



HEROIC

1-10

# HOUSE OF PAIN

A SIDE TREK FOR PCs OF  
8TH TO 10TH LEVEL

by Jennifer Clarke Wilkes

Illustration by Ryan Barger

Cartography by Rob Lee

*Your PCs are reaching the upper end of the heroic tier. New worlds are opening up to them—they might have already ventured to the Feywild, for example, and made contacts with inhabitants of that magical plane.*

*Now they are ready to take their first steps into the darkness.*

*The Shadowfell awaits . . .*

This Side Trek can serve as an introduction to the dangers of the shadow realm. It works well for PCs who are approaching the paragon tier, since it presents a reasonable challenge for characters of 10th level. It is suitable as a climactic encounter for lower-level adventurers, as well.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Someone has been kidnapping eladrin from settlements in the Feywild. The victims have nothing in common other than race and the misfortune to live in lightly protected dwellings at the edges of habitation. They are ordinary folk, not wealthy or noble, and no ransom demands have been issued. The kidnappings take place at night, and the victims disappear without a trace. None have seen them since.

This time, though, a young member of the family swears she saw “the dark man” walk right through the walls of the house as he escaped the scene. This being clearly has a connection with the Shadowfell, but its motives are as mysterious as ever.

Preliminary investigation with a Consult Mystic Sages ritual suggests that the shadow-dweller emerged from the Underdark, which has openings near several of the villages that suffered abductions. The PCs have ventured into the glittering depths in search of an answer to this mystery. These caverns are the territory of the fomorians and their cyclops servants, who are dangerous enemies but not allies of Shadow as far as the PCs know. Dodging the evil giantkin, the PCs searched the depths for a trace of the kidnapper. Now the PCs stand before a gloomy icon in a threatening grotto.

You can use a number of hooks to get the characters involved in this adventure. The easiest way is to have a friend or relative of an eladrin character be the latest abductee. The ties of blood and family duty alone ought to draw the party into the story. If your PCs are more mercenary, however, they might be induced to seek the answers for a reward. The mission can be a major quest, as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, perhaps with a monetary reward as well.

The party might travel directly from the Feywild, if they have contacts there, or if they are hired by the eladrin authorities. Alternatively, they might find their way to the Feywild Underdark through a passage in the natural world, such as is rumored to lie beneath the Curna Mountains in eastern Faerûn.

You can also drop this location into an existing Feywild Underdark adventure, with or without a related quest.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Vandariel, a shadar-kai witch who calls herself the Voice of Pain, is a fanatic devotee of the Raven Queen. She has founded and become the self-proclaimed high priest of a bizarre cult, the Lords of Pain, whose purpose is to bring more fey into the shadow pact with that goddess of death. Although the original shadar-kai entered this pact voluntarily, and the race breeds true, Vandariel is consumed by what she sees as a divine mission to reveal the mystery to all fey—whether they wish it or not. Those who do not come voluntarily to the truth are brought against their will. Dark stalkers move like the night, seeking out and abducting suitable subjects.

This adventure consists of two encounters. The first is a hazard, designed to ensure that only the worthy pass. If the characters fail this challenge, they can still proceed but lose the advantage of surprise. The second encounter takes place in the Shadowfell, where the characters confront the cult in its sinister temple.



## THE TEETH

**Encounter Level 10 (2,500 XP)**

### SETUP

This encounter includes the following hazard:

**The Teeth** (10th-level magic hazard)

If the characters alert the cultists, they also must deal with the following monsters:

**2 darkpact shadar-kai warriors** (W on the House of Pain Building map)

**1 darkpact stalker** (S on the House of Pain Building map)

The approach to the Shadowfell portal is protected by a vicious magical hazard. This barrier, known as the Teeth, is intended to slow and weaken intruders as well as to alert the cultists of their approach. Only shadar-kai and creatures who have sworn the pact of the Raven Queen can pass freely. Others must voluntarily inflict pain on themselves or suffer the consequences.

The characters approach from the west. Place them in any squares of the entrance tunnel and the open space to the west of the Teeth.

