

AGE OF RUIN

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

BY BRUCE HIGA, JOSHUA RANDALL,
KEITH RICHMOND, AND MICKEY TAN

REVIEWED BY DAN ANDERSON AND PIETER SLEIJPEN

PLAYTESTED BY BRIAN ADRIANSE, DAN ANDERSON, LORI ANDERSON, WILL ANSELL, JAMES AUWAERTER, DAVID BAUMANN, KEVIN BAUMANN, ROB BAUMANN, SHARON BAUMANN, TOM BLACK, CHAD BROWN, LARRY DELUCAS, CURT DOEMBERG, ROB DORGAN, JULIO ESPERAS, ROB GALLANT, BILL GUARDINO, AMIR HASSANEIN, PETER HOANG, JENNIFER JERAY, PAUL JERAY, REX JOYNER, DAVE KAY, MITCH KAYSERMAN, STEPHEN KOVALICIK, ANDREW KIM, EDWARD KIM, REBEKA MARCUS, THERON MARTIN, WES McCANN, ROBERT NEGRON, TANIS O'CONNOR, ROB OSBERG, BRANDON PATEL, MARK SCHIAVO, RANDY STROMMEN, ANDY STUEVE, JR SULLIVAN, BRIAN TAYLOR, NOPALZIN TORRES, FRED UPTON, DAVID VILLAREAL, ROB WATKINS, DAN YANOTCHKO, AND STEVEN ZWANGER.

Catastrophic events have transpired during your absence, and Faerûn lies in ruins. In a world covered in darkness that even the gods have forsaken, can you provide a shred of hope to the few survivors, or will you too succumb to despair? A **three-round** *Living Forgotten Realms* Epic Campaign adventure for 25th level characters. This adventure is a direct sequel to *EPIC4-1 Shooting the Moon*.

This is a three-round adventure. We recommend that you allow a minimum of 12-15 hours of playing time.

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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If you want to organize LFR games at home, you don't need to be associated with the Wizards Play Network. You don't need to report your event to anyone, and neither the DM nor the players need to have DCI/RPGA membership numbers. Just find the adventure you want to play, download it, and have fun!

Be sure to keep up with the LFR Community at our campaign website: <http://community.wizards.com/lfr>

PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the D&D 4th Edition core rulebooks. These are the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, or the corresponding D&D Essentials products. 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 about non-player characters (NPCs) and monsters appears in the full stat-block format with each combat encounter. For non-combat encounters, this information appears in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of a WPN event (see above), 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. Auras are designated with the O symbol, as well as the aura keyword.

A lower-case letter (used only for certain melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

All monsters have been updated for the latest monster design standards for damage, defenses, and style. In some cases, abilities have been streamlined to

reduce complexity and make the encounters easier to run correctly and on time.

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:

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

In support of the golden rule, we offer these guidelines:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and to make decisions about how the group interacts with the world.** This is especially important during non-combat encounters, but you may also need to adjust the combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time with the adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult.** 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 just ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each player the experience they're after. Everyone at the table should get a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game moving to ensure you finish on time.** 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 in about 4 hours; be very aware of running long or short, and adjust the pacing accordingly. If that means you need to "call" a combat encounter when it is obvious that the PCs are going to win, then feel free to do so.
- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with the environment.** Players should always know when enemies are bloodied or affected by conditions. Give them clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting frustrated by a lack of information. Encourage immersion in the

adventure and give the players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from your clues.

In summary, 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 Epic Campaign adventure is designed for **level 25** player characters (PCs). Players may only play this adventure with characters that have reached 21st level through play in the *Living Forgotten Realms* campaign. To be clear, it is okay to use a character that was started above 1st level following the rules in the *LFR Campaign Guide* and subsequently reached 21st level through the play of LFR adventures. However, the campaign rules limit new characters to a starting level of 11. It is not legal to create a brand-new 21st-level character specifically to participate in the Epic Campaign.

If a character has reached 21st level but is not the correct level for this adventure, which can only happen by playing the Epic Campaign adventures out of order, that player may adjust the level of his or her character accordingly for the duration of this adventure.

Adjusting Level Up: If a character is below the designated level for this adventure (but has reached at least 21st level), increase the character's level to the correct level for this adventure, following the core rules (so the character gains powers, feats, ability score increases, and so forth as normal). The player may not change any of the character's existing magic items, and the character gains no new magic items.

Adjusting Level Down: If a character is above the designated level for this adventure, reduce the character's level by removing all benefits gained from higher levels. The character may not use any of the magic items or Story Awards gained from Epic Campaign adventures designated for levels higher than this adventure. For example, if a player had to skip the level 21 adventure but has already played the level 22 and level 23 adventures, that character may not use any of the magic items gained from those adventures during the lower-level adventure. Anything that happened in the higher-level adventures is temporarily “unwound,” as if the character had played the adventures in the correct order.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If the group fails to defeat an encounter (for example, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they fail too many checks during a skill challenge) it doesn't have to mean the end of the adventure. In most cases, both success and failure should lead to interesting story outcomes. Whenever possible, give them a chance to work around their failure and still bring the adventure to a successful conclusion.

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 for the Raise Dead ritual.** If the group has access to the body and chooses this option, the component cost is usually divided evenly amongst the group (although this is not required, it is generally considered good form to share the costs). The component cost is 50,000 gp for epic tier. If a PC can cast the ritual, then the component cost is the only cost. If the group must locate an NPC to cast the ritual, that NPC charges a fee equal to 20% of the component cost.
- **Use a power that returns dead characters to life.** Certain characters gain powers that allow them to restore life without using the Raise Dead ritual or paying a component cost. For example, the warpriest (a cleric build from *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*) gains the *resurrection* daily utility power at 8th level. NPCs may not be used for this option unless an adventure specifically says so; a player character with the appropriate power must be at the table (assuming he or she isn't the dead character) and all other conditions for using the power must be met. For example, *resurrection* may only be used at the end of an extended rest, and the character must have died within the last 24 hours.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group doesn't have access to the dead character's body, or if they have the body but cannot afford (or are unwilling) to pay for a ritual, the player can choose to return the PC back to life at the end of the adventure, exactly as if the Raise Dead ritual had been used on the dead character. The details of exactly how the character's body made its way back to civilization are up to the player, or this can be left deliberately vague. There is no direct cost for accepting Death Charity, but the character forfeits all non-XP rewards for the

adventure (including gold, Story Awards, and the opportunity to select a Treasure). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

Sometimes, invoking the Death Charity clause is the only option to return a dead PC to life. For example, if the group suffers a TPK and no friendly NPCs know where to find them, then it's unlikely that their bodies can be recovered. The DM is the final arbiter of whether or not a dead character's body can be recovered. Remember, the Death Charity clause is always an option, no matter what happened to the PC. Returning from the dead (by whatever means) is optional and up to the player, but the decision must be made at the table and recorded on the character's Adventure Log. Any character that chooses not to return from the dead is permanently retired from play.

Mounts are not characters. These rules do not apply if a mount is killed during an adventure. To resurrect a dead mount, the owner must pay 20% of the mount's market price at the end of the adventure in which the mount died.

MILESTONES

Whether the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they generally reach a milestone after every second encounter following the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Some encounters do not count toward a milestone, usually because they are pure roleplaying encounters or do not pose a meaningful challenge to the party. If an encounter is not intended to count toward a milestone, it will say so. In particular, you should not deny the players a milestone just because they are having an easy time with the combat encounters. After each encounter, inform the players whether that encounter counted toward the next milestone. Reaching a milestone usually gives each PC another action point and affects some magic item powers.

LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't automatically resolved by the end of the adventure, such as the death penalty or the later stages of a disease.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life, that character usually suffers a death penalty. For example, a character brought back by the Raise Dead ritual or a warpriest's resurrection power suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until he or she has reached three milestones. The player should record the character's death on his or her Adventure Log, and then

keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, the death penalty ends.

Sometimes the death penalty is paid by a character other than the character that was returned to life. For example, if a sentinel uses the restore life power, there is a cost of four healing surges. These healing surges cannot be regained until the PCs who spent the surges (which cannot include the character who was returned to life) have reached three milestones or taken three extended rests. The character(s) who spent the surges track this on their individual Adventure Logs. As each character crosses the appropriate threshold, the death penalty ends for that character, regardless of whether it is still active on other characters.

Diseases: A disease lasts until it is cured or it reaches its 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 an adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cured or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may 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. Effects that last for a well-defined period of time (those that end after a certain number of days or extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified, such as by a Story Award). Effects that use a benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's Adventure Log and tracked across adventures.

It is always the player's responsibility to inform his or her DM at the beginning of an adventure if the character is suffering from a lasting effect.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

For a recap of key events in the previous four Epic adventures, refer to Player Handout 2.

NEW PLOTS REVEALED

The heroes have just returned through a portal, only to find that thirty years have passed. They are actually within the Barrens, a layer of the Abyss ruled by the demon lord Oublivae, Queen of Ruin. They have been in the Barrens since they took the portal to Corendath (at the end of *EPIC4-1*), a kingdom that was pulled into the

Abyss by Oublivae thousands of years ago. The Barrens is a dark reflection of the real world, showing the ruin and destruction of civilizations, a perfect glimpse of desolation.

Oublivae has been working alongside Tsien Chiang and Karadrach on all of their attempts to destroy Arvandor and the Demonweb. It was Oublivae who informed Tsien of the Hungering Dark in Carceri (EPIC3-2), and it was Oublivae who gave Tsien the shard of the Abyss with which the sorceress almost destroyed the Demonweb (EPIC3-3).

Oublivae tries to mislead the PCs into believing that thirty years have actually passed. She savors their abandoned hopes and relishes their grief. She wants the PCs to succumb to despair, become corrupted by dying hunger, and turn into her instruments. At a minimum, keeping the PCs lost in the Barrens gives Tsien Chiang time to work on her ritual to release the Hungering Dark.

Because of Oublivae's control of the Barrens, it is almost impossible to discern that it is not truly Faerûn.

DM INTRODUCTION

This survival-based adventure continues the story begun by its predecessors, following immediately on the events of EPIC4-1 *Shooting the Moon*.

- This adventure features a number of new traps and encounter mechanics. To maximize player enjoyment, over-communicate with the players and explain these new mechanics in detail.
- This adventure also features a great deal of content, and players may be rusty playing at Epic tier. The adventure should run in 12-15 hours of play time. Be sure to save 2-2.5 hours for the final encounter and conclusion.
- Many of the maps are large and detailed, so draw, print, or prepare them in advance.
- Pay special attention to underlined sections - they are underlined for a reason!

As the adventure begins, the PCs find out how much time has passed and how horrible things have become. Because the PCs are actually in the Barrens, the world is a true nightmare. Many of the events of this adventure may seem surreal or impossible. These are subtle and not-so-subtle hints that everything is not as it seems, but avoid making it seem entirely dream-like so the players still care about the events. It is better that they blame time travel or an alternate reality and still look for an explanation and solution. With the information that everyone and everything they knew has been destroyed, the PCs are overcome by supernatural despair. The only

way to remove Despair is to fight back against Oublivae's realm, overcome her servants, and bring Hope to the Barrens. At that moment shadowy abominations descend from the clouds, and the PCs have a slim chance to save some old allies.

Afterwards, the PCs are presented with a choice. They may travel anywhere they wish, witnessing the destruction, or head towards one of three most evil and powerful of Tsien's servants: Szass Tam, Fzoul Chembryl, and Manshoon. Please refer to Appendix 6 for more information on the villains in this adventure.

Once the PCs either overcome all three of those servants or spend too much time creating problems, they find themselves at Oublivae's *Fortress of the Fallen*. This moving fortress appears suddenly and is built over bottomless pits that lead down to the shard of pure evil that created the Abyss.

There, Oublivae confronts the PCs and shows that they are helpless before her control of the Barrens. Several PCs likely die before they prove that the Hope they've created in her realm is anathema to her power, and they can use it to defeat her.

TOTAL PARTY KILLS (TPK)

Although rare, TPKs happen from time to time. In most cases, the party fails the adventure when every PC is killed in an encounter. However, given the length of this adventure, a TPK can spoil everyone's fun, especially when the players set aside fifteen hours to play and are killed after two. Refer to Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for recovering from a TPK.

MANAGING MORALE

Because this adventure is set in the Abyss, in the lair of a demon that specializes in inflicting anguish, it is far darker than previous adventures. To best convey the mood, you need to manage a fine line between darkness with a hope for light and players genuinely not having fun.

Encounters feature vile elements, disturbing imagery, dying innocents, and various demoralizing penalties. Please keep things fun for your group and avoid topics that might cause issues for a particular player.

The adventure is designed so that you can kill one or more characters in many of the encounters. Use these opportunities to rattle the player's confidence and demonstrate the mechanics for dying in Appendix 1.

Oublivae genuinely wants to corrupt the PCs and to kill them one by one, then bring them back corrupted by her power. She does not want to kill the PCs all at once, nor will she pick on one PC over another. Avoid TPKs and do not exclusively kill and re-kill a particular PC.

COMPANIONS

Oubliavae (and thusly this adventure) is particularly cruel in its treatment of non-player companions of the PCs.

Throughout the adventure, whenever a rules section refers to (and likely penalizes) a “companion” it means any creature that assists the PCs, such as mounts, followers obtained via story award or theme, or druid or ranger animal companions.

TIME AND PACING

Please refer to Appendix 3 for advice on managing time during the adventure. This adventure can easily run long. This may be a feature for some groups who want more sessions of play, but be ready to speed things along in any sort of time-constrained or convention environment.

DIFFICULTY

Epic groups can vary significantly in power. We have created some options to give you more customization of this adventure’s difficulty. Please refer to Appendix 4 for advice on making the adventure easier or harder.

PACT DRAGONS

LFR administration has clarified the usage of the pact dragon’s *pledged rider* ability:

- Damage shared using the *pledged rider* ability must be redirected entirely. You cannot divide the damage between the rider and the pact dragon.
- Damage redirected by the *pledged rider* ability can only be reduced once, by either the initial target or the redirected target (player’s choice), but never by both the rider and the pact dragon for the same attack.

Please make sure you use this clarification, as otherwise the pact dragons can be used in unfortunate ways. The *shadowclaw nightmare* mount offered at the end of this adventure may be useful to PCs who require a mount and no longer find the pact dragon desirable.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

While this adventure is meant to be played as a sequel to *EPIC4-1*, not all PCs may have played that adventure. For PCs who did not play *EPIC4-1*, assume that they attempted to join the others as reinforcements. The new PCs journeyed through the portal to Corendath but arrived after the other PCs had defeated Karadrach.

If no characters have played *EPIC4-1*, it is highly advised that you run that adventure before this one, as the EPIC adventures are intended to be played in order.

Use Player Handout 1 to find out personal details about the PCs. If possible, do so before the game. This adventure works best if you use knowledge of NPCs and groups important to the PCs to make encounters personal with increased stakes.

- **Encounter 1:** The soldiers met are drawn from the armies the PCs used in *EPIC4-1*, or could include favored NPCs.
- **Encounter 4:** The locations and NPCs should be tailored for impact to the PCs.
- **Encounter 7A:** The death knight may be replaced by someone dear to the PCs.
- **Encounter 7C:** Manshoon prepares his sanctum with the souls of NPCs loved by the PCs, potentially including their families.

Give the players Player Handout 2 (both pages), which explains the story so far.

CONTINUED FROM *EPIC4~1*

On the island of I’Cath, former home to the sorceress Tsien Chiang, you are surrounded by thousands of skeletons, decomposed remnants of the armies you led.

Dark churning clouds blanket the sky, obscuring the sun entirely and casting the world in shadow. There is an overwhelming oppressive feeling, like something malignant is trying to crush you down both physically and mentally.

- Divine characters feel a sense of loss.
- Arcane characters feel a vague inhibition, as if surrounded by a magic ward.
- Primal characters feel a sense of loneliness, as if the natural world is on its deathbed.

Nature

DC 29: Based on plant growth decades have passed since the battle which remnants litter the field.

Arcana

DC 21: Extraordinarily powerful magic pervades the area, particularly the sky.

DC 29: Shadow and necromantic magic fills the clouds. You also sense a powerful ward enclosing everything in a planar lock. This ward is similar to the prison enclosing Carceri, preventing all travel away from Faerûn.

DC 38: The shadows bear the magical signature of the Hungering Dark, an abomination from Agathys that the PCs fled in *EPIC3-2*. The gods imprisoned the Hungering Dark on Carceri because they could not destroy it, and they feared it would continually grow until it devoured all of creation. What its signature energy is doing here is a mystery.

Religion

DC 21: Divine characters may determine that the sense of loss they feel is because their connection to the gods has been severed, as if the gods cannot respond, or are gone entirely.

DC 29: A warding lattice of divine energy encloses the sky somewhere far above and all around. You sense traces of divine power, but designed to keep the gods out, and something else in.

DC 38: See Arcana DC 38 above.

Distribute Player Handout 3, which explains the planar features that apply.

TIME LIMITS AND EXTENDED RESTS

The adventure apparently spans days or weeks from the PCs' point of view. During that time, the PCs are constantly attacked (by creatures of shadow, demons, ghouls, and people twisted by despair and insanity) while also wracked by nightmares and psychic depression.

MECHANICAL EFFECTS

- The PCs are unable to gain any benefits from an extended rest until they conclude the adventure. Even using resources like the Fantastic Recuperation ritual or an *exodus knife* do not help.
- For purposes of milestones, action points, daily items, and anything else based on daily limits or extended rests, this adventure has no extended rests. PCs accrue milestones and action points without any resets.

RECOVERING RESOURCES

There are two ways the PCs can recover resources (healing surges and non-item daily attack or utility powers) without taking an extended rest.

- **Despair:** If a particular PC is willing to ignore innocents in need and accept the psychic depression being inflicted on them, that PC can regain 4 healing surges and 1 daily attack or utility power. The PC gains another Despair

penalty. Each individual PC may make the choice whether to take on additional despair (and recover resources) or not.

- **Hope:** The sparks of Hope gained throughout the adventure provide some of the benefits of a rest. In addition, a PC can expend a Hope point as a standard action to regain 4 healing surges and 1 daily attack or utility power.

A PC cannot recover a particular daily attack or utility power more than one time in total during this adventure either via the Despair or Hope mechanics. Daily item powers cannot be recovered in this manner, but PCs may possess abilities which allow them to recharge items.

ENCOUNTER 1: HOPELESS

SETUP

The PCs encounter a few survivors from the slaughter at I'Cath. The survivors are broken and desperate, and relate some of the horrors that have occurred.

Use information about which nations or groups the PCs called on to aid their invasion of I'Cath in *EPIC4-1 Shooting the Moon* to flavor the soldiers in this encounter. For example, if a group called upon Cormyr, Myth Drannor, and Tymander, then perhaps they find a gibbering war wizard, a hobbling purple dragon knight, a maimed dragonborn Lance Defender, and a pair of skittish elven rangers.

Down near the shore, several people are digging into the ground, making a large hole.

When the PCs get close:

The people are a group of old and maimed soldiers. They gape in astonishment at you. None reach for a weapon.

One soldier croaks, "You're back! You're alive! Thirty years and you're back!" He chokes a little, overcome with anguish. "Too late. Too late for anyone."

There should be a number of NPCs equal to the number of PCs. These NPCs are former soldiers who helped assault I'Cath, though the thirty years since have been extraordinarily bad for them. Use any particularly appropriate NPC (or make some up) from those the PCs gathered during *EPIC4-1*.

Each NPC looks far worse than if only thirty years had passed, due to depression, decades of nightmares, and malnutrition. In addition, each NPC is physically or mentally maimed by the personal horrors experienced. For each NPC, there is at least one notable thing wrong with him or her. Use one of the following for each soldier, or create your own. Make sure that at least one NPC is well enough to talk intelligently with the PCs.

- The soldier's eye sockets are bloody holes. The soldier appears quite normal and sane, though exhausted. Whenever he sleeps, however, he screams endlessly, won't awaken, and his friends need to tie him down to stop a repeat of when he took out his own eyes.
- The soldier mutters constantly, flinching away when talked to. The soldier's madness makes her a hindrance in battle, but at least she still eats when food is placed in front of her, and follows when led.

- Threads of shadow meander through the soldier's flesh, originating from a wound, such as a ripped off limb. The shadow threads cause great pain and eventually prove fatal, but have spread too far to stop.
- The soldier bolts and hides as soon as the PCs appear. She stutters and shrieks when she talks, panicking at every sound, shadow, and change.
- One of the soldiers can barely move and is skeletal thin. Everything tastes like corruption and death to him and living has no purpose, so he's been letting himself starve to death.
- One soldier looks the most dirty and unkempt of the lot, as if he has not taken care of himself in ages. He answers everything in the most melancholy and pessimistic tones. The soldier has had every last piece of hope and caring destroyed, and believes that everyone he ever loved is dead, so plans to soon join them.

The NPCs cannot do anything useful, either due to injury, insanity, memory loss, or long term exposure to the Hungering Dark. The soldiers recount what has happened:

- Tsien Chiang cast a mighty ritual that summoned the Hungering Dark.
- She controlled the abomination and used it to take over the world.
- At first, people fought back. Tsien made examples of them. Entire cities were swallowed in darkness, until nothing remained.
- She blocked out the sun. It didn't take long for the peasants to decide serving Tsien was better than starving once the crops failed.
- They prayed to the gods and begged for assistance. The gods could not stop the Hungering Dark. Instead, the gods abandoned everyone and fled Toril.

The old soldiers have given up on the world and given up on fighting. They believe that anyone slain by the Hungering Dark has their soul devoured and that anyone slain in another fashion returns as an undead. So the soldiers came here, in the hopes that Tsien's island might be less afflicted by the Hungering Dark. They have concocted a suicide pact, in which they hope to pass on with some dignity and avoid being turned into undead. They are digging a mass grave now, though they have not yet worked out the exact details.

Give the PCs some time to figure out the state of affairs, long enough to discuss what happened to their most beloved kingdoms, and to figure out that everyone

they care about is probably dead. The soldier adds, hopelessly:

“It’s not long until the end. There’s no resistance. No hope. We’re all doomed. I just hope we can die without turning undead or having our souls eaten. Not that I’m sure there’s even a place for our souls to go anymore.”

Distribute Player Handout 4 and determine the relevant despair penalties for each PC. Refer to Appendix 5. Explain that these penalties only go away if the PCs can prove to themselves and the world that there is Hope, and that it is possible to fight back. Also note that it is possible to earn more Despair.

As soon as the players are done processing the Despair mechanics, or once they need a little prodding to finish up, proceed to the next encounter.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After resolving despair, proceed directly to Encounter 2.

DESPAIR

Each PC should now have 4 Despair penalties. Any companions should have the *Not Long for This World* set of Despair penalties.

If you have chosen an alternate method for handling Despair, be ready to adjust this and all future Despair sections.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

None.

ENCOUNTER 2: DEVOURING SHADOWS

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 25

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- 1 devouring cloud (D)
- 2 shadow stealers (S)
- 2 shadow eaters (E)
- 5 old soldiers (O)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one shadow stealer and one of the old soldiers.

Six PCs: Add one shadow stealer and another old soldier.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: The shadow stealers and shadow eaters each have 50 fewer hit points and gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and +5 bonus to damage rolls.

Easier: The devouring cloud's tendril attacks from *mauling fury* must target two different creatures. The monsters take a -5 penalty to initiative and are not insubstantial while they form.

Harder: When bloodied, the shadow stealers recharge *shadow blink* and *distracting frenzy*, then use one as a free action. *Hunger for action* (on all monsters) also grants a +5 power bonus to all defenses until the end of the monster's next turn.

Glory: All monsters can teleport 6 squares whenever they use *hunger for action*. The devouring cloud's *bite* automatically hits a grabbed target and *mauling fury* no longer requires that the *bite* be against a grabbed target.

SETUP

The Hungering Dark disgorges several abominations around the party and the soldiers.

Streamers of roiling darkness descend from above. Dark clouds become tentacles, claws, and great toothy maws, forming horrific shadowy monsters.

The old soldiers stand hopeless; sure their souls will soon be devoured.

The monsters are still forming from the storm clouds when combat begins. All monsters are insubstantial until the end of their first turn.

INSTRUMENT OF DEATH

This feature gives every creature a 1/round bonus to a damage roll of 5 times the number of non-minions that have died in the encounter, to a maximum of +20.

Use this combat to illustrate the mechanic, so that the players and you get used to exploiting the damage bonus. Killing a soldier or companion is a particularly easy way to illustrate this feature.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Pit: The pit is 2 squares (10 feet) deep. Athletics checks to climb are automatically successful.

Difficult Terrain: Various rocks, wood, and undergrowth are marked by a triangle to signify difficult terrain.

Soldiers: The old soldiers have the following statistics:

- All defenses: 32.
- 20 hp (out of 80); soldiers die at 0 hp or lower.
- No healing surges remaining.
- Speed 2

Unless ordered otherwise, at the end of the round half of the soldiers flail uselessly against the monsters, moving adjacent to the nearest monster and attacking ineffectively. The other half are paralyzed with fear, or stand still waiting for their death.

The PCs may order the soldiers as a minor action with a Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 21 targets one soldier; DC 38 targets all the soldiers):

- The target soldier(s) either shifts 1 square; moves 2 squares (soldiers cannot Run); or uses the Total Defense action".
- Each soldier can only be ordered twice per round.

TACTICS

This combat is intended to let the players remember how to use their characters and get used to Despair. The character goal of the encounter is to keep any of the soldiers or companions alive.

Do not have the monsters target any soldiers before at least two PCs have acted. (That way, if the PCs fail to keep the soldiers alive, the failure is truly theirs and not due to poor initiative rolls.) Thereafter, once at least two PCs have acted, the monsters should attempt to kill at least one soldier on their turn. They gain an action point

by doing so (monsters can spend more than one action point in an encounter).

The monsters otherwise kill the soldiers only when convenient, preferring to kill no more than two in the first round, then finish them off in the second round. Note that the shadow eaters can pick off one or two soldiers when coming back from *cross into shadow*. The party should have to work extremely hard to prevent any deaths. If possible, let monsters kill the soldiers with multi-target attacks, or use the shadow stealers and eaters who don't already have an action point, so that there is less chance for the bonus action point to be wasted.

The devouring cloud does whatever is necessary to grab a creature with its *shadow tendrils*, so that it can make *bite* and *swallow* attacks.

The shadow stealers use *distracting frenzy* to grant the devouring cloud extra *mauling fury* attacks or to let a shadow eater use *gobble* and *swallow*. They otherwise *shadow strike* as much as possible.

The shadow eaters use *grasping tendril* on leaders to keep them separated from their allies so they can swallow them when possible. Once bloodied, they *gobble* injured or bloodied PCs.

ROLEPLAYING

The soldiers act in accordance with the personalities chosen in Encounter 1. If the PCs are being successful at saving them, they begin to show the stirrings of hope.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When it seems obvious that the monsters can accomplish nothing else, they dissipate back into the clouds overhead.

What happens next is largely up to the PCs. Refer to Encounters 3 and 4 for managing pacing, and let the PCs explore as little or as much as they wish.

DESPAIR

If the PCs saved at least one of the soldiers, then each PC may remove one Despair penalty.

If the PCs expended notable daily resources and/or used impressive tactical methods to save all soldiers, then each PC may remove a second Despair penalty. The spirit behind the success is important. If the PCs simply won initiative and were extraordinarily optimized, such that the monsters had no ability to act, then regardless of how many soldiers they save, the PCs may not remove a second Despair penalty.

If the PCs had plentiful opportunity to save the soldiers, but expended no real effort such that all

soldiers died, then the PCs may not remove a Despair penalty at all.

If all soldiers died before the PCs could respond, then the encounter was not run correctly (see the second paragraph of the Tactics section). Allow each PC to remove one Despair penalty.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 2: DEVOURING SHADOWS

1 Devouring Cloud (D)	Level 25 Elite Soldier
Huge shadow magical beast	XP 14,000
HP 472; Bloodied 236	Initiative +25
AC 39, Fortitude 38, Reflex 38, Will 37	Perception +19
Speed 8, fly 8 (hover)	Blindsight 25
Immune blinded, disease, gaze, poison; Resist 15 cold, 15 necrotic, 15 radiant	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Instinctive Action	
On an initiative of 10 + its initiative check, the devouring cloud may either remove a single harmful condition, move 8 squares, or use <i>shadow tendrils</i> .	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 15 damage.	
M Shadow Tendrils • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 5 (one creature); +28 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 15 damage, and the target is pulled up to 5 squares and grabbed (escape DC 29 ends).	
M Mauling Fury • At-Will	
Effect: The devouring cloud makes two <i>shadow tendrils</i> attacks. It then makes a <i>bite</i> attack against a grabbed creature.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Hunger for Action • At-Will	
Trigger: The devouring cloud reduces an enemy to 0 hp or lower.	
Effect (No Action): The devouring cloud gains an action point.	
Bloodied Frenzy • Encounter	
Trigger: The devouring cloud is bloodied for the first time.	
Effect (Free Action): The devouring cloud teleports up to 8 squares adjacent to a living creature, and uses <i>mauling fury</i> .	
Swallow • At-Will	
Trigger: The devouring cloud hits a grabbed target with a <i>bite</i> attack.	
Attack (Free Action): Melee 3 (triggering target); +27 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target is swallowed (escape DC 38 ends) and is no longer grabbed. While swallowed, the target is restrained and takes 40 damage when it ends its turn. The swallowed creature has line of sight and line of effect only to the devouring cloud, and no creature has line of sight or line of effect to the target. The effect ends when the devouring cloud drops to 0 hit points or when it ends the effect as a free action. When the effect ends, the target appears in an unoccupied space of its choice adjacent to the devouring cloud.	
Skills Athletics +25	
Str 27 (+20)	Dex 22 (+18)
Con 28 (+21)	Int 20 (+17)
	Cha 23 (+18)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common

Note: Re-flavored Aspect of Turaglas (*Dragon* 376), with a situational +5 initiative bonus. Swallow mechanics redesigned. *Intercepting claw* replaced with *instinctive action* and *bloodied frenzy*. Tendril reach increased. Variable resistance made less variable. AC reduced and Reflex raised.

2 Shadow Stealers (S)	Level 25 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 7,000
HP 228; Bloodied 114	Initiative +27
AC 39, Fortitude 36, Reflex 40, Will 35	Perception +18
Speed 6, fly 6	Darkvision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Hook Strike • At-Will	
Effect: The shadow stealer shifts 1 square.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 15 damage and the target is grabbed (escape DC 29 ends).	
r Hurl Shadow • At-Will	
Effect: The shadow stealer shifts 1 square.	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +28 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d12 + 10 damage.	
M Shadow Blink • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Melee 5 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d12 + 24 damage.	
Effect: The shadow stealer teleports up to 5 squares before or after the attack.	
C Distracting Frenzy • Encounter	
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d12 + 10 damage.	
Effect: An ally within 10 squares of the shadow stealer takes a standard action as a free action.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Drag Away • At-Will	
Requirement: The shadow stealer must have a creature grabbed.	
Effect: The shadow stealer moves up to its speed, pulling the grabbed creature with it. The shadow stealer and the creature grabbed by it do not provoke opportunity attacks from each other as a result of this movement.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Hunger for Action • At-Will	
Trigger: The shadow stealer reduces an enemy to 0 hp or lower.	
Effect (No Action): The shadow stealer gains an action point.	
Skills Athletics +24	
Str 24 (+19)	Dex 27 (+20)
Con 20 (+17)	Int 21 (+17)
	Cha 10 (+12)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages -

Note: Banderhobb filch (*Monster Manual* 3), upgraded to epic tier, with a situational +5 initiative bonus. *Hook strike* and *quick claw* combined for simplicity. Shift effects moved to before both attacks.

