

PARAGON

11-20



# BEYOND THE MOTTLED TOWER

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“All my careful work destroyed by that traitorous bastard Modra and those ‘Heroes of Overlook.’ Now, I must begin again, seeking new allies on different worlds to make good my losses. But first, some vengeance on the Vale, as well as a way to eradicate all hints of my involvement with the githyanki. After all, anonymity is the key to any successful betrayal. . .”





“Beyond the Mottled Tower” is an adventure for five 11th-level characters. By the end of the adventure, the PCs should be midway to 13th level. This adventure is the first paragon adventure for the Scales of War adventure path. “Beyond the Mottled Tower” is the sequel to “The Temple Between,” or it can be adapted for use in your own ongoing campaign.

In this adventure, the PCs receive an urgent summons from Overlook’s Council of Elders on behalf of Megan Swiftblade, leader of the Freeriders. Answering her call, the PCs witness the near-destruction of the village of Talar. Subsequent revelations propel them on a dangerous hunt for those responsible, before all Elsir Vale suffers the same fate.

## BACKGROUND

The shadar-kai arms dealer Sarshan has grown wealthy and powerful through his shadowy dealings. Over many years, Sarshan built up a vast, invisible mercantile empire supplying weapons, intelligence, and mercenaries to anyone with sufficient coin. Sarshan’s success (and continued survival) hinged in equal part on his clients’ discretion, his duplicitous nature, and his ruthless cunning.

Sarshan is cautious, and his desire for anonymity is such that he has walked away from numerous deals that presented an unacceptably high risk of exposing his operation. However, one of Sarshan’s trusted lieutenants, the dark creeper Modra, betrayed his master when he supplied the orc war chief Tusk with arms and equipment for his attack on the folk of the Stonehome Mountains. Tusk’s subsequent defeat brought the PCs into direct contact with Sarshan’s operation for the first time.

## THE QUESTS

In “Beyond the Mottled Tower,” the PCs save the village of Talar from Sarshan’s attacks, then pursue the shadar-kai to his final lair. There, Sarshan’s threat can be ended once and for all.

### Minor Quest—Save Talar

When the village of Talar is threatened with utter destruction by a flow of elemental blood chaos, the PCs must find its source beneath the Mottled Tower and eliminate those responsible.

**Reward:** 600 XP.

### Major Quest—Defeat Sarshan

By pursuing the agents attacking Talar, the PCs retrace their route through a vast swamp and finally to Sarshan’s new lair in the Elemental Chaos. There, they must run a gauntlet of deadly traps and defenders before finally facing off against the shadar-kai.

**Reward:** 3,000 XP

Subsequently, in “The Shadow Rift of Umbraforge,” the treacherous Modra attempted to slay the PCs. Pursuing their assailant to the Shadowfell, the party discovered the shadar-kai’s fortress—the isolated citadel of Umbraforge. Its resultant destruction earned the PCs Sarshan’s relentless ire.

In the aftermath, another of Sarshan’s schemes was stymied in “The Temple Between.” The githyanki war leader General Zithiruun, a valued client and ally of the shadar-kai, was slain attempting to capture Overlook. Sarshan had worked with the disgraced githyanki for some time, funneling troops through the network of portals scattered across Elsir Vale and coordinating the assassination of troublemakers. The relationship was a profitable one for Sarshan, and its loss irked the shadar-kai greatly.

These setbacks have badly damaged Sarshan and his carefully built operation. In an effort to salvage what he can of his power in the world, the shadar-kai has decided to destroy all evidence of his association with the githyanki.

Sarshan has recently become aware that Megan Swiftblade, leader of the Freeriders, has discovered his association with General Zithiruun. Assassins sent by the shadar-kai have attempted to silence the Freeriders, but have succeeded only in forcing Megan to flee to her home village of Talar, near the town of Brindol. There, she has thrown herself on the mercy of an old family friend, the sage Falrinth. As the adventure begins, Sarshan’s servants have caught up with Megan and are about to unleash an indiscriminate assault on the village.

## BLOOD CHAOS

Blood chaos is a potent acidic distillation of raw elemental essence, first collected and refined from the Elemental Chaos by Djamel, a long-dead efreet conjurer. The efreet created this horrid ooze in the course of experimenting with the fundamental mutability of her home plane, storing it in a vast reservoir in her remote tower home. After Djamel's death, Sarshan discovered the tower and its blood chaos stores. Recognizing the material's potential as a weapon, he claimed the tower as his lair. Now, the shadar-kai forges plans to route the blood chaos by way of portals into Elsir Vale.