**When the characters first enter the chamber, read:**

*The tunnel opens into an irregular cavern lit dimly by a strange glow that emanates from the glittering stones. The way forward is nearly blocked by an interlocking array of stalactites and stalagmites, resembling nothing so much as ranks of teeth. The dim light makes features beyond a few feet difficult to make out. In front of the barrier is a small statue of a raven on a pedestal, wings outstretched.*

### Perception Check

**DC 20:** Elven runes are carved into the statue's pedestal, at the foot of the raven figure.

**DC 30:** The dark, shining rock of the statue seems dulled and rough in spots. (A second DC 27 Perception check reveals the presence of dried spatters.)

**When the characters move past the barrier, read:**

*The chamber rapidly narrows to a recess roughly 10 feet wide. Swirling darkness fills the end of the recess, and a font of dark stone stands nearby.*

### TACTICS

The stalker and the warriors watch through the portal until one or more characters have reached the last row of the Teeth. On its next turn, the stalker takes a move action to pass through the portal, then drops its *dark fog*. The warriors delay their actions if necessary, waiting for the darkness to fall, then move through the portal and make double attacks against characters. (The cultists all enjoy darkvision by virtue of their pact and are not impeded by the darkness.) They attack those who are still squeezing (and who thus grant combat advantage) if possible; otherwise they use *shadow jaunt* to move adjacent to and attack a character in the open space. The darkpact stalker uses *dark step* as often as possible to slice at the characters. The cultists retreat once the darkpact stalker becomes bloodied, or if they run out of maneuvering room.

The characters can take a brief rest after defeating or driving off the cultists.

The Teeth Hazard	Level 10 Obstacle XP 2,500
------------------	-------------------------------

*A nearly impenetrable thicket of stalactites and stalagmites blocks the way.*

**Hazard:** This hazard fills the squares indicated on the encounter map. When triggered, the magically infused rocks begin to clash like grinding teeth, attacking characters within the area. The openings between the "teeth" are so tight that Medium and Small characters must squeeze to pass through them.

#### Perception

**DC 27:** The character notices old bloodstains on one or more rocky projections.

#### Additional Skill: Dungeoneering

**DC 25:** The character senses that the rocks in this area are unusual and show signs of recent movement.

#### Additional Skill: Religion (a character who worships the Raven Queen gets a +2 bonus to the check)

**DC 25:** The character recognizes the icon of the Raven Queen as connected to the activation of the hazard.

**DC 30:** The character understands that an offering of blood at the icon is required to pass the barrier.

#### Trigger

When a creature enters or begins its turn in a square of the Teeth, the hazard attacks that creature.

#### Attack

**Opportunity Action**                      **Melee**

**Target:** Creature in the square that is not shadar-kai or that has not sworn the pact to the Raven Queen.

**Attack:** +13 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 2d6 + 5 damage

#### Countermeasures

- ◆ A character who makes a DC 27 Acrobatics check can move through the hazard at half speed without provoking the attack.
- ◆ A character who makes a DC 25 Endurance check takes only half damage from an attack.
- ◆ A character can daub the raven icon with his or her own blood (taking 1d4 damage). This stops the clashing of the Teeth and allows that character to squeeze through without attacks. Other characters are still attacked, even if they enter that character's square. Returning through the Teeth requires another offering (at the font beside the portal).

## CONCLUSION

Unless all the characters make a blood offering at the Raven Queen's icon, the cultists in the House of Pain are alerted, effectively making this area a two-stage encounter.

If the cultists are alerted, then the darkpact stalker and shadar-kai warriors in the next area roll initiative and take double moves to their side of the portal. The other inhabitants of the room take up a readied position (see next encounter).

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The area is dimly lit. Light sources are partially blocked by the rocky projections, making the far end of the chamber difficult to see clearly.

**The Teeth:** The characters can destroy these rocky projections by attacking them, although doing so takes considerable time and automatically alerts the cultists in the House of Pain. Each stalactite and stalagmite has the following stats: AC 4, Fortitude 12, Reflex 4; hp 80.

**Icon of the Raven Queen:** This statue is made of magically reinforced stone. The characters can destroy it (AC 5, Fortitude 10, Reflex 5; hp 60), but doing so automatically alerts the cultists in the House of Pain and removes any possibility of passing the Teeth through a blood offering.