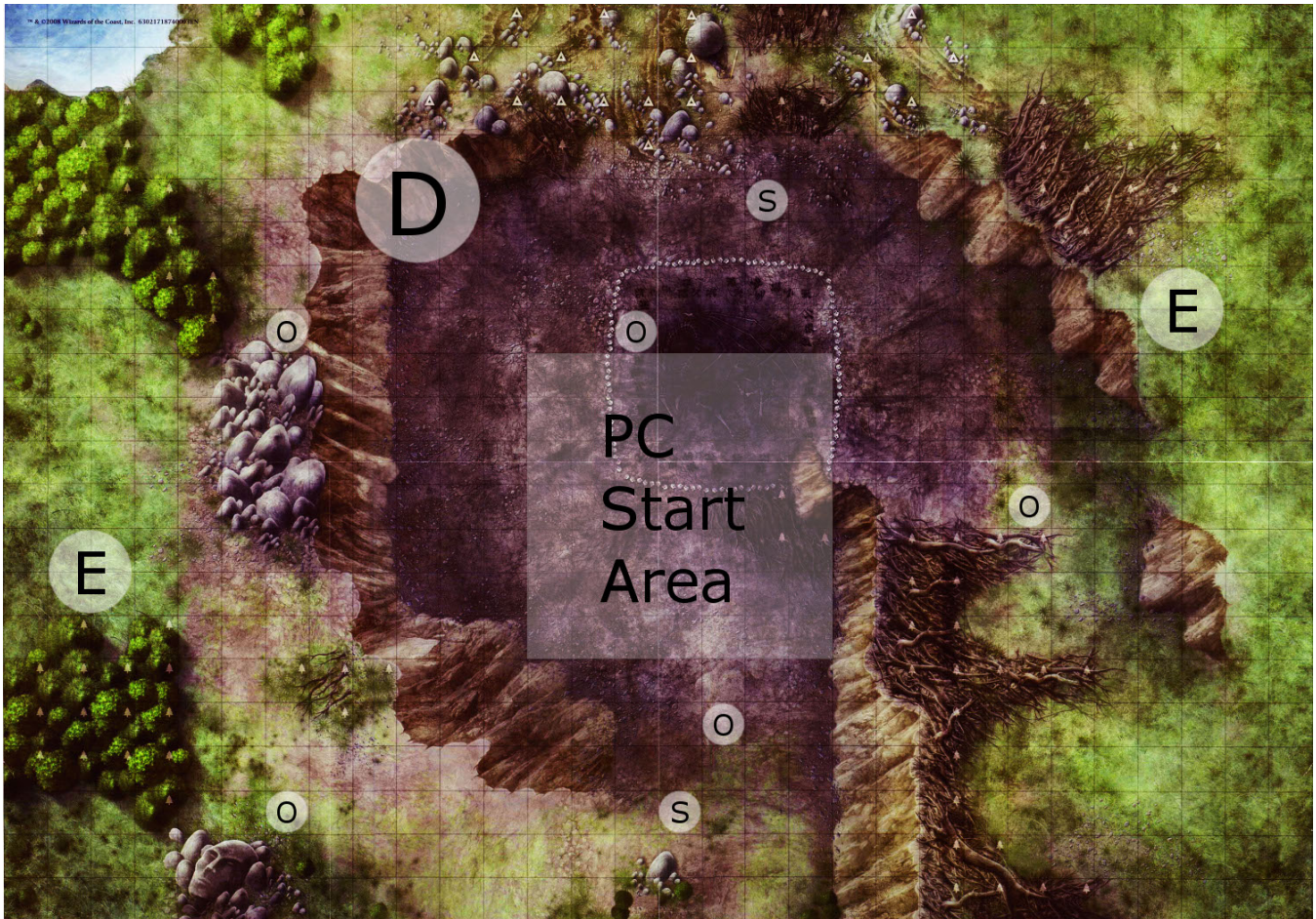
2 Shadow Eater (E)	Level 25 Brute
Large shadow magical beast	XP 7,000
HP 281; Bloodied 140	Initiative +25
AC 37, Fortitude 36, Reflex 39, Will 37	Perception +19
Speed 6, fly 6	Darkvision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d12 + 16 damage.	
r Grasping Tendril • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +28 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d12 + 14 damage, and the target is pulled up to 9 squares to a space adjacent and grabbed (escape DC 29 ends).	
M Gobble • At-Will	
Requirement: The shadow eater must be bloodied.	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d12 + 24 damage and the target is grabbed (escape DC 29 ends). If the target is bloodied, the shadow eater recharges swallow and uses it against the target as a free action.	
M Swallow • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Melee 2 (one bloodied creature grabbed by the eater); +28 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target is swallowed (escape DC 38 ends) and is no longer grabbed. While swallowed, the target is restrained and takes 40 damage when it ends its turn. The swallowed creature has line of sight and line of effect only to the shadow eater, and no creature has line of sight or line of effect to the target. The effect ends when the shadow eater drops to 0 hit points or when it ends the effect as a free action. When the effect ends, the target appears in an unoccupied space of its choice adjacent to the shadow eater.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Cross into Shadow (teleportation) • Encounter	
Trigger: The shadow eater is first bloodied.	
Effect (No Action): The shadow eater is removed from play until the start of its next turn. The shadow eater then appears in an unoccupied space within 10 squares of its last location.	
Hunger for Action • At-Will	
Trigger: The shadow eater reduces an enemy to 0 hp or lower.	
Effect (No Action): This creature gains an action point.	
Str 22 (+18)	Dex 27 (+20)
Con 21 (+17)	Int 22 (+18)
	Wis 25 (+19)
	Cha 12 (+13)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common	
Note: Banderhobb abductor (<i>Monster Manual 3</i>), upgraded to epic tier, swallow mechanics redesigned, with a situational +5 initiative bonus.	

ENCOUNTER 2: DEVOURING SHADOWS

TILE SETS NEEDED

Keep on the Shadowfell or Dragondown Grotto poster map.

D = devouring cloud; **S** = soul stealer; **E** = soul eater; **O** = old soldier



ENCOUNTER 3: ANGEL OF THE EVERLASTING VOID

SETUP

At various points during the adventure, Oublivae presents herself in her guise as the Blessed Angel. Do this when necessary for pacing, or after the PCs defeat one of the major villains in Encounters 5C, 6C, or 7C. She does not show up before Encounter 4, but can show up during it to help guide the PCs.

ANGELIC APPEARANCE

A faint smell of peppermint and the quiet sound of bells chiming precedes the arrival of a marvelous creature. The Blessed Angel appears, her glowing white wings flapping slowly as she hovers, a beacon of light in the darkness. Her smile is gentle and her expression compassionate.

She carries a scythe in one hand and an hourglass in the other. "Time has almost run out," she says after glancing at the hourglass. "Please, be at rest so you may enjoy the end of creation."

ANGELIC PERSONALITY

The angel is initially kind, almost solicitous, as if showing the PCs the error of their ways and helping them cope. Play her as entirely misguided by enigmatic beliefs that somehow this is a better world.

Oublivae has perfected masquerading as the Blessed Angel over many millennia. She maintains a righteous attitude. If any of the PCs die, she praises their martyrdom, even as she registers some disbelief that they choose to come back to life:

"Is it not time for you to put down your burden and rest? What use could the world still have for you?"

Insight

DC 38: The Blessed Angel's actions suggest that her words are not truthful. There is a hint in her mannerisms that reveals she enjoys your discomfort.

DC 45: The angel is acting, a creation or illusion of some other creature. That other creature is sadistic and enjoys toying with others.

AGENDA

Oublivae has put the events of this adventure in motion to advance her own agenda. It's just a question of how thoroughly and perfectly her plans play out. A perfect outcome for her is:

- Kill the PCs one by one, while opening them to her corruption.
- Drive the PCs to decisions that cause them to gain Despair.
- Tempt the PC to use the tainted powers *destroy them* or *devour them* (see Appendix 1).
- Eventually inform the PCs of Tsien's plans and how to stop the sorceress. Oublivae's best case scenario is to give the PCs just enough information that they stop Tsien but die in the process.

ALTERNATIVE USE

For some groups, you can have the Blessed Angel accompany the group throughout the entire adventure. She can transport the PCs from location to location, even taking them away mid-encounter when she gets bored. This approach removes some of the player agency in deciding where to go, but can be useful if time is limited or the players lack initiative.

TRUE APPEARANCE

The PCs are unable to discern Oublivae's true form until she chooses to reveal it – if they try prior to that, refer to the Troubleshooting section below.

Oublivae has the head of a resplendent fey queen atop a lustrous insectoid exoskeleton. An enormous scorpion tail rises above her, poised to strike anyone that comes close.

PERSONALITY

Oublivae is fascinated with history, with a focus on the rise and fall of civilizations. She delights and feeds off the despair inflicted on the PCs.

Oublivae talks a lot. She enjoys exchanging information, discussing the cyclical epochs of history, riddles, all manner of things. She'll be a consummate hostess.

She shows no fear of the PCs, even when she might seem doomed. She earnestly believes that no matter what happens she has already won.

While the potential future she has shown is interesting to her, she believes that if Tsien is in control of the Hungering Dark, Tsien might create an empire that can never fall. The destruction of existing civilizations is good, but Oublivae thinks she can do better. She's patient enough to play a longer game, so is willing to let the PCs have a chance to stop Tsien.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the PCs attack the angel, attempt to steal her hourglass, or use an ability which grants truesight, she acts before they can finish their action.

The angel sighs in frustration at your attempt. As she does so, a burst of power ripples out from the hourglass she carries and time freezes for an instant. When that instant passes, she has disappeared.

Thereafter, Oublivae communicates using a form of telepathy, rather than appearing in person.

SUGGESTED SCENES

If the PCs can't figure out somewhere to go before or during Encounter 4, the angel appears.

"The world that played out in your absence is a marvel, is it not? It is finally true to a destiny that was wrought by the gods millennia ago when they crafted the Hungering Dark."

She directs the PCs toward lost loved ones or favored kingdoms, knowing there is no positive outcome in these actions. She assures them that seeing the loss of everything that tied them to the world helps them to give up and leave those things behind.

If the PCs have seen enough destruction, she points them to one of the three villains.

Szass Tam:

"Szass Tam serves the sorceress by creating undead from the bodies of her enemies - indeed from the bodies of everyone he and his lackeys can reach. Do not worry, though - when creation is cleansed, you will not remain undead. Everything will be destroyed in the end, no matter what the lich does with the Dread Ring at Neverwinter."

Fzoul Chembryl:

"There is one god remaining, but not a true one. Once human, Fzoul is little more than an upstart and abject failure as the so-called "God of Serving Evil". He thought he had defeated Tsien, but now serves her in Zhentil Keep."

Manshoon:

"Tsien has taken the archmage Manshoon as her minion. It is unlike her to work with any man, but perhaps he has useful information for her plan to reshape a four-fold Weave. Tsien stopped the sun from

shining on Westgate, so Manshoon's vampires certainly benefitted from the deal."

After they defeat one of three villains in 5C, 6C, or 7C:

"A meaningless gesture. Do you not realize that your efforts are too little, too late? The world approaches oblivion, and with it, an end to all evil and suffering."

After they defeat the second of the villains, Oublivae begins getting truly annoyed by their persistence:

"Your persistence, much like your career choice, suggests insanity. Do you have a sick fascination with hurling yourselves to your death time and time again?"

AFTER THE PCs HAVE DEFEATED ALL THREE VILLAINS IN 5C, 6C, AND 7C, OR WITH THREE HOURS OR LESS OF TIME TO PLAY, THE ANGEL WILL APPEAR ONE FINAL TIME:

"I think that is quite enough meddling with my Barrens. Shall we end this?"

The smell of peppermint is replaced with that of blood and decay, while the chiming bells transition to a sorrowful dirge. The Blessed Angel's form wavers, folds in on itself, then rips apart to reveal something entirely different: a demon, with the head of a resplendent fey queen atop a lustrous insectoid exoskeleton. An enormous scorpion tail rises from her back, poised to strike.

"I am Oublivae, Queen of Desolation. I have shown you the world as it will be, after you fail to stop Tsien Chiang. It has been an amusing diversion, but I grow tired of your presence. You may return home soon, but I can entertain you to a few more deaths first."

The world spins and trembles, her realm reshaping to the Demon Queen's whim. The ground opens up, even as castle walls seem to rise up around you. You are helplessly dragged towards massive pits, your companions falling away from you.

Proceed to Encounter 8.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the PCs decide to travel to a key despair area, continue with the appropriate encounter. Return to this encounter whenever appropriate for additional roleplaying.

MILESTONE

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

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4: BARREN DESOLATION

SETUP

Thirty years have passed while the PCs were gone. In that time, Tsien Chiang released the Hungering Dark from Carceri. It grew to envelop Faerûn, attacking at her command. Unable to withstand its onslaught, the gods retreated from the world and left it to its fate.

Some evil nations and villains surrendered or were dominated by the sorceress. In general, any bastion of good was ruthlessly obliterated. People hide in small pockets, trying to survive. Often, these people must betray allies or turn to cannibalism. The world is savage and dark. There is no hope for Faerûn - save for what the PCs bring to it.

The PCs may visit a number of places in Faerûn that are near and dear to them. As they do, invoke as much despair as possible for the PCs who care the most. Describe regions in ruins or completely destroyed. Organizations, friends, and family are dead - or worse. Do not present any NPCs who might be rescued or saved, for the root of hope lies down those paths.

Allow the PCs to explore a few locations, finding out information about three of "Tsien's" servants (Manshoon, Szass Tam, Fzoul Chembryl; use Appendix 6 for more information) as they go, then have them seek out the next lieutenant or explore a little more until they get the trail to another. Ideally, your group defeats all three villains. In a time limited environment, refer to Appendix 3 to make sure there is time for the final confrontation.

Seed these key pieces of information into a location when you are ready to present one of the major villains. (Oublivae is pulling the strings for her own agenda.)

- Szass Tam is the one turning all of the dead into undead. He is known to be working on a ritual in Neverwinter.
- Fzoul temporarily defeated Tsien, and knows the most of her weaknesses. However, the sorceress regained the upper hand, so Fzoul is now enslaved as a commander of Tsien's forces. He can be found at Zhentil Keep.
- Manshoon has been head-hunting anyone who could have been a threat to Tsien (and keeping their souls for his own purposes) and is the only one who can contact her. If the PCs inquire about a powerful NPC, they might learn that Manshoon has captured the NPC's soul and keeps it in Westgate.

Allow the PCs to travel the world largely as they will, exploring the ruins and learning of the state of things. Use any of the following ideas, or others that are appropriate for your group. It is not terribly important how the PCs choose to travel around Faerûn. They are assumed to do so successfully, taking several days to get to each location, fighting undead, servants of evil, and shadowy monstrosities the entire way. Do convey that they face constant combat as they travel.

Speaking with an isolated survivor or two may reveal some or all of the following information.

- No place is safe.
- At first, people resisted, but with Tsien's own magic and the power of the Hungering Dark no one could withstand her.
- Eventually the gods announced that they must seal away Faerûn, like Carceri before it, to keep in the Hungering Dark. The gods then departed.
- Tsien Chiang rules the world, but no one has seen her for some time.
- Several powerful males were forced to serve her, and act as her lieutenants ruling over much of the world and finishing the job of destroying it.
- Szass Tam has been working in Neverwinter on its Dread Ring. Rumor says soon all who die will animate as undead.
- Fzoul Chembryl has rebuilt Zhentil Keep and crushes any who resist Tsien, as he was crushed by her.
- Manshoon in Westgate is rounding up people as cattle for himself and his vampire spawn, while capturing the souls of anyone knowledgeable or important.
- If anyone wishes to stop Tsien, they need to take down Szass Tam, Fzoul, and Manshoon first.

Make it clear to the PCs that the only way that they can overcome their despair is to strike against some of Tsien's servants. When the PCs are ready, run one of the following encounters:

- **5A Collection Time:** Szass Tam; Szass Tam's servants are gathering souls to create undead in Neverwinter.
- **6A Zhentil Enslaved:** Fzoul Chembryl; Fzoul has rebuilt Zhentil Keep.
- **7A Fields of the Dead:** Manshoon; Manshoon's stronghold is located in Westgate, on the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Given time, the PCs can confront each villain, but it is possible the players only have enough real life time to finish two of the paths. Nudge the players towards the encounters that will be most enjoyable for them.

Emphasize that approaching these lieutenants would be impossible for adventurers of heroic caliber and amazingly difficult for adventurers of paragon caliber. The epic PCs slaughter hordes of undead and the like to get to each leader, to the point where later forces flee before them, until they get to the real encounters.

THREE LIEUTENANTS?

Attentive players or their PCs may wonder why Tsien, who is obsessed with the number four, has taken only three lieutenants. The reason is that Oublivae, as clever as she is, overlooked that part of Tsien's personality; to the demon queen, the mental hang-ups of an upstart sorceress are unimportant.

If the PCs confront the Blessed Angel (Oublivae) about this discrepancy, she is visibly taken aback, but quickly recovers. The angel states that Tsien may have had four lieutenants at one point, but one must have displeased her and been slain. (This is a lie, as a DC 45 Insight check can discern.)

LOCATIONS

You can use the following scenes for inspiration, or if the PCs decide to travel to any of these areas. Remember that all NPCs have aged 30 years since the last time the PCs may have seen them. The PCs can also learn much of the information about a region by asking in nearby countries.

For any location not specifically listed, you can make up outcomes and events that add to the PCs' despair. If you are not familiar with a particular region, use the following as a default description.

- The city/region/country has been consumed by shadow, similar to that of the Ordulin Maelstrom.
- Everyone the PC knew is dead. There are no survivors, except one token NPC who can tell the PCs how bad everything is.
- If the PCs ask about any particular NPC, be sure to describe a gruesome and horrible fate.
- Whenever possible, connect the events to Tsien Chiang or the Hungering Dark. PCs should understand that Tsien is to blame for all of this.

AGLAROND

The once lush forests of Aglarond are withered, and the inhabitants of this once-great fey kingdom have been

slaughtered or turned to undead. The PCs can find an elderly half-elf farmer, Thelgood (AGLA1-1 *Lost Temple of the Fey Gods*) hiding in the village of Halendos. He can relate the following information.

- The presence of the Hungering Dark empowered all undead in Thay, making them much stronger than the good people of Aglarond could handle.
- The people begged help from nearby Thesk, who had a radiant vessel (CORE1-2) to fight the undead.
- The Shou witch Tsien Chiang slew the boy bringing the vessel, and all was lost.
- Undead from Thay quickly overran both countries, draining the life from the verdant forests and transforming all who fell in front of them into undead to join their ranks.

AKANUL

The land of Akanul is shattered, much of it underwater and claimed by the Abolethic Sovereignty.

- When the Hungering Dark covered the skies, Airspur was devoured whole.
- When the gods enclosed Faerûn in a ward to keep in the Hungering Dark, it caused all of the earthmotes to crash down.
- In the years since, the sea level has risen to wash the cratered land. Anyone living is converted to aberrations and sent to hunt others.
- The aboleth city of Xipphu landed on the border of Akanul. The aberrants offer tribute sacrifices to the Hungering Dark, which extrudes great tentacles of shadow to claim the offerings.
- The PCs may rescue an NPC who explains what has happened, but the NPC then begins to cough. A moment later he vomits out a torrent of tentacles, eyes, and his own organs, leaving nothing behind but an empty husk.

BALDUR'S GATE

The city of Baldur's Gate is now a burned-down heap of buildings inhabited by scavengers eking out an existence. Flaming Fist Lieutenant Hart Stonefield (BALD1-1 *Flames of Initiation*), a male human warlord, is one such scavenger.

- There is nothing left of the Flaming Fist organization.
- Hart spends all of his time hiding from undead and scavenging what he needs to survive day to day.
- When the Hungering Dark was released it empowered a surge of undead.

- The Flaming Fist and watch fought the good fight, but a Shou sorceress joined the battle and soon the undead were more than they could handle.
- Those who fled were hunted down and killed. Those who stayed have seen their numbers dwindle over the years.
- Hart suspects there are fewer than a dozen scavengers left in the city, and there will be none by the end of the year.

CALIMSHAN

War between the three cities, facilitated by Ala'Ammar, a human abolitionist (*CALI3-1 Malice of Mintar* and other CALI adventures), left all three cities weak and vulnerable. The cities are now ruled by powerful undead leaders, and the inhabitants are all dead. The only person left alive the PCs might know is Ala'Ammar's faithful servant, Ran Sahib, whose hands have been removed.

- Tsien Chiang took advantage of the weakened state of the region and conquered it.
- Ala'Ammar and the WeavePasha used a magic lamp to wish for the PCs to come to their aid. Nothing happened.
- All nobles and leaders of Almraiven, Calimport, and Memnon were executed, and Tsien enslaved all the peoples of Calimshan.
- The cities are ruled by powerful liches, members of the Twisted Rune. The liches have tapped the slaves for their life force, so attacking the liches only results in the death of the slaves.

CANDLEKEEP

A lone, elderly man sifts through the ashes of Candlekeep. The library was burned down decades ago by the witch Tsien Chiang, and the keepers of knowledge hunted down. He is the last of the librarians.

- As he sifts through the ash, he asks the PCs to help him find any pages that might have survived. There are none.
- If a PC offers him a tome, he is most grateful, and asks them to help him find his spectacles, which he lost fleeing the library decades ago.
- When he looks up, the PCs notice that the man's eyes are milky white: he is completely blind.

CORMYR

Much of Cormyr fell under the Ordulin Maelstrom when its growth escalated with the arrival of the Hungering Dark. Lord Erzoured (*CORM1-6 Curse of the Queen of Thorns* and other CORM adventures), nephew

of King Foril, sits on the throne. The few knights who remain hold out against the forces of Fzoul Chembryl, but it is only a matter of weeks before the kingdom will fall.

- When the Maelstrom expanded, King Foril suspected a Netherese plot and declared war. Prince Irvel and Taliss Muirwood led Purple Dragons and War Wizards to battle.
- They sent word to the PCs for help, but received no answer.
- It was a trap. A female Shou sorceress empowered the Maelstrom and it expanded over the army, destroying it instantly.
- Meanwhile, Fzoul Chembryl, serving the sorceress, launched an attack on Suzail. Foril was killed and the kingdom all but destroyed.
- King Erzoured blames the PCs for abandoning the kingdom during its most dire need. He strips them of all titles and exiles them from the kingdom. (A purely symbolic gesture, but one designed to hurt the PCs' feelings; and note that since this is not in actual Faerûn no story awards should be removed!)

DALELANDS

The Dalelands have been swallowed by the Ordulin Maelstrom spreading out from Sembia. There is a camp on the very edge of the Dalelands where the Halfling Jonster Yate, thoroughly insane, is attempting to make a boat of bones of the fallen so he can take them all to safety. He mutters continually about floods and vessels.

- The Stellar Fellowship of Gentle Adventurers was destroyed. All attempts to portal there open into lashing tendrils of shadow.
- New Velar was singled out for destruction by Tsien, for its support of adventurers and previous imagined slights against the Chiang Emporium.

DRAGON COAST

The Dragon Coast is a hive of scum and villainy. The Shou gangs united under Tsien Chiang, but have fallen into total chaos.

The few Shou who remain are quite mad and believe they are the chosen of Tsien. They all claim to be of the Chiang clan, and anticipate that they will be elevated to positions of great power, replacing one of her three generals.

Westgate is overrun with vampires who feed on the remaining populace night and day. Go to Encounter 7A.

EAST RIFT

The East Rift became a haven for refugees, for a short time.

- At the very outside of the East Rift is a single dwarf from the Crafty Kobold Salvage Company, Divhon Boltsmelter. He can recount much of what has happened below, but he is most concerned for the loss of his son (who actually died years ago in *EAST1-1 These Hallowed Halls*).
- Refugees from above ground fled from the Hungering Dark to the East Rift... far more than the dwarves could possibly hold or feed.
- After a time, horrible creatures poured out of the Underdark, creatures of tentacle and maw that homed in the dark, bolstered by the Hungering Dark. The cities held out for years, slowly dying to fighting monsters, but starvation was the true danger. The starving people of the East Rift turned to eating their dead, then their wounded. They began to change, growing fangs, and hungering for the living. The few dwarves remaining are mutated, with toothy maws for devouring the living.
- See the Underdark.

ELTURGARD

Elturgard is overrun with bloated, plaguechanged undead abominations. The Companion was destroyed decades ago, and the city of Elturel is almost abandoned. In the central square, directly below where the Companion once hung, the body of a copper dragon is partially fused into the surrounding buildings.

- The copper dragon identifies herself as Tyrangal (*SPEC2-1* (various) and *ADCP2-1 The Paladin's Plague*). Tyrangal took the form of an eladrin female in the previous adventures.
- Tsien Chiang brought the Hungering Dark to attack the city of Elturel and capture the Companion.
- Tyrangal and the defenses of the city were no match for Tsien and her deific power, especially with the weakened status of the Companion after the events of *ADCP2-1* and *ELTU3-6 True Blue*.
- Tsien channeled the power of the Hungering Dark through the Companion. This turned every resident within miles into horribly mutated undead abominations.
- The Hungering Dark devoured the Companion while the undead destroyed the city, including any buildings or structures dedicated to the PCs from *ADCP2-1*.

- Every member of the Dusk Talons, Lion's Den, and Order of Torm were transformed, and many of them wandered into the plaguelands and returned as plaguechanged undead abominations.
- As punishment for standing up against her, Tsien imprisoned Tyrangal within the very city she sought to protect, which keeps the dragon alive in a state of constant agonizing pain.
- Tyrangal begs the PCs to destroy her, ending her suffering. The PCs can either kill her or leave her to suffer. There are no other alternatives.

IMPILTUR

The entire country of Impiltur is crawling in all manner of demons.

- New Sarshel is the only city still standing and it is ruled by a court of demons.
- A maelstrom of darkness swirls overhead New Sarshel. Whenever a demon dies in the city, it is restored to life.
- The demons fight constantly with no fear of death, exchanging slaves, treasure, bragging rights, and even rulership of the country in ever-changing and destructive chaos.
- Many people are still allowed to live, but they must promise to serve demonic masters. Those who displease the demons are used for amusement.
- The people living in Impiltur must kill each other to survive, and most have turned to cannibalism.

LOUDWATER (THE GRAY VALE)

Loudwater is home to thousands upon thousands of goblinoids, who slaughtered the previous residents of the town under the leadership of the Ogre King and his pet goblin shaman, Sancossug (*ADAP1-1 Barrow of the Ogre King*). Even if the PCs made a deal with Sancossug in *ADAP1-1*, he still directs his forces to attack them. The epic PCs can effortlessly defeat the goblinoids, but there is no one left in Loudwater to save.

LURUAR

In a world of never-ending night, the lycanthropes rule. Always in beast form, the lycanthropes have consumed the populace and now feed on each other.

- The Vault of Sages in Silvermoon is smashed, its portal barely functional. (Only the PCs' epic magic allows them to use the portal.)
- For the fate of Coura / Saharel, see Spellgard.

MOONSHAE ISLES

Empowered by the Hungering Dark, Tsien Chiang summoned a tsunami that washed the islands off of the map. There may be a few survivors on an island or two, dying of starvation while fending off monsters of the sea looking for a meal of their own.

MYTH DRANNOR

Myth Drannor was completely eradicated early on, as an example to the rest of Faerûn.

NETHERIL

Netheril is an impassable region of shadow. Its inhabitants fled back to the Shadowfell before the world was sealed, in an attempt to find a place more hospitable for life.

NEVERWINTER

Neverwinter is one of the few places that surrendered early, so was left relatively untouched. The people are barely subsisting and people go missing every day, to fuel the nearby Dread Ring. Go to Encounter 5A.

RAVEN'S BLUFF

The high-density city of Raven's Bluff proved to be a feeding ground for the Hungering Dark.

- Knights of the Golden Rooster were dominated by Tsien's power and herded the population into holding pens.
- The Hungering Dark fed on the souls, growing in power. Then, the knights walked through a portal to Neverwinter.

RETURNED ABEIR

Returned Abeir is overrun by marauding dragon emperors and their servants who wage a never-ending battle against recently awakened Dawn Titans and their cultists.

- Tsien has not tested her power against the dragons and primordials yet. She prefers to let them destroy each other before she attacks the weakened victor.
- The city of Tarmalune has been completely consumed by the ever expanding pillar of fire, which will engulf the other cities of the Windrise Ports within a few years.

SPELLGARD (THE FALLEN LANDS)

Coura / Saharel (ADCP3-2 *From Dawn Till Dusk*) prophesied that Tsien would destroy the Vault of Sages

(see Luruar), so the Harpers relocated to Spellgard. Unfortunately, as the Harpers drew on Coura / Saharel's powers to predict Tsien's moves, the knowledge that the world was doomed drove the prophetess completely mad. She slew Blaynden and the other Harpers while they slept, and now wanders Spellgard aimlessly.

TYMANOTHER

The proud dragonborn of Tymanother put up an initial fight against Tsien's forces, but were no match for her power enhanced by the Hungering Dark.

- The Lance Defenders allied with the Zhentarim in an all-out effort to thwart Tsien.
- When Tsien temporarily disincorporated (see Encounter 6C), Fzoul turned on the weakened Lance Defenders and finished them off, claiming leadership of Tymanother.

UNDERDARK

Creatures of tentacle and shadow have swarmed the paths of the Underdark. Any descent is a constant and pointless battle.

- When Lolth departed, the drow cities and houses fell on each other, which only invited their enemies to assault them. Here and there, a stronghold persists, but there is no trust or welcome.
- Typically, creatures empowered by darkness enjoyed the depths of the Underdark. Now that the entire world is succumbing to darkness, such creatures are just as powerful on the surface as they once were in the depths of the earth.

WATERDEEP

The earthmote of Yaulazna was floating above Waterdeep facilitating trade when Tsien Chiang freed the Hungering Dark. She attacked the earthmote, and it plummeted into Waterdeep, vaporized most of the city on impact, and left nothing but a smoking crater.

The monsters of Undermountain swarmed the city, slaughtering the few survivors of the earthmote crash. The area is now rubble and ruins, inhabited by monsters free to roam the surface.

A serious search for survivors, turns up an insane doppelganger who is convinced he is simultaneously the only ruling Masked Lord of the city, the Blackstaff, and a clone of the mad wizard Halaster.

YLAUZA

See Waterdeep.

PERSONALIZING THE ADVENTURE

Please customize the areas to the PCs and their interests. Do not feel restricted to the examples above.

This section is entirely open-ended and a fantastic sandbox if you want to take epic PCs on many adventures through a post-apocalyptic Faerûn. If your group would enjoy it, feel free to improvise encounters and adventures in the various lands. You'll want to consider how to handle resource management.

Szass Tam, Fzoul Chembryl, and Manshoon were chosen as three of the most iconic Forgotten Realms villains available, villains with which the PCs might otherwise have difficulty obtaining a showdown. If there are villains who are more appropriate for your group, you may choose to slightly alter the villain in an encounter to provide a more customized adventure.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the PCs decide to travel to a key despair area, continue with the appropriate encounter (5A, 6A, or 7A). The PCs can return to this encounter at any time to explore what is left of Faerûn.

MILESTONE

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

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 5A: COLLECTION TIME

IMPORTANT NPCs

Fist of Lorrageauth, creature collection construct

SETUP

The PCs arrive in Neverwinter to find a city that surrendered to Tsien Chiang, but now lives in continual fear of her servants.

People dressed in dreary, gray clothes scurry around. Their eyes search the streets and alleys for potential danger. They avoid meeting your gaze, clearly afraid, and stay out of your way.

The people of Neverwinter avoid the PCs. The citizens have grown used to losing the occasional family member, dragged off by the undead, but fear what greater horrors will surely follow the PCs.

If the PCs have interests in Neverwinter, allow them to briefly explore the town. Otherwise, the Fist of Lorrageauth attacks, gathering many sacrifices to power a ritual for Encounter 5B:

Suddenly, portals open up all around and enormous mechanical claws burst from the portals to scoop up screaming citizens by the dozen. The claws pull their prey towards the portals, through which you can see an enormous black altar amid a field covered in bones.

Szass Tam recently ordered that all of the Dread Rings be brought to full power. In response, Lorrageauth opened portals for his Fist to gather sacrifices from the nearby city.

The claws sweep through the city, pulling entire families out of apartments or off the streets. Only the PCs can do anything about it. Go around the table and allow each PC to take one action (plus spend an action point if the PC wishes) to save people or divert the claws.

SKILL CHECKS

Each PC can make one skill check (justified in a logical fashion - see below for some examples). No single skill may be used more than once in this encounter. PCs may not aid another's skill check.

- A DC 21 (Easy) success saves 1 person.
- A DC 29 (Moderate) success saves 3 people.
- A DC 38 (Hard) success saves 5 people.

SKILL CHECK EXAMPLES

Below are basic examples of skills in use. Allow PCs to make up further examples.

Arcana (DC 21/29/38)

The PC channels power into the portals, closing one before a claw can bring its cargo back through it.

Athletics (DC 21/29/38)

The PC rips open a claw so citizens may wriggle to safety.

Diplomacy (DC 21/29/38)

The PC's presence orders people to safety and recruits people in rescue efforts.

Perception (DC 21/29/38)

The PC observes the movement of the claws and warns people away from their attacks.

Thievery (DC 21/29/38)

The PC disables the mechanism holding a claw closed, forcing it to release its captives.

ATTACK POWERS

The claws' defenses are AC 41, Fortitude 39, Reflex 37, and Will 35. The PC's attack needs to deal at least 25 damage or inflict a notable status condition (such as immobilized or stunned). Use your judgment; it would be reasonable to save 1 person with an at-will, 3 with an encounter power, or 5 with a daily. A critical hit or particularly effective attack might save an additional 2 people.

NON-ATTACK POWERS

A PC may use a power that makes sense (for example, a wall could block the claws; a movement or teleportation power could whisk people to safety). Adjudicate these results appropriately; it would be reasonable to save 3 people with an encounter power or 5 people with a daily power. Award particularly imaginative use of a power with an additional 2 people saved.

ACTION POINTS

A PC may spend an action point to make another skill check or use another power.

RESULTS

At the end of the round, total up the number of people the PCs saved. If the PCs saved less than 40 people (see below if there are more or less than five PCs), subtract the number they saved from 40: they have the

opportunity to save that many people in Encounter 5B. For a group of 4 PCs, the PCs must instead save 32 people, while a group of 6 must instead save 48 people.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The Fist gathers as many sacrifices as possible before retreating, but the PCs interference drives it back after only one round with any people the PCs did not save (the remainder determined in Results above).

The claws pull back to the field of bones through portals that rapidly begin to close.

The PCs have one round to decide whether to pursue the claws (and potential captives). The PCs recognize the destination as the nearby Dread Ring and see that the claws are taking the people to be turned into undead.

If the PCs do not go through the portals, they may travel to the Dread Ring overland, but they arrive too late to save the sacrifices. In Encounter 5B, the people are already dead. At the end of Encounter 5B, the PCs will gain a Despair for having failed to save the people.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count toward a milestone. It is part of the next encounter.

TREASURE

None.

ENCOUNTER 5B: NIGHT IN NEVERWINTER

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 Lorrageauth, dracolich doomlord (L)

1 Fist of Lorrageauth (F)

2 death giant soulcatchers (S)

6+ death thralls (T)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 60 hit points each from the death giant soulcatchers, remove two death thralls, and remove the action points from Lorrageauth and the Fist.

Six PCs: Add 60 hit points to both death giant soulcatchers, and add four death thralls.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: Reduce the hit points of Lorrageauth and his Fist by 100. Add +2 attack to all monsters and +5 damage to all non-minions.

Easier: Lorrageauth's *aura of doom* and the Fist's *breath of death* halve healing instead of preventing it entirely. The *soulfire explosion* of the death thralls does not remove healing surges.