This potent distillation of elemental energy burns inanimate objects and melts living flesh. A creature that enters or begins its turn in an area of blood chaos takes 2d6 + 3 acid and fire damage and is slowed (save ends).

Blood chaos at a depth of 3 feet or less is difficult terrain. In deeper areas of blood chaos, creatures must use their swim speed or make a DC 10 Athletics check to move. They gain cover except against attacks from submerged enemies. Fighting in deep blood chaos imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls except with spears and crossbows. Powers that have the fire keyword take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

On rare occasions, creatures who suffer exposure to blood chaos undergo horrid physical changes. This foul substance begins to imbue their physical nature with chaotic energy, disfiguring them but granting them powerful abilities.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Overlook's Council of Elders has received a missive from Megan Swiftblade, begging their aid in the light of repeated assassination attempts against her and her group—the Freeriders. The letter also includes an intriguing note indicating that Megan has discovered who was behind General Zithiruun's recent attack on the city. Megan is in hiding for her life, but asks that a courier be sent to the Green Dragon tavern in the village of Talar. The council summons the PCs, asking them to meet with Megan and assess the truth and value of her information.

The PCs reach Talar without incident, but as they rest in the tavern waiting for Megan to make contact, an earthquake hits the area. However, before they flee the collapsing tavern, the PCs must aid other trapped patrons. When they finally reach the street, the screams of the fleeing populace herald the sight of an unearthly ooze—blood chaos—inundating and destroying nearby buildings.

The PCs face off against several creatures lurking within the blood chaos. However, even as they determine that this deadly flow is emanating from a tunnel blasted out through the side of a nearby hill, the PCs see the tower atop the hill shudder and sink into the earth. In the aftermath, the PCs battle their way down through the tower, defeating a number of beasts freed by the earthquake, and rescuing the sage Falrinth, his servant, and Megan.

In a cavern deep beneath the tower, the PCs discover that servants of Sarshan are behind the attack on the town, and are set to flee by way of a teleportation circle. After defeating them, the PCs glean enough information from Falrinth and Megan to

determine that this attack is just the first of many, and that Sarshan must be stopped for good.

After activating the portal, the PCs arrive at the Ever-Tree—a living tower growing in the midst of a lake tainted with blood chaos. Immediately beset by a pair of green dragons, the PCs fight their way into the tunnels beneath the tree, catching their first glimpse of Sarshan as he flees. After defeating Sarshan's guards, the PCs follow the shadar-kai through another portal to the Elemental Chaos.

Arriving atop an earthberg drifting on the Sea of Fire, the PCs discover the monolithic tower that now serves as Sarshan's lair. Inside, the shadar-kai has configured a portal network leading through the tower to pass through a series of guarded and trapped chambers. When they finally reach the roof, the PCs and Sarshan face each other in a final showdown.

## SETTING

"Beyond the Mottled Tower" plays out in three distinct sections. The adventure opens in the village of Talar moments before an earthquake strikes. Escaping the destruction, the PCs are drawn to the nearby Mottled Tower, home of the sage Falrinth, and the previously secret caves beneath it.

From the tower, the party travels by portal to the Ever-Tree. This huge and ancient oak grows at the center of a lake tainted with blood chaos, and features a series of dank, noisome tunnels through which the PCs pursue Sarshan.

In the end, the PCs travel to the Sea of Fire in the Elemental Chaos, within sight of the black walls of the City of Brass. A floating island houses the obsidian tower in which the climax of the adventure plays out.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

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To get the adventure moving quickly, read the text below, then proceed to “Part 1: The Green Dragon”.

*The summons from the Council of Elders was sudden and unannounced. Standing once again in the High Hall, you are told that the Freeriders, led by Megan Swiftblade, have uncovered the identity of a powerful ally to General Zithiruun—an ally who helped prepare the recent attack on Overlook. Megan has since fled to the village of Talar in the face of repeated assassination attempts. In return for the name of the general’s mysterious benefactor, she has requested the council’s aid.*

*The council, concerned that this mysterious figure might still have designs on the city, has dispatched you to rescue Megan, eliminate any immediate threat to her safety, and return her to Overlook.*

If you prefer a slower start to the adventure, give the players a chance to ease into the action and learn a bit more about recent events. The PCs can receive the Council of Elders’ summons while in Overlook or at any location in Elsir Vale. The summons asks the PCs to come to the High Hall. Any characters who participated in “Siege of Bordrin’s Watch” (*Dungeon* 157) have visited the hall and spoken with the elders before.

## THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

In this roleplaying encounter, the PCs learn more about their quest. Read or paraphrase the following, then use the notes below to facilitate play and answer any questions the PCs might have.

*Once more, you stand in the High Hall to be greeted by Overlook’s elders, though their welcome is less brusque this time.*

*“Greetings, friends,” intones Elder Cadrick as you approach the dais upon which he and the city’s other four leaders stand. “We have received a desperate message from Megan Swiftblade, leader of the Freeriders, who you might remember. The Freeriders have discovered that General Zithiruun had a powerful ally in his recent attack on the city. Although she does not identify this ally in her message, Megan has already survived three attempts on her life and fears that more will follow. If we help her, she will tell us who was ultimately behind the attack, hopefully in time to prevent another.”*

*“Again, we find ourselves in need of aid, and again we call upon you. Travel to the village of Talar and find out what Megan knows. Keep her safe, neutralize any immediate threat to her, and then return her to us.”*

Cadrick and the others know the following additional information.

- ◆ The village of Talar, where Megan was born, lies outside the city of Brindol.
- ◆ Though Megan does not know who is behind the attacks against her, she believes it to be the ally she is threatening to name.
- ◆ Megan’s message to the council makes no mention of where she is staying, saying only that they should leave a message for her at the village’s Green Dragon tavern.

## GETTING TO TALAR

The party’s journey from Overlook to the eastern portion of Elsir Vale and the village of Talar is uneventful. If the PCs initially wish to bypass Talar for Brindol, they can resupply and purchase new equipment as you permit.

When the PCs finally reach Talar, read:

*The journey to Talar is long but not overly arduous. Just before dusk, you arrive at the village’s tavern and inn, the Green Dragon. Having secured rooms for the night and left your message, you take your rest in the dimly lit common room. Megan’s message to the council stated that she would contact its emissaries only after making sure you had not been followed. All you can do now is slake your thirst and wait.*

## THE GREEN DRAGON

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Allow this roleplaying and scene-setting encounter to run as long as the players are enjoying themselves, using the notes below to facilitate play.

The Green Dragon is a typical two-story village tavern and traveler’s inn. Its outer walls are dressed stone, while internal walls and the floor are stout oak boards laid over thick joists. The roof is slate, and a small beer cellar is found under the common room. Inside and outside shutters keep the evening chill at bay.

The common room takes up the majority of the first floor, with a large fireplace opposite the bar filling the area with warmth and light. The walls are covered in faded tapestries showing hunting and woodland scenes. The second floor houses the inn’s guests.



## THE PROVENDER

Rooms are available for 5 sp a night. Bernath the innkeeper can also provide hearty meals (2 sp for stew, thick-cut bread, and boiled vegetables) and ale (2 sp a pitcher). The wine in his cellar is carefully kept for wealthy patrons. Before opening a bottle, however, he demands payment up front (5 gp).

## THE FOLK

Most of the folk in the tavern are villagers relaxing after a hard day's work. A few travelers round out the clientele.

**Bernath:** The owner of the Green Dragon (male human; Diplomacy +7, Insight +6) is a jovial, portly widower who welcomes one and all to his establishment. However, a DC 10 Insight check reveals that the innkeeper's cheery disposition is a front. Although this might pique the PCs' suspicions, Bernath is simply ill at ease in the presence of armed adventurers. Once he sees to the PCs' room, food, and drink, he avoids them whenever possible.

Bernath and his son Niall are the only people in town who know that Megan is staying with Falrinth at the Mottled Tower. However, Bernath has been well paid by Megan to keep his silence. He plans to secretly deliver the PCs' message later that night.

**Niall:** Bernath's twelve-year-old son (male human; Thievery +6) is ostensibly in the common room to help his father. In reality, he is a daring, mischievous sort who doesn't think twice about helping himself to a traveler's unattended possessions.

At some point before the earthquake strikes, Niall makes a move to pilfer several silver coins that have fallen unnoticed under Leucis's chair (see below). The PCs and the merchant have a chance to notice (Perception DC 10).

Niall overheard his father talking with Serten (Falrinth's servant) about Megan's presence in the Mottled Tower, though his father does not know that Niall shares his secret.

**Leucis:** This frail cloth merchant (male tiefling; Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12) is deep in his cups when the PCs arrive. Leucis's business has taken a downturn recently, and when he spies the PCs, he attempts to start a conversation with the not-so-subtle goal of off-loading his wares on the (hopefully) wealthy adventurers.