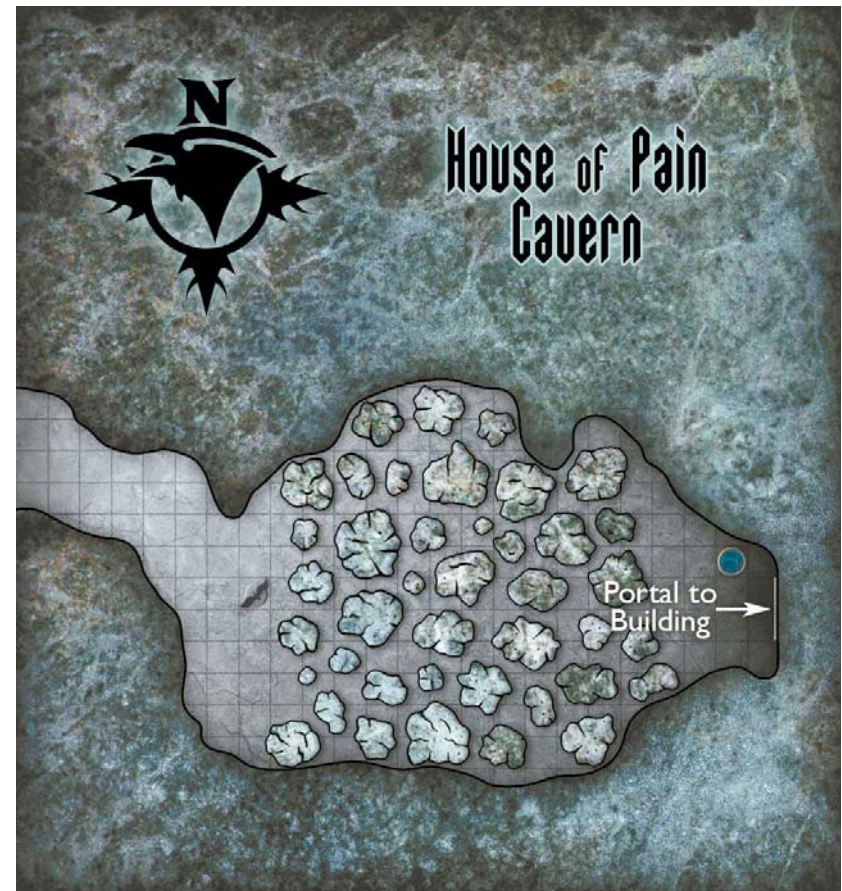
**Font:** This is a typical temple font of ordinary dark stone, which makes traces of previous blood offerings difficult to detect (DC 32 Perception). It can be destroyed (AC 5, Fortitude 10, Reflex 5; hp 40), but doing so automatically alerts the cultists in the House of Pain and removes any possibility of seeing through the portal.

**Portal:** The portal to the Shadowfell is a swirling, opaque disk that fills the 10-foot wide passage. It allows passage in one direction only, to the House of Pain on the other side. Return travel is possible only for shadar-kai and cultists who have sworn the pact with the Raven Queen.

The characters can see through the portal with a second blood offering at the font that stands beside it. Doing so deals 1d4 damage, but only one character needs to make the offering. The chamber beyond is dimly lit, but even a character without low-light vision can make out the hulking forms of the cyclops guards.

A second offering at the pool within the House of Pain (see next encounter) is required for anyone other than the cultists and shadar-kai to return.

The portal cannot be attacked or harmed in any way.



Characters can use teleportation powers when moving through the portal, provided they know what is on the other side.



## THE HOUSE OF PAIN

Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

### SETUP

- 3 darkpact cyclops guards (C)
- 1 darkpact shadar-kai chainfighter (CF)
- 2 darkpact shadar-kai warriors (W)
- 1 darkpact stalker (S)
- Vandariel, the Voice of Pain (P)
- Ritual circle

The House of Pain is a temple for the worship of the Raven Queen, where the Lords of Pain undergo the ritual that bonds them to their dark goddess. The shape of this great hall suggests an outspread raven's wing.

If the characters did not make a blood offering at the icon at the Teeth, then the creatures in this room are prepared. If the cultists have been alerted and the characters have not looked through the portal, the cultists gain a round of surprise against the characters. If the characters bypass the hazard without alerting the cultists and render the portal transparent, they gain a round of surprise on the room's occupants. If they did not make a blood offering at the font to see through the portal, no one is surprised.