Harder: Lorrageauth may make both a bite and claw attack as a standard action. The Fist gains a +10 bonus to initiative and may use *breath of death* as a minor action.

Glory: All monsters gain a +10 bonus to initiative. Lorrageauth's *gaze of doom* now targets one, two, or three creatures. The death giants may use *thrall shield* as a free action instead of an immediate interrupt.

SETUP

This Dread Ring is in the Neverwinter Wood. These haunted woods are anathema to lesser creatures. Any companion feels intense dread. It panics and attempts to hide or flee. Allow each PC with such a companion to decide if the companion flees the encounter (PCs can dismount for free in this case), or is forced to stay. Any companion, except a companion that is part of a class feature, forced to stay is Helpless for the duration. The death thralls prioritize attacks to coup de grace any helpless companions.

Helpless: A helpless creature grants combat advantage and may be the target of coup de grace attacks. Note that a helpless creature can still act normally!

The portal deposits the PCs in the Dread Ring that was destroyed by Drizzt and his companions over 100 years ago. Tsien Chiang assisted Szass Tam's efforts by raising Lorrageauth from the dead as well as capturing Elminster (see next encounter).

Szass Tam tasked Lorrageauth with rebuilding the Dread Ring in Neverwinter, which empowers the central Dread Ring in Thay. Lorrageauth was an artificer when he was alive. His creation, the Fist of Lorrageauth, is a construct collection device that harvests souls and converts them into necrotic energy to fuel the Dread Ring. Lorrageauth attacks immediately. His goal is to stop the PCs and add them to Szass Tam's army.

When the PCs arrive, read (modify if the PCs saved everyone in 5A):

Piles of bones form a maze around a dark altar. A massive draconic construct dives into the ground. Its claws rise up, impaling screaming people onto the bone piles before it disappears back into the ground.

Two death giants, souls swirling around them, begin chanting. The impaled people fall unconscious, their life drains away, and they begin rapidly transforming into undead minions.

Flying down on the opposite side of the altar is an immense skeletal dragon with strips of black flesh draped over its bones. Its voice bombards you, almost loosening your teeth. "I am Lorrageauth, and my creations shall be your doom."

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Bone Piles: Piles of bones are 2 squares (10 feet) tall. They are blocking terrain and can be climbed with a DC 21 Athletics check.

Altar of Bones: The altar stands in the center of the maze of bones; it is not tall enough to affect movement. Any living creature on the altar cannot regain hit points and takes a -5 penalty to saves.

Curved Bone Spikes: The spikes that flank the altar are used to sacrifice victims. Creatures that are force moved onto this terrain take 30 damage and are restrained (escape DC 29 ends). Note that a creature can always choose to forgo a saving throw against being forced into the hazard if they prefer taking 30 damage as opposed to end up prone.

Dread Ring: The entire map is inside the Dread Ring. Any power that has an arcane or necrotic keyword scores a critical hit on a 19-20 (any power with both

arcane and necrotic keywords scores a critical hit on a 18-20). (The increased critical ranges are already noted in the monster stat blocks.)

When a non-minion undead is reduced to 0 hit points, the undead creature rises with 1 hit point at the start of its next turn. If radiant damage reduces an undead creature to 0 hit points, it does not rise again. A particular creature can only rise once in this manner. It is added to the monster stats below.

Reinforcements: If the PCs did not save at least 40 (32 for 4 PCs, 48 for 6 PCs) people in the previous encounter (see Results in Encounter 5A) then the death giant soulcatchers are turning people who were not saved into death thralls.

At the end of each round, as long as the death giant soulcatchers are able to take free actions, a third (round down, until all have emerged) of the people who were not saved in the previous encounter emerge as death thrall minions into any square adjacent to a bone pile. When all death giant soulcatchers are killed, then the reinforcements stop coming. Note that these reinforcements are in addition to the death thralls that already start in the encounter.

TACTICS

The monsters focus on divine PCs. They all use their forced movement to impale enemies on bone spikes or force them onto the altar.

Lorrageuth uses *gaze of doom* on as many foes as possible, especially ones threatened by multiple death thralls. He then moves up to breathe.

The thralls stay in the death giants' aura to benefit from the attack bonus. They maneuver adjacent to as many PCs as possible for *soulfire explosion* when they die.

The death giants use *soul shrive* on enemies impaled on bone spikes, or against strikers. Because *thrall shield* is an immediate action, they use it only when an attack includes a status effect that stops immediate actions or can do a lot of damage, so that they can continue to create reinforcements.

The Fist starts the combat under the ground. It burrows up out of the ground during the first round on its initiative, opening combat with *rising claws*. It then uses *breath of death* with an action point.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

With Lorrageuth and his forces defeated, over the course of a short rest the PCs discover he was assisting Szass Tam with a massive ritual to raise all of the dead in Faerûn as undead. An open portal shows a ritual chamber in Thay where Szass Tam channels power

from a captive Elminster into the ritual. Szass Tam is mere moments from finishing.

The PCs must proceed through the portal to stop Szass Tam in Encounter 5C. If they choose not to do so, they each gain a Despair penalty.

If you have the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* book, extra time, and players who would be interested, you may take more time for the PCs to explore the dread ring's horrors before discovering the portal to Thay.

DESPAIR

If the PCs saved all of the people from Neverwinter, either during Encounter 5A or by stopping the death giants from making any reinforcements, then each PC may remove one despair penalty.

If the PCs allowed more than 20 people from town to be turned into death thralls as part of the Reinforcements mechanic and/or by not entering the portal in 5A, then each PC gains one despair penalty.

If the PCs choose not to stop Szass Tam's ritual by proceeding to Encounter 5C, then each PC gains one despair penalty.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

TREASURE

One of Lorrageuth's experimental constructs can be retrieved after the battle: a *vermilion bag of tricks*.

ENCOUNTER 5B: NIGHT IN NEVERWINTER

1 Lorrageuth, Dracolich (L)	Level 26 Elite Controller
Gargantuan natural magical beast (dragon, undead)	XP 18,000
HP 484; Bloodied 242	Initiative +20
AC 40, Fortitude 39, Reflex 38, Will 36	Perception +23
Speed 8, fly 10 (clumsy)	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic, 20 acid; Vulnerable 10 radiant	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
○ Aura of Doom • Aura 3 Enemies cannot regain hit points or gain temporary hit points while in the aura.	
Blessed by Szass Tam At the start of its turn, Lorrageuth can remove one condition.	
Instinctive Destruction On an initiative of 10 + its initiative check, Lorrageuth can use <i>gaze of doom</i> as a free action. If Lorrageuth cannot use a free action to make this attack due to any effect, then that effect ends instead of Lorrageuth making the attack.	
Dread Ring Reanimation If this creature is reduced to 0 hit points, it rises with 1 hit point at the start of its next turn. It can only rise again once in this manner. If radiant damage reduced it to 0 hit points, it does not rise again.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite (necrotic) • At-Will <i>Attack:</i> Melee 4 (one creature); +31 vs. AC <i>Special:</i> This attack can score a critical hit on a 19-20. <i>Hit:</i> 4d10 + 12 (crit 5d12 + 52) necrotic damage, and ongoing 30 necrotic damage (save ends).	
M Claw • At-Will <i>Attack:</i> Melee 4 (one or two creatures); +31 vs. AC <i>Hit:</i> 4d10 + 12 damage. <i>Effect:</i> Lorrageuth slides the target up to 2 squares.	
C Breath Weapon (necrotic) • Encounter <i>Attack:</i> Close blast 10 (enemies in the blast); +29 vs. Reflex <i>Special:</i> This attack can score a critical hit on a 19-20. <i>Hit:</i> 5d12 + 18 (crit 5d12 + 78) necrotic damage. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage. <i>Effect:</i> The target loses any necrotic resistance (save ends).	
MINOR ACTIONS	
R Gaze of Doom (arcane, necrotic) • At-Will 1/turn <i>Special:</i> This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks. It can score a critical hit on an 18-20. <i>Attack:</i> Ranged 20 (one creature); +29 vs. Will <i>Hit:</i> 2d8 + 18 (crit 5d12 + 34) necrotic damage and the target slides up to 5 squares and gains vulnerable 20 all (save ends).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Bloodied Breath • Encounter <i>Trigger:</i> Lorrageuth is first bloodied. <i>Effect (Free Action):</i> Breath weapon recharges, and Lorrageuth uses it.	
Str 27 (+21)	Dex 24 (+20)
Con 26 (+21)	Int 18 (+17)
Wis 20 (+18)	Cha 17 (+16)
Alignment evil	
Languages Common, Draconic	
Note: Dracolich doomlord (MV) turned into a gargantuan elite. Domination replaced with gaze of doom. Replaced <i>action recovery</i> with <i>blessed by Szass Tam</i> . Added critical damage to all necrotic powers.	

6+ Death Thrall (T)	Level 25 Minion Brute
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 1,167
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	Initiative +17
AC 37, Fortitude 39, Reflex 36, Will 35	Perception +20
Resist 15 necrotic	Darkvision
Speed 7	
TRAITS	
Soul Thrall	
The thrall gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls in a Death Giant's aura.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadow Slam (weapon) • At-Will <i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +30 vs. AC <i>Hit:</i> 20 damage (crit 40 damage) and the target is pushed 1 square.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
C Soulfire Explosion (necrotic) <i>Trigger:</i> The thrall is reduced to 0 hit points. <i>Attack (No Action):</i> Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +28 vs. Reflex <i>Special:</i> This attack can score a critical hit on a 19-20. <i>Hit:</i> 10 necrotic damage, and the target loses 1 healing surge. A target without healing surges takes damage equal to one-quarter of its total hit points.	
Str 28 (+21)	Dex 20 (+17)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 12 (+13)
	Wis 16 (+15)
	Cha 15 (+14)
Alignment evil	
Languages Giant	

Note: Draconomicon: Metallic Dragons. Updated and lightly reflavored.

ENCOUNTER 5B: NIGHT IN NEVERWINTER

2 Death Giant Soulcatcher (S)	Level 25 Controller
Large shadow humanoid (giant, undead)	XP 7,000
HP 233; Bloodied 116	Initiative +17
AC 39, Fortitude 38, Reflex 35, Will 38	Perception +23
Resist 15 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	Darkvision
Speed 8	
TRAITS	
○ Soulcatcher • Aura 10	
Enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses.	
Create Death Thralls	
The soulcatchers are creating reinforcements as free actions from the people captured in the previous encounter. This process can be paused if they cannot take free actions at the end of the round, and halts once they are all dead (note the Dread Ring feature).	
Dread Ring Reanimation	
If this creature is reduced to 0 hit points, it rises with 1 hit point at the start of its next turn. It can only rise again once in this manner. If radiant damage reduced it to 0 hit points, it does not rise again.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Soul Dagger (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 20 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
A Soulfury Detonation (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +28 vs. Fortitude	
Special: This attack can score a critical hit on a 19-20.	
Hit: 4d12 + 10 necrotic damage and the target slides up to 3 squares.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
R Soul Shrive • At-Will 1/round	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +28 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends) and loses 1 healing surge. A target without healing surges takes damage equal to one-quarter of its total hit points.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Thrall Shield • At-Will	
Trigger: An attack damages or applies a harmful condition to the death giant.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): All damage and effects from the attack that the death giant takes are redirected to a death thrall minion within 10 squares.	
Str 28 (+21)	Dex 20 (+17)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 12 (+13)
	Wis 22 (+18)
	Cha 15 (+14)
Alignment evil	Languages Giant

Note: Death giant soulcatcher (*Dragon* 378) with the soulfire hurler's slightly altered aura. Changed *consume soul shard* to remove condition. Added undead subtype. Entire soul shard mechanism removed for simplicity and ease of DM burden (the death giants have more shards than they can possibly use). Status effects on attacks shuffled for balance and ease of play.

1 Fist of Lorrageauth (F)	Level 25 Elite Soldier
Gargantuan natural animate (construct)	XP 14,000
HP 452; Bloodied 226	Initiative +17
AC 41, Fortitude 39, Reflex 37, Will 35	Perception +21
Speed 8, burrow 8	Darkvision, tremorsense 20
Immune disease, poison, sleep; Resist 30 necrotic	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Threatening Reach	
The Fist can make opportunity attacks against enemies within 4 squares of it.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 4 (one creature); +29 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 15 damage and the target is pulled up to 3 squares.	
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the Fist's next turn. While marked, the target provokes an opportunity attack from the Fist if it attacks any of the Fist's allies, even if the Fist is included in the attack.	
m Whipping Claws • At-Will	
Effect: The Fist makes two claw attacks that must be against different targets.	
M Rising Claws • Encounter	
Effect: The Fist moves up to its burrow speed just below the surface of the ground, avoiding opportunity attacks as it passes underneath other creatures' spaces. When it burrows beneath the space of a creature within 2 squares of the ground, the Fist makes a claw attack against that creature.	
C Breath of Death (arcane, necrotic) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Close blast 5 (living creatures in blast); +28 vs. Fortitude	
Special: This attack can score a critical hit on an 18-20.	
Hit: 4d10 + 15 (crit 5d12 + 55) necrotic damage and the target cannot regain hit points (save ends).	
Each Failed Save: The target is treated as having failed a death save.	
Special: A creature reduced below 0 hp by this power is treated as having failed a death save.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
No Escape • At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy leaves an adjacent square	
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): +28 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target doesn't leave the square and its movement ends.	
Bloodied Breath • Encounter	
Trigger: The Fist is first bloodied.	
Effect (Free Action): <i>Breath of death</i> recharges, and the Fist uses it.	
Str 24 (+19)	Dex 17 (+15)
Con 18 (+16)	Int 14 (+14)
	Wis 19 (+16)
	Cha 4 (+9)
Alignment unaligned	Languages

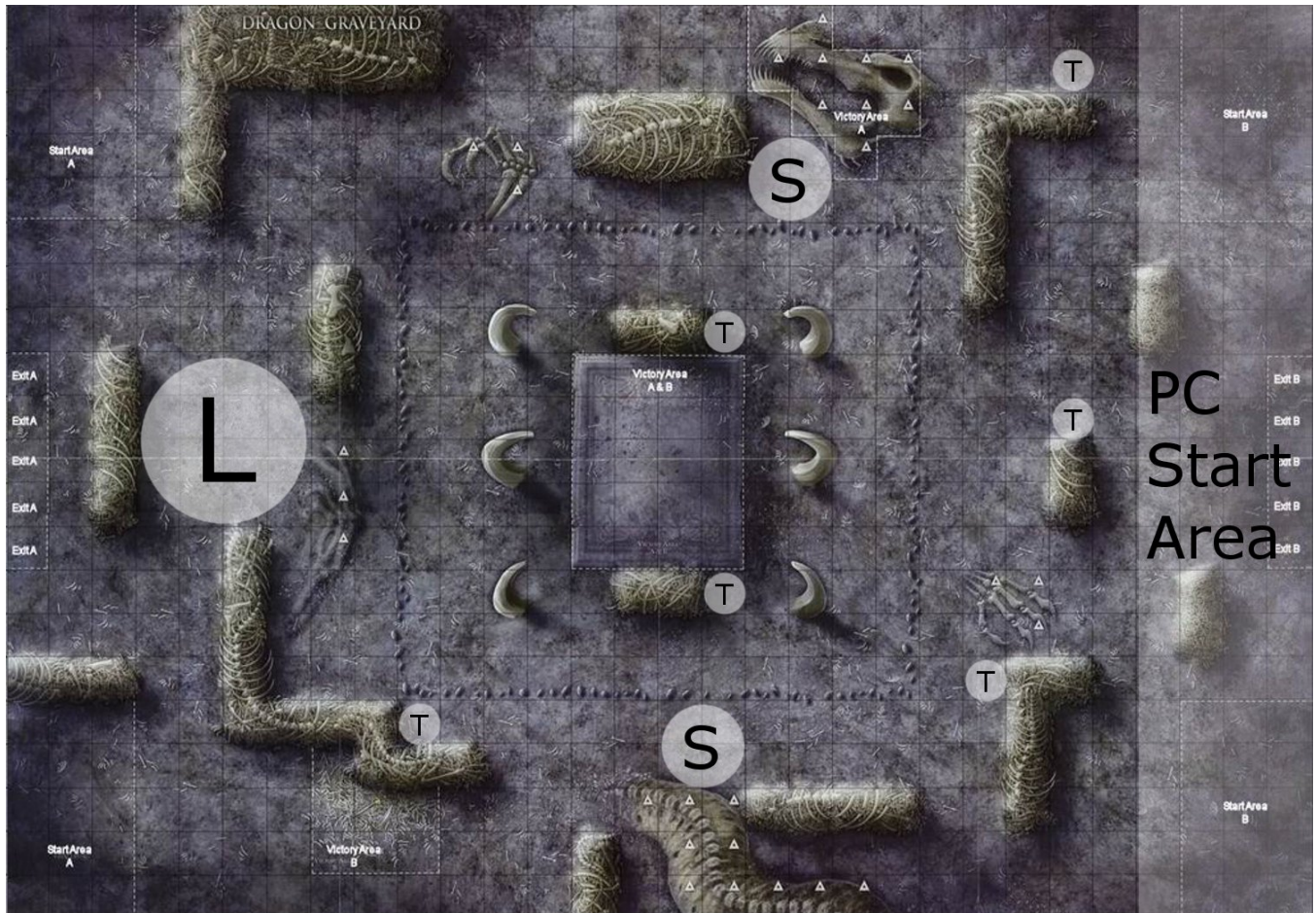
Note: Re-flavored hoard guardian sentinel (*Draconomicon: Metallic Dragons*, page 137). Upgraded to an Elite. Added burrow speed. Increased size to gargantuan; increased reach and added threatening reach. Changed *petrifying gaze* to *breath of death* for encounter speed and synergy. Added necrotic resistance because it operates in the Dread Ring. Added tremorsense and brown dragon alternate power, *rising bite* (changed to *rising claws*) from *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons*.

ENCOUNTER 5B: NIGHT IN NEVERWINTER

TILE SETS NEEDED

Haunted Temples Map Pack or *Dragondown Grotto* poster map

L = Lorragauth (dracolich); S = death giant soulcatcher; T = death thrall



The Fist of Lorragauth starts off map underground and may emerge from any space on its turn.

ENCOUNTER 5C: DREAD RING OF THAY

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- 1 Szass Tam (S)
- 1 bloodied Elminster (E)
- 1 eye of fear and flame (F)
- 1 scion of horror (H)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove the action points from all elites in the encounter. Reduce the hit points of both the scion of horror and eye of fear and flame by 100.

Once per round, each PC may use a minor action instead of a standard action to interact with the prismatic sphere skill challenge. The prismatic sphere takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Six PCs: Add a second eye of fear and flame. The prismatic sphere gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: Reduce the hit points of both the scion of horror and eye of fear and flame by 100 and they both gain a +10 bonus to damage rolls.

Easier: Flensing may only be sustained if it hits initially. Szass Tam requires an additional round to complete his ritual. When forced into the sphere, a PC may make a save to fall prone without being attacked, as if it were hazardous terrain.

Harder: The scion and Szass Tam gain a +10 bonus to initiative. The scion and eye of fear and flame gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

Glory: Szass Tam's aura allows him to slide 2 squares any enemy that ends its turn in the aura. He will use this to slide creatures into the sphere or pit. After the first PC's turn, add 6 nightmare spirits to the encounter. They act immediately with an initiative equal to that PC's.

SETUP

The PCs enter the portal to the Citadel in Thay:

You arrive in Szass Tam's tower. The walls of the spire writhe with the dead, hands groping out to grab you.

At the far end of the tower is an elderly man in red robes bound to an elaborately carved throne of dark, veined stone.

Hovering next to a massive pit of swirling souls is the skeletal form of a robed skeleton.

The lich Szass Tam speaks, "So you have come to get a firsthand seat to a new era. With the help of Elminster here, my Dread Rings will soon awaken all of the dead in the world.

Prepare to join my army. Die easily and I can make you generals. If I must damage your bodies excessively, you can instead be fodder.

Elminster, protect me with your colorful spell while I finish the ritual."

The old man struggles, but a claw swipe from the creature next to him bloodies his face and he gives in with a pained cry. There is a tremendous burst of arcane energy and Elminster forms a sphere of shimmering rainbow colors around Szass Tam.

Szass Tam is finishing a binding ritual to permanently enslave Elminster, then use Elminster's power to finish ritual to animate the dead throughout Faerûn.

A DC 29 History check recognizes the chair that is binding Elminster as Thakorsil's Seat, an artifact that imprisons and dominates a creature. It is impossible to free Elminster without first defeating Szass Tam.

All PCs should make a DC 21 Arcana check. If any succeed, they identify the legendary spell Elminster cast as a *prismatic sphere*: give them Player Handout 6.

If all of the PCs fail, allow them to make additional checks to examine it as minor actions. They will find this encounter extremely difficult without that information.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light due to the glow from the ritual magic.

Statues: Statues are ten feet tall blocking terrain.

Ceiling: The first level of the tower has a ceiling height of 30 feet with walls made of corpses.

Dread Ring: The entire map is inside the Dread Ring. Any power that has an arcane or necrotic keyword scores a critical hit on a 19-20 (any power with both arcane and necrotic keywords scores a critical hit on a 18-20).

When a non-minion undead is reduced to 0 hit points, the undead creature rises with 1 hit point at the start of its next turn. If radiant damage reduces an undead creature to 0 hit points, it does not rise again. A particular creature can only rise once in this manner.

Thakorsil's Seat: Each arm looks like the head and neck of a snarling dragon, and each of its four feet is like draconic claw grasping a sphere. The chair is blocking terrain. Elminster is bound to it and cannot be moved

from it until Szass Tam is dead. As an artifact, it is impervious to damage and most effects.

Corpse Wall: All the outer walls and inner black walls of the tower are walls of animated corpses. Any living creature that starts its turn adjacent to the walls is attacked from the animated hands that reach out for living flesh.

TRIGGERED ACTION
m Animated Hands (necrotic) • At-Will <i>Trigger:</i> A living none grabbed creature starts adjacent to the wall. <i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +28 vs. Reflex <i>Hit:</i> 4d8 + 18 necrotic damage and the target is grabbed (escape DC 29).
m Absorb Creature (necrotic) • At-Will <i>Trigger:</i> A living creature starts its turn grabbed by the wall. <i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one grabbed creature); +28 vs. Reflex <i>Hit:</i> While grabbed the creature is removed from play (escape DC 29). While removed, the creature has no line of sight or line of effect and takes ongoing 50 damage.

The bodies of any creatures slain by the wall are thrown into the room.

Pit of Nightmares: Any living creatures that enter or fly over the black column in the center of the map are buffeted by screaming spirits of nightmare for 20 damage and slid to any square adjacent to the pit. The spirits do not hinder line of sight or line of effect.

Prismatic Sphere: The prismatic sphere can be walked through by anyone willing to be attacked by every layer, but attacks and other effects fail to pass through it. If a creature other than Szass Tam is forced into the sphere (but not out of it), it is attacked by the current layer, and then may choose to either continue through or stop moving. There is no save required to stop moving after one layer, nor can a save prevent being attacked by the outermost layer.

SKILL CHALLENGE: PRISMATIC SPHERE

Goal: Taking down the wall one color at a time.

Complexity: Special

Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Endurance, Nature, or Religion.

Success: PCs get to Szass Tam in time to stop the binding ritual.

Defeat: Szass Tam completes the ritual and Elminster is forever his slave.

No creatures have line of sight or line of effect to Szass Tam inside the sphere. Szass Tam is unhindered by the sphere and may freely move through it or attack out of it.

The sphere further blocks all harmful effects and effects that would bypass the wall (such as teleportation,

arcane gate, Feywild jaunt, etc.). The sphere is 4 squares in diameter, with 2 x 2 in the center as safe to stand in.

The prismatic sphere drops if the PCs kill Elminster, or if the PCs use standard actions and either powers or skills to overcome each layer of the prismatic sphere, one by one.

For ease of use, how to overcome the prismatic sphere and the statistics for each layer appear after the monster stat blocks in this Encounter and are repeated in Appendix 7. Player Handout 6 gives the players enough information to overcome the sphere, but does not display each layer's attacks.

Szass Tam only needs free actions to work on his ritual, as long as his concentration is not disrupted. If he takes any damage or cannot take free actions due to a condition, his concentration is automatically disrupted and he cannot finish the ritual during this combat. He needs to take three (four for a group of 4) full rounds to complete his ritual. He may act normally and without restriction even while working on the ritual.

Arcana, Nature, or Religion DC 38 (minor action, special)

While within 5 squares of Elminster, a PC can use arcane, divine or primal energy to thwart Szass Tam's ritual on the archmage. Szass Tam requires an extra round to complete his ritual. The PCs can get a maximum of one success in this manner each round.

Once the ritual ends, Szass Tam directs Elminster's attacks fully, so they are no longer random. Further, Elminster fights on even if Szass Tam is destroyed and cannot be taken alive. If any effect would reduce Elminster to 0 hp or lower, or otherwise knocks him unconscious or capture him, he instead dies in an explosion of energy, recharging and using *ragefire nova* as no action.

The PCs may largely bypass the prismatic sphere and invalidate Szass Tam's ritual by killing Elminster before the ritual ends. If they do so, the insane archmage seems to become lucid for a moment before he dies, and utters "Why?" incredulously before expiring. At the end of the encounter, all of the PCs gain another Despair penalty (or do not remove one from the Hope point, as they prefer).

TACTICS

The enemies in this encounter are well aware of the usual capabilities and defenses of the PCs, so they target attacks appropriately. They prioritize their efforts to first

attack anyone who is best at working on the prismatic sphere, followed by spellcasters or divine characters.

Szass Tam maintains his ritual so long as he is able to take free actions and takes no damage. He starts combat with *flensing* and *soulstrike*. Szass Tam is unaffected by the *prismatic sphere* and may freely attack out of it. He continues sustaining *flensing* until its target dies (he does not stop when the target merely drops unconscious).

The scion of horror attempts to hinder anyone moving past it to the sphere and use *visions of horror* to hurl enemies into the sphere, or next to Elminster. It fights recklessly, letting itself be bloodied or die if that helps.

The eye of fear and flame stays next to Elminster so it can force him to *magic missile* enemies. It uses *eye of fear* on any enemy that comes near to it and *eye of black fire* on any enemy that is injured.

Elminster attacks whomever Szass Tam or the eye of fear and flame order him to attack, until Szass Tam's concentration is broken. Once that happens, he must still attack the PCs until Szass Tam is destroyed, but he resists by targeting PCs who his attacks hurt the least. Use *arcane fire* and *fire strike* when possible, and *magic missile* if PCs are hard to hit or can be pushed into the prismatic sphere. If any enemy moves within 3 squares, use *ragefire nova* to push them into the prismatic sphere.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat Szass Tam, Elminster ceases to attack and the undead flee the area. Elminster is thoroughly mad from his ordeal, and cannot be saved. Amidst gibberish, heartfelt thanks, and cryptic commentary, he draws a thin journal from his robes and presses it on the PCs. The journal is filled with notes concerning the ritual that Tsien performed to summon the Hungering Dark. The notes are quite complex, but seem less useful now that the ritual is already complete.

After handling despair and a short rest, refer to Encounter 3 for having the Blessed Angel appear or resolving the adventure.

DESPAIR

Every PC regains two healing surges and removes one Despair penalty.

Every PC also gains one Hope point. Refer to the Recovering Resources section of the introduction for the mechanical effects of Despair and Hope.

If the PCs failed to save Elminster (by killing him or letting the ritual finish), they each gain a Despair penalty. They do regain two healing surges

MILESTONE

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

TREASURE

Elminster is wearing *time-jumping boots* and Szass Tam is wearing a +5 *robe of the archmage*. If the PCs saved Elminster, they obtain his ritual notes (note so on story award EPIC19).

ENCOUNTER 5C: DREAD RING OF THAY

1 Szass Tam (S)	Level 30 Elite Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 38,000
HP 428; Bloodied 214	Initiative +17
AC 44, Fortitude 41, Reflex 41, Will 44	Perception +23
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)	Darkvision
Immune disease, fear, poison; Resist 20 necrotic	
Saving Throws +2 (+5 vs. charm); Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
○ Necromantic Aura • Aura 5	
Enemies in the aura cannot benefit from necrotic resistance.	
Unstoppable	
Szass Tam can remove one condition at the start of his turn.	
Necrotic Master	
Szass Tam scores a critical on an 18, 19, or 20 and his critical hits cause the target to lose two healing surges.	
Dread Ring Reanimation	
If this creature is reduced to 0 hit points, it rises with 1 hit point at the start of its next turn. It can only rise again once in this manner. If radiant damage reduced it to 0 hit points, it does not rise again.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +35 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 20 (crit 5d10 + 52) necrotic damage, and ongoing 30 necrotic damage (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage.	
r Necrotic Lance (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one or two creatures); +35 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d8 + 20 (crit 5d10 + 52) necrotic damage, and Szass Tam gains 20 temporary hit points.	
Miss: Half damage.	
C Soul Strike • Encounter	
Attack: Close burst 10 (enemies in the burst); +35 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d10 + 25 (crit 5d10 + 65) necrotic damage.	
Miss: Half damage.	
R Flensing (necrotic) • Encounter	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +35 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 5d8 + 30 (crit 5d10 + 70) necrotic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Sustain minor: The target takes 50 necrotic damage. This power can be sustained even if the target is missed or saves.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
C Mass Resistance • Daily	
Effect: Close burst 10 (Szass Tam and his allies in the burst); the targets gain resist 15 against one type of damage until the end of the encounter. Choose from acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, poison, psychic, radiant, or thunder.	
Spellmaster • Recharge 5-6	
Effect: Szass Tam regains the use of an expended encounter power.	
Time Control • Encounter	
Effect: All effects on Szass Tam end and he takes an extra standard action this turn.	
Skills Arcana +31, Dungeoneering +28, History +31, Nature +28	
Str 12 (+16)	Dex 14 (+17)
Con 28 (+24)	Int 32 (+26)
	Cha 30 (+25)
Alignment evil	Languages All
Note: Custom elite based on Szass Tam (FRCG).	

1 Eye of Fear and Flame (F)	Level 25 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 14,000
HP 466; Bloodied 233	Initiative +19
AC 40, Fortitude 36, Reflex 38, Will 39	Perception +20
Speed 6, burrow 6	Darkvision
Resist 15 fire, necrotic	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Dread Ring Reanimation	
If this creature is reduced to 0 hit points, it rises with 1 hit point at the start of its next turn. It can only rise again once in this manner. If radiant damage reduced it to 0 hit points, it does not rise again.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw (fire, necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 16 fire and necrotic damage and the target slides 3 squares.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
r Eye of Black Fire (fire, necrotic) • At-Will 1/round	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +28 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d8 + 16 fire and necrotic damage and the target cannot spend healing surges until the end of this creature's next turn.	
Special: This power does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
C Eye of Fear (fear, gaze) • At-Will 1/round	
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in blast); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: 2d8 + 16 psychic damage and the target is pushed 5 squares.	
Command • At-Will 1/round	
Effect: One adjacent ally makes a basic attack as an immediate reaction.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
C Bloodied Gaze (fear, fire, gaze) • Encounter	
Trigger: This creature is bloodied for the first time.	
Attack (Free Action): Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: 4d12 + 24 psychic and fire damage and the target is pushed 5 squares and dazed (save ends).	
R Death's Salvation (healing) • At-Will 1/turn	
Trigger: An undead ally within 10 squares drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (Free Action): The undead ally regains 50 hit points.	
Str 22 (+18)	Dex 25 (+19)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 28 (+21)
	Cha 30 (+22)
Alignment evil	Languages Common
Note: Re flavored and modified flameharrow.	

1 Scion of Horror (H) Level 25 Elite Controller (Leader)	
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 14,000
HP 466; Bloodied 233	Initiative +19
AC 40, Fortitude 36, Reflex 38, Will 39	Perception +20
Speed 6	Darkvision
Resist 15 necrotic	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Dread Ring Reanimation	
If this creature is reduced to 0 hit points, it rises with 1 hit point at the start of its next turn. It can only rise again once in this manner. If radiant damage reduced it to 0 hit points, it does not rise again.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Paralyzing Touch (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one or two creatures); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: 4d8 + 16 necrotic damage and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
R Visions of Horror (fear, psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one or two creatures); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: 4d8 + 16 psychic damage and the target slides 5 squares. The target cannot willingly move closer to the corrupter (save ends).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
C Monstrous Horror (psychic, fear) • Encounter	
Trigger: The Scion is first bloodied.	
Attack (No Action): Close burst 5 (enemies in burst); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: 4d8 + 16 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 5 squares.	
Embrace my Nightmare • Encounter	
Trigger: The Scion drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect: Six nightmare spirits appear from any pit squares. They immediately shift 3 squares. They enter initiative and act immediately after the current creature's turn ends.	
Str 22 (+18)	Dex 25 (+19) Wis 27 (+20)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 28 (+21) Cha 30 (+22)
Alignment evil	Languages Common
Note: Greatly simplified and reflavored sire of corruption (MM3)	

6 Nightmare Spirits Level 25 Minion Soldier	
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 1,167
HP 1; a missed attack never damage a minion	Initiative As Corrupter
AC 39, Fortitude 38, Reflex 39, Will 36	Perception +21
Speed 6, fly 6	
TRAITS	
O Cower (fear) • Aura 1	
An enemy that starts its turn in the aura is slowed until the start of its next turn. If the target teleports while slowed, it cannot teleport more than 2 squares.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Fearful Touch (fear) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: 16 (crit 32) damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
C Dragged into Nightmare (charm)	
Trigger: An enemy reduces the nightmare spirit to 0 hit points.	
Attack (No Action): Close burst 10 (the triggering enemy in the burst); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: The target falls unconscious until the start of its next turn.	
Str 17 (+15)	Dex 12 (+13) Wis 29 (+20)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 20 (+17) Cha 22 (+18)
Alignment evil	Languages Common
Note: Reflavored corrupted idler.	

