to the nearest non-pillar square and knocks them prone.

Lava Pools: The lava is bubbling with heat here. Creatures take 15 ongoing fire damage (save ends) when entering or starting a turn in the pool and must succeed a DC 15 Athletics check to move in or out of it. The lava pools are all connected underneath the altar.

Altar: The altar is a large 20 foot by 20 foot square stone table with a height of 5 feet. **Rubble:** Piles of rubble exist around the back edge of the chamber. The leftmost pile on the far side from the entrance conceals the hidden escape route from this chamber. Any PC with **CORE19 Favor of Dernan** or **CORE24 Savior of Kiriolanis Marudawn**, receives a +2 to all checks related to the exit. A PC with both awards receives a +5 to those same checks. A DC 26 Perception check indicates the small passageway beyond. However

it takes three DC 24 Athletics checks to clear the rubble enough to squeeze through. The rubble also has 60 hit points and the normal features of an object. The tunnel through and beyond is narrow and acts as difficult terrain for medium size creatures.

Tactics

The volcanic dragons are very aware of their auras and do so by spreading themselves out as best as possible to catch the most enemies in their auras while staying out of adjacent melee. They primarily build their *growing heat* until it is at aura 10 and then maintain it from there. If close to death or finding an advantageous situation, they use the *volcanic catastrophe*. The dragons also prefer to stay in the lava pools. They use *lava vent* when the party is grouped together or when strikers attempt to gain flank upon them.

The exalted brain in a jar starts behind a bone pile and hovers to 6 squares up where it can reach targets on the ground. It maintains its position inside the auras if they are at burst 10 and takes no damage for doing so. It focuses primarily on PCs that are separated from the party attempting to dominating them and forcing them to attack their companions. Only if that is ineffective, or somebody directly threatens the brain does it let its dominated victims walk into the magma. If it gets a chance to use *teleportation field*, it prefers to teleport PCs into the lava pool nearest to the dragons.

If the party should attempt to bypass the encounter with the tunnel, the brain attempts to dominate the last PC. If successful the brain commands the PC back to the chamber in hopes of the party following. If the brain is dead at this point the dragons use their *growing heat* and *volcanic catastrophe* to best effect trying to roast the party in the tunnel.

Instead of attacking the PCs, half of the fire elemental sparks attack the volcanic dragons to trigger the dragon's *fire absorption*. Others keep their distance, traveling through the magma to attack PCs keeping their distance from the main fight. If all PCs proof to be resistant to the aura of the dragons, the dragons or the brain order the elementals to try and reach those characters hiding at the back. If that is impossible they simply fight until they explode.

Scaling the Encounter

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Reduce the hit points of the volcanic dragons to 224 and bloodied to 112.

Six PCs: Increase the hit points of the volcanic dragons to 336 and bloodied to 168.

Ending the Encounter

Whether the PCs fled through the tunnel or defeated their adversaries, they are successful. Once down the tunnel they find shelter in a widening of the tunnel. Anymore than a few short rests may find them unable to escape the region of the Well of Dragons as the cultists scour the hills. Proceed to the next encounter once the players are ready.

Experience Points

The characters receive 720/990 experience points each for defeating/escaping the Chamber of Ascension.

Treasure

The party finds no treasure in this encounter unless they defeated the enemies.

Encounter 5: Chamber of Ascension Statistics (Low Level)

Exalted Brain in a Jar (level 10) **Level 10 Controller**
Medium natural animate XP 500

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision
HP 107; **Bloodied** 53
AC 24; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 22
Speed fly 6 (hover)

M **Teleportation Field** (immediate reaction, when an enemy hits the exalted brain in a jar with a melee attack; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
Targets the triggering creature, +14 vs. Will; the target is teleported up to 8 squares.

R **Fearful Recoil** (minor; at-will)
Ranged 8; +12 vs. Will; the target immediately moves its speed plus 4 squares away from the exalted brain in a jar. The target avoids hazardous terrain and difficult terrain if possible.

R **Supreme Domination** (standard; recharge 5-6) ✦ **Charm**
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends).

C **Mind Stab** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 5; +14 vs. Will; 1d10 + 7 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to Will (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, telepathy 10
Skills Arcana +15, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Intimidate +14
Str 12 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+8)
Con 19 (+9) **Int** 21 (+10) **Cha** 18 (+9)

Fire Elemental Spark **Level 12 Minion**
Medium elemental magical beast (fire) XP 175

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +7
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 26; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 22
Resist 30 fire
Speed 7

m **Claw** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
The fire elemental spark shifts 1 square and attacks; +17 vs. AC; 8 fire damage (crit 12 fire damage).

C **Fire Burst** (immediate reaction when reduced to 0 hit points) ✦ **Fire**
The fire elemental spark shifts 1 square and explodes. Close burst 1; +15 vs. Reflex; 8 fire damage. Fire elementals in the burst gain a +2 bonus to defenses until the end of their next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Primordial
Str 15 (+8) **Dex** 21 (+11) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+5)

Note: The sparks have swim 7 (only in magma)

Adult Volcanic Dragon (level 11) **Level 11 Elite Brute**
Large elemental magical beast XP 1,200

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
Burning Fumes aura 2; enemies within the aura gain vulnerable 5 fire.
HP 282; **Bloodied** 141
AC 23; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23
Resist 20 fire (see *fire absorption*)
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy), overland flight 12, swim 8 (in lava only)
Action Points 1

m **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Reach 2; +14 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

m **Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +14 vs. AC; 3d6 + 4 damage, and the target loses fire resistance until the end of the volcanic dragon's next turn.