**When the characters first pass through the portal, read:**

*Before you is a wide corridor that is lit dimly by a flickering glow from beyond the opening ahead. Cruelly barbed hooks project from the walls every few feet.*

*The hulking forms of several humanoid creatures block the opening. They are clad in hide armor and heft crude battleaxes, and below each heavy brow glares a single eye.*

**When a character reaches the opening, read:**

*This great hall extends more than 50 feet to the east, with sharply angled alcoves. It is dimly lit by a shimmering circle on the floor at the far end and by the glow of a smoking brazier. Beside the brazier, by the circle, stands a gaunt humanoid in tight-fitting garb. Dark flames wreath her hands. Several black-cloaked humanoids ring the circle.*

### Perception Check

**DC 23:** A fountain to the west is surmounted by a relief carving of a cloaked figure, and you can see that more cruel hooks adorn the walls here.

**DC 28:** At the circle's center is a barred enclosure, in which crouches a huddled figure.

3 Darkpact Cyclops Guards (C)		Level 11 Minion
Large fey humanoid		XP 150 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +13; darkvision, truesight 6	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 23, Will 23		
Speed 6		
⊕ <b>Battleaxe</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
Melee 2; +17 vs. AC; 4 damage.		
⊕ <b>Evil Eye</b> (immediate reaction, when a melee attack misses the darkpact cyclops guard; at-will)		
The darkpact cyclops guard makes a melee basic attack against the attacker.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Elven	
Str 22 (+11)	Dex 16 (+8)	Wis 17 (+8)
Con 20 (+10)	Int 11 (+5)	Cha 11 (+5)
Equipment hide armor, heavy shield, battleaxe		

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The area is dimly lit. Shadar-kai and the shadow-touched servants of the cult have darkvision and can see without difficulty in this area.

**Portal:** The portal to the Shadowfell is a swirling, opaque disk that fills the end of the passage. It allows travel only from the cavern of the Teeth to the House of Pain. Return travel is possible only for shadar-kai and cultists who have sworn the pact with the

Darkpact Shadar-Kai Chainfighter (CF)		Level 6 Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid		XP 250
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +5; darkvision	
HP 68; Bloodied 39		
AC 20; Fortitude 19, Reflex 19, Will 17		
Speed 6; see also <i>dance of death</i> and <i>shadow jaunt</i>		
⊕ <b>Spiked Chain</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
Melee 2; +11 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage.		
⊕ <b>Dance of Death</b> (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ <b>Necrotic, Weapon</b>		
The darkpact shadar-kai chainfighter shifts 6 squares and makes 3 spiked chain attacks at any points during its move. It can attack a given enemy only once, but it deals 1d6 extra necrotic damage with each successful hit.		
<b>Shadow Jaunt</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>		
The darkpact shadar-kai chainfighter teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of its next turn.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Acrobatics +14, Stealth +14		
Str 17 (+6)	Dex 18 (+7)	Wis 14 (+5)
Con 12 (+4)	Int 10 (+3)	Cha 11 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, +1 magic spiked chain		