Bloodied Elminster (E) Level 25 Elite Controller	
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 14,000
HP 460; Bloodied 230 (current hp 200)	Initiative +22
AC 40, Fortitude 40, Reflex 40, Will 40	Perception +18
Speed 0	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Bound to Tharkorsil's Seat	
While Szass Tam is alive, Elminster is bound to the seat (immobilized) and cannot be banished, moved or teleported.	
Bloodied Rage	
Elminster's spells deal 3d10 extra damage while he is bloodied (already factored in below, remove if Elminster is healed).	
Sage's Countermagic	
At the end of his turn, Elminster removes one harmful effect.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
r Magic Missile (force) • At-Will	
Effect: Ranged 20 (one creature); 3d10 + 25 force damage and the target is pushed 2 squares.	
r Arcane Fire (fire, force) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +28 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 4d6 + 3d10 + 19 force and fire damage, and the target takes ongoing 30 force and fire damage and is slowed (save ends).	
Failed Save: The target takes 30 force and fire damage and is now immobilized instead of slowed.	
C Ragefire Nova (fear, fire) • Recharge 6	
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: 4d8 + 3d10 + 19 fire damage, and Elminster pushes the target up to its speed + 1 squares.	
Miss: Half damage, and Elminster pushes the target 3 squares.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
C Fire Strike (fire, force) • At-Will 1/round	
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +28 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d12 + 3d10 + 10 fire and force damage.	
Skills Arcana +25, History +25, Nature +24	
Str 13 (+14)	Dex 18 (+17) Wis 20 (+18)
Con 22 (+19)	Int 25 (+20) Cha 17 (+16)
Alignment unaligned	Languages ["all"]
Note: Elminster Aumar (<i>Dungeon Magazine</i> 181). Removed several abilities, added <i>magic missile</i> , allowed <i>fire strike</i> while bloodied. Removed ongoing from ragefire nova to simplify.	

PRISMATIC SPHERE

The colors must be dealt with in the following order: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet.

Refer to the chart below for the specific special powers, keyword, or rider(s) required to overcome a particular color. Each of the first six layers may be brought down using a standard action as long as a PC is...

- Within 5 squares:
 - Has a particular special power or ritual. No power expenditure or skill check is required.
 - Expends an appropriate (with a keyword or rider, effect that occurs as a result of the power, associated with that layer) daily power. No skill check is required.
- While adjacent. All skill checks below can be made with Arcana, Athletics, Endurance, Nature, Religion, or Thievery:
 - Expends an appropriate encounter power and makes a DC 29 skill check.
 - Expends an appropriate at-will power and makes a DC 38 skill check. On a failure, the PC is attacked by the current layer.
 - Makes a DC 38 skill check. Success or failure, the PC is attacked by the current layer.

Notes: The powers used to bring down each layer is used in a special manner that channels the potential energy into the sphere with no other effect. Using an appropriate power nearby has no effect on the sphere. No power expended to bring down a layer has any other effect.

The ability to change damage or add damage of an energy type, such as with a *frost weapon*, or *whetstone*, does not make a power have that keyword for this purpose (as you are not attacking with and dealing damage with the power). Features which modify a power directly, such as Arcane Admixture or Long Night Scion, work as the power has the keyword without being used.

The seventh layer is most easily brought down by *dispel magic*, a *staff of the magi* or some other power that destroys zones or conjurations. Such powers cannot work until the violet layer is revealed.

Alternatively, the layer may be destroyed: automatically hit, resist 30 all, and 100 hit points (50 for a group of 4, 150 for a group of 6). A standard action Arcana or Athletics check while adjacent removes its check result in hit points, without any danger.

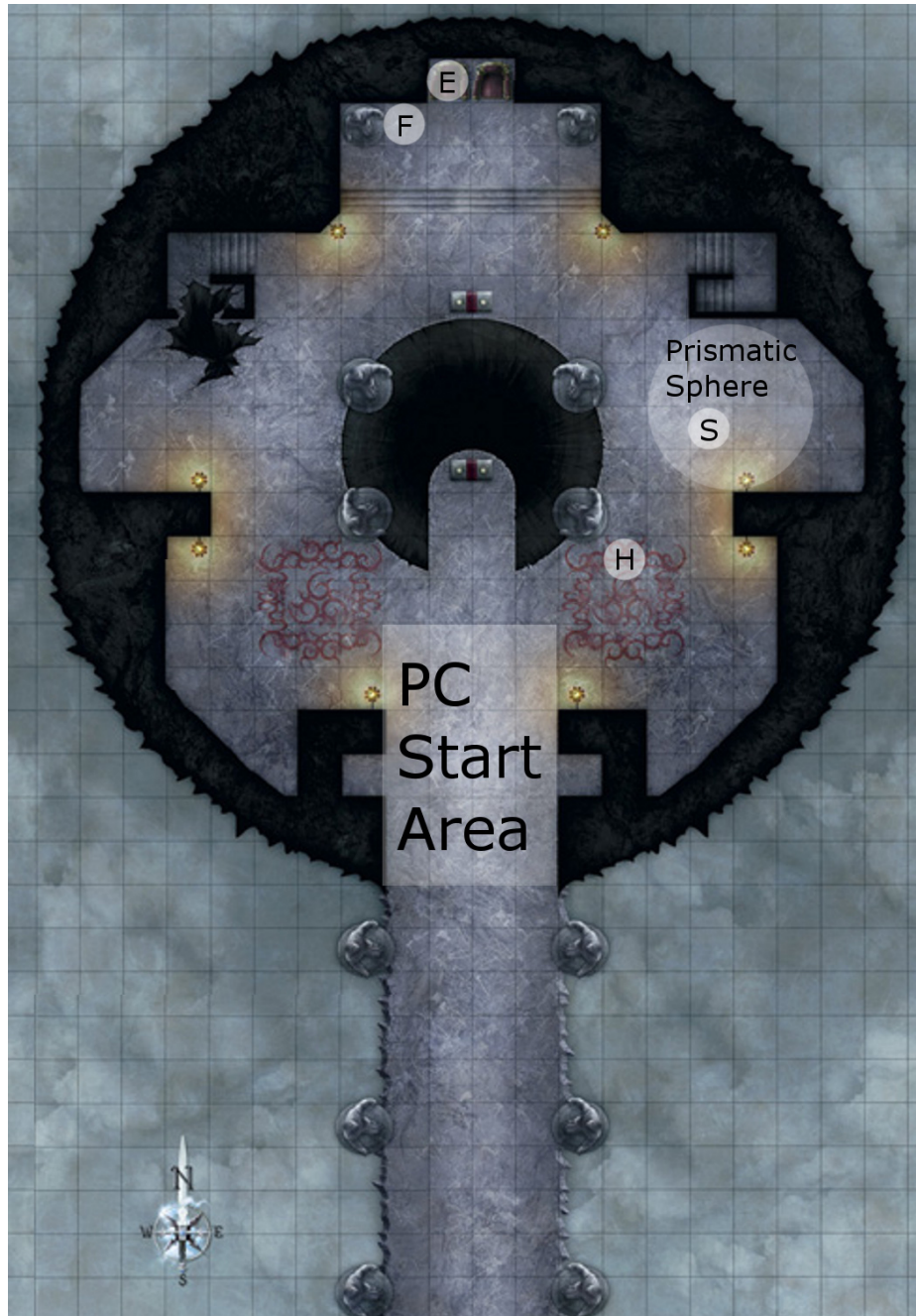
Red (fire)
Attack: +30 vs. Reflex Hit: 20 fire damage (crit 40). Miss: 10 fire damage. Countermeasure: <i>Cone of cold</i> (level 15 wizard) power or cold powers or powers that immobilize or restrain.
Orange (acid)
Attack: +30 vs. Reflex Hit: 40 acid damage (crit 80). Miss: 20 acid damage. Countermeasure: Control Weather ritual or an item that does an extremely similar effect, thunder powers or powers that knock prone.
Yellow (lightning)
Attack: +30 vs. Reflex Hit: 80 lightning damage (crit 120). Miss: 40 lightning damage. Countermeasure: <i>Disintegrate</i> (level 19 wizard) power or any necrotic or ongoing damage powers, or powers that turn a creature insubstantial.
Green (poison)
Attack: +30 vs. Fortitude Hit: 40 poison damage (crit 80). Effect: Ongoing 40 poison damage (save ends). Second Failed Save: The target dies. Countermeasure: Passwall ritual or an item that does an extremely similar effect, teleportation powers, or powers that stun.
Blue
Attack: +30 vs. Fortitude Hit: The target is restrained outside the barrier (save ends). Second Failed Save: The target is petrified until the end of the encounter. Countermeasure: <i>Magic missile</i> (level 1 wizard) power, any force powers, or powers that pull, push, or slide.
Indigo
Attack: +30 vs. Will Hit: Until the end of the encounter, as a free action at the start of the creature's turn it must make its most effective at-will attack against either itself or an ally within range. Countermeasure: <i>Holy lantern</i> power, any radiant powers, or powers that blind.
Violet
Attack: +30 vs. Will Hit: The target is removed from play (save ends). When the target successfully saves, it takes 40 damage and appears in a random safe square outside the prismatic sphere. Failed Save: The target takes 40 damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hp or lower, it is slain and its body appears in a random square outside of the sphere. Countermeasure: <i>Dispel magic</i> power or any power that ends zones or conjurations.
Otherwise, the layer has all defenses 40, resist 30 all, and 100 hp (50 for a group of 4, 150 for a group of 6). A standard action Arcana or Athletics check removes the check result in hit points.

Note: A creature may walk through all of the layers, but they are attacked. A creature immune or missed by the violet barrier appears on the inside of the sphere.

ENCOUNTER 5C: DREAD RING OF THAY

TILE SETS NEEDED

Haunted Temples Map Pack or P3 Assault on Nightwyrm Fortress poster map



ENCOUNTER 6A: ZHENTIL KEEP

SETUP

The PCs make their way to the Moonsea, where the forces of Zhentil Keep have enslaved the region, even as they themselves are enslaved to Tsien Chiang.

Zhentil Keep is a bustling port and center of military activity. Workers and slaves appear busy at improving fortifications and docks. Zhentilar soldiers can be seen all over the city and walls.

While there is a small army of Zhents between the PCs and their goal, this army is no match for epic PCs. The PCs can easily fight, sneak, or talk their way into Zhentil Keep in any manner they choose, without expending any resources. If the PCs choose to spend any time gathering information, they can learn the following:

- Fzoul Chembryl commands from a temple to Bane within Zhentil Keep. He rarely leaves.
- Fzoul Chembryl resisted Tsien's scheme and her alliance with the hated Netherese. Supposedly, he defeated Tsien, but he now serves her. It's dangerous to bring up this contradiction.

Streetwise can uncover further information, as well as any information from Appendix 6:

DC 21: In addition to innumerable Zhentilar soldiers, Fzoul is served by beholders, ogres, and a few remaining angels of Bane.

DC 29: Fzoul is a tyrant in battle, empowering his allies and hurling them against his enemies. He has little regard for the lives of those he commands, expecting them to die to protect him.

DC 38: Fzoul meets all potential enemies in a Temple to Bane within Zhentil Keep, under the vigilance of a holy statue to Bane that is rumored to smite anyone who opposes him.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs enter Zhentil Keep and, after effortlessly defeating or bypassing elite guards, encounter Fzoul's beholder corps. Proceed to Encounter 6B.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count toward a milestone.

TREASURE

None.

ENCOUNTER 6B: LOST IN THE MIND'S EYE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 26

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 beholder eye of anguish

6 beholder eyes of loss (B)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 2 beholder eyes of loss.

Six PCs: Increase the hit points of the beholder eyes of loss by 50 and the beholder eye of anguish by 100.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: Instead of making eye ray attacks at end of each turn, attack everyone at the start of each round. Reduce the hit points of all beholder eyes of loss by 40.

Easier: The beholder eye of anguish's prismatic ray does only one instance of 4d8 + 14 radiant, psychic, and necrotic damage rather than three separate damage instances.

Harder: When you make an eye rays attack as a standard action, the beholder always uses the 4th eye ray.

Glory: Use the eye ray barrage attack at both the start of each creature's turn and at the end of its turn. Note that due to the limit on free action attacks, different beholders must be the source of the attacks. Also, when a beholder is bloodied, it removes one harmful effect or condition before using *moment of chaos* or *ripple of chaos*.

SETUP

The PCs are deep within Zhentil Keep, approaching the temple of Bane where Fzoul holds court, when Fzoul orders his Beholder Corps to slay them.

Fzoul's voice echoes from somewhere far ahead. "You will go no further. You are not fit to step in the temple to Bane. Beholder Corps, deal with them!"

Magic flares throughout the large chamber and the room splinters like a shattering mirror. Beholders rise up from all directions. They shimmer, blinking in and out of view even as they appear to multiply, filling the room with dozens of eyes staring death. With a

crackling sound, eye rays fill the air, reflecting around the room.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

General Features: The room appears simple, but any movement could randomly teleport the PC, and attacks from range are more difficult than normal.

- A PC who willingly moves more than 2 squares must make a DC 29 Intelligence check:
 - **Success:** the PC moves normally.
 - **Failure:** the PC becomes lost. Place the PC on a random teleport location (roll 1d12) as the PC's third square of movement. The PC may finish his or her movement as normal. A PC is only teleported in this manner once per turn.
 - **Special:** if the movement was via teleportation, then on a failure the PC's movement ends at the random location.
- Any attack against a beholder from more than 5 squares away suffers a -5 penalty to the attack roll.
- **Countermeasure:** as a minor action, a PC may attempt a DC 38 Perception check. On a success, the PC does not have to make the Intelligence check when moving more than 2 squares and the PC does not suffer the attack penalty. Both of these benefits last until the end of the PC's current turn.

Ceiling: The ceiling of this area is 4 squares (20 feet) high.

Statues: The statues in the room are 3-feet tall. They block movement and provide cover.

Teleportation Fields: The four bars of crackling energy on the map are fields of energy that teleport creatures that enter them. A creature that moves through the field is teleported to one of the random teleport locations on the map (roll 1d12). A creature may save to prevent this teleport, but takes 20 force damage for attempting the save as the field almost tears the target in two.

If a creature would be teleported to a location already occupied by another creature, then no teleportation occurs, but both creatures take 20 points of force damage.

Eye Ray Barrage: Describe all of the eye rays bouncing and reflecting around the room. The beholders take full advantage of the room's teleportation field. A beholder can use eye rays against a target anywhere in the room, as long as the beholder is within 10 squares of a teleportation field.

At the end of each creature's turn, before it has attempted any saves, one (and only one) beholder may

make an *eye rays* attack against that creature as a free action.

TACTICS

Roll separate initiative for each beholder eye of loss, so that they don't act all at once. The beholder eye of anguish starts off the map and materializes anywhere at the start of its first turn. It may delay its initiative to enter at an opportune moment.

The beholder eye of anguish uses its *central eye* on creatures already suffering a save ends effect.

The beholders focus on strikers to use them as weapons and reduce their damage output. If all strikers are already weakened and/or blinded, the beholders focus all eye rays on a single PC until that PC is dead.

When possible, use the beholder eye of anguish for the eye ray barrage feature, as its eye rays are more powerful.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Fzoul awaits the PCs within the defenses of the Temple to Bane in Encounter 6C.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

TREASURE

None.

ENCOUNTER 6B: LOST IN THE MIND'S EYE

1 Beholder Eye of Anguish	Level 26 Elite Artillery
Huge aberrant magical beast	XP 18,000
HP 376; Bloodied 188	Initiative +21
AC 39, Fortitude 38, Reflex 37, Will 39	Perception +17
Speed fly 8 (hover), teleport 6	Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
All-Around Vision	
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the beholder.	
Eye Tyrant	
The beholder's ranged attacks do not provoke opportunity attacks.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +31 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 20 damage.	
R Eye Rays • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +31 vs. Defense (see below). Roll 1d4 to randomly determine which ray to use.	
1 - <i>Charm Ray</i> : +31 vs. Will; 4d8 + 14 psychic damage and the target slides up to 5 squares and makes a melee basic attack against one of its allies.	
2 - <i>Blinding Ray</i> : +31 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 14 radiant damage and the target is blinded (save ends).	
3 - <i>Exhaustion Ray</i> : +31 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 14 necrotic damage and the target is weakened (save ends).	
4 - <i>Prismatic Ray</i> : Make one attack roll (+31) and compare it to all three defenses, potentially hitting up to three times, as if using rays 1, 2, and 3. Resolve the <i>charm ray</i> before applying the <i>blinding</i> and <i>exhaustion rays</i> .	
MINOR ACTIONS	
R Central Eye • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +31 vs. Will	
Hit: The target teleports up to 5 squares and takes a -5 penalty to saving throws (save ends).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
R Eyes of the Beholder • At-Will	
Trigger: The beholder ends its turn.	
Effect (Free Action): The beholder uses <i>eye rays</i> against each enemy within 10 squares.	
R Ripple of Chaos • Encounter	
Trigger: The beholder first becomes bloodied.	
Effect (Free Action): The beholder uses <i>eye rays</i> against each enemy within 10 squares. The beholder then teleports up to 6 squares.	
Str 18 (+17)	Dex 26 (+21)
Con 26 (+21)	Int 21 (+18)
	Cha 28 (+22)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech
Note: Re-flavored / New beholder based on a mixture of other beholders, simplified for ease of play.	

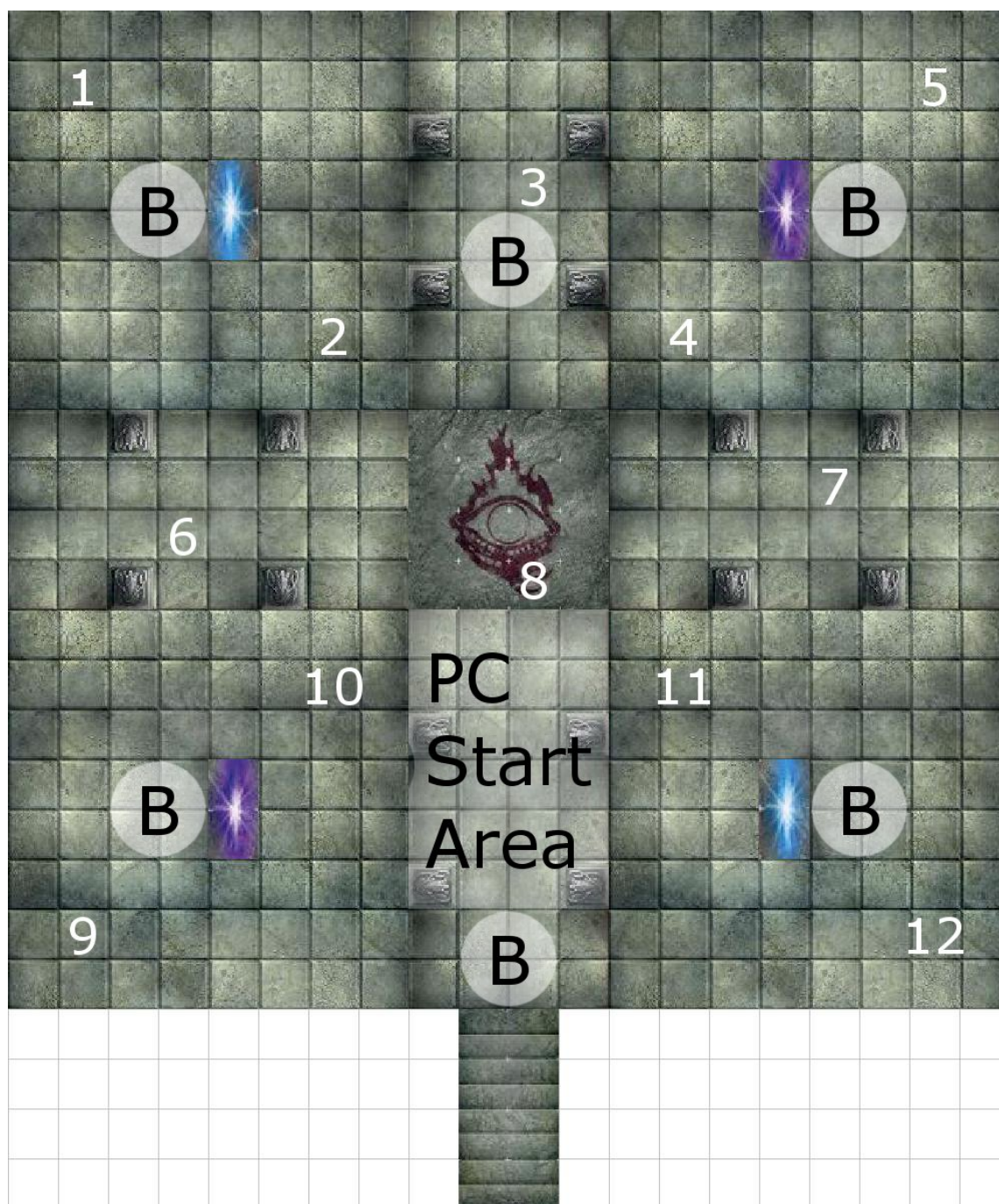
6 Beholder Eye of Loss (B)	Level 24 Artillery
Large aberrant magical beast	XP 6,050
HP 176; Bloodied 88	Initiative +20
AC 37, Fortitude 36, Reflex 35, Will 37	Perception +16
Speed fly 8 (hover), teleport 6	Darkvision
TRAITS	
All-Around Vision	
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the beholder.	
Eye Tyrant	
The beholder's ranged attacks do not provoke opportunity attacks.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +29 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 18 damage.	
R Eye Rays • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +29 vs. Defense (see below). Roll 1d4 to randomly determine which ray to use.	
1 - <i>Charm Ray</i> : +29 vs. Will; 4d8 + 14 psychic damage and the target slides 5 squares and makes a melee basic attack against one of its allies.	
2 - <i>Blinding Ray</i> : +29 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 14 radiant damage and the target is blinded (save ends).	
3 - <i>Exhaustion Ray</i> : +29 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 14 necrotic damage and the target is weakened (save ends).	
4 - <i>Any Ray</i> : Choose one of the above rays to use.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
R Central Eye • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +29 vs. Will	
Hit: The target teleports up to 5 squares and cannot use encounter powers or augmented at-will powers until the end of its next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
R Moment of Chaos • Encounter	
Trigger: The beholder first becomes bloodied.	
Effect (Free Action): The beholder uses <i>eye rays</i> against one enemy within 10 squares. The beholder then teleports up to 6 squares.	
Str 18 (+16)	Dex 26 (+20)
Con 26 (+20)	Int 21 (+17)
	Cha 28 (+21)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech
Note: Lesser version of the beholder eye of anguish.	

ENCOUNTER 6B: LOST IN THE MIND'S EYE

TILE SETS NEEDED

DT2: Arcane Corridors x2

B = Beholder Eyes of Loss, 1-12 = Teleportation Locations



The beholder eye of anguish starts off map underground and materializes from any space on its turn.

ENCOUNTER 6C: ENDS MOST FZOUL

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 28

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- 1 Fzoul Chembryl (F)
- 3 fallen angels of Bane (A)
- 3 battlesworn ogre mauler (O)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one fallen angel of Bane and one battlesworn ogre mauler. The statue removes conditions once per round and has 50 hp.

Six PCs: Increase the hit points of the ogres and angels by 50. The statue removes conditions three times per round and has 150 hp.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: Reduce the hit points of all enemies by 50. They receive a +2 bonus to attack rolls and +5 bonus to damage rolls. Instead of stunning, the ogre's *brutal smash* dazes.

Easier: Reduce the damage bonus from Fzoul's *Tyrant's Eye* aura to +5. The ogre maulers may not use both *roar of destruction* and *brutal smash* in the same turn. The angels require an immediate reaction to use bane's sentence and it may be removed with a minor action Religion DC 38 or one standard action Religion DC 29.

Harder: All of the monsters gain a +5 bonus to all defenses until the end of their first turn. The fallen angels take half damage from anyone affected by *bane's sentence*. When the battlesworn ogre maulers are bloodied, they recharge *brutal smash* and *roar of destruction*.

Glory: Fzoul's allies gain a +10 bonus to initiative. On 20 + his initiative check, Fzoul may use *aggression pact* as a free action. Increase the statue's resist all to 50.

SETUP

Once the PCs defeat the Beholder guards, they can advance into Fzoul's temple. Fzoul is initially willing to speak with them, but is eventually compelled by Tsien's orders to fight to the death.

If the PCs attack Fzoul immediately, during the fight he attempts to convey the information about how he

defeated Tsien and that to do so permanently requires Sinmaker's aid.

Fzoul Chembryl waits for you in a temple to Bane, the god he once served. A statue of the tyrant god dominates the center of the room, and Fzoul's armor and stance match the statue.

Powerful angels hover close to the exarch of Bane, no doubt drawing power from his presence. Ogres in blackened and spiked plate hold morningstars ready.

Fzoul sneers, "You appear at last. Where were you when the witch made her play?"

Fzoul is aggressive and clearly hates Tsien Chiang. He cheerfully explains how he defeated her, but show frustration at her escape and counterattack.

- He attacked with a horde of devils, angels, and beholders. She killed many of them. Acceptable losses.
- Unfortunately, when he delivered the final blow, she disincorporated, an ability only the gods should have that lets them return soon after death.
- Fzoul sought out Sinmaker, the fiendish apothecary formerly imprisoned in Carceri (see EPIC3-2 *Cracks in the Crimson Cage*). Fzoul learned that Sinmaker has a concoction that overcomes a deity's ability to disincorporate, but the fiend hides on Sigil where gods may not tread.
- Before Fzoul's minions could find Sinmaker, Tsien ambushed Fzoul and enthralled him. Now he, the tyrant of Faerûn, must follow her every despicable wish.
- It is too late to secure Sinmaker's aid. The gods have sealed off Faerûn, so travel to Sigil is impossible.

The information about Sinmaker may prove valuable later: if the PCs obtain the information, note so in story award EPIC19 at the end of the adventure.

Tsien Chiang has ordered the PCs' deaths, so Fzoul can only speak for so long. Once the major conversation points are resolved, Fzoul initiates combat:

"Perhaps if you'd been there, the witch would have been defeated." Fzoul snarls in frustration, as if fighting some compulsion. "But what-ifs are pointless. The witch wants you dead, and that's that. Time for you to die."

The angels murmur, "As he speaks, so are they sentenced."

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: This room is brightly lit.

Ceiling: The ceiling of this great cathedral to Bane is 4 squares (20 feet) tall.

Pillars: The small pillars on the map are not blocking terrain and do not impede movement.

Statue of Bane: This trap assaults enemies of Bane and protects Bane's faithful. See the stat block.

Altars: The 6 altars ringing the room assist the servants of Bane. If an enemy is within 2 squares of an altar, Fzoul's allies may score critical hits on an 18, 19, or 20 (rolls of 18 and 19 still need to hit) on any attack against that enemy.

TACTICS

Fzoul commands his followers to focus on enemy leaders as the primary target to ensure they are dazed. He stays centrally located to ensure his allies gain the benefits of *tyrant's eye*.

The ogre maulers use *brutal smash* only when they can roll twice to attack with it.

The angels keep as many PCs as possible in their aura, to protect Fzoul. They use *Bane's command* to bring ranged combatants into melee next to them. If any PC attacks Fzoul, the angels *sentence*, then *decree* that PC's death.

The angels work together to move focus targets near to Bane's statue so they can beat the target down before the idol of their absent god.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The angels disintegrate when Fzoul dies; only the last remnants of Fzoul's divine presence gave them strength. A ripple of power spreads out from Fzoul's corpse. As it passes the statue of Bane, the statue explodes.

After handling Despair and a short rest, refer to Encounter 3.

DESPAIR

Every PC regains two healing surges and removes one Despair penalty.

Every PC also gains one Hope point. Refer to the Recovering Resources section of the introduction for the mechanical effects of Despair and Hope.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

TREASURE

Fzoul has a *ring of Khirad* and a *scroll of protection* which is attuned specifically to Tsien Chiang.

ENCOUNTER 6C: ENDS MOST FZOUL

3 Fallen Angels of Bane (A)	Level 25 Soldier
Large immortal humanoid	XP 7,000
HP 229; Bloodied 114	Initiative +20
AC 43, Fortitude 38, Reflex 39, Will 40	Perception +16
Speed 8, fly 12 (hover)	Darkvision, Truesight 5
Immune disease, fear, poison; Resist 15 necrotic, 15 radiant	
TRAITS	
O Bane's Protection • Aura 10	
Enemies in the aura deal half damage to Fzoul.	
Corrupted Angelic Presence	
While the angel is bloodied, it takes a -2 penalty to defenses and gains a +10 bonus to damage rolls.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Blade of the Tyrant (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d12 + 13 damage and the target is dazed until the start of its next turn.	
R Bane's Command (psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: 3d12 + 13 psychic damage and the target slides up to 5 squares.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
R Bane's Decree • At-Will 1/round	
Effect: Ranged 5 (one creature subject to <i>Bane's sentence</i>). The target takes 20 psychic damage, and the angel can shift up to 2 squares closer to the target.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
R Bane's Sentence (psychic) • At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares attacks Fzoul.	
Effect (Free Action): The target takes ongoing 30 psychic damage until the end of the encounter. The target or an ally adjacent to it can end this effect by succeeding on a standard action DC 38 Religion check or two standard action DC 29 Religion checks. The effect automatically ends when the angel drops below 1 hit point.	
Skills Insight +21	
Str 26 (+20)	Dex 23 (+18) Wis 19 (+16)
Con 21 (+17)	Int 18 (+16) Cha 21 (+17)
Alignment evil Languages Supernal	

Note: Fallen angel of death. Heavily reflavored to soldier and theme changed from death to protecting Fzoul. Defenses modified, and *angelic presence* was switched from an easily forgotten penalty to a defense penalty while bloodied plus a damage bonus similar to Karadrach's.

3 Battlesworn Ogre Mauler (O)	Level 25 Brute
Large humanoid (giant)	XP 4,150
HP 285; Bloodied 142	Initiative +17
AC 38, Fortitude 39, Reflex 35, Will 35	Perception +15
Speed 8	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Morningstar (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d12 + 16 damage.	
r Javelin (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10/20 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 16 damage, and the target is pushed up to 2 squares.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
M Brutal Smash (weapon) • Recharge 6	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d12 + 9 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of its next turn.	
Aftereffect: The target is dazed until the start of its next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
C Roar of Destruction (thunder) • Encounter	
Trigger: The ogre mauler hits with a melee attack.	
Attack (Free Action): Close burst 5 (enemies); +28 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 4d10 + 11 thunder damage, and the target is pushed up to 3 squares and knocked prone.	
Str 27 (+20)	Dex 20 (+17) Wis 16 (+15)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 6 (+10) Cha 8 (+11)
Alignment evil Languages Common, Giant	
Equipment: javelin x6, morningstar	
Note: Battlesworn ogre mauler with push added to javelin.	

Statue of Bane	Level 25 Trap
HP 100	Initiative –
AC 30, Fortitude 30, Reflex 20, Will –	
Resist 20 all; Immune all conditions	
DETECT	
• Perception: PCs automatically see the statue, but need a Religion check to determine its capabilities.	
• Religion: Any PC with the divine power source and a +19 or higher Religion bonus automatically senses the malice surrounding the statue. Otherwise, a minor action DC 29 Religion check identifies the statue's capabilities.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
m Smash • At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy of Fzoul ends its turn within 2 squares of the statue.	
Effect: The statue animate momentarily to punish Bane's enemies, dealing 30 damage, and the target is dazed until the <u>start</u> of its next turn.	
OTHER ACTIONS	
Blessing of Bane (No Action)	
Twice per round, at any point in the round, the statue removes one harmful condition from Fzoul or one of his servants.	

Note: Custom trap.