**Sariel:** This slim female eladrin carries the weapons and armor of a warrior. She sits on her own, humming a tuneless song while nursing her ale. Though she is polite to anyone conversing with her, she is tightlipped as to her reasons for being in Talar. The other patrons ignore her, often while discussing spurious explanations for her presence.

Though her appearance is likely to arouse suspicion, Sariel is merely a courier for a well-to-do merchant in Brindol. She knows nothing about Megan, but takes any questioning by the PCs as an attempt to shake her down and steal the mundane documents she carries.

**Farmers:** These hardy humans are relaxing after a hard day's work in the fields. Most sit in small groups drinking and talking quietly among themselves. They are polite and deferential to the PCs, and can provide the following information.

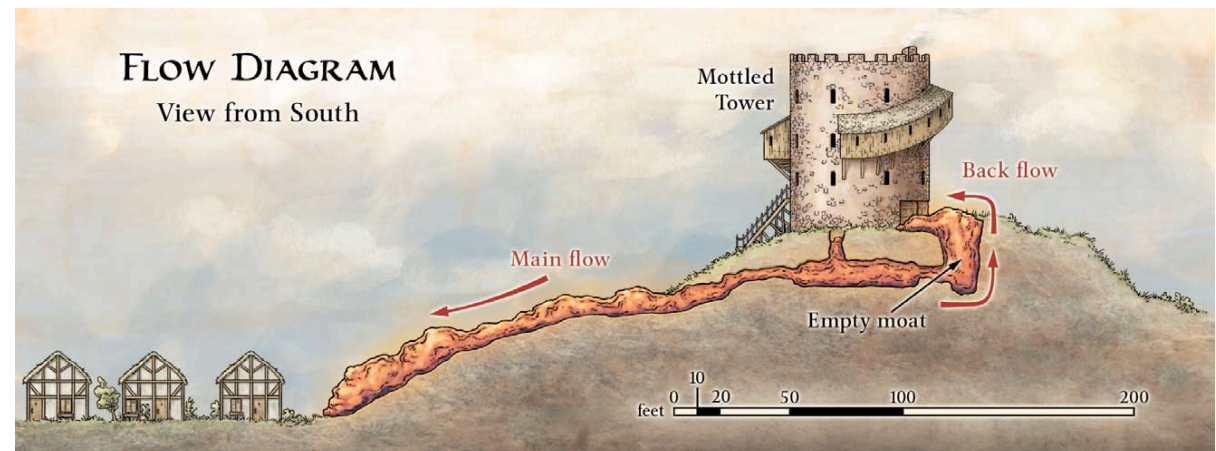
- ◆ Everyone in the village knows of Megan's reputation as an adventurer, and all remember her as a child. However, she hasn't lived in Talar for years.
- ◆ Megan's parents died five years before, and she has no other family in Talar.
- ◆ Megan's father was a good friend of Finrath the sage—or at least as much of a friend as the antisocial sage let him be.

When the players have done as much roleplaying and information gathering in the Green Dragon as they wish, the earthquake strikes.

**Skill Challenge:** "Walls Come Tumbling Down" (page 22).

In the aftermath of the earthquake, the village lies in ruins. However, Talar's ordeal is far from over.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Flowing Death" (page 24).



## AT THE TOWER

Even as the PCs defeat the creatures that have emerged from the flow of blood chaos through the village, they witness the Mottled Tower sinking into its hill on the edge of town.

*The horrid ooze continues to slowly flow through the village, destroying everything it touches. However, sudden movement atop the nearby hill catches your attention. Even as you watch, the mottled tower shudders, then begins to sink into the ground. Two frantic figures—one dragging the other—appear on the rooftop.*

As the PCs approach the tower, read:

*The tower continues to sink into the earth, so that by the time you reach the crest of the hill, only the roof and its battlements remain above ground. Two figures cling to the slate—one a human male dressed in sage's garb; the other a human female clad in armor, sword in hand. Though the male seems utterly terrified, the woman is defiant despite what appears to be a badly broken leg.*

The figures atop the tower are Serten, Falrinth's apprentice, and Megan Swiftblade, leader of the Freeriders.

**Serten:** This portly human male (Arcana +9) wears an ink-stained robe, now tattered and torn. He is groggy and bleeding from a head wound caused by falling stone.

**Megan Swiftblade:** Badly injured and covered with dust, this slender human female has short-cropped blond hair. A vicious scar runs from her forehead down her left cheek. If the PCs took part in "Siege of Bordrin's Watch" (*Dungeon* 157) or "The Temple Between" (*Dungeon* 161), they recognize Megan at once.