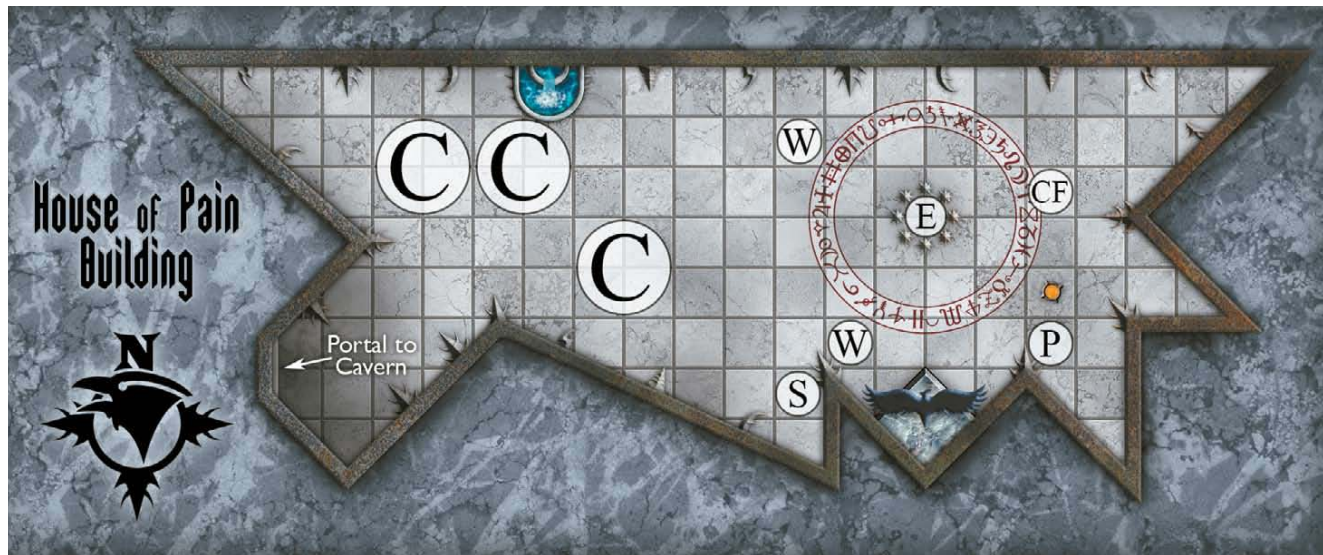
Raven Queen. The portal is also transparent to such creatures.

A blood offering (see the previous encounter) at the fountain within the House of Pain is required for anyone other than the cultists and shadar-kai to return. Such an offering also renders the portal transparent.

The portal cannot be attacked or harmed in any way.

Characters can use teleportation powers when moving through the portal, provided they know what is on the other side.

**Wall Spikes:** The cultists exploit these cruelly hooked projections to injure and impede their opponents. A creature that is pushed into a square with a wall spike takes 1d6 + the attacker's Strength modi-



fier damage and is immobilized until the end of the attacker's next turn.

**Sacred Fountain:** This small pool is backed by a relief carving that depicts the cowed figure of the Raven Queen, flanked by ravens in flight. A blood offering here allows return passage through the portal. It also lets the offering character ignore the *aura of pain* (see the Altar entry).

**Ritual Circle:** The circle is 20 feet across and marked on the floor with mystic runes. Vandariel performed a Magic Circle ritual after bringing her prisoner into the center. Natural creatures of 14th level or below cannot pass through the circle or affect creatures within it. Unaffected creatures can take a standard action to obscure the runes and break the circle.

The cage at the center of the circle is about 5 feet across and made of cold iron bars. The eladrin prisoner is held here. He or she is unharmed physically but is affected by the *aura of pain* in the area, and

nearly catatonic with fear. The prisoner does not assist a rescuer in any way but huddles in misery. The cage is locked (DC 25 Thievery to open).

This circle also functions as a permanent teleportation circle for the Linked Circle ritual. It connects to another circle in a temple of the Raven Queen elsewhere in the Shadowfell.

**Altar:** This is a stone altar topped with the symbol of the Raven Queen. Black candles are lit, and a sacred book is open to the liturgy of the ritual. The altar also anchors a permanent *aura of pain*, which distracts and debilitates enemies. A blood offering at the fountain (see above) allows a character to ignore the aura's effects.

**Aura of Pain** aura 5; creatures who enter or start their turns within the aura (other than shadar-kai or those who have sworn the pact of the Raven Queen) take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and to Will.

The characters can destroy the altar (AC 4, Fortitude 12, Reflex 4; hp 80). Doing so also ends the aura.

**Treasure:** In addition to the magic items carried by the cultists, the characters can gather treasure in the form of offerings, ritual accouterments, and the like, totaling 3,000 gp.

The sacred tome is of value to scholars, although the evil ritual scribed in its pages makes it a dangerous object to sell. The Fey Court is willing to pay the party 500 gp to ensure the book's destruction.