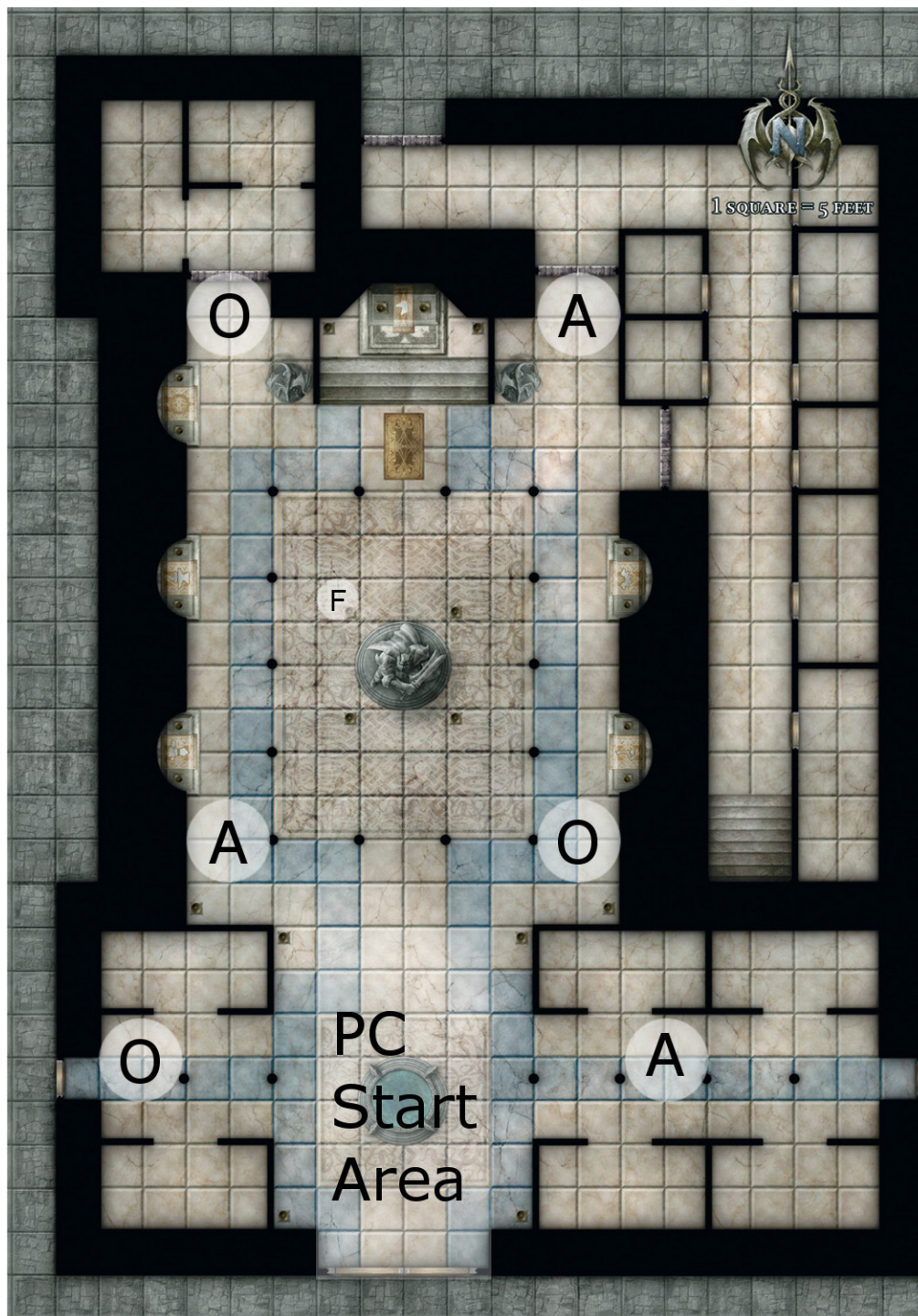
1 Fzoul Chembryl (F)	Level 29 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium immortal humanoid	XP 30,000
HP 522; Bloodied 261	Initiative +23
AC 43, Fortitude 41, Reflex 40, Will 43	Perception +28
Speed 8, fly 8	Blindsight 10
Resist 15 necrotic, 15 poison	
Saving Throws +2 (+7 vs. fear, charm, immobilize, restrain, slow); Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
○ Tyrant's Eye • Aura 10 Allies in the aura deal 10 extra damage against dazed targets. Once per turn, allies in the aura that miss with an attack may reroll the attack roll. An ally doing so takes 20 psychic damage after resolving the attack.	
Excoriating Decree Whenever an enemy makes an attack against Fzoul, the enemy is dazed until the start of its next turn.	
Dark Majesty Fzoul makes saving throws at the start and end of his turn. He may save against any fear, charm, dominate, stun, or unconscious effect, even if that effect does not normally allow a save.	
Scepter of the Chosen Tyrant Fzoul scores a critical hit on an 18, 19, or 20. On a critical hit, the target then slides up to 5 squares and makes an at-will attack as a free action against an ally. Fzoul chooses the attack and targets.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Scepter of the Chosen Tyrant (psychic, weapon) • At-Will Attack: Melee 10 (one creature); +32 vs. AC or Will (whichever is lower) Hit: 3d12 + 18 (crit 6d12 + 54) damage and the target is dazed until the start of its next turn.	
M Aggression Pact • At-Will Effect: Fzoul makes two <i>scepter of the chosen tyrant</i> attacks, and one ally he can see makes an at-will attack as a free action.	
C Victory Pronounced (weapon) • Recharge when first bloodied Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in burst); +34 vs. AC Hit: 6d12 + 18 (crit 6d12 + 90) damage. Miss: Half damage. Effect: Until the end of Fzoul's next turn, whenever any ally makes an attack roll against the target, it makes two attack rolls and uses either result.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
R Bane's Command • At-Will 1/round Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +32 vs. Will Hit: 3d12 + 13 (crit 6d12 + 49) psychic damage and the target slides up to 5 squares.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Lord of the Zhentarim • At-Will Trigger: Fzoul takes damage. Effect (No Action): Half of the damage is redirected to an ally within 10 squares. This ability may only be used once per source of damage.	
Vengeance Earned • At-Will Trigger: Fzoul ends his turn without hitting an enemy. Effect (No Action): One ally within 10 squares uses a free action to take a standard action.	
Skills Arcana +23, Bluff +29, Diplomacy +29, History +23, Insight +33, Intimidate +29, Perception +28, Religion +23 Str 26 (+22) Dex 25 (+21) Wis 28 (+23) Con 21 (+19) Int 18 (+18) Cha 30 (+24)	
Alignment evil Languages All	
Note: Custom elite based on Fzoul Chembryl (FRCG) and Sorcerer King Andropinis (DSCS), with cleric themed additions.	

ENCOUNTER 6C: ENDS MOST FZOUL

TILE SETS NEEDED

Madness of Gardmore Abbey poster map.

F = Fzoul Chembryl; A = fallen angel of bane; O = battlesworn ogre maunder



ENCOUNTER 7A: FIELDS OF THE DEAD

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 Ligan Fayer, death knight (K)

1 shadowclaw dreadmare (S)

3 ragewinds (R)

5 legion of the dead (L)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one of the ragewinds and one of the legion of the dead.

Six PCs: Add one ragewind and one legion of the dead.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: The shadowclaw's *shadow jump* does not recharge when it is bloodied and all non-minion enemies have 50 fewer hp. Add additional legion of the dead minions equal to the number of PCs on the legion's initiative in rounds 1 and 2.

Easier: The Fields of the Dead feature does not trigger until a creature is at negative bloodied hit points. The death knight's *call to arms* must be used as an Immediate Reaction.

Harder: Whenever a large creature dies, such as a ragewind or mount, all adjacent creatures take 20 damage from the explosion and 4 legion of the dead are added to the encounter instead of 1.

Glory: The death knight may take actions after charging, and he can score critical hits on 18, 19, or 20. The death knight and his mount gain a +5 bonus to initiative.

SETUP

The encounter takes place when the PCs set out to find and deal with Manshoon. When the PCs are still several hours away from Manshoon's stronghold in Westgate, they are met by a group of his most powerful guards. Manshoon's divinations detected the approach of the PCs, and he alerted his forces to be ready for them.

The fields around Westgate have been obliterated by warfare. Nothing is intact; buildings are shattered and burnt, and even the bodies have been ripped to pieces.

Several corpses are surrounded by an explosive pattern of dried viscera and shards of bone.

Overhead, the dark clouds ripple and surge. Tendrils of darkness whip outwards, seeking you. Bits of bloody bones and weapons swirl on the ground and rise up in a tornado of shadowy wind. Other bones clatter together into makeshift skeletons.

In the midst of this chaos, a black knight flies down out of the dark clouds on a skeletal horse. His eyes of burning blue flame look directly at you as he levels his blade and says, "Manshoon commands your deaths. Who's first?"

Religion

DC 29: The storm attacks any enemy it can reach. Taking cover may be the only way to avoid it, and flying into it is suicidal.

DC 38: The field destroys any creature that crosses death's door. Any creature reduced to 0 hit points or fewer is instantly slain, and the creature's life force animates more undead.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ruined Cover: Squares on the map that look like solid building are partially destroyed buildings. Their roofs are 2 squares (10 feet) tall (DC 15 Athletics to climb). A creature that enters the ruined buildings treats such squares as difficult terrain (even if flying). Creatures inside a ruined building are safe from the Storm of Darkness. The ruins also provide cover for anyone attacked into or out of a building.

Storm of Darkness: Tendrils of darkness sweep across the battlefield. Any living creature that ends its turn exposed to the storm (not in Ruined Cover or with some other solid barrier overhead) takes 30 necrotic damage and is slid 2 squares.

A living creature that enters a square more than 5 squares (25 feet) above the ground bears the full brunt of the storm: the creature takes 30 necrotic damage, is knocked prone, and is then slid up to 5 squares.

Fields of the Dead: The entire battlefield is suffused with necromantic energy. Any non-minion creature reduced to 0 hit points or fewer is instantly slain in an explosion of gore and bones. Add a legion of the dead minion to the encounter in the creature's space. PCs are still animated as per Appendix 1 (and similarly abilities that prevent death before it happens also prevent the explosion and the appearance of a minion).

TACTICS

The monsters focus their attack as much as possible, attempting to reduce an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer, so the enemy dies and creates a legion of the dead.

The ragewinds move into position near to multiple enemies and unleash *steel whirlwind*. They ideally remain within 10 squares of the death knight so he can use *call to arms* on them. Both *all-around defense* and *rush of blades* allow the ragewinds to reposition as necessary.

The death knight begins the encounter flying 8 squares above the ground, so that anyone wishing to charge him before he acts runs afoul of the Storm of Darkness. He uses *unholy flames* as often as possible, to harm the PCs and empower his allies. The knight uses *selfish rider* whenever the shadowclaw has *shadow jaunt* to ignore the damage. The knight preferentially attacks mounted enemies, taking great pleasure in killing their mounts.

The legion of the dead follow the death knight's orders. Once the knight is destroyed, they mindlessly attack the nearest enemy.

ROLEPLAYING

The death knight Ligan Fayer was once a paladin and Knight of the Chalice, an order dedicated to fighting against demons. He despises the PCs for their freedom and despises himself for his failures. Ligan does not care if he dies; only that he kills as many of the PCs as possible. He has forsaken all honor, and says and does anything to gain a tactical advantage.

Instead of Ligan, you can use a character well known to the PCs, such as a former comrade or treasured NPC. The knowledge that a friend became a death knight, and then attempted to kill the PCs, can make the entire table more invested in the roleplaying.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

All of the undead fight to the death, though Ligan may pretend to surrender to buy respite for a round so he can strike once more. Once the death knight and ragewinds are dead, the storm dissipates and the legion resumes its rest.

The PCs are free to rest, then continue on to Westgate in Encounter 7B.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

TREASURE

The death knight has a *saddle of the nightmare*. This item is not useful until the end of the adventure, however.

ENCOUNTER 7A: FIELDS OF THE DEAD

1 Death Knight (K)	Level 26 Elite Soldier (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 18,000
HP 470; Bloodied 235	Initiative +16
AC 42, Fortitude 39, Reflex 36, Will 39	Perception +15
Speed 5	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Mounted Champion	
The death knight and his mount both roll initiative, then use whichever initiative is higher. The death knight may make a save to negate any effect that would dismount him, such as knocking him prone or teleporting either himself or his mount.	
Shroud of Hungering Darkness	
The death knight gains a +5 bonus to defenses against ranged and area attacks that originate more than 5 squares away from him.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Fullblade (necrotic, weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +31 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 20 necrotic damage (crit 44 + 5d12).	
Effect: One ally adjacent to the target makes a free action melee basic attack against it with a +2 attack bonus and deals 10 extra damage on a hit.	
R Frozen Shackles (cold) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +29 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d8 + 20 cold damage (crit 36 + 5d12) and the target is immobilized until it takes damage from an attack.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
C Unholy Flames (fire, necrotic) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Close burst 5 (living creatures in burst); +29 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 20 fire and necrotic damage.	
Effect: Undead creatures in the burst (including the death knight) deal an extra 3d6 fire damage with melee attacks until the end of the death knight's next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Selfish Rider • At-Will	
Trigger: The death knight is damaged while mounted.	
Effect (No Action): The damage is redirected to the knight's mount.	
C Call to Arms • At-Will	
Trigger: A non-minion ally within 10 squares is hit by an enemy.	
Effect (Free Action): The triggering ally can take a free action to shift up to 5 squares and make a melee basic attack.	
Skills Athletics +26, Bluff +25, Intimidate +25	
Str 27 (+21)	Dex 13 (+14) Wis 14 (+15)
Con 19 (+17)	Int 18 (+17) Cha 24 (+20)
Alignment evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Note: Loosely based on death knight Mauglurien (E1 <i>Death's Reach</i>), with leader and mount elements added to make it truly Elite. Added frozen shackles to give him a ranged option. <i>Shroud of hungering darkness</i> is a +5 cloak of distortion by another name.	

1 Shadowclaw Dreadmare (S)	Level 26 Skirmisher
Large shadow beast (mount, undead)	XP 3,200
HP 246; Bloodied 123	Initiative +21
AC 40, Fortitude 38, Reflex 39, Will 38	Perception +22
Speed 8, fly 8 (hover), teleport 5	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic, 20 cold; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
Charger	
When mounted by a 26 th level or higher rider, the shadowclaw and its rider gain a +10 power bonus to damage rolls of charge attacks.	
Shadowride	
Any enemy that hits the shadowclaw or its rider with an opportunity attack takes 20 cold and necrotic damage.	
Saddle of the Dreadmare	
When the shadowclaw teleports, its rider can choose to remain mounted and teleport along with the shadowclaw. When any effect allows its rider to shift, but not the shadowclaw, the shadowclaw may shift instead.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadowclaws (cold, necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +31 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 16 necrotic and cold damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Shadow Jump • Recharge when first bloodied	
Trigger: The shadowclaw takes damage.	
Effect (No Action): After taking the damage, the shadowclaw becomes immune to damage until the start of its next turn.	
Str 25 (+20)	Dex 22 (+19) Wis 18 (+17)
Con 30 (+23)	Int 4 (+10) Cha 12 (+14)
Alignment evil Languages –	
Equipment saddle of the dreadmare	
Note: Based on the shadowclaw nightmare (E1 <i>Death's Reach</i>), with several changes for simplification.	

5+ Legion of the Dead (L)	Level 25 Minion Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 1,500
HP 1; a missed attack never damage a minion	Initiative +21
AC 38, Fortitude 38, Reflex 37, Will 36	Perception +20
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Rending Claws • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 21 damage.	
r Bone Shards • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 16 damage.	
Str 28 (+21)	Dex 27 (+20) Wis 24 (+19)
Con 29 (+21)	Int 3 (+8) Cha 7 (+10)
Alignment unaligned Languages –	
Note: Vizier's skeleton (DSCC), slightly reflavored.	

3 Ragewinds (R)		Level 25 Skirmisher
Large natural animate (undead)		XP 6,050
HP 228; Bloodied 114		Initiative +19
AC 39, Fortitude 38, Reflex 38, Will 36		Perception +18
Speed 10, fly 5		Blindsight 20
TRAITS		
All-Around Defense		
The ragewind does not provoke opportunity attacks when it moves.		
Freedom of Movement		
Any immobilizing, prone, or slowing effects on the ragewind end at the start of its turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Weapon Fury • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +30 vs. AC		
Hit: 5d8 + 10 damage. If the ragewind is bloodied, it gains 20 temporary hit points.		
M Rush of Blades • At-Will		
Effect: The ragewind shifts up to 5 squares and makes two <i>weapon fury</i> attack at any point during this movement.		
C Steel Whirlwind • Recharge 5-6		
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +30 vs. AC		
Hit: 5d8 + 20 damage.		
Miss: Half damage.		
Effect: Any squares of Ruined Cover in the burst are destroyed, becoming difficult terrain. If an enemy is in such a square, it must make an Acrobatics DC 29 check or take 20 damage and be knocked prone.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
C Bloodied Rage		
Trigger: The ragewind is bloodied for the first time.		
Attack (No Action): The ragewind recharges and uses <i>steel whirlwind</i> .		
C Death's Rage		
Trigger: The ragewind dies.		
Attack (No Action): Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +28 vs. Will		
Hit: The target may choose to make a melee or ranged at-will attack as a free action against its nearest ally. If the target does not make the attack or deal at least 20 damage to that ally, it takes 40 psychic damage.		
Str 17 (+15)	Dex 20 (+17)	Wis 13 (+13)
Con 20 (+17)	Int 13 (+13)	Cha 17 (+15)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common		

Note: Ragewind (MV: *Threats to the Nentir Vale*), upgraded to epic tier and simplified. *Steel whirlwind* modified to interact with a terrain feature. *Death's rage* altered to dodge a number of issues with forced basic attacks. Swapped automatic damage aura for *bloodied rage*.

ENCOUNTER 7A: FIELDS OF THE DEAD

TILE SETS NEEDED

Book of Vile Darkness poster map.

K = death knight on shadowclaw dreadmare; **R** = ragewind; **L** = legion of the dead



ENCOUNTER 7B: APPROACHING WESTGATE

SETUP

The PCs continue on to Westgate, where they discover that Manshoon keeps people like cattle and vampires roam freely. Investigation determines that Manshoon can be found at the Morningstar Haven, a desecrated temple of Amaunator.

The Hungering Dark completely blots out all natural light over Westgate. Occasional torches and magical lights provide scant illumination.

The PCs can immediately discover:

- Vampires rule the city. They keep the living in specially marked houses or in pens like cattle.
- A number of humans move around, toiling at errands. Occasionally those people are stopped by a vampire for a snack, but they are otherwise trusted slaves.

The lesser vampires that live throughout the town are no match for the epic PCs, so the PCs can easily slaughter, sneak, or talk their way through the city.

Any NPC, living or vampire, can point them to Manshoon's lair in the Morningstar Haven. The PCs can also learn the following:

- The Morningstar Haven was once a temple to Lathander, then Amaunator. It was one of the few beacons of light in a city always known more for its darker side. Manshoon has since claimed the temple as his own and desecrated it. To enter is death.
- Manshoon captures the souls of those who anger him or Tsien Chiang. Sometimes, you can hear the souls scream for mercy as he tortures them even after death.

A Streetwise check can reveal details from Appendix 6, as well as the following:

DC 21: Manshoon is served by many vampires, part of a new Black Network he is creating. His most powerful are vampire wizards and a murderous vampire brute who carries out physical tasks for the archmage.

DC 29: Manshoon bonds with his powerful servants which grants them power, but gives Manshoon complete control over their lives.

DC 38: When Manshoon tires of torturing a captured soul, he devours it for sustenance and power.

The PCs should eventually go to the Morningstar Haven to confront Manshoon:

The Morningstar Haven is a large stone building in Westgate's Arena district. Trees and flowers once lined the streets around the edifice, but darkness has left little but dead branches and vines. Crimson clouds hover above the building, raining blood down upon it. Rivulets of the crimson liquid run down the walls and gurgle in the gutters.

The massive doors of the temple are flung wide open, as if you were expected. Faint cries of pain and suffering emanate from within.

A DC 38 Perception will recognize some of the cries as lost loved ones (see Encounter 7C's Lost Souls).

Enterprising PCs might investigate the clouds or roof overhead. The blood raining from the clouds is tainted with necrotic energy that makes anyone in the blood more vulnerable to the attacks of vampires (see Encounter 7C's Rain of Blood).

If the PCs expose themselves to the blood, they can find an opening in the roof of the temple and start the encounter in the 5 x 6 square rain of blood area instead.

Manshoon cannot be surprised, even if the PCs stealth into the room.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs should confront Manshoon in the Morningstar Haven in Encounter 7C.

Refer to Encounters 3 and 4 if they choose to leave Westgate instead.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count toward a milestone.

TREASURE

None.

ENCOUNTER 7C: THE SUN DEVoured

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 Manshoon (M)

1 false Manshoon (F)

4 vampire black mages (V)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one soul and 1 vampire black mage. Reduce False Manshoon's hit points by 100 and remove his action point.

Six PCs: Add one soul and 1 vampire black mage. Increase the False Manshoon's hit points by 100 and add an action point to both Manshoons.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: Reduce the hit points of all enemies by 50 and remove dazed from False Manshoon's *betraying gaze* and the vampire black mage's *black ray*. All of the enemies may score critical hits on 18, 19, or 20 and deal an extra 10 damage when they score a critical hit.

Easier: Manshoon's crits no longer prevent healing. Reduce the damage for protecting a soul to 10. *Blood drain* no longer recharges on any of the vampires.

Harder: Manshoon also gains an action point whenever he uses *devour soul*. If a bloodied enemy starts its turn next to him, he may use *blood drain* as an immediate interrupt against that enemy. When he becomes bloodied, he may use either *fireball* or *finger of death* as a free action, either before or after triggering *mistform*.

Glory: There are trapped souls equal to the number of PCs times 2. Manshoon acts twice per round, on initiative 40 and 25.

SETUP

The PCs confront Manshoon in his inner sanctum. He knows they are coming due to his divinations. Manshoon has placed souls of NPCs valuable to the PCs (friends, family, or political allies) within prisons of the chamber. Choose spirits based on the answers given for Player Handout 1. He plans to devour these souls as the PCs fight him, to empower his magic.

Manshoon has no interest in negotiating with the PCs.

The inside of the temple is dark and washed in blood. The liquid has been splashed over every piece of iconography. Instead of sunlight streaming through a hole in the roof, blood drips in an unending rain into a pool of bubbling gore; instead of the scent of holy incense, you smell the reek of a slaughterhouse.

Manshoon stands in the middle of that rain of blood. "Once, sunlight could threaten me. Once, you might have. No more!" He laughs, and beckons you forward in challenge.

From somewhere past him, familiar voices cry in pain and terror. Manshoon adds, "A pleasant music to accompany your demise."

In the corners of the room, mists coalesce into other vampires in black robes.

Manshoon is projecting an image of himself on top of one of his most powerful vampires. The real Manshoon is not in the chamber at all, but his magic allows him line of effect and sight through the false Manshoon. Once the PCs overcome the illusion or bloody the False Manshoon, the real Manshoon appears in the teleportation circle (or flies into the room if the circle is blocked).

A PC with a passive Insight of 38 or higher can tell that Manshoon is intensely confident, as if he believes himself invulnerable.

As soon as False Manshoon acts, alert any PC with a passive Insight of 43 or higher that something is peculiar, as though Manshoon's actions and expressions are not matching.

Whenever any PC hits or is hit by False Manshoon, or registers disbelief at the number of actions or strange behavior of Manshoon, that PC may make an active Insight check as a free action:

- **Insight DC 43:** The character realizes that there is an image layered over the False Manshoon. Reduce the DC by 5 if this character has hit or been hit by the False Manshoon.
- **Arcana DC 29:** This check is only possible once an Insight check has been made. Manshoon is using powerful magic to project an image of himself onto another creature and using powers through that image. It should be possible to dispel the image through sufficient harm to the False Manshoon, or by a standard action DC 38 Arcana check while adjacent to the False Manshoon. Allow other sensible options to succeed, such as *dispel magic* or the Encounter power of a *staff of the magi*.

The placement of the souls should be made obvious to the PCs. These spirits are the souls of NPCs that are most dear to the PCs, and they cry and beg for aid. They communicate with the PCs, begging to be freed before they are lost to oblivion. Any PC that examines the soul prisons can determine how to free them.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ceiling: The ceiling of this former temple is 8 squares (40 feet) high.

Blood Pool and Rain of Blood: Any non-vampire standing in any square touched by the trails of blood, or standing or flying in the Rain of Blood in the center 5 by 6 square area, regains only half as many hit points when it heals and grants combat advantage to all vampires.

Teleportation Circle: The teleportation circle is keyed to Manshoon. Whenever he teleports, he may choose one of its squares as the destination, regardless of distance or line of sight.

Warded Sanctum: Manshoon's sanctum is layered with wards that empower him and enfeeble his enemies. Manshoon automatically hits and succeeds on saves on a natural 17, 18, 19, or 20. All enemies automatically fail any saving throw on a natural 1, 2, 3, or 4.

Lost Souls: On the eastern side of the map there are a number of columns. In the center of these columns are strange magical prisons, some of which (4 to 6, equal to the number of PCs) contain the ethereal forms of tortured spirits.

Manshoon consumes the souls throughout the combat for additional power. The PCs may prevent him from doing so either by rescuing or destroying the souls before Manshoon does.

Rescuing a soul requires an Athletics, Religion, or Thievery check while adjacent to an imprisoned soul: DC 21 as a standard action, DC 29 as a move action, or DC 38 as a minor action. A rescued soul merges with the PC. A PC may release the soul into any adjacent square as a free action. A PC may claim the soul from any adjacent square as a free action.

At the end of each round, until Manshoon is defeated, a PC takes 20 damage for each soul he or she has absorbed. This damage cannot be redirected or resisted in any way. A PC may choose to avoid the damage by releasing the soul. Any soul that has been released and is not merged with a PC can be devoured (as per *devour soul*).

Alternatively, the PCs may destroy the souls. The souls take no damage unless a PC chooses to deal damage to one. The souls have 1 hp and all defenses 5. While imprisoned, they have resist 30 all.

If any of the PCs have died and gained the *destroy them* or *devour them* abilities (Appendix 1), they may use either ability to automatically destroy a soul (no rolls required). Doing so allows the PC to regain hit points equal to their bloodied value and automatically save against all effects a save can end. This act affects Despair at the end of the encounter.

TACTICS

All of the vampires attempt to keep the PCs in the Blood Pool or Rain of Blood so they grant combat advantage and cannot be healed as easily.

The vampire black mages use *animate shadows* and *black ray* to ensure their allies have combat advantage, for *blood drain* and False Manshoon's benefit. The mages avoid melee until they have used *animate shadows*, then move in to *blood drain* if possible.

False Manshoon uses *betraying gaze* when it can do so without provoking too many attacks. It otherwise makes multiple melee attacks on enemies granting combat advantage. If necessary it delays until one of its allies assists it with combat advantage or until an enemy enters the Blood Pool or Rain of Blood.

The real Manshoon uses powers through the False Manshoon as long as he can get away with it, then comes out to attract attention from the PCs. He opens with a *vascular purge* on a low Fortitude leader or controller, then attempts to dominate a striker PC with low Will. Manshoon holds *web of unmaking* until it seems likely to remove key effects.

ROLEPLAYING

False Manshoon blusters and attempts to provoke the PCs into charging him. He is an over-the-top villain who antagonizes the PCs, encourages them to expend resources, and dares them to expose themselves to the Blood Pool and Rain of Blood.

Once the real Manshoon reveals himself, he is far more eloquent and logical. He apologizes for the ham-fisted overacting of his associate. He cheerfully banters with the PCs, hoping to distract them. Manshoon discusses the effectiveness of spells with arcane casters. He even reveals secrets about how he came to associate with Tsien defending the decision as his own. Manshoon lets slip the following:

- Tsien Chiang plans to become the new goddess of magic. She has stolen power from Auril, Corellon, Lolth, and Sehanine.
- Tsien used the power of those four gods to break the Hungering Dark out of Carceri, drawing it to Faerûn under her control.

- Everything is four-fold with Tsien: four hearts in four locations with the power of four gods. Manshoon hopes to restrain her impulses when she redesigns how magic works.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When Manshoon is defeated, a shudder passes through the entire area. Vampires linked to him scream in pain and expire. The dark clouds overhead thin slightly and a few rays of sunlight shine through.

Any souls that the party saved emerge to safety. They thank the PCs for saving them and convey any information from Manshoon that the PCs did not hear (the souls either overheard this information from Manshoon or learned it before they died).

The PCs also find a strange religious device on Manshoon. It is made from pieces of four holy symbols, to Auril, Corellon, Lolth, and Sehanine with a shriveled piece of muscle caught in the middle. A DC 21 Heal or Nature check identifies the muscle as part of a frost giant's heart. PCs who played *CORE2-11 The Sign of Four* intuit that this is a piece of Thrym's heart.

After handling Despair and a short rest, refer to Encounter 3.

DESPAIR AND HOPE

Every PC regains two healing surges. Based on what happened to the Lost Souls, the PCs may also remove (or gain) Despair penalties and Hope points. Each PC begins by removing one Despair penalty. Then:

- Despair
 - If all of the souls were destroyed at the end of the combat, then all of the PCs gain one Despair penalty.
 - Any PC who intentionally destroyed a soul gains one Despair penalty.
- Hope
 - Any PC who used *destroy them* or *devour them* to destroy a soul does not gain a Hope point.
 - PCs who did not use *destroy them* or *devour them* to destroy a soul gain one Hope point.

Refer to the Recovering Resources section of the introduction for the mechanical effects of Despair and Hope.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

TREASURE

False Manshoon wears a *mirrored mask*. The real Manshoon wears a *ring of elemental mastery* as well as the strange holy symbol (note that the PCs obtained the holy symbol on story award EPIC19).

ENCOUNTER 7C: MANSHOON

Manshoon (M)		Level 29 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 26,000
HP 532; Bloodied 266		Initiative +22
AC 43, Fortitude 40, Reflex 42, Will 41		Perception +22
Speed 6, fly 6, teleport 4		Darkvision, Blindsight 20
Immune charm, disease, gaze, poison, removed from play; Resist 15 necrotic		
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1 (see also devour soul)		
TRAITS		
Staff Caster		
Manshoon does not provoke opportunity attacks for ranged or area attacks.		
Vampiric Archmage		
Manshoon may score critical hits on a 19 or 20 (see also devour soul). When he scores a critical hit, the target cannot regain hit points until the end of Manshoon's next turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m/r Arcane Blast • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 or Ranged 10 (one creature); +32 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 3d8 + 26 damage (crit 50 damage + 5d10 necrotic) and the target is pushed up to 5 squares.		
A Fireball (fire) • Recharge 4-6		
Attack: Area burst 3 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +32 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 6d6 + 24 fire damage (crit 60 fire + 5d10 necrotic).		
Miss: Half damage.		
Special: This attack ignores fire resistance due to his <i>ring of elemental mastery</i> .		
R Finger of Death (necrotic) • Recharge 4-6		
Attack: Melee 2 or Ranged 10 (one creature); +32 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 6d6 + 34 necrotic damage (crit 70 + 5d10 necrotic).		
Miss: Half damage.		
Effect: If the power reduces the target to 20 hit points or fewer, the target drops to 0 hit points.		
A Web of Unmaking (force) • Encounter		
Attack: Area burst 4 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +32 vs. Will		
Hit: 6d6 + 24 force damage (crit 60 force + 5d10 necrotic), and the target slides up to 5 squares.		
Miss: Half damage, and the target slides 2 squares.		
Effect: Manshoon may end any conjurations, zones, or sustained powers within the burst.		
R Vascular Purge • Encounter		
Attack: Melee 2 or Ranged 20 (one creature); +32 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 6d6 + 34 damage (crit 60 damage + 5d10 necrotic), and the target is stunned (save ends).		
Miss: Half damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
Effect: The target's allies with line of sight to the target are dazed (save ends). This is a fear effect.		

MINOR ACTIONS		
R Dominating Gaze (charm) • At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +32 vs. Will		
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends, with a -2 penalty).		
Second Failed Save: The target is dominated until the end of the encounter.		
Special: A target that has saved against this dominate is immune to it for the rest of the encounter.		
M Blood Drain • Recharge when an adjacent living creature becomes bloodied		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature granting combat advantage to Manshoon); +32 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 4d12 + 22 damage (crit 70 damage + 5d10 necrotic), and the target is weakened (save ends).		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Mistform • Encounter		
Trigger: Manshoon is first bloodied		
Effect (No Action): Manshoon turns into mist, gaining insubstantial and phasing until the end of his next turn. He recharges <i>fireball</i> and <i>finger of death</i> . He may then fly up to 12 squares as a free action. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.		
Devour Soul • At-Will 1/turn		
Trigger: Manshoon takes damage or starts his turn in the room.		
Requirement: At least one unprotected soul.		
Effect (No Action): Manshoon removes one harmful condition, effect, or penalty per unprotected soul and gains an action point. One trapped soul is then destroyed, fed to Manshoon. After taking any triggering damage, Manshoon becomes immune to damage until the end of the current creature's turn.		
Until the end of the encounter, Manshoon gains a cumulative +2 bonus to attack rolls per soul devoured and decreases the number needed to critically hit by one (from 19 to 18 to 17, etc).		
Devour Thrall • At-Will		
Trigger: Manshoon would be reduced below 1 hp or starts his turn.		
Requirement: At least one vampire ally must have at least 50 hp.		
Effect (No Action): Manshoon removes one harmful condition, effect, or penalty. After taking the triggering damage (if there is any), Manshoon is restored to 50 hp and is immune to damage until the end of the current creature's turn. The vampire ally is destroyed.		
Skills Arcana +29, Diplomacy +28, History +29, Insight +28, Stealth +22		
Str 12 (+15)	Dex 16 (+17)	Wis 16 (+17)
Con 26 (+22)	Int 31 (+24)	Cha 28 (+23)
Alignment evil		Languages All
Equipment <i>ring of elemental mastery</i>		

Note: Custom elite based on Manshoon (FRCG), with hit point recovery methods replaced by sacrificial mechanics and additional powers added to more properly convey an archmage.

False Manshoon (F)	Level 25 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 14,000
HP 434; Bloodied 219	Initiative +22
AC 39, Fortitude 37, Reflex 38, Will 36	Perception +21
Speed 8, fly 6, teleport 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Combat Advantage	
This creature deals an additional 5d6 necrotic damage when it has combat advantage.	
False Manshoon	
This creature bears a seeming to appear as Manshoon. The illusion ends when this creature is bloodied. Until the illusion ends, Manshoon may originate any attacks from the False Manshoon's space.	
Manshoon's Mask	
This creature gains +2 to all defenses against ranged and area attacks.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claws • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d10 + 17 damage.	
M Slashing Roll • At-Will	
Effect: False Manshoon shifts up to 4 squares and makes two <i>claw</i> attacks at any point during that movement.	
M Eviscerate • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Melee 1 (one or two creatures); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d10 + 17 damage and the target is dazed (save ends).	
A Betraying Gaze (charm) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Area burst 3 within 10 (enemies in burst); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: The target makes an at-will attack as a free action and is dazed (save ends). False Manshoon selects the attack and targets.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
M Blood Drain • Recharge when an adjacent living creature becomes bloodied	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature granting combat advantage to the vampire); +28 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d10 + 17 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Mistform • Encounter	
Trigger: False Manshoon is first bloodied	
Effect (No Action): False Manshoon turns into mist, gaining insubstantial and phasing until the end of his next turn. He may then fly up to 12 squares as a free action. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
Skills Bluff +24, Insight +22, Stealth +26	
Str 24 (+20)	Dex 27 (+21) Wis 18 (+17)
Con 25 (+20)	Int 16 (+16) Cha 22 (+19)
Alignment evil Languages Common	
Equipment mirrored mask	
Note: Gwenth, vampire (<i>Dungeon</i> 170) with increased mobility and revised <i>blood drain</i> and <i>mistform</i> , as done for Manshoon. Changed <i>betraying gaze</i> from at-will to recharge, so it's more fun.	