M **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The volcanic dragon makes a claw and a bite attack or two claw attacks.

Growing Heat (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Each enemy in the volcanic dragon's *burning fumes* aura takes 5 fire damage, then *burning fumes* expands to aura 5. *Sustain free:* Each enemy in the volcanic dragon's *burning fumes* aura takes 5 fire damage, then the *burning fumes* expands to aura 10. Each round thereafter, the volcanic dragon can sustain it to maintain the size and damage of the aura.

C **Volcanic Catastrophe** (free, when the volcanic dragon's *burning fumes* is aura 10 at the start of its turn; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Burst 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 3d10 + 4 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). *Effect:* The *burning fumes* aura reverts to its original state and size (aura 2).

A **Lava Vent** (minor/1 per round; recharge 6) ✦ **Fire, Zone**
Aura burst 1 within 10; the burst becomes a zone of lava. Any creature that moves into or starts its turn in the zone takes 5 fire damage.

Fire Absorption (free, whenever the volcanic dragon is hit by a fire attack; at-will)
Each enemy in the volcanic dragon's *burning fumes* aura takes 5 fire damage.

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic, Primordial
Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 23 (+11)
Con 22 (+11) **Int** 18 (+9) **Cha** 20 (+10)

Encounter 5: Chamber of Ascension Statistics (High Level)

Exalted Brain in a Jar — **Level 12 Controller**
Medium natural animate — XP 700

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 123; **Bloodied** 61
AC 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 24
Speed fly 6 (hover)

M **Teleportation Field** (immediate reaction, when an enemy hits the exalted brain in a jar with a melee attack; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
Targets the triggering creature, +16 vs. Will; the target is teleported up to 8 squares.

R **Fearful Recoil** (minor; at-will)
Ranged 8; +14 vs. Will; the target immediately moves its speed plus 4 squares away from the exalted brain in a jar. The target avoids hazardous terrain and difficult terrain if possible.

R **Supreme Domination** (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Charm**
Ranged 10; +15 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends).

C **Mind Stab** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 5; +16 vs. Will; 1d10 + 8 psychic damage , and the target takes a -2 penalty to Will (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, telepathy 10
Skills Arcana +16, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +15
Str 12 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 19 (+10) **Int** 21 (+11) **Cha** 18 (+10)

Fire Elemental Spark — **Level 12 Minion**
Medium elemental magical beast (fire) — XP 175

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +7
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 26; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 22
Resist 30 fire
Speed 7

m **Claw** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
The fire elemental spark shifts 1 square and attacks; +17 vs. AC; 8 fire damage (crit 12 fire damage).

C **Fire Burst** (immediate reaction when reduced to 0 hit points) ✦ **Fire**
The fire elemental spark shifts 1 square and explodes. Close burst 1; +15 vs. Reflex; 8 fire damage. Fire elementals in the burst gain a +2 bonus to defenses until the end of their next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Primordial
Str 15 (+8) **Dex** 21 (+11) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+5)

Note: The sparks have swim 7 (only in magma)

Adult Volcanic Dragon — **Level 13 Elite Brute**
Large elemental magical beast — XP 1,600

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision
Burning Fumes aura 2; enemies within the aura gain vulnerable 5 fire.
HP 322; **Bloodied** 161
AC 25; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 25
Resist 20 fire (see *fire absorption*)
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy), overland flight 12, swim 8 (in lava only)
Action Points 1

m **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

m **Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 3d6 + 5 damage, and the target loses fire resistance until the end of the volcanic dragon's next turn.

M **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The volcanic dragon makes a claw and a bite attack or two claw attacks.

Growing Heat (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Each enemy in the volcanic dragon's *burning fumes* aura takes 5 fire damage, then *burning fumes* expands to aura 5. *Sustain free:* Each enemy in the volcanic dragon's *burning fumes* aura takes 5 fire damage, then the *burning fumes* expands to aura 10. Each round thereafter, the volcanic dragon can sustain it to maintain the size and damage of the aura.

C **Volcanic Catastrophe** (free, when the volcanic dragon's *burning fumes* is aura 10 at the start of its turn; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Burst 10; +14 vs. Reflex; 3d10 + 5 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). *Effect:* The *burning fumes* aura reverts to its original state and size (aura 2).

A **Lava Vent** (minor/1 per round; recharge 6) ✦ **Fire, Zone**
Aura burst 1 within 10; the burst becomes a zone of lava. Any creature that moves into or starts its turn in the zone takes 5 fire damage.