## CROSSING THE MOAT

Although the tower has sunk into the hill, the PCs must still cross the moat to reach the roof. Normally dry, this broad ditch is now filled with blood chaos. However, the collapse of the tower has left huge chunks of stone spread through the moat. Though the blood chaos is slowly eating away at them, these blocks remain solid enough that the PCs can easily cross (no skill checks necessary).

## LEARNING MORE

The PCs can yell across the moat to Serten and Megan, but initially only Megan responds.

**Megan:** Although she desperately needs help, Megan is less than happy to see the PCs. She resents them for denying the Freeriders the glory of defeating General Zithiruun. The rest of the Freeriders went into hiding elsewhere in Elsir Vale after the first assassination attempt against them, as the group felt that splitting up would make them less vulnerable.

Megan is anxious to rescue Falrinth, but her broken leg has her trapped. Serten dragged her up to the roof, but the apprentice is now too terrified to move. She fears that escaped monsters have trapped the old sage below. She can identify all three of the monster types once caged in the tower, but she knows nothing of their particular abilities.

Megan does not know who or what is behind the earthquake. Though she suspects that Sarshan is trying to kill her, she does not yet share her knowledge of the shadar-kai with the PCs.

**Serten:** Serten is terrified, but gentle questioning calms him somewhat. He knows little more than the PCs at this point. He was in his quarters when the earthquake struck, but he has no idea what caused it or where the blood chaos is coming from.

Serten tells how the earthquake released several monsters kept by Falrinth for research purposes. Megan rescued him from these foul creatures, then he returned the favor by dragging her to the roof when a collapsing wall broke her leg. He, too, fears for Falrinth's life.

## MOTTLED TOWER OVERVIEW

The Mottled Tower once stood within a dry moat atop a low, steep hill on the periphery of the village. Constructed of cut and dressed stone, the tower was in good repair before its collapse. The sage Falrinth lives within, attended by his apprentice.

## FEATURES OF THE TOWER

**Illumination:** Dim light (sun or moonlight filtering through the tower's narrow windows on the fourth floor, a few guttering candles and torches on lower floors).

**Wooden Doors:** Doors within the tower are not locked. AC/Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, 20 hit points.

**Walls:** The inside walls are of wooden slats over thick posts. AC/Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, 40 hit points.

**Floors:** Worn oaken floorboards over heavy joists make up the floors. AC/Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, 40 hit points.

**Ceilings:** Ceilings are the joists and bare floorboards of the level above, and are 20 feet high. Dust and the sound of footsteps sift down when creatures are moving on the next level.

**Spiral Staircase:** A wooden spiral staircase climbs the height of the tower, providing access to all levels.

**Narrow Windows:** Window slits in the stone walls allow dim light into the tower's interior. These windows are shuttered both inside and out. On levels now below the ground, the shutters hold the earth and mud outside at bay.



**Mess and Clutter:** The earthquake and the tower's subsequent plunge into the hill have caused chaos within. Chairs and tables are overturned, while the contents of cupboards and shelves lie scattered upon the floor.

**External Staircase:** This covered walkway spirals around the tower, providing access between the second, third, and fourth floors.

**Structural Damage:** The earthquake has caused extensive damage to the tower. Though the ancient structure is in no danger of collapse, sections of its walls have been badly weakened. Cracks have appeared above all the windows and doors, while stone dust and crumbled mortar cover the floor. Here and there, the massive stone blocks of the walls jut inward from the pressure of the earth outside.

## FIFTH FLOOR

The only features of note on this level are the tower's battlements and chimney stack. Megan and Serten have taken refuge here from the raging monsters and the blood chaos below.

## FOURTH FLOOR

Falrinth's apprentice Serten slept here, and the sage kept several monsters caged in this area as part of his questionable research. When the PCs reach this level, they discover that these test subjects have escaped. Enraged by their long captivity and their mistreatment at Falrinth's hands, they attack anyone they see.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Unbound" (page 26).

## THIRD FLOOR

A library, laboratory, and guest room make up this level. Falrinth does most of his work and research here.

**Library:** High wooden bookshelves dominate this chamber, their volumes now spread across the floor. An overturned table lies in the middle of the room.

**Laboratory:** This large chamber is a shambles, with much of the floor covered in shattered laboratory equipment.

**Megan's Quarters:** Falrinth's guest room sees use only infrequently, as the antisocial sage seldom welcomes visitors. The plainly furnished room shows signs of recent occupation but contains nothing of value.