4 Vampire Black Mages (V)	Level 25 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 6,050
HP 178; Bloodied 89	Initiative +16
AC 37, Fortitude 36, Reflex 37, Will 38	Perception +18
Speed 6, fly 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d10 + 16 damage, plus 10 necrotic against bloodied enemies.	
r Black Ray (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +30 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 20 necrotic damage and the target slides up to 3 squares and is dazed until the end of its next turn.	
A Animate Shadows (necrotic) • Encounter	
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +30 vs. Will	
Hit: 3d6 + 30 necrotic damage and the target slides up to 1 square.	
Effect: Each target grants combat advantage until the end of the mage's next turn.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
M Blood Drain • Recharge when an adjacent living creature becomes bloodied	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature granting combat advantage to the vampire); +28 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d10 + 17 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Mistform • Encounter	
Trigger: The vampire mage is first bloodied.	
Effect (No Action): It turns into mist, gaining insubstantial and phasing until the end of its next turn. It may then fly up to 12 squares as a free action. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
Str 18 (+16)	Dex 21 (+17) Wis 17 (+15)
Con 22 (+18)	Int 28 (+21) Cha 22 (+18)
Alignment evil Languages Common	

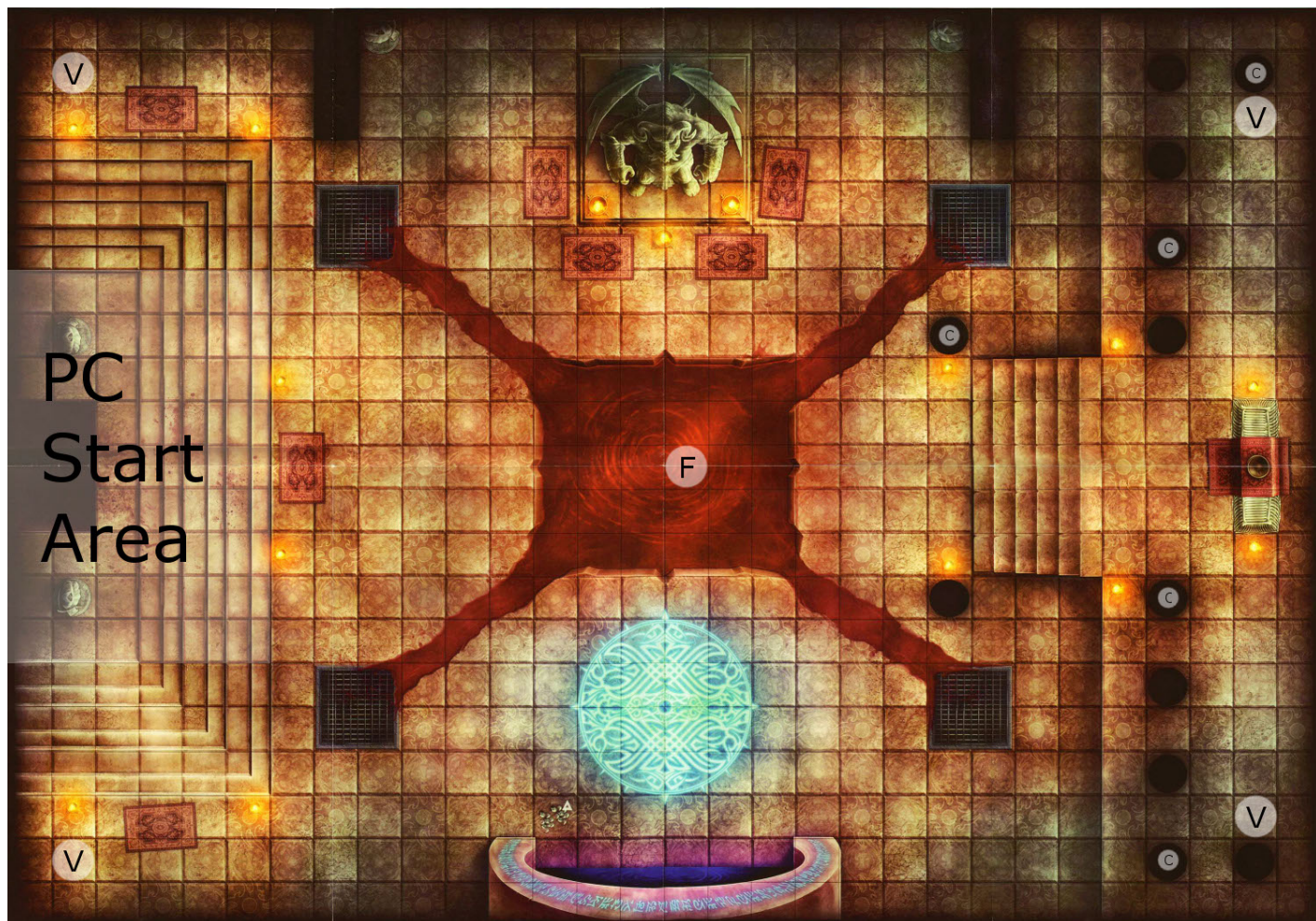
Note: Dark flameskull (*Tomb of Horrors*) reflavored as vampire.

ENCOUNTER 7C: MANSHOON

TILE SETS NEEDED

Keep on the Shadowfell poster map.

F = false Manshoon; V = vampire black mages; C = captured soul



The real Manshoon starts off map. See the Tactics section for when and where he enters the map.

ENCOUNTER 8: END OF OBLIVION

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 29

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 Oublivae (O)

2 balor (B)

1 ancient abyssal worm (W) (starts off map)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove a balor. The ancient abyssal worm now starts on the map in its place.

Six PCs: Add an ancient abyssal worm. Have one Balor and one ancient abyssal worm start on map, and the others start off map, coming in on their initiative.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: Do not use despair penalties: drowsy, jittery, or trembling. At the start of each round, all PCs take 20 damage. This damage cannot be resisted or redirected.

Reduce the hit points of all enemies by 100.

Easier: Do not steal action points from the PCs at the start of the combat. Tailor your despair penalty choices to avoid ones that will particularly threaten the PCs. It is suggested that you do not use drowsy, haunted, or shocked.

Harder: All monsters gain an action point and a +2 bonus to attack rolls and all defenses.

Oublivae may use *hurl into the abyss* twice per round.

Glory: Select two despair penalties of different types to use each round. All of the monsters gain a +5 bonus to initiative.

SETUP

As described in Encounter 3: After defeating all three lieutenants, Oublivae revealed her true form and the party's location in the Barrens. The party finds itself thrust into the middle of her palace and must fight the demon lord before they can escape her realm.

Pits surround you on all sides. Evil red light flickers from their fathomless depths. You feel a dreadful urge to descend and claim some nameless power, but part of your mind screams that the bottomless pit holds only doom.

The room holds several statues, apparently rulers of different races. An inscription is engraved into the base of each statue.

Demons appear in a burst of fire. One roars in challenge as another flicks a flaming whip in your direction.

Oublivae gazes at you from her throne, her long tongue licking her lips in anticipation.

There are three sigils of desolation: Split the PCs evenly between the sigils. If the PCs have any mounts or companions, they should also be split onto the different sigils and should never be placed on the same sigil as their controlling PC.

The PCs realize immediately the effects of the sigil of desolation, and also that they cannot easily undo these (as they did to Karadrach's in EPIC4-1).

For groups of 5 or 6 PCs, some monsters (an ancient abyssal worm for 5, as well as a balor for 6) are lurking in the pit and emerge on their initiative from any pit square.

Give out Player Handout 7, which is crucial for avoiding death or being lost in the abyss during this encounter.

Oublivae is the demon queen of this Abyssal realm and can manifest control of it in deadly fashion.

- At the start of combat, all PCs lose one action point accompanied by a sense of despair and loss. The PCs have a feeling that hope can overcome this effect. Track which PCs lost these points (some may have no action points at all).
 - At the start of the third round, return these action points to the PCs. The PCs have proven their hope can withstand Oublivae and her demons.
- At the start of each round, Oublivae selects one Despair Condition (see Appendix 2) and applies that despair penalty to all enemies. This despair penalty only persists until the start of the next round, when she selects a new one.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ceiling: The ceiling is 30 feet (6 squares) tall.

Pit: The pits lining the sides and in the center of the chamber are bottomless, leading down through the Abyss.

Any non-demon flying over the pit, ending its turn next to it, or failing a save to avoid falling into the pit automatically takes 20 psychic from exposure to the evil and madness of the Abyss. This damage can only be taken once per round.

Demons and flying creatures do not need to make saves to avoid falling or hurling into a pit. If a creature does fall into a pit, it may make a second saving throw (or DC 38 Athletics or Acrobatics check) to catch itself on the edge of the pit before it falls any further.

A PC that fails to catch itself, or falls unconscious into the pit, is Lost in the Abyss.

Sigils of Desolation: A creature other than Oublivae on one of the sigils cannot apply damage against temporary hit points, redirect damage, or take immediate actions.

Statues: The four statues in the chamber are blocking terrain. Each statue is of a ruler of a kingdom Oublivae has destroyed, with legible engravings in Common about the base.

The first statue is barely recognizable as humanoid, with its upper torso missing. The runes around its base are ancient: **My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings: Look on my works ye Mighty, and despair!**

The second statue is decrepit, features worn away by blasts of sand. **Pharaoh Perym of Payratheon, last caretaker of the World Tree.**

The third statue shows an angelic figure with broken wings, stone tears from her eyes. **Corendath, Chosen of the Angels, Forgotten by the Light.**

The fourth statue is an unfinished work in progress and shows King Foril of Cormyr. **Cormyr, Land of the Purple Dragon, Swallowed by Darkness, DR 26 - 1484.**

Lost in the Abyss: A creature Lost in the Abyss can take no actions nor interact with the encounter in any way. Give the PC Player Handout 8, which details the PC's options for recovery, including spending a Hope point.

If the PC cannot recover on their own, Oublivae makes the PC an offer. As long as the PC surrenders to her, she helps the PC. For the rest of the encounter, Oublivae and her demons focus on other PCs, trying to push them to the same point of despair. They will not hurl that PC into the Abyss any longer. Note in Story Award 19 that the PC surrendered to Oublivae.

A PC without Hope and unwilling to deal with Oublivae takes no further part in the encounter. If all of the PCs die and/or are Lost in the Abyss, refer to Ending the Encounter's guidance below.

TACTICS

It is suggested that all monsters in this encounter have their own initiatives. Because Oublivae inflicts the helpless condition, remember that a helpless creature grants combat advantage and may be the target of coup

de grace attacks. A helpless creature can still act normally!

The monsters ruthlessly exploit Oublivae's *abandon all hope* to coup de grace PCs. Reminder: a creature that takes its bloodied value or greater from a coup de grace hit immediately dies.

The monsters focus on killing PCs who possess Hope or who have not already died in the adventure. Oublivae desires to kill as many different PCs as possible and to remove all of their Hope even more than she wishes to keep her allies alive. Once a PC has no Hope, she attempts to fling them into a pit.

Oublivae has observed the PCs fighting in the last several fights, so her tactics should ruthlessly strike at linchpins and utilize weaknesses.

If any PC has gained *devour them* (Appendix I) Oublivae uses *devour them all* to target the creature's allies, relying on her or the Balor's forced movement to position the PC. If at all possible, she will force a PC to kill an adjacent ally in this fashion.

Use the ancient abyssal worm's *suicidal presence* early in to make helpless PCs coup de grace themselves with their own at-will attacks.

The balors use their flaming whips to pull PCs onto the sigils of desolation, while Oublivae prefers to slide enemies into a pit.

ROLEPLAYING

Refer to Encounter 3 for more information about roleplaying Oublivae.

During the fight, Oublivae shows no fear of the PCs, even when she might seem doomed. She is confident that no matter what happens, she has already won.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After defeating Oublivae, the Barrens crumble away out from under them, and the PCs are shunted back to Faerûn.

If the PCs failed to defeat Oublivae, or if any PC is Lost in the Abyss and cannot escape, one of the following happens (each PC may decide on their own):

- Their PC is lost forever, either eaten by Oublivae or never emerging from the Abyss.
- Escape from the Abyss, or recovering the PC's body, is costly: the PC loses 100,000gp and one treasure bundle choice.
- The PC is saved by *creation's hourglass* (see Story Award 19), the artifact Oublivae has been using to manipulate time. The PC loses all three uses of the hourglass.

The exact details of how this occurs can vary from PC to PC. PCs lost in the Abyss might die, go mad, or find a way out on another Abyssal layer. Oublivae eats some of the corpses, but she'll send some or all of the remains back once she's done with them.

The hourglass speaks to anyone it saved:

“It is not yet your time. The end of creation approaches, and you must persist to face it. Oublivae’s realm was a mockery of reality, and it would not be proper for that mockery to cut short your fate.”

Update story award EPIC18 with the results of this encounter. Only mark off ‘Lost in the Abyss’ for PCs who did not escape on their own using the means described in Player Handout 8.

The PCs appear once again in the portal room in I’Cath: proceed to the Conclusion.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

TREASURE

As Oublivae is defeated, her *quickenings diadem* and *creation’s hourglass* (see story award EPIC19) fall free. Her horns also shatter: PCs can use a piece of horn to form an *instrument of death* (story award EPIC21).

ENCOUNTER 8: END TO OBLIVION

2 Balor (B)	Level 26 Elite Brute
Huge elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 22,000
HP 598; Bloodied 299	Initiative +20
AC 39, Fortitude 39, Reflex 36, Will 38	Perception +28
Speed 8, fly 12 (clumsy)	Blindsight 6, darkvision
Resist 20 fire	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
O Soul Stealer • Aura 2	
If an enemy in the aura spends a healing surge, this demon makes a melee basic attack against it with a +5 bonus to its attack and damage rolls as a free action.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Lightning Sword (lightning, weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +31 vs. AC	
Hit: 5d10 + 13 (crit 3d10 + 63) lightning damage.	
M Flaming Whip (fire) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 5 (one creature); +29 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d10 + 10 fire damage, and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).	
The balor pulls the target up to 5 squares to a square adjacent to it.	
M Fire and Lightning • At-Will	
Effect: The balor uses lightning sword once and flaming whip once.	
C Beheading Blade (lightning, weapon) • Recharge when first bloodied	
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +31 vs. AC. The attack can score a critical hit on a roll of 15-20.	
Hit: 5d12 + 14 (crit 3d12 + 74) lightning damage.	
A Rain of Fire (fire) • At-Will	
Attack: Area burst 2 in 20 (creatures in the burst); +29 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d12 + 14 fire damage.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
M Theft of Knowledge • Encounter	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +29 vs. Will	
Hit: This creature recharges <i>beheading blade</i> . The next time this creature uses that power before the end of the encounter, it gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls with the power.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
C Death Burst (fire) • Encounter	
Trigger: The balor drops to 0 hit points.	
Attack (No Action): Close burst 10 (creatures in the burst); +31 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 6d10 fire damage.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: The balor is destroyed.	
Skills Bluff +20, Insight +27, Intimidate +20	
Str 30 (+23) Dex 25 (+20) Wis 29 (+22)	
Con 31 (+23) Int 12 (+14) Cha 14 (+15)	
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Equipment lightning sword, flaming whip	
Note: <i>Theft of knowledge</i> from Oublivae's Ruinlords theme. <i>Variable resistance</i> replaced with <i>soul stealer</i> . <i>Flaming body</i> replaced with <i>rain of fire</i> .	

1 Ancient Abyssal Wurm (W)	Level 26 Elite Skirmisher
Huge elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 22,000
HP 466; Bloodied 233	Initiative +23 (special)
AC 39, Fortitude 35, Reflex 35, Will 39	Perception +17
Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy), teleport 6	Darkvision
Resist 20 fire	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Dual Brain	
The ancient abyssal worm acts on initiative count 40 and 25 and may take a minor, move, and standard action each turn. At the end of each turn, remove one harmful effect on it.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 5d8 + 11 damage.	
C Breath Weapon (varies) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +29 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d12 + 12 acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage, and the target takes a -4 penalty to AC (save ends).	
Effect: The worm dissolves into a torrent of elements and flows with its breath weapon. The worm disappears from its current location and reappears in a square adjacent to the area of the blast.	
A Devastation of Eons (zone) • Encounter	
Effect: The worm creates a zone in an area burst 2 within 10 squares that lasts until the end of the worm's next turn. The worm gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +5 bonus to damage rolls against creatures within the zone.	
Sustain Minor: Each creature within the zone takes 10 damage and the zone persists.	
C Suicidal Presence (charm) • Encounter	
Attack: Close burst 10 (enemies in the burst); +29 vs. Will	
Hit: The target uses one of its at-will powers of the worm's choice against itself as a free action. If the target is Helpless, the attack is treated as a Coup de Grace.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
C Bloodied Breath • Encounter	
Trigger: The worm is first bloodied.	
Attack (Free Action): The worm's breath weapon recharges, and the worm uses it.	
Skills Intimidate +27	
Str 34 (+24) Dex 29 (+21) Wis 20 (+17)	
Con 25 (+19) Int 19 (+16) Cha 31 (+22)	
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal	

Note: *Devastation of eons* from Oublivae's ruinlords theme. *Variable resistance* preset to fire. *Pit of despair* and *all-around vision* removed to simplify and make slightly easier. *Breath recharge* simplified and movement clarified. Increased *suicidal presence* burst size and switched attack to Will from Reflex, and made dominate effect no longer take players' turn. Made *dual brain* more versatile to avoid table problems.

Oublivae (O)	Level 25 Solo Controller
Huge elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 35,000
HP 936; Bloodied 418	Initiative +28 (special)
AC 39, Fortitude 35, Reflex 39, Will 39	Perception +27
Speed 8, climb 8 (spider climb), teleport 8	darkvision
Resist 20 fire	
Saving Throws +5; Action Points 2	
TRAITS	
O Perish Alone • Aura 20	
Any enemy that ends its turn within the aura and is not adjacent to an ally takes 20 damage.	
Quickening Diadem	
When Oublivae is stunned or dazed, she can take a move action on her turn in addition to whatever actions she is normally allowed.	
Queen of Desolation	
Oublivae acts on initiative count 45 and 30 and may take a minor, move, and standard action each turn. At the end of each turn, remove one harmful effect on her.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw of Dread • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +30 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d12 + 14 damage and the target is slid 3 squares.	
r Isolation • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +28 vs. Will	
Hit: 4d10 + 10 psychic and the target is not considered anyone's ally and has no allies (save ends).	
MINOR ACTIONS	
C Hurl Into the Abyss • At-Will 1/round	
Attack: Close burst 10 (one creature in burst); +28 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d12 + 14 damage and the target is knocked prone and cannot fly until the start of its next turn.	
Effect: A pit opens up beneath the target. If the target is not flying, it must make a successful save, or fall into it (see Pit terrain feature).	
FREE ACTIONS	
Quickening Diadem • Daily	
Effect: Oublivae may take a move or minor action.	

TRIGGERED ACTIONS
Abandon All Hope (psychic) • At-Will
Trigger: An enemy starts its turn within 20 squares of Oublivae.
Effect (Opportunity Action): The triggering enemy is helpless until the start of its next turn, or until critically hit.
Tail Spike • At-Will
Requirement: Oublivae must not have a creature impaled on her tail.
Trigger: An enemy enters a square adjacent to Oublivae.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 2 (triggering target); +30 vs. AC
Hit: 3d12 + 14 damage and the target is impaled on Oublivae's tail (escape DC 29 ends). While impaled, the target is restrained and cannot make opportunity attacks against Oublivae. Whenever Oublivae moves, she must move the target to a space adjacent to her. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.
Devour Them All • At-Will
Trigger: An enemy with <i>devour them</i> starts its turn within 20 squares of Oublivae.
Effect (Free Action): The target must use <i>devour them</i> as a free action on an adjacent creature. This attack does not count against the limit to making only one free action attack per turn.
Only Dies Alone • At-Will
Trigger: Oublivae would be reduced below 1 hp.
Requirement: A living ally within 20 squares.
Effect (No Action): An ally within 20 squares dies. Oublivae regains hit points equal to the number of hit points the ally had remaining. This ability bypasses any effect that prevents recovery of hit points.
Skills Athletics +28, Bluff +27, History +26, Insight +27, Nature +27, Stealth +28
Str 32 (+23) Dex 32 (+23) Wis 30 (+22)
Con 26 (+20) Int 29 (+21) Cha 31 (+22)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common
Equipment quickening diadem, creation's hourglass

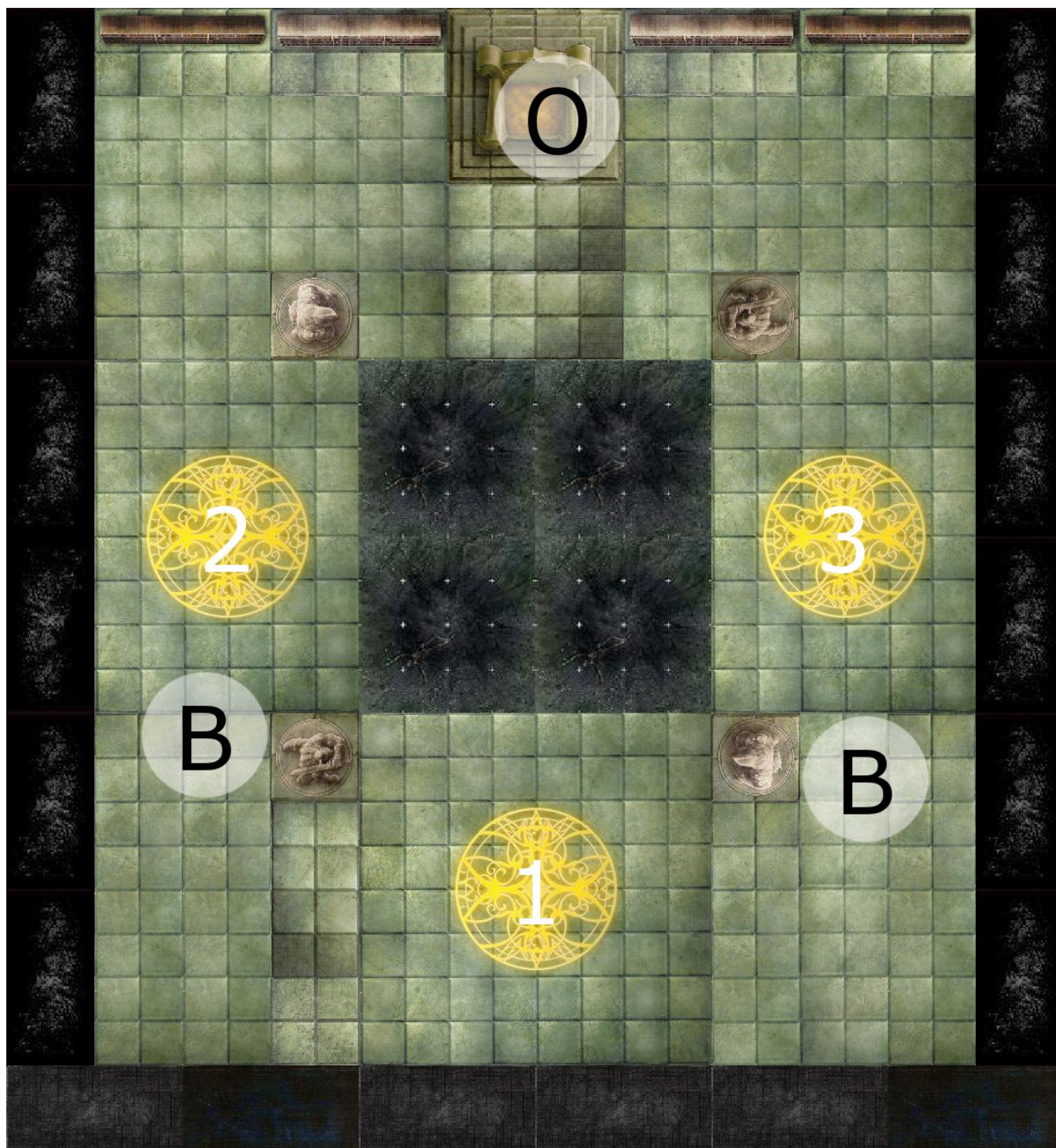
Note: Heavily altered form of Oublivae (*Demonomicon*), reduced several levels, with updated solo action economy, improvements for encounter synergy, and stun and unconscious removed for player fun and encounter pacing. *Variable resistance* set to fire. *Quickening Diadem* added. Bluff training added, since her entire shtick is misleading others.

ENCOUNTER 8: END OF OBLIVION

TILE SETS NEEDED

DU4: Arcane Towers (extra magic circles), DTMS: The Dungeon.

O = Oublivae; B = balor; The ancient abyssal worm starts off map, emerging from any pit on its first turn.



ENCOUNTER 9: CONCLUSION

The PCs appear back on the portal to I'Cath. Months have passed since they passed through the portal.

You appear within a familiar teleportation circle. Soldiers of your army snap to attention and salute as you appear in the Palace of Bones, where you unknowingly entered the Abyss. One runs off to report your arrival.

A large hourglass that you last saw held by Oublivae rests in the middle of the circle. As you notice it, a voice speaks in your mind:

“I am Creation’s Hourglass. I observe the passage of time, from its beginning, through the richness of its development, until inevitably I shall witness its conclusion.

Oublivae’s realm did not show an authentic depiction of that conclusion. It is likely that a true end approaches, and you will be central in events leading up to it. I wish to accompany you on this journey. I foresee that you will find me useful.”

The soldiers that the PCs met in Encounters 1 and 2 are here waiting for them, but alive and well. The PCs can quickly learn that they have been gone for several months. Most of their armies left, but a dedicated group remained to ensure the PCs could return.

The PCs are escorted out of the chamber and the palace so they can see outside.

The palace is surrounded in a shimmering dome of force. Beyond that dome, the entire island of I'Cath is wracked by violent magical storms.

A woman in ritual robes of High Imaskar channels power into the dome. “The sorceress Tsien Chiang was attempting to prevent your return,” she says.

She turns from her task to gaze solemnly at you. “I believe there is little time remaining, and much to do.”

The story continues in
EPIC4-3 Dark Hearts of Madness

REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn XP, gold, access to Treasures, and Story Awards. All totals listed here are per PC.

EXPERIENCE POINTS AND GOLD

In the Epic Campaign, characters do not need to track XP. All characters reach level 25 upon completing this adventure (regardless of whether they died during the adventure or not).

Base Gold per PC

325,000 gp

(Conclusion: 325,000 gp)

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces (the “Base Gold” listed above) as well as the option to select from a list of Treasures. A Treasure 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; multiple players may choose the same Treasure. Some of the listed Treasures may not be available if the PCs did not complete the objective specified in the adventure to unlock that Treasure.

If a character buys or sells gear during the adventure (or pays for services, such as NPC ritual casting) add or subtract the amount from the base gold. If a player selects a Treasure that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character’s base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character to spend more gold than he or she earns during an adventure, but characters may not spend gold that they do not have. For details on selling items, see the *Living Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

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 Treasure, 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.

Certain Treasures have a minimum adventure level listed. That Treasure is not available if the group played below the minimum adventure level. However, those who played at a higher adventure level can always choose from the lower-level options.

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

THREE ROUNDS, TWO TREASURES

The Living Forgotten Realms Epic Campaign consists of 10 three-round adventures, each of which covers a single level of the Epic tier of play. To keep the PCs’ rewards in line with the campaign’s expected advancement rate, the PCs have the opportunity to select **TWO** of the listed Treasures (including More Gold). We settled on two Treasures instead of three, because characters are really not expected to find three magic items per level, even at the Epic tier. We structured the Base Gold and More Gold awards such that a character who chooses More Gold as both of his or her Treasures still ends up with enough cash to buy a level 25 magic item at market price.

All the PCs are considered to be 26th level at the time they are making their Treasure selections from this adventure, so they can choose any of the listed items. A character who wishes to find two magic items for his or her two Treasures still has to have two available found-item slots (including the new slot that is unlocked for reaching 26th level).

To be clear, a character who chooses More Gold twice receives no other Treasures. That character would earn 300,000 gp in addition to the Base Gold award, for a grand total of 625,000 gold pieces gained from this adventure.

EACH PC SELECTS TWO OF THE FOLLOWING:

Treasure A: *vermillion bag of tricks* (level 28; AV)
Found in Encounter 5B

Treasure B: *+5 robe of the archmage* (level 25; MME)
Found in Encounter 5C

Treasure C: *time-jumping boots* (level 27; AV2)
Found in Encounter 5C

Treasure D: *ring of khirad* (level 27; AV2)
Found in Encounter 6C

Treasure E: *scroll of protection* (level 30; MME)
Found in Encounter 6C. The scroll is keyed to protect against Tsien Chiang specifically. This treasure does not consume a found item slot.

Treasure F: *saddle of the nightmare* (level 29; custom)
Found in Encounter 7A. PCs who choose this item as one of their Treasures also gain EPIC20 (which includes the game statistics for the saddle and mount)

Treasure G: *mirrored mask* (level 27; AV2)
Found in Encounter 7C

Treasure H: *ring of elemental mastery* (level 28; *Manual of the Planes*)
Found in Encounter 7C.

Treasure I: *quickenning diadem* (level 29; AV)
Found in Encounter 8.

Treasure J: *instrument of death* (level 30; *Custom*)
Found in Encounter 8. . PCs who choose this item as one of their Treasures also gain EPIC21 (which includes the game statistics for the ring).

Treasure K: Any Uncommon permanent magic item (regardless of item slot) of level 26 or lower from a player resource
Found in the Conclusion

Treasure L: Any Common permanent magic item (regardless of item slot) of level 28 or lower from a player resource
Found in the Conclusion

Treasure X (Upgrade an Item): A character may upgrade one existing +4 enhancement bonus magic item (and only a +4 enhancement bonus magic item) to a +5 enhancement bonus. The upgraded item is the same item, but the character now has the +5 version of that item instead of the +4 version.
Found in the Conclusion; if the original +4 item was selected using a found-item slot, then the upgrade does NOT consume another found-item slot. However, if the original item was not paid for with a found-item slot, then selecting the upgrade DOES consume one of the character's found-item slots.

Treasure Y (Potion plus Gold): A character may choose to gain 1 *potion of life* (level 30) plus 50,000 (fifty thousand) gold pieces instead of another Treasure. The player should write the consumables gained on his or her Adventure Log. Consumables obtained in this fashion do not take up found-item slots.

Treasure Z (More Gold): A character may choose to receive coin, astral diamonds, or other valuables worth 150,000 (one hundred fifty thousand) gold pieces (in addition to the Base Gold amount) instead of another Treasure.

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.

All PCs gain EPIC18 and EPIC19, reflecting their successes and failures in the adventure. Only PCs who take Treasures F or J gain EPIC20 or EPIC21.

EPIC18 Oblivion Overcome

You were subject to unthinkable despair in Oublivae's Barrens and lived to tell the tale. Check each of the following that happened to you during the adventure:

- ☐ You shed all Despair before you fought Oublivae.
- ☐ You were Lost in the Abyss.
- ☐ You gained *destroy them* by dying and being returned by the Barrens.
- ☐ You suffered a Total Party Kill (TPK).
- ☐ You gained *devour them*.
- ☐ You surrendered to Oublivae.

How many Hope points did you have left at the end of the adventure? _____

If you gained either *destroy them* or *devour them*, you gain the Bloodthirsty Wrath boon. This boon never expires (although you may lose it in a future adventure), does not cost a found-item slot, does not count as one of your Treasure selections for the adventure, and does not count against the limit of Rare items you are allowed to possess. However, it is subject to the normal LFR rules limiting you to one active divine boon at a time.

Bloodthirsty Wrath		Level 28 Rare
<i>Destruction and carnage are the only things able to quell your appetite.</i>		
Divine Boon (cannot be sold)		
Property		
You gain 28 temporary hit points the first time you drop an enemy to 0 hit points during an encounter.		
Attack Power (Healing) ♦ Daily (Free Action)		
<i>Requirement:</i> You must be bloodied.		
<i>Trigger:</i> You hit an enemy with a melee attack.		
<i>Effect:</i> After the attack, you make a melee basic attack against a randomly-chosen creature adjacent to you. If this attack hits, you may spend a healing surge.		
Reference: Gruumsh's Bloodthirsty Wrath (<i>Book of Vile Darkness</i>)		

EPIC19 Encroaching Darkness

In the Barrens you saw the horrifying results of Tsien Chiang's plans to summon the Hungering Dark. You managed to gather information that might help you to stop the sorceress. Check each of the following items or information that you recovered during the adventure.

- A tome of arcane notes (from Szass Tam)
- Sinmaker's location and use (from Fzoul)
- A strange holy symbol (from Manshoon).

You also recovered *creation's hourglass*, an artifact that Oublivae was using to manipulate time. Once per adventure, and only three times ever, you may use the hourglass to manipulate time. Each time you do so, mark off one use: □ □ □

MINOR ACTIONS

Creation's Hourglass ♦ Adventure

Effect: You gain an extra standard action and an extra minor action, which you must use before the end of your turn. You can't use these extra actions to make attacks.

The hourglass may prove to have other powers later in the campaign, so you should not void this Story Award even after you have used all three activations of the above power.