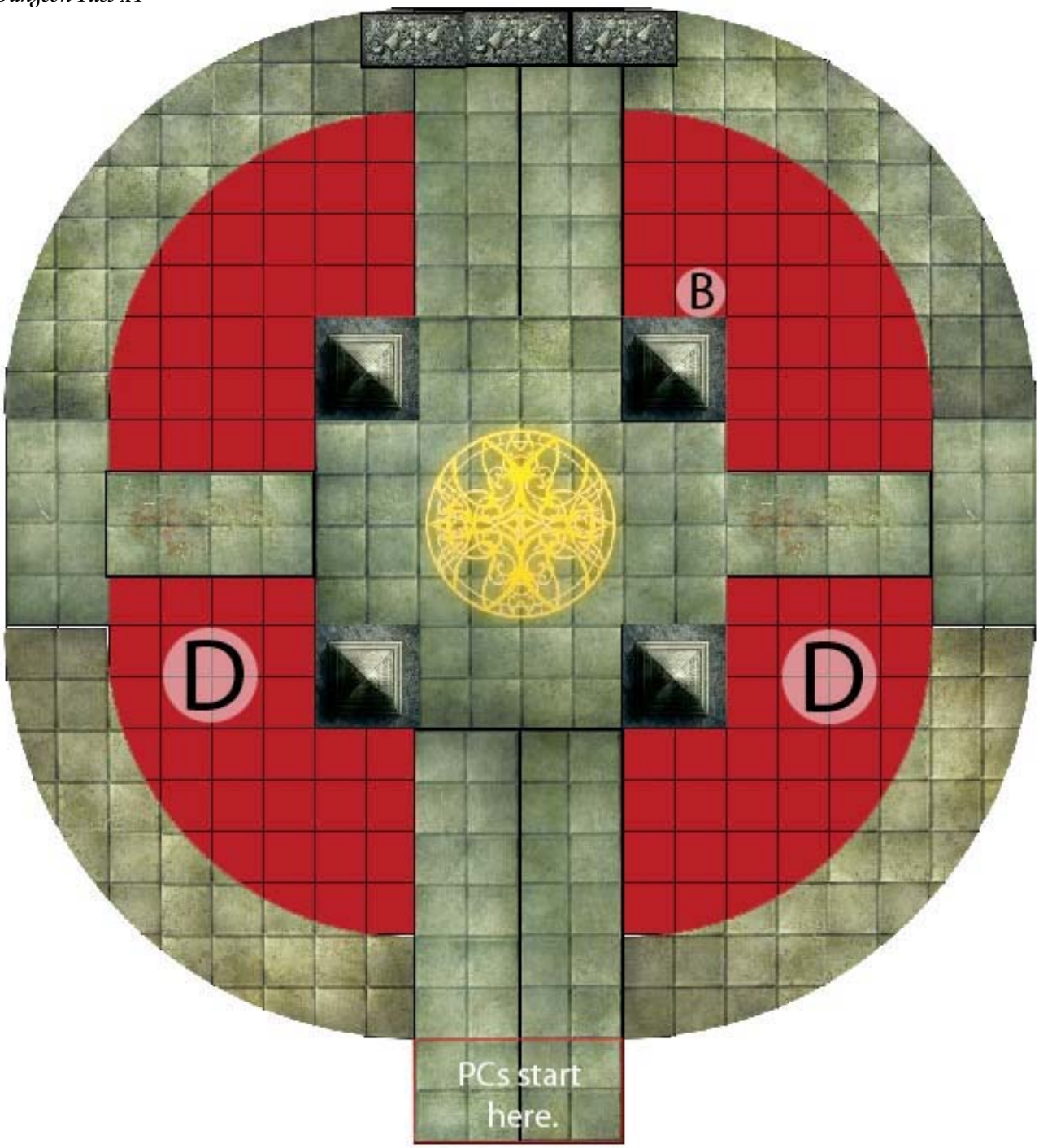
Fire Absorption (free, whenever the volcanic dragon is hit by a fire attack; at-will)
Each enemy in the volcanic dragon's *burning fumes* aura takes 5 fire damage.

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic, Primordial
Str 24 (+13) **Dex** 21 (+11) **Wis** 23 (+12)
Con 22 (+12) **Int** 18 (+10) **Cha** 20 (+11)

Encounter 5: Chamber of Ascension Map

Tile Sets Needed

Arcane Towers x2
Dungeon Tiles x4



Encounter 6 (Optional): The Last Grasp of Shadowbane

Setup

The Last Grasp of Shadowbane: intelligent bastard sword

This is an optional role-play encounter if the time is available. In this encounter the sword wakes up communicating through whoever possesses is. Its current purpose is to determine who has it and why. This encounter takes place once the party has caught its breath and move deeper into the tunnels.

The sword is motivated primary to destroy shadow energy and its servants. It does so honorably as it tends towards a good perspective. It has slept for centuries and has no knowledge of the death of Mystra or other major events of the last centuries. It is not aware of Netheril or their devotion to Shar. Should this topic come the sword is very motivated return to its purpose.

Initially it may possess the person who carries it to introduce itself to the other party members. The PCs alignment, race, and class factor into the sword's attitude. If carried by a shadow race, e.g. shadar-kai, it wants to be put down immediately. It has a cold attitude towards alignments other than its own and classes not capable of wielding it effectively. It has seen many battles and has the mannerisms of an aged somewhat embittered war veteran. It can communicate telepathically with the party members should it choose to do so, but prefers to speak through its wielder.

The conversation could take the following paths:

- If PCs mention Netheril, the sword focuses on this. It wants to know more about this cursed empire. If the party informs the sword that the empire is allied with Shar it immediately wants the party to leave the tunnels so it may battle its way through Netheril.
- If the PCs bring up Dernan the sword becomes curious about who he is and his motives. While the party may not have this knowledge, if they bring up his association with Selûne this is enough. The sword knows of the relation between Selûne and Shar and knows its best chance to taste shadow-touched flesh.
- It also asks about the PCs backgrounds and respond accordingly based on its opinions that shadows must be destroyed and that hand to hand combat is the best method to accomplish its goals.
- Once the sword has heard about its intended use it impatiently pushes the party towards moving out of the tunnels so that it may meet this Dernan.

Ending the Encounter

Once the PCs have finished their discussion with the sword they may continue on to the next encounter.