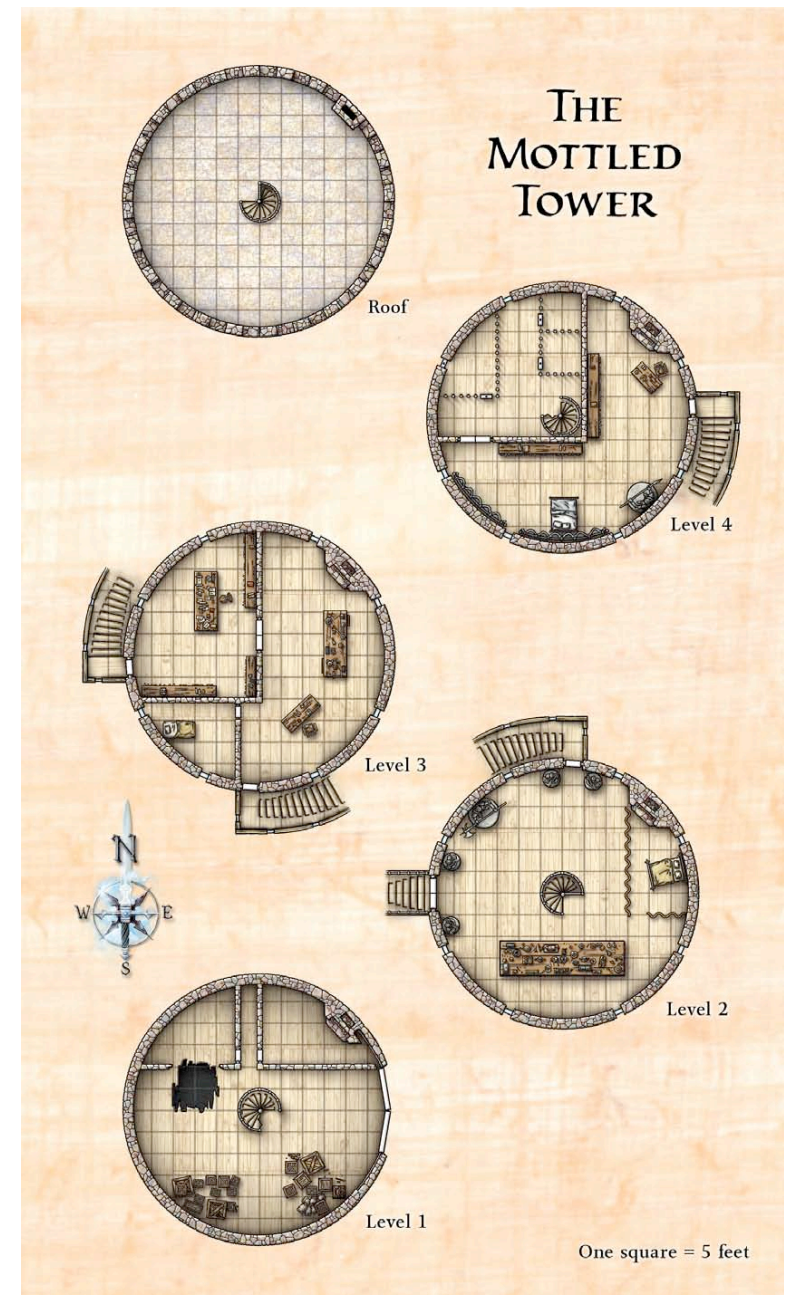
## SECOND FLOOR

Falrinth uses the second floor as his living space. A curtained-off section holds a four-poster bed, while a large banquet table dominates the rest of the chamber.

## FIRST FLOOR

The tower's ground floor is used mainly for storage, with two smaller chambers set up as a kitchen and pantry. Large sliding doors of iron in the east wall provide access for crates, barrels, and so forth.

**Pantry:** Shelves once crammed with foodstuffs line the walls of this room, but their contents have joined the boxes, crates, and barrels filling much of the available floor space.



**Kitchen:** A large fireplace dominates this chamber. Cooking paraphernalia fallen from cupboards and sideboards lies scattered about.



When the PCs reach this area, they discover Falrinth huddled in a corner. Read:

*A portly human male huddles within the devastation of this kitchen. His straggly brown hair is disheveled, mud staining his robes.*

The reclusive Falrinth is less than grateful to his rescuers, asking only if the PCs have seen Megan and Serten. If the PCs speak to Falrinth (either here or later), refer to the skill challenge “The Chase Is On (Part 1)” (page 30).