EPIC20 Saddle of the Dreadmare

To gain this mount, you must choose the *saddle of the dreadmare* as one of your Treasure selections for this adventure. The saddle costs you a found-item slot and counts against your limit of one Rare item per tier.

Saddle of the Dreadmare Level 29 Rare

After defeating a death knight and his mount, you recovered this saddle, which is made from the skin of a dreadmare.

Mount Slot 2,625,000 gp

Property

This saddle is attuned to a specific shadowclaw dreadmare and a specific rider. It does not work for any other creature. If the dreadmare attuned to this saddle dies, it is resurrected automatically, at no gold piece or healing surge cost, at the end of the rider's next extended rest. The dreadmare has three healing surges per day and is fully healed at the end of any extended rest taken by its rider.

Utility Power ♦ At-Will (Move Action)

Effect: If the shadowclaw dreadmare is alive, it appears in the rider's square or any legal square adjacent to the rider. The rider may mount the dreadmare as part of this move action.

Utility Power ♦ At-Will (Free Action)

Effect: The shadowclaw dreadmare is dismissed. This does not heal any damage the dreadmare has taken or end any conditions or ongoing effects affecting the dreadmare. The dreadmare may spend some or all of its healing surges while it is dismissed, if the rider wishes.

Special: The dreadmare is dismissed automatically when its rider falls unconscious, or if its rider ever turns on it, such as by being dominated and attacking it, by including it in harmful area effects, by redirecting damage to it, or as determined by the DM. If the dreadmare is dismissed for any reason other than voluntarily by the rider, the rider may not summon the dreadmare again until the rider has completed a short rest.

Reference: Custom item created for LFR

Shadowclaw Dreadmare Level 26 Skirmisher

Large shadow beast (mount, undead)

HP 246; **Bloodied** 123

Initiative +21

AC 40, **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 39, **Will** 38

Perception +22

Speed 8, fly 8 (hover)

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 20 necrotic, 20 cold

Vulnerable 5 radiant

TRAITS

Charger

The dreadmare and its rider gain a +10 power bonus to damage rolls of charge attacks.

Shadow Retribution

Any enemy that hits the dreadmare or its rider with an opportunity attack takes 20 cold and necrotic damage.

Saddle of the Dreadmare

When any effect allows its rider to shift, but not the dreadmare, the dreadmare may shift instead.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m Shadow Claws (cold, necrotic) • At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +31 vs. AC

Hit: 4d8 + 16 necrotic and cold damage.

MOVE ACTIONS

Teleport (teleportation) • At-Will

Effect: The dreadmare teleports up to 5 squares and teleports its rider with it. This power is not affected by items or feats possessed by its rider.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Shadow Jump • Encounter

Trigger: The dreadmare takes damage.

Effect (No Action): After taking the damage, the dreadmare becomes immune to damage until the start of its next turn.

Str 25 (+20)

Dex 22 (+19)

Wis 18 (+17)

Con 30 (+23)

Int 4 (+10)

Cha 12 (+14)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** -

EPIC21 Instrument of Death

In order to gain this item, you must choose it as one of your Treasure selections for the adventure. The *instrument of death* costs you a found-item slot and counts against your limit of one Rare item per tier.

Instrument of Death Level 30 Rare

This circle of bone feels cold to the touch. As creatures die in its presence the ring grows ever warmer.

Ring Slot 3,125,000 gp

Property

You gain a +6 item bonus to all weapon and implement damage rolls.

Property

Whenever you hit a minion with an attack and deal damage to it, that minion cannot use abilities triggered by its death or by being reduced to 0 hit points (such as *rise again*, *death burst*, or *desperate starvation*).

Utility Power ♦ Encounter (Free Action)

Trigger: You make a damage roll.

Effect: You gain a bonus to the damage roll equal to 5 times the number of non-minion creatures that have died during the current encounter, to a maximum of +20.

Reference: Custom item created for LFR.

EVENT SUMMARY: EPIC4~2 AGE OF RUIN

THE RESULTS OF THIS ADVENTURE WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EPIC CAMPAIGN!

Please fill this survey out and return it to your Event Organizer or Senior DM. You may also fill out the survey online.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EPIC0402LFR>

Question 1. Which of the “boss fights” in this adventure was the party’s favorite?

- a. Szass Tam
- b. Fzoul Chembryl
- c. Manshoon
- d. Oublivae

Question 2. How many Hope points did the party have left (total for all PCs) at the end of the adventure? ____

Question 3. How many of the PCs gained the *destroy them* power? (0-6): ____

Question 4. How many of the PCs gained the *devour them* power? (0-6): ____

Question 5. How many total PC deaths were there during the adventure? (If the same character died, came back, and died again, count that as two deaths.) ____

Question 6. This adventure featured a very significant plot twist about a possible future version of Faerûn. What was the majority sentiment at the table (including the DM) regarding this? (Put any specific comments on the back.)

- a. Favorable; majority felt that the plot twist was fun and appropriate
- b. Neutral; majority either anticipated the plot twist or didn’t react strongly either way to it
- c. Unfavorable; majority did not like the plot twist and felt it detracted from the adventure

Question 7. This adventure was more dangerous, in terms of potential death, than previous Epic adventures, though there was a safety net of sorts. What was the majority sentiment at the table (including the DM) regarding this?

- a. Favorable; majority felt that the increased level of danger/deadliness was fun and appropriate
- b. Neutral; majority either didn’t notice any difference in the danger level or didn’t react strongly to it
- c. Unfavorable; majority felt that the increased level of difficulty made the adventure less fun
- d. Too easy; majority disagreed with the assertion that this adventure was harder - they thought it was easier

Question 8. Some of that added difficulty was through the Despair and Hope system, where the PCs started with horrendous penalties, but steadily overcame them and eventually gained a tremendous benefit. What was the majority sentiment at the table (including the DM) regarding this system? (Put any specific comments on the back.)

- a. Favorable; majority felt that the Despair / Hope system was fun and thematically appropriate
- b. Neutral; majority didn’t react strongly either way to the system
- c. Unfavorable; majority felt that the system was unfair, outside the rules, not fun, or otherwise inappropriate

Questions 9-10 (Optional). How do the DM and the players rate this adventure? (Put any specific comments on the back.)

DM’s Rating:

- a. 1 star (worst possible rating)
- b. 2 stars (below expectations)
- c. 3 stars (met expectations / average)
- d. 4 stars (above expectations)
- e. 5 stars (exceeded expectations / best rating)

Players’ Rating:

- a. 1 star (worst possible rating)
- b. 2 stars (below expectations)
- c. 3 stars (met expectations / average)
- d. 4 stars (above expectations)
- e. 5 stars (exceeded expectations / best rating)

NEW RULES

Time-Jumping Boots

Level 27 Uncommon

For a brief moment, these nondescript boots allow you to step out of time and evade your enemies' attention.

Feet Slot 1,625,000 gp

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Reflex.

Power ♦ **Daily** (Move Action)

Effect: You disappear until the start of your next turn. Until that time, you don't have line of sight or line of effect to any creature, and creatures don't have line of sight or line of effect to you. You also ignore negative ongoing effects, take no damage, and don't need to make saving throws (though you can still do so if you wish). You can take one standard action and two minor actions. At the start of your next turn, you reappear in the space you last occupied or in the nearest unoccupied space of your choice, and you are dazed until the end of your turn.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault* 2, page(s) 128.

Robe of the Archmage

Level 25 Rare

You can tap this robe's power to broaden your magical ability, but at a cost, since your body acts as a conduit for that force.

Armor: Cloth 625,000 gp

Enhancement: +5 AC

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Fortitude and Will.

Property: After each extended rest you can prepare one additional utility power of your level or lower from your spellbook. You must have a spellbook to use this benefit, and the additional power can be the same level as another utility power you prepare.

Utility Power ♦ **Daily** (Minor Action)

Effect: You take damage equal to your bloodied value that can't be reduced in any way. The next damage roll you make with an arcane attack power before the end of your turn has all of its damage dice maximized.

Reference: *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*, page(s) 16.

Scroll of Protection

Level 30 Uncommon

You read words of power from this scroll that repel your enemies and prevent them from attacking.

Consumable 125,000 gp

Special: This scroll works only against Tsien Chiang

Utility Power (Aura) ♦ **Consumable** (Standard Action)

Effect: You activate an aura 2 that lasts until the end of the encounter or until you make an attack. The aura affects Tsien Chiang. She takes a -4 penalty to attack rolls against targets in the aura, and she cannot enter the aura willingly. If she starts her turn in the aura, she must use her first action to leave the aura by the shortest route possible, unless no route exists.

Reference: *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*, page(s) 101.

Ring of Khirad

Level 27 Uncommon

This ring is set with a clouded astral diamond whose gleam reveals things seen and unseen.

Ring Slot 1,625,000 gp

Property: You gain a +5 item bonus to Insight checks and Perception checks, and you can see invisible creatures and objects.

Utility Power ♦ **Daily** (Minor Action)

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, creatures within 5 squares of you lose invisibility, gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses against illusion attacks, and take a -2 penalty to attack rolls with illusion powers. In addition, an affected creature that makes an attack is slowed until the end of its next turn.

Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

If you've reached at least one milestone today, your allies are unaffected by this power.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault* 2, page(s) 126.

Mirrored Mask

Level 27 Uncommon

A jagged-cut mask of silvered glass appears to show images of eladrin scouts even as it protects you from attacks.

Head Slot 1,625,000 gp

Property: You are immune to gaze attacks.

Property: You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses against ranged or area attacks.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault* 2, page(s) 125.

Ring of Elemental Mastery

Level 28 Uncommon

Forged from elemental air, earth, fire, and water, this ring gives its wearer the durability to withstand the harshest climates and bypass the toughest resistances.

Ring Slot 2,125,000 gp

Property: You do not need to breathe. Also, you and your equipment suffer no ill effects from precipitation, high pressure, and ambient temperatures between -50 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

Utility Power ♦ Encounter (Minor Action)

Effect: Choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, or lightning. Until the end of the encounter, your attacks ignore 5 resistance of that type.

If you've reached at least one milestone today, your attacks ignore resistance of the chosen type.

Reference: *Manual of the Planes*, page(s) 157.

Potion of Life

Level 30 Common

This fabled potion not only heals wounds, but can even bring back the recently deceased.

Consumable: Potion 125,000 gp

Utility Power (Healing) ♦ **Consumable** (Standard Action)

Effect: If this potion is administered to a character who died since the end of your last turn, that character is restored to life at 50 hit points. If consumed by a living creature, this potion instead functions as a potion of recovery.

Reference: *Player's Handbook*, page(s) 255.

Quickening Diadem

Level 29 Uncommon

A diadem of astral diamonds floats above your head, honing your mental clarity and your reflexes.

Head Slot 2,625,000 gp

Property: When you are stunned or dazed, you can take a move action on your turn in addition to whatever actions you are normally allowed.

Utility Power ♦ **Daily** (Free Action)

Effect: You take a move or minor action.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page(s) 144.

Bloodthirsty Wrath

Level 28 Rare

Destruction and carnage are the only things able to quell your appetite.

Divine Boon 2,125,000 gp

Property: You gain temporary hit points equal to this boon's level the first time you drop an enemy to 0 hit points during an encounter.

Attack Power (Healing) * **Daily** (Free Action)

Requirement: You must be bloodied.

Trigger: You hit an enemy with a melee attack.

Effect: After the attack, you make a melee basic attack against a random creature adjacent to you. If this attack hits, you can spend a healing surge.

Reference: *Gruumsh's Bloodthirsty Wrath*, *Book of Vile Darkness*, page(s)

Vermilion Bag of Tricks

Level 28 Uncommon

This beautiful leather bag is inlaid with the images of beasts – not unlike the ones that it can summon to fight by your side.

Wondrous Item 2,125,000 gp

Power (Conjuration) ♦ **Daily** (Standard Action)

Use this bag to conjure a Large or Huge minion (see below for statistics). Roll a d8 to determine which beast is produced and modify its statistics accordingly:

1: Large Bloodspike Behemoth; when this creature hits with its melee basic attack (tail), the target also takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends) and is knocked prone.

2: Large Crushgrip Constrictor; when this creature hits with its melee basic attack (bite), the target is also grabbed (until escape).

3: Large Blade Spider; this creature's melee basic attack (claw) does not have reach but instead affects all enemies in a close burst 1.

4: Large Stone-Eye Basilisk; when this creature hits with its melee basic attack (bite), the target is also immobilized (save ends).

5: Large Wyvern; this creature has a fly speed of 8, and when the creature hits with its melee basic attack (tail), the target also takes ongoing 10 poison (save ends).

6: Huge Guulvorg; when this creature hits with a melee basic attack (bite), the target takes 15 damage instead of 10 and is knocked prone.

7: Large Iron Gorgon; when this creature hits with its melee basic attack (horns), the target is pushed 1 square. On a successful charge, it deals 20 damage instead of 10 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

8: Huge Carrion Crawler; this creature's melee basic attack (bite) has reach 3, and on a hit, the target is also pulled 2 squares and slowed (save ends).

Conjured Beast (Vermilion Bag)		
Large or Huge natural beast		
HP 1; a missed attack never damage a minion	Initiative as conjurer	
AC 38, Fortitude 38, Reflex 36, Will 33	Perception +14	
Speed 6	low-light vision	
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Bite, Claw, Horns, or Tail • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +26 vs. AC		
Hit: 10 damage.		
Str 23 (+20)	Dex 18 (+18)	Wis 24 (+20)
Con 18 (+18)	Int 2 (+10)	Cha 7 (+11)
Alignment unaligned	Languages —	

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page(s) 184.

APPENDIX 1: DYING

It is far more likely for one or more PCs to die during this adventure than previous epic adventures. In nightmarish fashion, death is merely the beginning and the PCs must witness each other die multiple times.

Whenever a PC dies in an encounter prior to Encounter 8:

- If the PC has an effect which would trigger on death to save them from death (such as the level 24 ability of several epic destinies or the power of a *ring of the phoenix*), they may activate that ability to prevent death.
- If the PC has an effect which triggers on death to remove the PC's corpse (such as the level 21 ability of the archlich), the ability fails entirely to work. The PC cannot so easily escape the Barrens.
- Other PCs may use resurrection abilities, such as the *revive* power, a *potion of life*, or *Sinmaker's flask*.
- Any PC that has not been raised by the start of their turn is reanimated by Oublivae's power. Give that player Player Handout 5. The PC is now tainted by Oublivae's power and touched by a desire for destruction that may turn into an almost cannibalistic hunger. This taint is not detectable in the Barrens, though an astute PC may realize that using a power gained by inexplicably being raised is likely to have a cost. A particular PC is only brought once during a particular encounter in this way!
- If a PC dies again during an encounter, Oublivae will not reanimate the PC until after the group takes a short rest. After a short rest, a PC that is still dead is reanimated and treated as if it took a short rest.

A PC reanimated by Oublivae:

- Sets their hit points to the PC's bloodied value in hit points. This functions even if an effect would prevent or hinder regaining hit points.
- Resets the PC's number of failed death saves (if they had any) to 0.
- May stand up as a free action.
- Either loses two healing surges (only possible if the PC has surges to lose), or takes the standard cumulative -1 death penalty to attacks, skills, and checks until three milestones have passed.
- Gains the *destroy them* power (see below).

A PC reanimated by Oublivae does not regain any powers, healing surges, or other benefits from having been brought back to life. Note also that death does not clear harmful effects from a PC, so the PC may still have conditions or penalties.

Destroy Them

You lash out at your enemies with terrible anger.

At-Will 1/round

Minor Action

Melee Touch

Target: One creature

Attack: +30 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 20 damage.

If a PC uses *destroy them* one or more times, then after their next short rest it changes to:

Devour Them

You bite and tear into your enemies, taking their strength for yourself.

At-Will 1/round

Minor Action

Melee Touch

Target: One creature

Attack: +30 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 20 damage and you regain 20 hit points.

If a PC uses *devour them* one or more times, the PC gain the ability to also use it at-will on opportunity attacks instead of a melee basic, but *must* now take any opportunity attack granted using *devour them*. The PC's allies also provoke opportunity attacks from the PC, such as for moving, ranged, and area powers, as if the PC was an enemy.

APPENDIX 2: DEATH'S UNREST

CREATURES

Many ghoul hungerers

1 voidharrow herald

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Decrease the voidharrow herald's hit points by 40.

Six PCs: Increase the voidharrow herald's hit points by 40.

SETUP

Due to Appendix 1, a TPK before Encounter 8 requires that each PC dies twice in an encounter. In the event that occurs, the adventure should not end, but it's important to reinforce that dying has a real cost.

Instead of coming back 5 minutes later, the PCs have instead been stripped of all valuables and equipment and tossed into a dumping ground of thousands of corpses. The PCs are reanimated once more, separated and surrounded by ghouls, but with the *devour them* power. Without their gear, they must overcome the ghouls. The PCs may then rescue their equipment from destruction by a voidharrow herald.

This encounter is less fully fleshed out than a normal encounter, as it is unlikely to be necessary. Please adjust details as appropriate for your group. If there is insufficient time for this encounter, feel free to narratively describe the process. Note the penalties to Treasure below.

An awful hunger awakens you once again from death. You are surrounded by, almost buried in, a pile of rotting corpses. The flesh around you smells delectable.

A ghoul clambers over the pile to look down at you. It reaches down for you, grabbing for a fresh piece of meat.

The PCs:

- Have no equipment or magic items
- Have not recovered any powers from a short rest
- Are at full hit points (even though they spent no surges)
- Have the *devour them* power (Appendix 1)

The PCs are scattered through piles of bodies: treat every square as difficult terrain. The PCs start within about 10 squares of each other, but do not have line of

sight or effect to each other until they climb, fly, or teleport up onto the top of a pile. The PCs' gear is about 100 squares away - it's not easily detectable until after the fight is over, but some may have ways of summoning some magic items.

Each PC is surrounded (adjacent or within 4 squares, as appropriate to threaten the PC) by 1d4 abyssal ghoul hungerers. As minions that only attack AC, it is not necessary to recalculate many of the PC statistics for not having equipment.

A PC may grab an improvised weapon from the debris around as a minor action. The improvised weapon deals 1d4 damage with no proficiency bonus and may be used as a ranged weapon with an increment of 5 / 10. For most PCs, their weapon attacks will be 10 or 11 lower than usual (-5 enhancement, -3 expertise, -2 or -3 proficiency) and their implement attacks will be 8 or 9 lower than usual (-5 enhancement, -3 expertise, possible -1 for superior implement). Note that most PC methods of avoiding opportunity attacks will not work without their equipment.

PCs can easily defeat the ghouls using *devour them*: Oublivae is attempting to make sure they are properly tempted to use it.

Once the PCs have defeated the ghouls, allow them a momentary breather to collect themselves: they may spend one healing surge to regain hit points, regain one encounter attack power, and regain one encounter utility power.

Red smoke rises up into the air several hundred feet to the east.

The smoke is rising from where a voidharrow herald has gathered together the PCs' treasure and is systematically obliterating it. Arcana DC 21 reveals that the smoke comes from the expenditure of residuum, while DC 29 senses a great deal of magic in that direction; magic that matches the gear of the PCs. Assuming the PCs rush to investigate:

A demonic creature made of crimson stone has gathered together a large pile of treasure; your magic items! One of the items begins to glow bright red and the demon prepares to begin destroying it.

The demon is within a clearing in the debris 20 squares across, so the PCs should start 10 squares away from it. If the PCs do not interrupt it, it will eventually destroy

their equipment, but it's reasonable to allow distraction, deception, and stealth to provide a benefit in this encounter.

The voidharrow herald will destroy their items unless they act to stop it. It starts with items the PCs found earlier in the adventure. Assuming they act and it can melee someone, it instead fights them.

It is tremendously difficult to mess with PC gear in any way that is sane and fair, so give the players every opportunity to not have their items attacked. Instead, the PCs will lose treasure from this adventure.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

General Features: The piles of debris are of varying size and shape. They are difficult terrain and generally block line of sight and effect beyond five squares, unless a creature is flying.

TACTICS

The abyssal ghouls swarm a PC, so they can take opportunity attacks and even their deaths will harm the PC.

The voidharrow herald targets one PC and attacks that PC until the PC is dead, then moves to the next. It preferentially targets PCs who have not yet used *devour them*, to force them to use it.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends after the PCs destroy their enemies and recover their equipment. Every PC who did not use *devour them* during the encounter loses it, regaining *destroy them*. The PC is aware *devour them* can be regained by using *destroy them* (Refer to Appendix 1).

Refers to Encounters 3 and 4 for continuing the adventure. If the PCs TPKed on their way to a lieutenant, it's reasonable to let them now go for that lieutenant. If they died to the lieutenant, then that lieutenant is no longer available to fight.

For the rest of the adventure, at least until the players have regained some confidence, consider running on an easier difficulty, scaling for one fewer PC, or using less optimal tactics (Refer to Appendix 4).

MILESTONE

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

TREASURE

Some of the PCs' treasure has been destroyed by the voidharrow herald. At the end of the adventure, each PC receives 100,000gp less and receives only one Treasure bundle, instead of two.

Abyssal Ghoul Hungerer		Level 22 Minion Soldier	
Medium elemental humanoid (undead)		XP 692	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		Initiative +21	
AC 36, Fortitude 35, Reflex 36, Will 34		Perception +17	
Speed 8, climb 8		darkvision	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic			
STANDARD ACTIONS			
m Unyielding Bite • At-Will			
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +27 vs. AC			
Hit: 15 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).			
TRIGGERED ACTIONS			
C Dead Blood (Necrotic) • Encounter			
Trigger: The ghoul drops to 0 hit points.			
Effect (No Action): Close burst 1 (creatures in burst); each target takes 15 necrotic damage.			
Str 27 (+19)	Dex 26 (+19)	Wis 18 (+15)	
Con 24 (+18)	Int 20 (+16)	Cha 14 (+13)	
Alignment chaotic evil		Languages Abyssal	
Note: Necrotic resistance and dead blood damage scaled for higher level.			

Voidharrow Herald		Level 22 Artillery
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)		XP 4,150
HP 160; Bloodied 80		Initiative +18
AC 36, Fortitude 33, Reflex 34, Will 35		Perception +17
Speed 6, teleport 6		Blindsight 3
Resist 15 necrotic, psychic		
TRAITS		
Plagued Blood		
When the herald is bloodied, it can score a critical hit on a roll of 17-20.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Plague Blade • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 10 (one creature); +29 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d8 + 21 damage.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
C Voidharrow Curse (necrotic, psychic) • At-Will		
Effect: Close burst 10 (one enemy in the burst). The target is cursed (save ends). If the herald scores a critical hit against the target while it is cursed, the target takes 15 extra necrotic and psychic damage.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Cursed Pain (necrotic, psychic) • At-Will		
Trigger: An enemy cursed by the herald that the herald can see takes damage.		
Effect (Free Action): The triggered enemy takes 15 necrotic and psychic damage, and the curse ends.		
Skills Arcana +19, Insight +17		
Str 16 (+14)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 12 (+12)
Con 22 (+17)	Int 16 (+14)	Cha 28 (+20)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common, Primordial	

APPENDIX 3: TIME MANAGEMENT

This adventure is designed to run in 12 - 15 hours. Some groups can easily run longer, through roleplaying or slower combat. In a time-sensitive environment, you may need to carefully manage time. Consider the following methods for DMing faster while still having fun. Please don't lose track of time and do a disservice by cutting out roleplaying or rushing the final battle.

- **Pre-Draw Maps** - This is absolutely vital! Most of the maps are available in poster form.
- **Pre-Roll Initiative** - In addition to saving some time each encounter, this lets you consider monster tactics in advance.
- **Use Average Damage** - Not for everyone, but it makes attacks resolve more quickly.
 $1d6 = 3.5$, $1d8 = 4.5$, $1d10 = 5.5$, $1d12 = 6.5$
Round to the nearest even number when necessary. (Ex: $3d8 + 13 = 26$, $3d6 + 13 = 24$)
- **Call Fights** - If a fight's conclusion seems foregone, narrate a resolution and move on. Feel free to charge 1 healing surge for every unbloodied non-minion, plus 1 per elite and/or 6 minions left alive.
- **Play Quickly** - Make players decide their turns quickly and set a good standard by resolving yours quickly, as well. Don't rewind time or allow group consensus tactics if doing so bogs the game down.
- **Fun First, Worry Second** - Don't worry about optimal rules perfect play. Make a call, forget unimportant details, just focus on the enjoyment of the table!
- **Ease Up** - The biggest thing that will delay this adventure is when the PCs start dying and need to figure out how to survive. If you're running overtime, ease up the difficulty so they can get back into a groove.
- **Pace Play** - Keep an eye on the clock and have a good idea of what's left to play. It may be necessary to cut short one of the three major arcs in this adventure, so that you have time for the conclusion.

Each combat encounter includes a suggestion under scaling for a way to make that particular encounter run more quickly. These suggestions are primarily intended for tables that are more defensive than offensive, so take longer to defeat enemies. If the table is already having trouble, the increased damage output may cause them difficulty; instead just treat the party as one smaller or don't give the monsters the benefits listed for Faster, only the penalties.

The Faster suggestions are not intended for initiative and damage optimized parties.

In a very time restricted environment, it may be necessary to shorten the adventure. Consider the following:

- **Have Oublivae (as the Blessed Angel) shepherd the PCs**, teleporting them from one encounter to the next. This reduces player agency and bypasses some of the roleplaying the PCs might spend in Encounter 4. When the primary purpose of an encounter has been accomplished, Oublivae can bypass the wrap-up section of an encounter by transporting the PCs to the next one. Give the PCs the benefits of a short rest when you do so.
- **Skip Encounter 2**: This encounter is used to get the action flowing more quickly, let the PCs remember how to play, and get used to Despair and the general features, but it is less important to the plot. If you remove it, the PCs remove an additional Despair when they defeat the 3rd and final lieutenant.
- **Shorten Encounters 5B, 6B, and 7A**: These encounters can present serious threats to individual PCs, but should be no danger of a TPK. They each provide flavor associated with their lieutenant, but they can easily be called quite early. If necessary, one or more could even be hand-waved, skill challenged or skipped entirely.
- **Skip one lieutenant**: After the PCs defeat two of the villains, go directly to the Conclusion. This is one of the cleaner ways to save time, but it can be the least satisfying in terms of player satisfaction for overcoming awesome enemies. It can also cause some balance problems in the Conclusion if the PCs have insufficient Hope or too many dailies left. It may be more reasonable for those who might replay this adventure.

APPENDIX 4: DIFFICULTY MANAGEMENT

This adventure is intentionally more difficult than the other epic adventures, with many means available for outright killing PCs. Please ensure that the adventure is difficult enough that the PCs must work hard not to die, and easy enough that it remains enjoyable. It is intended that every encounter have a chance to kill one PC (or force the use of an ability that prevents death) and one of the challenges of the adventure is avoiding having each PC die once. It should be extremely difficult for a TPK to occur before the Conclusion.

The intended difficulty of this adventure starts very high - when the PCs are full of Despair and aren't sure what to expect, forcing the PCs to use up dailies, then steadily gets easier as they overcome their Despair and hit their stride. This should mimic the concept of Hope overcoming Despair. Use your judgment to attain that intent.

Epic tables have amazing variation in effectiveness. Some tables are a perfect synergy of characters optimized to breeze through any combat, while other tables might severely lack a key benefit like damage output, healing, or control.

Most of the encounters in this adventure can be made easier or harder simply by using different tactics, such as focus firing key PCs and matching attacks to weak defenses for tough groups and spreading out damage and using less dangerous powers for more fragile groups.

For other groups, it may be necessary to make greater adjustments for optimal enjoyment. Many of the encounters contain information for scaling for difficulty to make the challenge easier or harder. Do not use these options without discussing difficulty with the table first. Feel free to offer weaker tables the option to face an easier challenge so they can finish the adventure faster and stronger tables the option to show off with a more legitimate challenge. In general, Easier tries to give the PCs a little more control by blunting key monster synergies, Harder tries to give the monsters a greater chance to be able to act, and Glory changes the encounter in a tactical way to challenge intentionally optimized parties.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to treat the group as having a different number of PCs for scaling. Only particularly strong or weak groups require both scaling

for a different number of PCs and easier/harder difficulty. Be very careful doing so unless a group seems guaranteed to TPK or begs for more challenge.

If a group has had several deaths - especially if they are becoming unhappy or taking too long to play - reduce the difficulty of the encounters! Oublivae's goal is to have each of the PCs gain the *destroy them* and/or *devour them* powers. Once a PC has one of these powers, avoid picking on that PC. If all of the PCs have them, then it may be time to focus instead purely on the enjoyment of the table,

If you seem to have absolutely no chance to threaten a PC with death, because the monsters never get to act or just can't seem to hit or damage the PCs, it's worthwhile to verify if that's truly the experience that the players desire. Some players never want to be challenged, while others want to play on glory tier as a larger party. Do remember, though, that Oublivae can observe the PCs the entire time; it is more than reasonable for the monsters to use her knowledge to appropriately aim for low defenses, gang up entirely on linchpin characters, or take appropriate actions to nullify certain power usage.

APPENDIX 5: DESPAIR

The PCs are being exposed to horribly disheartening and depressing events, including the death of almost everyone they know, their apparent failure to stop the end of the world, and the flight of the gods.

In order to properly frame the mechanical effects of such strong emotions, and get the players in on the hardship, this adventure uses Despair penalties, similar to those used in *the Shadowfell: Gloomwrought and Beyond*. The PCs gain four despair penalties in the first encounter, and may gain or lose despair throughout the adventure. In addition, all companions gain “Not Long For This World” which has three despair penalties. When allowed to remove a despair penalty, a player may also remove one of those three penalties. Player Handout 4 contains descriptions of all the despair penalties so they can be handed to players.

All of the Despairs listed may easily be reflavored into some other emotion or hardship. Each player can use these penalties as an opportunity to explore interesting and appropriate emotions for their PC.

The Despair penalties have been separated into four sets of six. It is suggested that each PC be assigned a Despair from each of the four sets. This should help ensure that every PC is penalized in a variety of ways, without over-penalizing one particular aspect (such as the ability to attack or defend oneself).

It is entirely up to you and your group how you determine who gets which despair penalties. For many groups, simply cut out and shuffle the four different sets and have each player draw one from each pile. For other groups, the players might choose the feelings which best fit their character’s personality for reacting to such events, while others you might want to carefully tailor the despair to those that will have a stronger or weaker effect. If a group is playing on easier difficulty, consider immediately allowing each PC to discard one of the Despairs so they possess only three at start, or allowing them to view the penalties before deciding who gets which set of penalties. If playing on harder or glory tier of difficulty, consider picking despair penalties specifically to hinder the most crippling abilities of the PCs.

Remove Despair penalties that would be less fun for your specific group. You can make sure that every player has different penalties, for variety, or narrow down to a very select list that everyone shares so that everyone can easily remember the penalties.

Be careful to keep things fun. These definitely increase the difficulty of the adventure, which can be interesting and exciting, but make sure that it is the PCs who feel despair, and not the players. It is reasonable, though more complicated, to hand out the Despair more slowly:

- **Encounter 1:** Divvy up 4 Despair to each PC, and allow them to select one.
- **Encounter 2:** Run the combat at higher difficulty, to compensate for the lack of penalties. Instead of removing Despair, the PCs gain a Despair if any soldier dies, and two if all of them die.
- **Encounter 4:** As the PCs witness the extent of the damage, they gain an additional Despair.
- **Encounter 5A:** Unless the PCs save all of the people, they gain an additional Despair.

If the players are completely opposed to Despair, that aspect of the adventure can be removed, though it removes some of the challenge and flavor of the adventure. In addition, these penalties are used to effectively pay for the Hope gained later in the adventure, which is used for surge, daily, and even resurrection later on. If you choose not to use Despair, ignore the first Hope the PCs would receive, so that they only receive a maximum of two points.

APPENDIX 5: DESPAIR (CONTINUED)

Group A

Drowsy: During the first round of combat, you deal half damage with your attacks.

Flustered: You cannot use more than one encounter attack, daily attack, and/or augmented psionic attack power each round.

Jittery: You take a -5 penalty to any attack roll you make that is not part of your standard action.

Miserable: You take a -1 penalty to all d20 rolls.

Squeamish: While bloodied, you take a -2 penalty to all d20 rolls.

Trembling: You take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Group B

Distracted: You grant combat advantage to all enemies.

Doomed: You regain only half the usual amount when you heal during combat.

Fragile: Whenever an enemy misses you with a damaging attack that deals no damage on a miss, you take 5 damage. This damage cannot be resisted or redirected.

Frail: You take a -5 penalty to your highest defense at the time you gain this despair.

Indifferent: You take a -2 penalty to all defenses.

Vulnerable: You gain Vulnerable 5 All.

Group C

Hesitant: You cannot spend an action point unless you are bloodied.

Lethargic: You cannot take more than one move action per round, nor take more than one minor action per round.

Shocked: You cannot make any attacks in a combat until after an enemy has taken a turn. If your initiative would be higher than all enemies, set your initiative to 1 lower than the highest enemy's initiative.

Sluggish: You take a -5 penalty to your final initiative result.

Traumatized: You cannot use the actions gained by spending action points to use attack powers.

Unresponsive: You cannot use any immediate or opportunity actions during the first round of the encounter.

Group D

Careless: Even if you would normally not provoke opportunity attacks for doing so, you provoke opportunity attacks for shifting, charging, using ranged or area powers, and even provoke from attackers who cannot see you.

Fatalistic: You die at 2 failed death saves (instead of 3) or negative healing surge hit points (instead of negative bloodied).

Haunted: You take a -5 penalty to saving throws you make that are not at the end of your turn.

Hopeless: You take a -2 penalty to all saving throws.

Impatient: You cannot ready actions, delay initiative, or swap initiative with an ally.