Encounter 7: Safely out of the Mountain

Encounter Level 12/14 (3600/5500 XP)

Setup

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:
1 adult purple dragon (level 11) (P)
3 bone scribe (S)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:
1 adult purple dragon (P)
5 bone scribe (level 15) (S)

Moving on from the escape tunnel the party moves deeper into the earth. Following Tairen's directions the party is able to navigate the various junctions of the tunnels. After several hours the party comes across a large intersection where four tunnels converge. Tairen's map indicates that eight tunnels are supposed to be here. A purple dragon, Nyctophorix, perches behind an illusionary collapse in the tunnel above the entry point of the party. He heard them coming down the tunnel and waits until several of them enter the center of the chamber before unleashing its wrath. Normally he patrols the grounds surrounding the mountain at night and rests here during the day. Having a fascination with arcane works he keeps several bone scribes on hand to do his bidding. A consummate collector, he is susceptible to bribery, but to let the party leave would take bribery on a grand scale. Perhaps each party member gives up his or her greatest item.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

After miles of traveling deep within the narrow bowels of the earth the tunnel begins to widen. According to Tairen's directions the large chamber ahead should be the convergence of eight tunnels. Peering within the chamber there appears to be only four tunnels including the one you are standing in. Debris from a recent cave-in litters the central floor of the cavern. In the center of the debris rests a piece of stone covered in runes.

The rune covered stone is a piece of a teleportation key that the dragon discovered some time ago. The original key was smashed and this remnant holds no power. The dragon discarded it here to entice would be meals to explore it. A DC 20 Arcana check reveals the teleportation runes to the PCs while a DC 30 Arcana check tells them that the rune key holds no power.

Once the characters are in suitable position for the purple dragon's *frightful presence* he uses it while attempting to hide behind the illusory rubble and maintain his stealth.

Features of the Area

This area has a few important features.

Illumination: There is no light here.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 50 ft. high.

Rubble: The rubble counts as difficult terrain.

Tunnels: The tunnels are lettered and list below. A DC 20 athletics check allows PCs to scale the slick cliff walls.

A) PC Starting Point
B) 30 ft. up from the floor, an illusory wall conceals the dragon's perch. The dragon is resting behind the illusion waiting for prey. A passive DC 25 Insight check detects something unusual about the surface of the wall.
C) 40 ft. up from the floor, open tunnel leading into the Underdark
D) Behind this stonewall the dragon hides its recent spoils here and phases behind the wall to retreat if he can't win the fight.
E) This open tunnel leads to the Underdark.
F) 30 ft. up an illusory wall covers this tunnel that leads out of the area and to safety. Once the PC is within 20 ft., a DC 25 Perception check notes the air is less foul in this tunnel, which should tell them this is the way out.
G) 20 ft. up, this tunnel leads into the Underdark.
H) Rubble blocks this tunnel. Beyond the rubble the tunnel leads to the Underdark. The dragon may use this as an escape if defeat is inevitable.

Any PC with **CORE19 Favor of Dernan** or **CORE24 Savior of Kiriolanis Marudawn**, receives a +2 to all checks related to the exit and the illusions. A PC with both awards receives a +5 to those same checks.

Tactics

The purple dragon intends stay hidden behind the illusory rubble as long as it can to maintain combat advantage. A passive DC 25 Insight check detects something unusual about the surface of the wall where

the attack came from. As soon as a sufficient number of the PCs have exited the entry tunnel the purple dragon unleashes its *frightful presence* to catch the largest number of the group. He then follows up with an action point to use the breath weapon and a minor action to dominate a PC. The dragon attempts to do all of this from behind the illusory rubble. As long as the party fails to locate the dragon, it stays hidden reusing its breath weapon and domination as available.

Once discovered the dragon phases and fly across the chamber through the collapsed rubble. Assuming the dragon recharges the phasing, it travels up to another illusory covered tunnel and attempts to repeat the breath weapon and dominate tactic. The dragon continues to fight until it is down to one quarter of its hit points. At that point it uses its second action point to escape and phase into its lair if able.

The bone scribes stay to the edges and attempt to engage mobile characters.

Scaling the Encounter

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove 120/128 hit points from the purple dragon.

Six PCs: Add 120/128 hit points to the purple dragon.

Ending the Encounter

Once the PCs defeat the dragon, they discover in a matter of minutes that fresh air seems to be flowing from tunnel E. A few hours later they emerge from broken rock into the last rays of the day.

Experience Points

The characters receive 720/1100 experience points each for defeating/escaping the dragon.

Treasure

The dragon has left a few of its lesser items scattered around cave in the hopes that adventurers tire themselves out digging through the rubble for more. Thorough searching reveals coins and objects worth 200/400 gold pieces per PC. A *baldric of time (paragon)* (high level only), and a *jagged weapon* +3 can also be uncovered here.

Encounter 7: Safely out of the Mountain (Low Level)

Adult Purple Dragon (level 11) **Level 11 Solo Controller**
Large natural magical beast (dragon) XP 3,000

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 448; **Bloodied** 224
AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 30
Resist 20 psychic
Saving Throws +5
Speed 7, fly 7 (hover), overland flight 14
Action Points 2

m **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 2 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends).

m **Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage.

M **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The purple dragon makes two claw attacks.

C **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge 5-6) ✦ **Psychic**
Close blast 10; + 15 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 psychic damage and is dazed (save ends both). Each time the target fails the saving throw against this effect, the purple dragon can slide it 3 squares. *Miss*: Half damage, and the target is not dazed and does not take ongoing damage.

C **Bloodied Breath** (free; when first bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Psychic**
The dragon's *breath* weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

R **Dominating Gaze** (minor; at-will) ✦ **Charm, Gaze**
Ranged 10; targets a stunned or dazed creature; +15 vs. Will; the target is dominated until the end of the dragon's next turn. The purple dragon can use *dominating* gaze on only one creature at a time.