<b>Darkpact Shadar-Kai Warrior (W) Level 8 Soldier</b>	
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 350
<b>Initiative</b> +11	<b>Senses</b> Perception +6; darkvision
<b>HP</b> 86; <b>Bloodied</b> 43	
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 20, <b>Reflex</b> 21, <b>Will</b> 18	
<b>Speed</b> 5; see also <i>shadow jaunt</i>	
⊕ <b>Katar</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	+13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage (crit 1d6 + 9 necrotic).
⊕ <b>Double Attack</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	The darkpact shadar-kai warrior makes two katar attacks.
⊕ <b>Cage of Gloom</b> (standard; recharge ☞ ☞)	The darkpact shadar-kai warrior makes a katar attack. If the attack hits, the darkpact shadar-kai warrior makes a secondary attack as strands of shadow coil around the target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +11 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends).
<b>Shadow Jaunt</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>	The darkpact shadar-kai warrior teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of its next turn.
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +15, Stealth +19	
<b>Str</b> 17 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 20 (+9) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+6)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+6)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+5) <b>Cha</b> 11 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> +1 <i>magic shadowmail</i> , 2 +1 <i>lifedrinker katars</i> , <i>amulet of protection</i> +2	



**Vandariel, the Voice of Pain (P)** **Level 10 Elite Controller (Leader)**  
XP 1,000

Medium shadow humanoid

**Initiative** +8 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision  
**HP** 202; **Bloodied** 101  
**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 24  
**Saving Throws** +2  
**Speed** 6; see also *shadow jaunt*  
**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Blackfire Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**  
+14 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 4 fire and necrotic damage.

↗ **Beshadowed Mind** (standard; recharge ☐☐☐☐) ♦ **Necrotic**  
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target has no line of sight to anything more than 2 squares from it (save ends).

↗ **Lance of Dark Faith** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Implement, Necrotic**  
Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage (crit 2d6 + 12 necrotic), and one ally within sight gains a +2 power bonus to its next attack roll against the target.

↖ **Deep Shadow** (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ **Necrotic**  
Aura 2; thick, writhing shadows surround Vandariel. She and any other shadow creatures within the aura gain concealment. In addition, enemies that enter or start their turns within the aura take 5 necrotic damage, and enemies (including flying ones) also treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain. Vandariel can sustain the aura as a minor action. However, the effect ends if she uses *shadow jaunt* or moves more than half her speed on her turn.

## TACTICS

If the cultists are not aware of the characters' approach, they begin the encounter in the indicated positions.

The darkpact cyclops guards attempt to flank the characters but use their reach when possible. Their job is to slow down intruders long enough for the other cultists to respond, so they try to take advantage of cover and any darkness effects to hold out as long as possible.

The darkpact stalker begins by dropping its *dark fog* on a square between the darkpact cyclops guards, cloaking both them and the entrance passage in

✦ **Blade Barrier** (standard; sustain minor; daily) ♦ **Conjuration, Implement**  
Area wall 5 within 10; Vandariel conjures a wall of spinning blades that lasts until the end of her next turn. The wall can be 5 squares long and 2 squares high. The squares it occupies are difficult terrain. If a creature enters the barrier's space or starts its turn there, it takes 3d6 + 5 damage and ongoing 5 damage (save ends, with a -2 penalty to the saving throw).

**Shadow Jaunt** (move; encounter) ♦ **Teleportation**  
Vandariel teleports 4 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of her next turn.

↖ **Healing Word** (minor; encounter) ♦ **Healing**  
Close burst 5; Vandariel or an ally within the area spends a healing surge and regains 2d6 + 3 hit points. Vandariel can use this power twice per encounter, but only once per round.

**Raven Queen's Blessing** (free, when Vandariel's attack drops an enemy to 0 hit points; encounter) ♦ **Healing**  
Vandariel or an ally within 5 squares of that enemy can spend a healing surge (with a +3 bonus to the hit points regained).

**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Common, Elven, Supernal  
**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Arcana +14, Heal +11, Religion +14, Stealth +15  
**Str** 12 (+6) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 18 (+9)  
**Con** 13 (+6) **Int** 19 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+9)  
**Equipment** +2 *eladrin armor*, +2 *symbol of despair*

magical darkness. (The cultists all enjoy darkvision by virtue of their pact and are not impeded by the darkness.) It then uses *dark step* as often as possible, in conjunction with the cyclopes, to set up flanking opportunities and protects itself with *invisibility* if the area of darkness is dispelled.