Quarrelsome: You cannot flank, move through the spaces of allies, or allow allies to move through your space.

Any companion automatically gets the following set of despair penalties. Whenever you may remove a despair penalty, you may also choose one of the three despair penalties to remove from any followers.

Not Long For This World: Your companion, familiar, hireling, mount, or other attached creature / NPC will soon be ripped away from you. They gain all of the following penalties:

- Any resistance to damage it has or gains is removed.
- It gains Vulnerable 5 All.
- It heals only half the usual amount when healed during combat.

APPENDIX 6: VILLAINS

A PC can attempt a History or Religion check to learn the information provided. Information is cumulative. Note that PCs can only learn information at least 30 years old, since they have no access to recent events.

MANSHOON (HISTORY / ARCANA)

Automatic: The PCs automatically know that Manshoon was once a wizard lord of Zhentil Keep and leader of the Zhentarim, who united a cabal of evil wizards under his rule.

DC 31: Manshoon is a ruthless leader who always keeps his composure and finds his way by manipulating others to his agenda. After leaving the Zhentarim, Manshoon turned up as a vampire who took over Westgate's thieves' guild and attempted to take over the town.

DC 41: Manshoon is known for taking extreme measures to ensure his life. He used to keep clones of himself in stasis, until they all activated at once and caused chaos throughout Faerun.

SZASS TAM (HISTORY / ARCANA / RELIGION)

Automatic: The PCs automatically know that Szass Tam is an archmage lich who ruled in Thay for centuries. Szass Tam is cunning, ambitious, and callous. The lich works through servants and intermediaries, careful not to waste his most valuable servants.

DC 32: Szass Tam prizes unique and powerful servants. He surrounds himself in most powerful undead and is always willing to turn a formerly living enemy into a new general.

DC 42: Szass Tam overthrew several other archmages to take control of Thay. The lich works on grand plans: world dominion, control of reality, and making himself a god..

FZOUL CHEMBRYL (HISTORY / RELIGION)

Automatic: The PCs automatically know that Fzoul Chembryl is an exarch of Bane and lord of Zhentil Keep. He is famed for his hatred of Netheril.

DC 31: Fzoul Chembryl lived as the Chosen Tyrant of Bane until he died defending Zhentil Keep against the shades of Netheril. When he died, Fzoul ascended to become a lesser god in service to Bane.

DC 41: Fzoul commands the might of both Bane's clergy and the Zhentarim. Fzoul does not shy from physical confrontation, smiting his enemies with a scepter of divine energy.

OUBLIVAE (ARCANA / RELIGION)

DC 32: Oblivae is a demon lord of the Abyss, ruler of the Abyssal layer known as the Barrens. She is known as the Angel of the Everlasting Void, the Demon Monarch of the Barrens, and the Queen of Desolation. Oblivae's eternal work is to divide what is united, isolate those divided pieces, and leave only barren, lifeless desolation in her destructive wake. Oblivae's followers in the Abyss live by her example of hopelessness, driving their victims to madness and cannibalism.

DC 42: The Queen of Desolation reveals the future to would-be heroes, allowing them to experience the ruin of their civilization and all they hold dear while she savors their abandoned hopes. She particularly relishes the grief of those enemies who die alone. Oblivae likewise delights in the horror of creatures forced to watch their allies slain and consumed, their blood lapped up by her long, ghoulish tongue.

APPENDIX 7: PRISMATIC SPHERE

The colors must be dealt with in the following order: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet.

Refer to the chart below for the specific special powers, keyword, or rider(s) required to overcome a particular color. Each of the first six layers may be brought down using a standard action as long as a PC is...

- Within 5 squares:
 - Has a particular special power or ritual. No power expenditure or skill check is required.
 - Expends an appropriate (with a keyword or rider, effect that occurs as a result of the power, associated with that layer) daily power. No skill check is required.
- While adjacent. All skill checks below can be made with Arcana, Athletics, Endurance, Nature, Religion, or Thievery:
 - Expends an appropriate encounter power and makes a DC 29 skill check.
 - Expends an appropriate at-will power and makes a DC 38 skill check. On a failure, the PC is attacked by the current layer.
 - Makes a DC 38 skill check. Success or failure, the PC is attacked by the current layer.

Notes: The powers used to bring down each layer is used in a special manner that channels the potential energy into the sphere with no other effect. Using an appropriate power nearby has no effect on the sphere. No power expended to bring down a layer has any other effect.

The ability to change damage or add damage of an energy type, such as with a *frost weapon*, or *whetstone*, does not make a power have that keyword for this purpose (as you are not attacking with and dealing damage with the power). Features which modify a power directly, such as Arcane Admixture or Long Night Scion, work as the power has the keyword without being used.

The seventh layer is most easily brought down by *dispel magic*, a *staff of the magi* or some other power that destroys zones or conjurations. Such powers cannot work until the violet layer is revealed.

Alternatively, the layer may be destroyed: automatically hit, resist 30 all, and 100 hit points (50 for a group of 4, 150 for a group of 6). A standard action Arcana or Athletics check while adjacent removes its check result in hit points, without any danger.

Red (fire)
Attack: +30 vs. Reflex Hit: 20 fire damage (crit 40). Miss: 10 fire damage. Countermeasure: <i>Cone of cold</i> (level 15 wizard) power or cold powers or powers that immobilize or restrain.
Orange (acid)
Attack: +30 vs. Reflex Hit: 40 acid damage (crit 80). Miss: 20 acid damage. Countermeasure: Control Weather ritual or an item that does an extremely similar effect, thunder powers or powers that knock prone.
Yellow (lightning)
Attack: +30 vs. Reflex Hit: 80 lightning damage (crit 120). Miss: 40 lightning damage. Countermeasure: <i>Disintegrate</i> (level 19 wizard) power or any necrotic or ongoing damage powers, or powers that turn a creature insubstantial.
Green (poison)
Attack: +30 vs. Fortitude Hit: 40 poison damage (crit 80). Effect: Ongoing 40 poison damage (save ends). Second Failed Save: The target dies. Countermeasure: Passwall ritual or an item that does an extremely similar effect, teleportation powers, or powers that stun.
Blue
Attack: +30 vs. Fortitude Hit: The target is restrained outside the barrier (save ends). Second Failed Save: The target is petrified until the end of the encounter. Countermeasure: <i>Magic missile</i> (level 1 wizard) power, any force powers, or powers that pull, push, or slide.
Indigo
Attack: +30 vs. Will Hit: Until the end of the encounter, as a free action at the start of the creature's turn it must make its most effective at-will attack against either itself or an ally within range. Countermeasure: <i>Holy lantern</i> power, any radiant powers, or powers that blind.
Violet
Attack: +30 vs. Will Hit: The target is removed from play (save ends). When the target successfully saves, it takes 40 damage and appears in a random safe square outside the prismatic sphere. Failed Save: The target takes 40 damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hp or lower, it is slain and its body appears in a random square outside of the sphere. Countermeasure: <i>Dispel magic</i> power or any power that ends zones or conjurations.
Otherwise, the layer has all defenses 40, resist 30 all, and 100 hp (50 for a group of 4, 150 for a group of 6). A standard action Arcana or Athletics check removes the check result in hit points.

Note: A creature may walk through all of the layers, but they are attacked. A creature immune or missed by the violet barrier appears on the inside of the sphere.

PLAYER HANDOUT 1: PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

This handout is best given to the players before the adventure in an email to help the judge prep the adventure. If this cannot be done, please make multiple copies and hand it to the players as they arrive at the table.

1. What nation or group did you call on for aid in *EPIC4-1*'s assault on the island of I'Cath?
2. What regions in Faerûn are the most dear to you or interest you the most?
3. Briefly describe a few living NPCs who are most important to your character. These might be friends, family, allies, nobles, etc. If you are not attached to any NPCs from previous adventures, feel free to make up appropriate family members or childhood best friends. If any were part of the group you called on for question 1, please indicate so.

PLAYER HANDOUT 2: THE STORY SO FAR...

EPIC3~1, EPIC3~2, AND EPIC3~3

A year ago, the flow of abominations, horrific weapons created by the gods and primordials during the Dawn War, from Carceri, the astral prison used by the gods, to Arvandor, astral dominion of Corellon and the Seldarine, increased dramatically. Many of the abominations appearing in Arvandor were tainted with a virulent poison capable of corrupting mortals and immortals alike. Arvandor had become so overwhelmed by these incursions that many of them spread beyond Arvandor into Faerûn itself. Fearing that these incursions were too much for the exalted of Arvandor to handle, Corellon sent for aid from the fey kingdoms of Faerûn.

Adventurers traveled to Arvandor and joined the Glorious Hunt. Through their heroics, they cleansed Corellon and his *ruesti* of the poison that threatened their very existence and destroyed the abominations that carried it. After their victory, Corellon set the adventurers on a quest to travel into Carceri, discover the source of the poison and increased flow of abominations, and put a stop to it.

Lolth had taken control over the metaphysical funnel that links Carceri's isle of Agathys to Arvandor through use of a powerful ritual. Understanding that a direct assault upon Arvandor would prove to be fruitless, she employed Sinmaker, an enigmatic apothecary currently detained in Carceri, with crafting a poison powerful enough to bring certain death to Corellon, offering Sinmaker his freedom in return. Her plan to increase the flow of abominations into Arvandor and infuse them with Sinmaker's virulent poison was working perfectly until the PCs interceded. Her plan foiled, Lolth retreated back to the Demonweb, leaving a number of powerful servants stationed within Agathys to maintain control over the funnel. Typical of her nature, she did not hold up her end of the bargain with Sinmaker before taking her leave.

The adventurers followed Lolth's treachery into Carceri and, with Sinmaker's aid, managed to defeat the forces that maintained Lolth's hold over the funnel. With the denizens of Carceri bearing down on them, the adventurers managed to escape the prison plane through a portal to the Demonweb that Lolth's forces had planned to use for their own escape. Corellon then requested that the PCs assist him once more by seeking out Lolth as his emissaries.

Tsien Chiang, a Shou sorceress of immeasurable power and knowledge, devised a scheme to distract Lolth long enough to siphon energy from the Demonweb for her evil schemes. Disguised as a young priestess of Lolth, she manipulated a drow matron, Zarylene, into discovering the means by which Lolth could corrupt Corellon and his realm of Arvandor. Zarylene prayed to the Spider Queen with her new apprentice's scheme. Lolth heard her prayers and launched her campaign against Arvandor shortly thereafter. Following Lolth's departure, Tsien disappeared into the depths of the Demonweb Pits bearing the shard of an ancient artifact. She planted the artifact and quickly fled the Demonweb before Lolth's return. Once planted, the artifact began to siphon power from the Demonweb and channel it through a planar conduit to Tsien.

Shortly after Tsien's disappearance, the Demonweb began to unravel, erupting into chaos as entire sections dissolved and long-imprisoned demons escaped into Faerûn. Lolth returned to her realm severely weakened and furious that she had allowed herself to be tricked. All of her power bent on keeping the Demonweb together, Lolth was in need of help.

The PCs navigated their way through the dissolving Demonweb to Lolth's throne, where she negotiated several concessions in exchange for destruction, or removal, of the shard. The PCs defeated the shard, thus bringing stability back to the Demonweb.

PLAYER HANDOUT 2: THE STORY SO FAR... (CONTINUED)

EPIC4~1 RECAP

Having stolen power from Corellon and Lolth, Tsien Chiang made plans to drain power from Sehanine. Following her trail, the PCs stopped Candlekeep from burning to the ground and made their way to Myth Dyraalis, where several of Sehanine's most devout followers had been petrified while holding a vestige of the goddess' power.

The PCs interrupted Tsien's attempt before she could completely drain Sehanine's power, but were unable to defeat the sorceress, due in large part to enchanted gems; the hearts that originally freed Tsien to return to Faerûn. Tsien took the power she had drained and stole the Mistress of the Night, heading to another plane to work further on her ritual.

It was then that Sehanine offered her assistance to the PCs, aiding them to muster an army to attack at I'Cath, Tsien's stronghold, while the sorceress was out. The PCs quickly gathered armies from all over Faerûn and assaulted the island, fought their way into the Palace of Bones and overcame Tsien's generals and daughters. They then learned that the corrupted angel Karadrach, last seen orchestrating Corellon's poisoning, was an ally of Tsien who had aided her in creating her magic defenses, and knew a way to defeat them.

The PCs traveled through a portal to a strange land where ancient divine defenders had been misled by Karadrach and another evil angel who called up demons to face the PCs and used some strange magic to alter the flow of time around the heroes.

Karadrach used a powerful magic, called Words of Destruction - perversions of the Words of Creation the gods used to create the world - to strip the PCs of their defenses, but they still prevailed against him, and secured the research about the words which would allow them to remove the defenses of Tsien's hearts the next time they fought.

The PCs returned to the Palace of Bone through the portal, only to find that many years had passed since they stepped through hours ago...

CONCLUSION FOR *EPIC4~1*

The teleportation chamber in Faerûn has greatly changed. The magical lights are extinguished and a thick layer of dust coats the surface. The portal sputters from the effort of your arrival, then fizzles out, exhausted forever.

Outside the silent and empty palace of bones, the island of I'Cath is a tangled wilderness. Bushes and vines have spread up to cover the entire hill around the palace. Trees have grown decades in height overnight.

Thousands of skeletons are impaled upon spikes. Time has stripped the skeletons of all flesh, and largely destroyed their equipment, but they are clearly the remains of your armies.

The angel had told Karadrach, "The world needs time without their interference and even a few moments will let the future play out as it must."

Apparently horrible things can happen in a few moments.

PLAYER HANDOUT 3: FEATURES

The following are the current general features for Faerûn:

Lighting: *Darkness has swallowed the light.* Unless otherwise specified, all areas are dimly lit.

Flying: *The skies are a churning mass of hungry shadows.* If you end your turn flying more than ten squares above the ground, you take 30 necrotic damage and are knocked prone.

Planar Lock: *The gods have sealed off the world to its own destruction.* It is impossible to leave Faerûn, so planar travel largely fails. Effects which briefly access another plane, such as to remove a target from play to a demiplane, hurl an enemy through hostile dimensions, or allow a creature to escape danger briefly in the Feywild, still work at the discretion of the DM. They instead send the target into a twisting maelstrom of darkness within the Hungering Dark at the boundary of the planar ward. Any creature ending its turn in that darkness takes 30 damage and loses a healing surge.

Any form of permanent planar travel, such as opening a planar portal, cannot be used at all. In addition, any attempt to attract the attention or intervention of other planar powers, such as contacting a god with a ritual, fails. Normal mortal magic, such as divine encounter and daily powers and even divine boons, are unaffected.

Death: *The barrier between life and death is perilously thin.* All creatures (PCs and enemies both) gain the following ability, usable once per round:

Instrument of Death * At-Will 1/round

Trigger: You make a damage roll.

Effect (No Action): You gain a bonus to the damage roll equal to 5 times the number of non-minion creatures that have died in the encounter, to a maximum of +20.

Dying: *The grasp of the grave is swifter and certain.* If you end your turn with 0 hit points or less, you are treated as having just failed a death save. You must still also make death saving throws as normal, if you are Dying, and you cannot be stabilized by a Heal check.

PLAYER HANDOUT 4: DESPAIR

Group A

Drowsy: During the first round of combat, you deal half damage with your attacks.

Flustered: You cannot use more than one encounter attack, daily attack, and/or augmented psionic attack power each round.

Jittery: You take a -5 penalty to any attack roll you make that is not part of your standard action.

Miserable: You take a -1 penalty to all d20 rolls.

Squeamish: While bloodied, you take a -2 penalty to all d20 rolls.

Trembling: You take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Group B

Distracted: You grant combat advantage to all enemies.

Doomed: You regain only half the usual amount when you heal during combat.

Fragile: Whenever an enemy misses you with a damaging attack that deals no damage on a miss, you take 5 damage. This damage cannot be resisted or redirected.

Frail: You take a -5 penalty to your highest defense at the time you gain this despair.

Indifferent: You take a -2 penalty to all defenses.

Vulnerable: You gain Vulnerable 5 All.

Group C

Hesitant: You cannot spend an action point unless you are bloodied.

Lethargic: You cannot take more than one move action per round, nor take more than one minor action per round.

Shocked: You cannot make any attacks in a combat until after an enemy has taken a turn. If your initiative would be higher than all enemies, set your initiative to 1 lower than the highest enemy's initiative.

Sluggish: You take a -5 penalty to your final initiative result.

Traumatized: You cannot use the actions gained by spending action points to use attack powers.

Unresponsive: You cannot use any immediate or opportunity actions during the first round of the encounter.

Group D

Careless: Even if you would normally not provoke opportunity attacks for doing so, you provoke opportunity attacks for shifting, charging, using ranged or area powers, and even provoke from attackers who cannot see you.

Fatalistic: You die at 2 failed death saves (instead of 3) or negative healing surge hit points (instead of negative bloodied).

Haunted: You take a -5 penalty to saving throws you make that are not at the end of your turn.

Hopeless: You take a -2 penalty to all saving throws.

Impatient: You cannot ready actions, delay initiative, or swap initiative with an ally.

Quarrelsome: You cannot flank, move through the spaces of allies, or allow allies to move through your space.

Any companion automatically gets the following set of despair penalties. Whenever you may remove a despair penalty, you may also choose one of the three despair penalties to remove from any followers.

Not Long For This World: Your companion, familiar, hireling, mount, or other attached creature / NPC will soon be ripped away from you. They gain all of the following penalties:

- Any resistance to damage it has or gains is removed.
- It gains Vulnerable 5 All.
- It heals only half the usual amount when healed during combat.

GROUP A

DROWSY During the first round of combat, you deal half damage with your attacks.	MISERABLE You take a -1 penalty to all d20 rolls.
FLUSTERED You cannot use more than one encounter attack power or augmented psionic attack power each round.	SQUEAMISH While bloodied, you take a -2 penalty to all d20 rolls.
JITTERY You take a -5 penalty to any attack roll you make that is not part of your standard action.	TREMBLING You take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

GROUP B

DISTRACTED You grant combat advantage to all enemies.	FRAIL You take a -5 penalty to your highest defense at the time you gain this despair.
DOOMED You regain only half the usual amount when you heal during combat.	INDIFFERENT You take a -2 penalty to all defenses.
FRAGILE Whenever an enemy misses you with a damaging attack that deals no damage on a miss, you take 5 damage. This damage cannot be resisted or redirected.	VULNERABLE You gain Vulnerable 5 All.

GROUP C

HESITANT You cannot spend an action point unless you are bloodied.	SLUGGISH You take a -5 penalty to your final initiative result.
LETHARGIC You cannot take more than one move action per round, nor take more than one minor action per round.	TRAUMATIZED You cannot use the actions gained by spending action points to use attack powers.
SHOCKED You cannot make any attacks in a combat until after an enemy has taken a turn. If your initiative would be higher than all enemies, set your initiative to 1 lower than the highest enemy's initiative.	UNRESPONSIVE You cannot use any immediate or opportunity actions during the first round of the encounter.

GROUP D

CARELESS Even if you would normally not provoke opportunity attacks for doing so, you provoke opportunity attacks for shifting, charging, using ranged or area powers, and even provoke from attackers who cannot see you.	HOPELESS You take a -2 penalty to all saving throws.
FATALISTIC You die at 2 failed death saves (instead of 3) or negative healing surge hit points (instead of negative bloodied).	IMPATIENT You cannot ready actions, delay initiative, or swap initiative with an ally.
HAUNTED You take a -5 penalty to saving throws you make that are not at the end of your turn.	QUARRELSOME You cannot flank, move through the spaces of allies, or allow allies to move through your space.

<p>NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It cannot gain or benefit from resistance to damage. • It gains Vulnerable 5 All. • It heals only half the usual amount when healed during combat. 	<p>NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It cannot gain or benefit from resistance to damage. • It gains Vulnerable 5 All. • It heals only half the usual amount when healed during combat.
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PLAYER HANDOUT 5: ALIVE!

You ache and burn.

Death should end pain, but instead you are haunted by the memories of your failure, and filled with a roaring need for vengeance.

No! It is not your time. Whatever has done this to you and yours will pay.

You will destroy them. Destroy everything they hold dear.

Your vengeance will be terrible.

And. It. Will. Be.

NOW!

You awaken from death with hit points equal to your bloodied value. You may stand up as a free action. Effects which hinder or prevent healing do not hinder this effect.

You must either lose two healing surges (you must have the healing surges to lose) or instead suffer the standard cumulative death penalty (-1 penalty to attacks, skills, and checks for three milestones). You reset the number of failed death saves (if you had any) to 0.

You also gain the following ability:

Destroy Them

You lash out at your enemies with terrible anger.

At-Will 1/round

Minor Action

Melee Touch

Target: One creature

Attack: +30 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 20 damage.

You do not regain any powers, surges, or any other benefit from being restored to life. Note that dying does not remove harmful conditions or effects.

PLAYER HANDOUT 6: PRISMATIC SPHERE

A prismatic sphere is a complex magical construct that stops all forms of attack and passage, line of effect and line of sight, giving its user complete protection while it persists. Its user is immune to all of its effects, and may freely attack out of it.

The colors must be dealt with in the following order: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet.

Any PC that moves through the sphere is attacked by all of the remaining colors, one color at a time. The PC can choose to stop moving after any attack, and stay outside the sphere.

Taking down a prismatic sphere is a tremendously complex process, most easily accomplished by the death of its caster. It otherwise requires certain very specific techniques.

Color	Keyword	Rider(s)	Special Power	Danger
Red	Cold	Immobilized, restrained	<i>cone of cold</i> (Wizard 15)	Low fire damage
Orange	Thunder	Knocked prone	Control Weather (Ritual)	Acid damage
Yellow	Necrotic	Ongoing damage, insubstantial	<i>disintegrate</i> (Wizard 19)	High lightning damage
Green	Teleportation	Stunned	Passwall (Ritual)	Deadly poison
Blue	Force	Push, pull, slide	<i>magic missile</i> (Wizard 1)	Petrification
Indigo	Radiant	Blinded	<i>holy lantern</i> (Cleric 6)	Madness
Violet	*	*	<i>dispel magic</i> (Wizard 6)	Banishment

Refer to the chart above for the specific special powers, keyword, or rider(s) required to overcome a particular color. Each of the first six layers may be brought down using a standard action as long as a PC is...

- Within 5 squares:
 - Has a particular special power or ritual. No power expenditure or skill check is required.
 - Expends an appropriate (with a keyword or rider, effect that occurs as a result of the power, associated with that layer) daily power. No skill check is required.
- While adjacent. All skill checks below can be made with Arcana, Athletics, Endurance, Nature, Religion, or Thievery:
 - Expends an appropriate encounter power and makes a DC 29 skill check.
 - Expends an appropriate at-will power and makes a DC 38 skill check. On a failure, the PC is attacked by the current layer.
 - Makes a DC 38 skill check. Success or failure, the PC is attacked by the current layer.

Notes: The powers used to bring down each layer is used in a special manner that channels the potential energy into the sphere with no other effect. Using an appropriate power nearby has no effect on the sphere. No power expended to bring down a layer has any other effect.

The ability to change damage or add damage of an energy type, such as with a Frost weapon, or whetstone, does not make a power have that keyword for this purpose (as you are not attacking with and dealing damage with the power). Features which modify a power directly, such as Arcane Admixture or Long Night Scion, will work as the power has the keyword without being used.

The seventh layer is most easily brought down by *dispel magic*, a *staff of the magi* or some other power that destroys zones or conjurations. Such powers cannot work until the violet layer is revealed.

Alternatively, the layer may be destroyed: automatically hit, resist 30 all, and 100 hit points (50 for a group of 4, 150 for a group of 6). A standard action Arcana or Athletics check while adjacent removes its check result in hit points, without any danger.

PLAYER HANDOUT 7: HOPE TRIUMPHS

Your adventures in the Barrens have allowed you to fight back against the despair that the Demon Lord Oublivae attempts to inflict on you. You have been so successful in besting her servants that you carry a burning flame of Hope into her sanctum. This allows you to fight back against her control of her own realm and the attacks of the demons.

During this encounter, you may spend Hope points to do the following.

- At the start of the round, you become immune to penalties from Despair, the Helpless condition, and Oublivae's *perish alone* aura until the end of the round.
- At the start of your turn, set your current hit points equal to your bloodied value, remove the Dead condition, and stand up from prone as a free action. If you are Lost in the Abyss, you may emerge in any square adjacent to a pit as a move action as a move action as a move action as a move action.

Note that Hope points you have left over following this adventure may also be useful in a future Epic adventure.

PLAYER HANDOUT 8: LOST IN THE ABYSS

You have fallen into a bottomless pit in the Abyss. This pit was created when the seed of all evil was hurled into the elemental chaos. Its power created Asmodeus, twisted Graz'zt into a Demon Lord, and it may be your death, or madness.

If you have any Hope points remaining, you may spend one to catch onto the side of the pit and emerge triumphant into the encounter at the start of your next turn (see Player Handout 7).

If you do not have any Hope, or choose not to spend a point, your options are heavily constricted. You may take no actions while Lost in the Abyss and no ally can assist you. You possess the following options:

- **Overcome the Abyss:** If you have story award EPIC13, and you personally attacked the sliver, you have already overcome the lure of the Abyss. As a move action, you may emerge in any square adjacent to the pit at the start of your next turn. If you are unable to take move actions, you may not take this option.
- **Understand the Abyss:** If you have story award EPIC13, and you personally claimed the sliver, you have some measure of power over the Abyss. You may emerge from the pit as if you had spent a Hope point. You may only take this option one time during this encounter.
- **Grab Desperately:** If you have four or more healing surges, you may expend four healing surges in order to make an additional saving throw to catch yourself deeper down. You may take this option multiple times if you have enough surges and keep failing your save. If successful, as a move action, you may emerge in any square adjacent to the pit at the start of your next turn. If you are unable to take move actions, you may not take this option.
- **Surrender to Despair:** If you are truly without hope and despair has washed over you, then you hear Oublivae's voice. *"This end was inevitable. You have no more options, no more escape. You are mine to sacrifice, save, or toy with. Surrender to me; admit that I bested everything you had, and I will spare you. You may even rejoin your comrades in this petty squabble."*
 - If you accept, then you are treated as if you had spent a Hope point to escape being Lost. Clearly inform the DM (privately if you choose) of your decision.
- **Never Surrender:** If you refuse Oublivae's offer, and cannot take another option, then you are truly lost in the abyss. Whether your character is lost permanently, or is later saved, will be determined by your allies.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

SAW THE FUTURE OF FAERÛN DURING THE ADVENTURE

EPIC4~2 AGE OF RUIN

EPIC18 Oblivion Overcome

You were subject to unthinkable despair in Oublivae's Barrens and lived to tell the tale. Check each of the following that happened to you during the adventure:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> You shed all Despair before you fought Oublivae. | <input type="checkbox"/> You were Lost in the Abyss. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> You gained <i>destroy them</i> by dying and being returned by the Barrens. | <input type="checkbox"/> You suffered a Total Party Kill (TPK). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> You gained <i>devour them</i> . | <input type="checkbox"/> You surrendered to Oublivae. |

How many Hope points did you have left at the end of the adventure? _____

If you gained either *destroy them* or *devour them*, you gain the Bloodthirsty Wrath boon. This boon never expires (although you may lose it in a future adventure), does not cost a found-item slot, does not count as one of your Treasure selections for the adventure, and does not count against the limit of Rare items you are allowed to possess. However, it is subject to the normal LFR rules limiting you to one active divine boon at a time.

Bloodthirsty Wrath

Level 28 Rare

Destruction and carnage are the only things able to quell your appetite.

Divine Boon (cannot be sold)

Property

You gain 28 temporary hit points the first time you drop an enemy to 0 hit points during an encounter.

Attack Power (Healing) ♦ Daily (Free Action)

Requirement: You must be bloodied.

Trigger: You hit an enemy with a melee attack.

Effect: After the attack, you make a melee basic attack against a randomly-chosen creature adjacent to you. If this attack hits, you may spend a healing surge.

Reference: Gruumsh's Bloodthirsty Wrath (*Book of Vile Darkness*)

EPIC19 Encroaching Darkness

In the Barrens you saw the horrifying results of Tsien Chiang's plans to summon the Hungering Dark. You managed to gather information that might help you to stop the sorceress. Check each of the following items or information that you recovered during the adventure.

- ☐ A tome of arcane notes (from Szass Tam)
- ☐ Sinmaker's location and use (from Fzoul)
- ☐ A strange holy symbol (from Manshoon).

You also recovered *creation's hourglass*, an artifact that Oublivae was using to manipulate time. Once per adventure, and only three times ever, you may use the hourglass to manipulate time. Each time you do so, mark off one use: ☐ ☐ ☐

MINOR ACTIONS

Creation's Hourglass ♦ Adventure

Effect: You gain an extra standard action and an extra minor action, which you must use before the end of your turn.

You can't use these extra actions to make attacks.

The hourglass may prove to have other powers later in the campaign, so you should not void this Story Award even after you have used all three activations of the above power.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

GAINED THE SERVICE OF A DEATH KNIGHT'S MOUNT DURING THE ADVENTURE

EPIC4~2 AGE OF RUIN

EPIC20 Saddle of the Dreadmare

To gain this mount, you must choose the *saddle of the dreadmare* as one of your Treasure selections for this adventure. The saddle costs you a found-item slot and counts against your limit of one Rare item per tier.

Saddle of the Dreadmare	Level 29 Rare
<i>After defeating a death knight and his mount, you recovered this saddle, which is made from the skin of a dreadmare.</i>	
Mount Slot	2,625,000 gp
Property	
This saddle is attuned to a specific shadowclaw dreadmare and a specific rider. It does not work for any other creature. If the dreadmare attuned to this saddle dies, it is resurrected automatically, at no gold piece or healing surge cost, at the end of the rider's next extended rest. The dreadmare has three healing surges per day and is fully healed at the end of any extended rest taken by its rider.	
Utility Power ♦ At-Will (Move Action)	
<i>Effect:</i> If the shadowclaw dreadmare is alive, it appears in the rider's square or any legal square adjacent to the rider. The rider may mount the dreadmare as part of this move action.	
Utility Power ♦ At-Will (Free Action)	
<i>Effect:</i> The shadowclaw dreadmare is dismissed. This does not heal any damage the dreadmare has taken or end any conditions or ongoing effects affecting the dreadmare. The dreadmare may spend some or all of its healing surges while it is dismissed, if the rider wishes.	
<i>Special:</i> The dreadmare is dismissed automatically when its rider falls unconscious, or if its rider ever turns on it, such as by being dominated and attacking it, by including it in harmful area effects, by redirecting damage to it, or as determined by the DM. If the dreadmare is dismissed for any reason other than voluntarily by the rider, the rider may not summon the dreadmare again until the rider has completed a short rest.	
Reference: Custom item created for LFR	

Shadowclaw Dreadmare	Level 26 Skirmisher
Large shadow beast (mount, undead)	
HP 246; Bloodied 123	Initiative +21
AC 40, Fortitude 38, Reflex 39, Will 38	Perception +22
Speed 8, fly 8 (hover)	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic, 20 cold	
Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
Charger	
The dreadmare and its rider gain a +10 power bonus to damage rolls of charge attacks.	
Shadow Retribution	
Any enemy that hits the dreadmare or its rider with an opportunity attack takes 20 cold and necrotic damage.	
Saddle of the Dreadmare	
When any effect allows its rider to shift, but not the dreadmare, the dreadmare may shift instead.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadow Claws (cold, necrotic) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +31 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 4d8 + 16 necrotic and cold damage.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Teleport (teleportation) • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dreadmare teleports up to 5 squares and teleports its rider with it. This power is not affected by items or feats possessed by its rider.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Shadow Jump • Encounter	
<i>Trigger:</i> The dreadmare takes damage.	
<i>Effect (No Action):</i> After taking the damage, the dreadmare becomes immune to damage until the start of its next turn.	
Str 25 (+20)	Dex 22 (+19) Wis 18 (+17)
Con 30 (+23)	Int 4 (+10) Cha 12 (+14)
Alignment unaligned Languages -	

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

(character name)

MADE A RING FROM ONE OF OUBLIVAE'S HORNS DURING THE ADVENTURE

EPIC4~2 AGE OF RUIN

EPIC21 Instrument of Death

Oublivae encouraged swifter death across her realm. After defeating her, you made a ring from a piece of one of her horns. In order to gain this item, you must choose it as one of your Treasure selections for the adventure. The *instrument of death* costs you a found-item slot and counts against your limit of one Rare item per tier.

Instrument of Death		Level 30 Rare
<i>This circle of bone feels cold to the touch. As creatures die in its presence the ring grows ever warmer.</i>		
Ring Slot	3,125.000 gp	
Property	You gain a +6 item bonus to all weapon and implement damage rolls.	
Property	Whenever you hit a minion with an attack and deal damage to it, that minion cannot use abilities triggered by its death or by being reduced to 0 hit points (such as <i>rise again</i> , <i>death burst</i> , or <i>desperate starvation</i>).	
Utility Power ♦ Encounter (Free Action)		
Trigger: You make a damage roll.		
Effect: You gain a bonus to the damage roll equal to 5 times the number of non-minion creatures that have died during the current encounter, to a maximum of +20.		
Reference: Custom item created for LFR.		

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

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Event Name: _____ Event Code: _____
(This number was given to the organizer when the event was scheduled)

Adventure Title: _____ Session Number: _____
(For administrative use only)

Date of Play: / /
Month Day Year

Start Time: :
Hour Minute

Give hour in military time standard (p.m. hours = hour +12). Don't record the exact minute the adventure played. Instead list the closest 30-minute interval the game was scheduled to start at (30 or 00).

A legal table has no less than four players, and no more than six players.

Player Name	WIN/DCI Number
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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

SESSION TRACKING

DUNGEON MASTER

DM Name: _____

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