C **Frightful Presence** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. Aftereffect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Dark Phase (minor; recharge 3-6)
The dragon gains the phasing quality until the end of its turn.

Harmed by Sunlight
An adult purple that begins its turn in direct sunlight can only take a single standard action on its turn. If it ends the turn in direct sunlight, it also takes 112 damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +17, Dungeoneering +14, Insight +14
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 19 (+9) **Wis** 18 (+9)
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 17 (+8) **Cha** 24 (+12)

Note: Hit points have been adjusted to take the errata from the *Dungeon's Master Guide 2* into account.

Bone Scribe **Level 13 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 200

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 27; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24
Immune disease
Speed 7

m **Mind Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
+16 vs. Will; 4 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to Will and is slowed until the end of the bone scribe's next turn. The bone scribe can shift 1 square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 10 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 8 (+5)
Con 20 (+11) **Int** 23 (+12) **Cha** 19 (+10)

Encounter 7: Safely out of the Mountain (High Level)

Adult Purple Dragon **Level 13 Solo Controller**
Large natural magical beast (dragon) XP 4,000

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
HP 512; **Bloodied** 256
AC 31; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 32
Resist 20 psychic
Saving Throws +5
Speed 7, fly 7 (hover), overland flight 14
Action Points 2

m **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends).

m **Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.

M **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The purple dragon makes two claw attacks.

C **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge 5-6) ✦ **Psychic**
Close blast 10; + 17 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 psychic damage and is dazed (save ends both). Each time the target fails the saving throw against this effect, the purple dragon can slide it 3 squares. *Miss*: Half damage, and the target is not dazed and does not take ongoing damage.

C **Bloodied Breath** (free; when first bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Psychic**
The dragon's *breath* weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

R **Dominating Gaze** (minor; at-will) ✦ **Charm, Gaze**
Ranged 10; targets a stunned or dazed creature; +17 vs. Will; the target is dominated until the end of the dragon's next turn. The purple dragon can use *dominating* gaze on only one creature at a time.

C **Firghtning Presence** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. Aftereffect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Dark Phase (minor; recharge 3-6)
The dragon gains the phasing quality until the end of its turn.

Harmed by Sunlight
An adult purple that begins its turn in direct sunlight can only take a single standard action on its turn. If it ends the turn in direct sunlight, it also takes 128 damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +18, Diplomacy +18, Intimidate +18, Dungeoneering +15, Insight +15
Str 16 (+9) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 18 (+10)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 24 (+13)

Note: Hit points have been adjusted to take the errata from the *Dungeon's Master Guide 2* into account.

Bone Scribe (level 15) **Level 15 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 300

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +13;
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 29; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 26
Immune disease
Speed 7

m **Mind Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
+18 vs. Will; 5 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to Will and is slowed until the end of the bone scribe's next turn. The bone scribe can shift 1 square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 10 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+10) **Wis** 8 (+7)
Con 20 (+13) **Int** 23 (+14) **Cha** 19 (+12)

Encounter 7: Safely Out of the Mountain Map

Tile Set Used

DU3: Caves of Carnage

Encounter 8: A Parting Blow

Setup

Important NPCs:
Kal Clewsoro, male human agent.

Clewsoro is the Netherese agent who originally overheard Dernan when he first mentioned his quest at Spellgard. Since then Clewsoro has been responsible in part for the agents hounding Dernan. Clewsoro became aware of the machinations of Tairen too late to prevent them. He is mounted on a purple ten-foot long beast that appears to be, a cross between a lamprey eel and a bat. A DC 15 Arcana check reveals this creature to be a veserab. Clewsoro has been searching the outlying regions of the Well of Dragons. He was about to abandon the search when he witnessed a grand assault on the Well of Dragons.

Clewsoro has redoubled his efforts and is searching for anything out of the ordinary. Luck is finally on his side as he witnesses a small group of people emerging from a crevasse.

For hours you find yourself squeezing through small tunnels, slowly navigating tight switchbacks, and crawling through stagnant stench filled pools with only an inch or two of airspace above them. Fearing another switchback you round a bend in the tunnel and spy an orange light overhead. A few minutes later and you find yourself climbing out of a weather worn crevasse into the last rays of sunset.

As you catch your breath a voice calls out from above. A gray-skinned figure, astride a purple winged beast, stares down at you. "You there! Are you the ones who have been helping Dernan Moonbrow?"

Clewsoro keeps out of range of combat and high in the air. As he believes he cannot take a party that has survived the Well on his own. His goal is to scare the exhausted party into relinquishing the relic in exchange for avoiding the ire of both the Cult and the Netherese.

Clewsoro is elated that he has found the item Dernan was seeking and tries to make attractive offers to get it. He won't be goaded into rash decisions. He has spent too much time hunting for Dernan and this prize. Kal is willing to offer the PCs full payment for the relic. Full payment in this case means he pays up to the max amount offered in this adventure. He exhibits patience until the PCs become belligerent at which point he ends the encounter and flies away.

Ending the Encounter

If the party gives up their prize, he keeps his word to a point. He doesn't share their identities with the Netherese and rewards them with a Shade Coin. See the story awards for more details. If the party keeps the weapon, he speeds off as quickly as he can towards the Netherese encampment hoping to gather assistance. Given the terrain and the distance the party has no trouble escaping.

Experience Points

The PCs do not earn any XP for this encounter, and it does not count towards a milestone.

Treasure

If the weapon is turned over to Kal, the PCs earn enough 100/150 gp each from him (or up till the maximum of the adventure).