The darkpact shadar-kai warriors take advantage of the darkness to move up and make double attacks (using *shadow jaunt* if the darkness ends), using *cage of gloom* to restrain dangerous melee foes. The darkpact chainfighter stays in the rear ranks and lashes enemies with its spiked chain until it has an opportunity to use

**Darkpact Stalker (S)** **Level 10 Lurker**  
XP 500

Medium shadow humanoid

**Initiative** +14 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision  
**HP** 81; **Bloodied** 40; see also *killing dark*  
**AC** 24 (see also *dark step*), **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23  
**Speed** 6

⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**  
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage (crit 1d8 + 13).

↗ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**  
Ranged 5/10; +15 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.

↖ **Killing Dark** (when reduced to 0 hit points)  
Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a darkpact stalker explodes in a spout of darkness.

✦ **Dark Fog** (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ **Zone**  
Area burst 4 within 10; creates a zone of darkness that blocks line of sight (creatures with darkvision ignore this effect).

**Keen Scimitar** (minor; encounter)  
Requires scimitar; if the next attack the darkpact stalker makes before the end of its next turn is a hit, treat it as a critical hit.

**Combat Advantage**  
The darkpact stalker deals 2d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

**Dark Step** (move; at-will)  
The darkpact stalker moves 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.

**Invisibility** (minor; recharge ☐☐☐☐) ♦ **Illusion**  
The darkpact stalker becomes invisible until the end of its next turn.

**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** Common  
**Skills** Stealth +15, Thievery +15  
**Str** 12 (+6) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+7)  
**Con** 15 (+7) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 19 (+9)  
**Equipment** black feyweave armor, +1 *keen scimitar*, 4 daggers

*dance of death*. After dashing through its enemies in this way, it retreats to the cover of darkness.

Vandariel moves into the corner previously occupied by the darkpact stalker. She then uses her *deep*

*shadow* aura and spends a minor action each round thereafter to sustain it. Each round, she moves to benefit as many allies as possible with the aura's concealment, making sure never to move more than 3 squares in a turn. She uses *beshadowed mind* as often as she can, targeting ranged attackers first. While waiting for that power to recharge, she attacks with her *lance of dark faith*, resorting to *darkfire touch* only if forced into melee. Once it recharges, she uses *beshadowed mind* again, spending an action point if necessary to move to the most advantageous position. She uses *healing word* to restore the darkpact stalker to health once it becomes bloodied. If the battle turns against her, she shifts away from melee attackers and throws up a *blade barrier*. If possible, she moves into the ritual circle; otherwise she retreats into one of the room's sharp angles and blocks it. When facing defeat, she uses *shadow jaunt* to teleport outside the temple's walls and make her escape.

**If the cultists have been alerted to the characters**, the stalker and the warriors move to intercept them in the chamber of the Teeth as described in the previous encounter. Once the cultists return to this area, Vandariel uses *healing word* to restore some of the stalker's hit points. (She saves her remaining use of *healing word* for herself.) The stalker and the two warriors move behind the cyclops guards and around the corners to avoid being hit by ranged or area attacks and await the intruders.

The central darkpact cyclops guard readies an action to charge the first character who comes through the portal. It attempts a bull rush to push that character into a wall spike. The other cyclopes use their reach to attack the spiked character.

The cultists otherwise follow the tactics described above.

## CONCLUSION

If the characters defeat the cultists, they disrupt the ritual before the prisoner's transformation is complete. They earn the quest reward (if any) by returning the prisoner to his or her village and reporting their findings to the authorities. Their act of heroism puts them in good stead with the Fey Court and can lead to further missions on its behalf.

If Vandariel escaped, the characters have made a dangerous enemy. She devotes herself to bringing them down, using all the resources of her cult to do so. Agents of Shadow might teleport into the characters' haven to assault them, or a party of darkpact fomorians might lay an ambush. Once the characters reach the epic tier, sorrowsworn agents might pursue them. Finding and defeating Vandariel is the only sure way to stop the attacks.

The abandoned House of Pain can make a good base for further exploration of the Shadowfell. Characters might have to create an opening in the walls, use a Wizard's Sight ritual to allow teleportation, or perform a Linked Portal ritual.

### About the Author

**Jennifer Clarke Wilkes** works as a game editor at Wizards of the Coast LLC. She has also co-written a number of role-playing game supplements, including the *Faiths of Eberron* and *Sandstorm* supplements.