## BELOW THE TOWER

A series of caverns unknown to Falrinth lie beneath the tower. Sarshan’s attack squad is using a trio of ancient floodgates within the caves to destroy Talar—the first test of Sarshan’s equipment and capability.

**Tactical Encounter:** “Blood Chaos Caverns” (page 28).

## THE CHASE IS ON (PART 1)

In this first part of a connected two-part skill challenge, the PCs obtain information from Megan and Falrinth, then step through a portal to follow the route of Sarshan’s servants back to their master.

**Skill Challenge:** “The Chase Is On (Part 1)” (page 30).

## THE EVER-TREE

Once the skill challenge is complete, the PCs are ready to use the teleportation circle to follow the route taken by Sarshan’s servants. Stepping through the portal takes them to the Ever-Tree, below which Sarshan has created a lair to help him regulate and direct the flow of blood chaos.

**Tactical Encounter:** “Draconic Wrath” (page 31).

## THE CHASE IS ON (PART 2)

In this second part of the connected skill challenge, the PCs enter the fetid tunnels below the Ever-Tree in search of Sarshan.

**Skill Challenge:** “The Chase Is On (Part 2)” (page 33).

## BLOOD CHAOS POOLS

In the depths of the tunnels beneath the Ever-Tree, Sarshan and his servants funnel a pool of blood chaos into Elsir Vale by way of two ancient portals.

**Tactical Encounter:** “In Fetid Darkness” (page 34).



## THE TOWER OF DJAMELA

Sarshan's lair and final hiding place lies in the Elemental Chaos—a tower on a floating island set in the midst of the Sea of Fire. After activating the portal through which the shadar-kai fled the “In Fetid Darkness” encounter (page 34), the PCs appear within a permanent teleportation circle on the shore of a floating earthberg. Close by, they see the larger island whose obsidian tower is Sarshan's lair. On the horizon, the distant spires of the legendary City of Brass shimmer above the haze of the lava sea.

## THE ISLAND

Sarshan's island is a steep-sided rise that juts up from the Sea of Fire. An ancient stone dike surrounds the island, bolstered by arcane rituals that help keep the lava at bay. Environmental conditions on the island are described in the “Sea of Fire” encounter (page 37).

The PCs can learn more about the island with a successful History check.

**DC 15:** *Years ago, this island was home to an eccentric efreet mage named Djameela. When her dangerous research saw her driven from the City of Brass, Djameela relocated to this remote location to continue her work. The monolithic tower that dominates the island was raised by her hand, and filled with traps and conjured creatures to defend against intrusion.*

**DC 20:** *Djameela's passion was the study of raw chaos. The mage was particularly interested in the mutability of the matter of the Elemental Chaos, and sought to harness the innate chaotic quality of such matter to effect its controlled change.*

**DC 25:** *Djameela's enemies eventually found her, and the efreet mage was slain. In the aftermath, the golems and spectral defenders that Djameela had conjured were left to run free, preventing others from continuing Djameela's research. With its dike decaying, the island was nearly consumed by the Sea of Fire.*

## DJAMELA'S TOWER

The efreet mage's tower is a sheer-sided obsidian monolith. Sarshan has constructed a path leading from his access portal at the edge of the island to the monolith's base. However, the shadar-kai has prepared for unwelcome visitors by reestablishing control over the mage's traps and wards—including a great reservoir of blood chaos in the tower's lower level.

**Height:** The tower is 200 feet high and constructed of polished obsidian (Athletics DC 30 to climb).

**Ceiling:** Unless otherwise noted, ceilings within the monolith are 60 feet high. The top level is open to the sky.

**Level Access:** The monolith contains seven levels, some of which are sunk below the island's surface. However, knowing that the PCs are after him, Sarshan has reconfigured the portals that once provided access between levels. Now, they lead through the chambers where Djameela's most dangerous traps lie in wait.

## THE END IS NIGH

Sarshan's plans involve the shunting of huge amounts of blood chaos between the planes. However, the





shadar-kai's knowledge of Djamel's work is less complete than he thinks. In the course of establishing the portal links between the obsidian tower and the world, Sarshan has inadvertently diverted arcane power from the wards that imbue the island's walls. Now, even as the PCs hunt the shadar-kai, a torrent of lava threatens to breach the dikes. This race against time means that the PCs do not have time to take an extended rest while on the island.

When his work is complete, Sarshan attempts to establish a portal to escape the island. Unfortunately, the breakdown of the wards interferes with his ritual, costing him time that allows the PCs to catch up.