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs managed acquire and keep the relic, they find Dernan Moonbrow in a nearby city. It seems his pursuers took off due to some great disturbance near the Netherese border. He heartily thanks the PCs and they gain **CORE29 Mixed Blessings**. This award also makes them marked men as the empire of Netheril n has put prices on their heads. He also pays each PC 100/150 gp. In addition PCs who are on the *Bane Against the Shadow* major quest gain a special boon from Selûne and can select *Sehanine's Mark of the Dark Moon* (replace the name Sehanine with that of Selûne, if selected this bundle cannot be sold) as a special boon from Selûne.

If the PCs lost the relic or turned it over to the Netherese they earn **CORE30 Wrath of the Moon**.

Rewards Summary

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn experience points, treasure, and possibly story awards. All totals listed here are per PC. A number before the slash is the low-level value; after the slash is the high-level value.

Experience Points

Give PCs a full award for each encounter they successfully completed, and a half award if they were unsuccessful. Give no award if the characters did not play the encounter at all.

Encounter 2: Choices
280 / 400 XP
Encounter 3: Chamber of Souls
640 / 880 XP
Encounter 5: Chamber of Ascension
720 / 990 XP
Encounter 7: Safely Out of the Mountain
600 / 800 XP
Major Quest: Bane of Shadows
600 / 800 XP

Maximum Possible Experience Without Major Quest:
2240 / 3200* XP
* Total possible xp is 3210, but 3200 is the cap.

Total Possible Experience With Major Quest:
2940 / 4200 XP

Gold per PC
1200 / 2200 gp
(Player's Introduction: 100/100 gp, Encounter 4: 800/1550 gp, Encounter 7: 200/400 gp, Conclusion: 100/150 gp)

Treasure

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or something else of value. Each player makes one and only one selection for their character; players may choose the same treasure bundle. Mark the one-letter bundle ID on the tracking form next to any character that selects a bundle; note that it is possible (and likely) that some characters will not select a bundle for each session of play.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character's base gold award, and ensure you enter the total amount of gold gained (minus any expenditures) online. It is possible and permissible for a character who spends more gold than he or she earns to have a negative total for the adventure. PCs receive 20% of the item's market price when they sell any magic item or consumable. They receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist's weapon +1* is listed as a choice in a bundle, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist's dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC's adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

An asterisk next to a magic item means that it is an item that appears in the **New Rules** section.

Each PC Selects One of the Following Bundles:

Bundle A: *bloodstone spider* (low level version only) (level 11; *Adventurer's Vault* 1)*
Found in Encounter 4

Bundle B: *hat of disguise* (level 10; *Player's Handbook 1*)
Found in Encounter 1

Bundle C: *slick armor +3* (level 12; *Adventurer's Vault 1*)*
Found in Encounter 4

Bundle D: *sash of vitality ceaseless* (level 14; *Adventurer's Vault* 2)*
Found in Encounter 4

Bundle E: *jagged weapon +3* (level 13; *Adventurer's Vault* 1)*
Found in Encounter 7

Bundle F: *baldric of time* (paragon) (high level version only) (level 16; *Adventurer's Vault* 2)*
Found in Encounter 7

Bundle G: *Sehanine's Mark of the Dark Moon* (low level version only) (level 13; *Dungeon Master's Guide* 2) (Replace Sehanine with Selûne - cannot be sold)

Bundle H: *Sehanine's Mark of the Dark Moon* high level version only) (level 18; *Dungeon Master's Guide* 2) (Replace Sehanine with Selûne – cannot be sold)

Consumable plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *potion of resistance* plus 500 / 1,300 gp to their rewards from this adventure. The player should write the consumable gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the consumable plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle. Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 1,300 / 2,100 gp to their rewards from this adventure. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

Story Awards

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards.

CORE29 Mixed Blessings

You have wrested the *Last Grasp of Shadowbane* from its hold in the Well of Dragons and returned it to Dernan Moonbrow. As a show of his appreciation he has offered you a mark of the moon. This mark identifies you as someone who has done a great service to the church of Selûne. However, you have become a significant thorn in the sides of the Empire of Netheril. A bounty has been placed on your head and when interacting with them they treat you with hostility.

CORE30 Wrath of the Moon

You failed to deliver the weapon to the servants of Selûne. The Moon Goddess has marked you such that you do not receive aid from her agents in the future.

On the positive side, Netheril appreciates your actions and gave you a Shade Coin that can be used to help with future Netherese interactions. The coin is a silver triangle with 1 inch sides. One side of the token is featureless. The other side of the coin depicts a personalized symbol of Shar. As long as the person who earned the token has it in his possession it feels remarkably cold. It is a sign of having earned the favor of a specific high-ranking Shadovar agent. Showing the coin to other Netheril agents or governments under control of Netheril helps, but it could create the opposite effects due to enmities between various factions among the Shadovar. Showing it to enemies of Netheril is guaranteed to generate distrust. The exact effects are up to the DM, but it should never generate automatic success or failures unless specified otherwise in the adventure.

Adventure Questions

Mark the answers to the following adventure questions on the tracking form.

1. How did the party handle the last two combats?

a. Defeated both in combat.
b. Ran from one but defeated the other.
c. Ran from both.
d. Perished from one of them.

2. How did the party deal with Clewsoro and the Last Grasp of Shadowbane at the end?

a. Turned over the relic.
b. Scoffed and ignored Clewsoro's offer.
c. Never got the relic.
d. Lost it in the Well of Dragons.

3. Did the PCs try to shift the blame of the theft on the Netherese?

a. Yes, but failed.
b. Yes, succeeded.
c. No.
d. Never managed to get the blade, or where caught before leaving the Well of Dragons.

4. How did the PCs try to deal with the Netherese?

a. Through stealth.
b. Through bluff.
c. Not at all.

New Rules

Baldric of Time

This rough-textured belt seems to be coated in the sands of time.

Level: 16
Price: 45,000 gp
Item Slot: Waist
Property: When you roll a 20 on your initiative check, you gain an extra standard action during the first turn of the encounter.

Bloodstone Spider

This tiny spider, carved from red bloodstone, can become monstrously real at your whim.

Level: 11
Price: 9,000 gp
Wondrous Item
Power (Daily • Conjuration): Standard Action. Use this figurine to conjure a spider made of bloodstone (see below for statistics). As a free action, you can spend a healing surge when activating this item to give the creature temporary hit points equal to your healing surge value.
Power (At-Will): Standard Action. The bloodstone spider recharges its poisoned slash power.

Bloodstone Spider
Large natural magical beast

Initiative as conjurer **Senses** Perception +7; tremorsense 5
HP 16; **Bloodied** 8
AC 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18
Immune disease, poison
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)

M **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+13 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 5 damage.

M **Poisoned Bite** (Standard; encounter) ✦ **Poison**
+13 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** -
Skills Stealth +14

Str 20 (+10)	**Dex** 18 (+9)	**Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 18 (+9)	**Int** 1 (0)	**Cha** 10 (+5)

Description: When you activate a figurine, the conjured creature appears in a space adjacent to you, provided the space is large enough to contain the creature without squeezing. The creature obeys only you, responding to commands spoken in any language. The creature remains for up to 8 hours or until you use a minor action to dismiss it. The conjured creature acts on the same initiative count as you. Every action it takes costs you a minor action (which you use to issue commands), and a conjured creature cannot exceed its normal allotment of actions (a standard, a move, and a minor action) during its turn. If you spend no minor actions on your turn to command the creature, it remains where it is without taking any actions on its turn.

A conjured creature has hit points, defenses, and attacks as indicated in its statistics block. It has no healing surges and cannot be healed, though it can still benefit from temporary hit points. When reduced to 0 hit points or fewer, the conjured creature disappears and cannot be conjured again until after you've taken an extended rest. Conjured creatures lack basic attacks and therefore cannot make opportunity attacks.

Mount: If the conjured creature has the mount keyword, you can ride the creature and are considered to have the Mounted Combat feat while mounted on it. While mounted, you can command the creature using free actions, though the mount is still limited to its normal allotment of actions. You can choose to be mounted on the creature when it appears.

Jagged Weapon

This weapon is pitted, scarred, and unadorned, but it deals grievous wounds.

Level: 12
Price: 13,000 gp
Weapon: Axe, Heavy Blade, Light Blade
Enhancement: +3 attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: Ongoing 10 damage (save ends)
Property: This weapon scores critical hits on a 19 or 20.

Sash of Vitality Ceaseless

This sash's red and white coloring represents harm and healing, granting you increased vitality when you need it most.

Level: 14
Price: 21,000 gp
Item Slot: Waist
Property: When you spend a healing surge while you're bloodied, you regain additional hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Sehanine's Mark of the Dark Moon

The priests of Sehanine speak of the dark moon, an invisible celestial object that casts protective shadows upon Sehanine's followers. As her favored one, you are shielded from harm by the dark moon.

Level: 13 or 18
Price: 17,000 gp or 85,000 gp
Divine Boon
Property: If a creature cannot see you, you take half damage from its attacks that hit you and no damage from its attacks that deal damage on a miss.
Power (Daily * Teleportation): Immediate Reaction. *Trigger*: You take damage. *Effect*: You teleport 2 squares.

Level 13: You teleport 4 squares, become invisible until the end of your next turn, and can make a Stealth check to hide as a free action.

Level 18: You teleport 6 squares, become invisible until the end of your next turn, and can make a Stealth check to hide as a free action.

Slick Armor

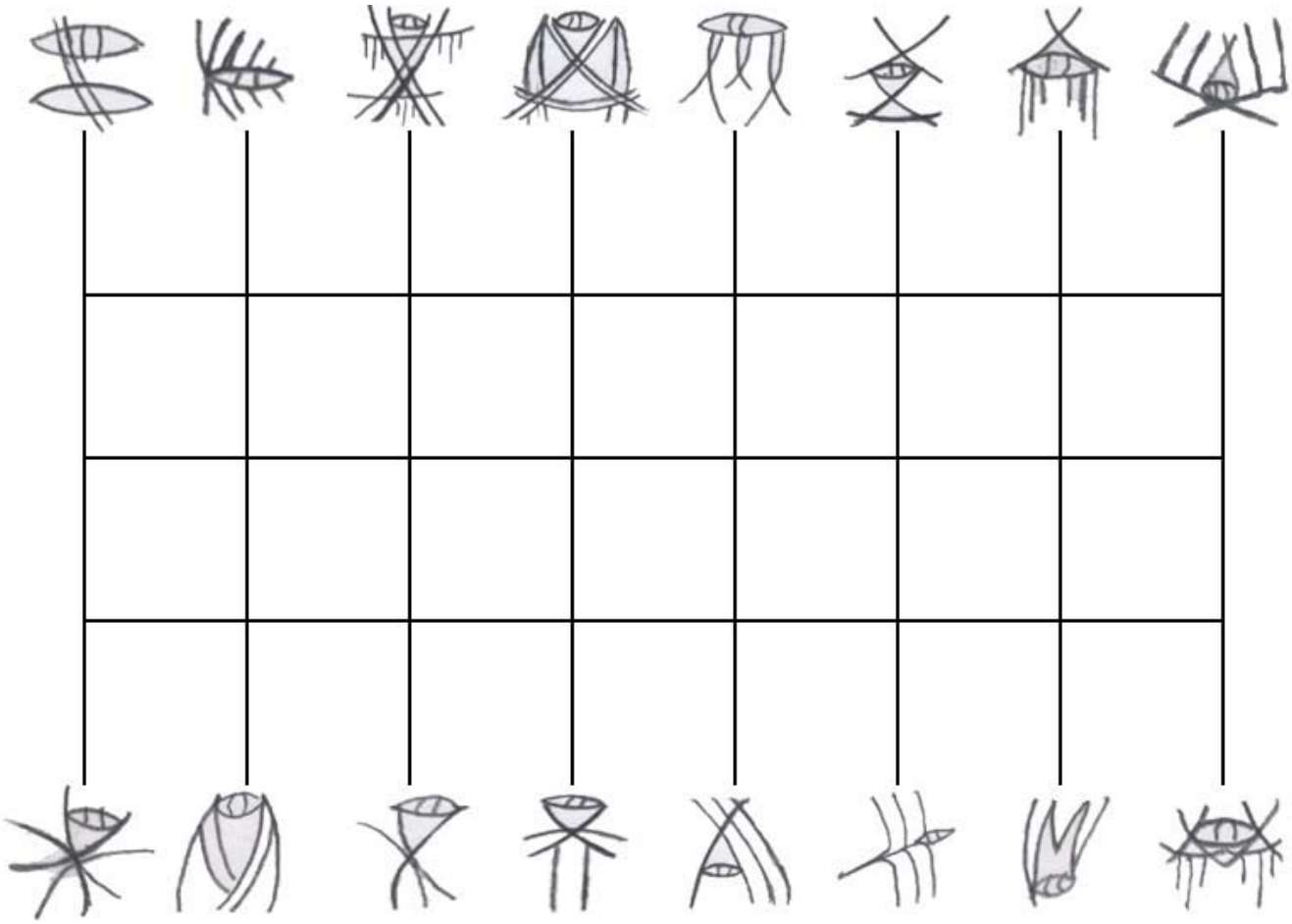
It's hard to get a hold on you while you wear this armor.

Level: 12
Price:13,000 gp
Armor: Cloth, Leather, Hide
Enhancement: +3
Property: Gain a bonus to Acrobatics checks to escape actions equal to twice the armor's enhancement bonus.

Handout 1: The Vault Puzzle

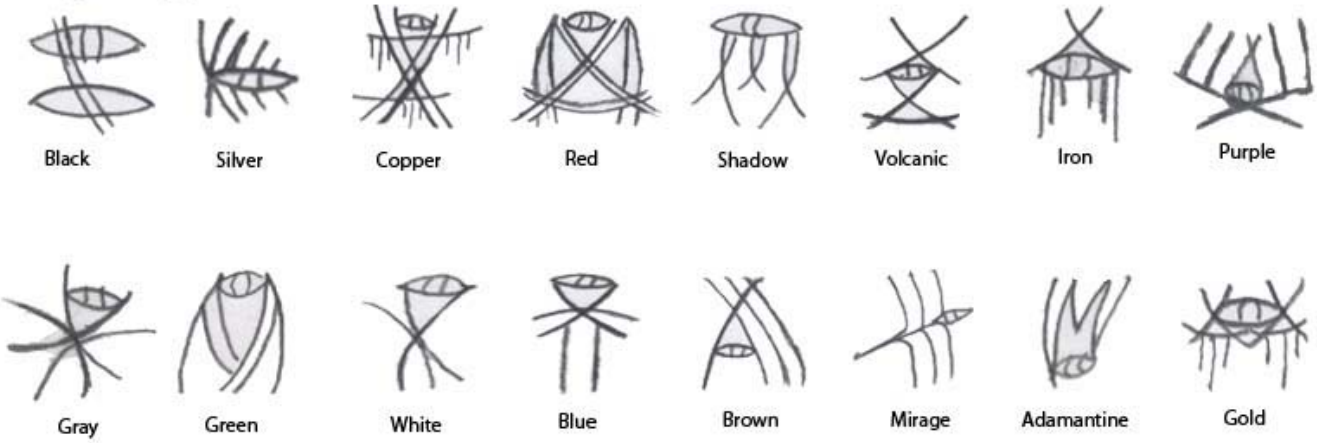
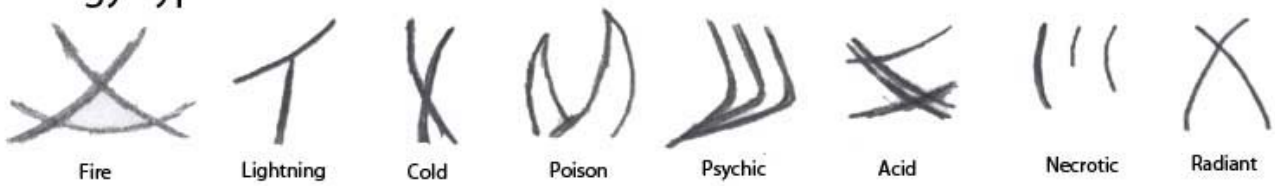
The Plaque Combination

The Control Panel



Handout 2: The Vault Key

Dragon Types



Energy Types