## SEA OF FIRE

The portal takes the PCs to an earthberg floating on a lava sea. Sarshan's tower is nearby, but the party must run a gauntlet laid down by the shadar-kai's guards.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Sea of Fire" (page 37).

## GALLERIES

Once the PCs have fought their way past the initial wave of defenders, they follow the path to the monolith's well-guarded entrance.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Galleries" (page 39).

## CRUSHER ROOMS

The portal in the galleries leads to a deadly gauntlet of traps and defenders still present from the time of Djamel.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Crusher Rooms" (page 42).

## FINAL BATTLE

As Sarshan prepares his final escape, the PCs have one chance to catch the shadar-kai and end his threat to Overlook and Elsir Vale.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Final Battle" (page 45).





## WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN

Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

### SETUP

An earthquake rocks the village of Talar, threatening to raze the Green Dragon to the ground.

**Walls Come Tumbling Down** Level 11  
Skill Challenge XP 3,000

*The tavern begins to shudder violently as if in the grip of a powerful storm. Tipped tankards slosh ale to the floor as several patrons are knocked back in their chairs. Window shutters bang wildly as the shaking increases, the floor and walls bucking as if alive. In panic, the other patrons stagger to their feet and attempt to flee the chaos.*

The PCs must flee the tavern as it collapses about their heads, but the plight of the trapped and terrified villagers complicates their escape.

**Complexity**  
5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills**  
Acrobatics, Athletics, Diplomacy, Intimidate.

**Other Skills**  
Acrobatics, Bluff, Perception.

**Victory**  
The PCs manage to escape the tavern and evacuate the patrons trapped within. Consequently, they enter the “Flowing Death” encounter early, giving them additional time to rescue the villager on the trapped wagon before the blood chaos overwhelms her. See page 24 for more information.

**Defeat**  
The PCs are injured beneath the collapsing building or hit by flying debris, though buried characters and villagers can be dug out with a few minutes’ work. Each PC loses 1 healing surge.

**Special**  
Some of the timeline events (see below) incur failures or successes in the skill challenge.  
If the PCs simply flee the tavern, they automatically fail the skill challenge. To be successful, they must attempt to help other patrons escape.

**Acrobatics (DC 10)**  
(0 successes or failures)  
Moving through the collapsing tavern, whether to reach a fallen comrade or to flee, requires a successful Acrobatics check.

**Acrobatics (DC 21)**  
(1 success or failure, see below)  
Escaping the collapsing tavern through a door or window requires a successful Acrobatics check. This check allows the PC to drag one other person with him or her. A PC can make this check only once for himself, but he can make the check again if he goes back into the tavern to rescue one of the villagers.

**Athletics (DC 16)**  
(1 success or failure, see below)  
Different events in the skill challenge key to specific Athletics checks the PCs can attempt. See the event descriptions below.

**Bluff (DC 16)**  
(0 successes or failures)  
With a successful check, the PC manages to convince a terrified villager to accept his or her aid. The PC gains a +2 bonus to his or her next Diplomacy or Intimidate check with the same NPC.

**Diplomacy or Intimidate (DC 16)**  
(1 success or failure)  
With a successful check, the PC manages to convince—or threaten—one of the terrified villagers into leaving a place of refuge within the tavern. The villager subsequently escapes the tavern.

**Perception (DC 10)**  
(0 successes or failures)  
The PC notices something of importance in the tavern, whether a villager trapped beneath a table (see “Trapped Villager,” below), parts of the floor or ceiling about to collapse (see “Roof Collapse” and “Crumbling Floor”), and so on. This check serves as the lead-in to one of the events detailed below.

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Once the earthquake strikes, the action develops quickly. This skill challenge takes place over 6 rounds, during which a number of specific events unfold. Some events occur at specific times, while others

are triggered by the PCs’ actions. The PCs dictate in which order they tackle these additional events.

**Round 0:** The earthquake hits the village; the skill challenge begins.

**Round 1:** “Leucis.”

**Round 2:** “Crumbling Floor.”

**Round 3:** “Fire.”

**Round 4:** If the “Fire” event was not resolved, a tapestry bursts into flames.

**Round 5:** If the “Fire” event was not resolved, fire spreads to the adjacent tapestries.

**Round 6:** “Roof Collapse.”

**Round 7:** The tavern collapses. Any PCs remaining inside are trapped beneath the rubble.

The events of the skill challenge are presented in the order in which they occur, followed by events triggered by the PCs.

### LEUCIS

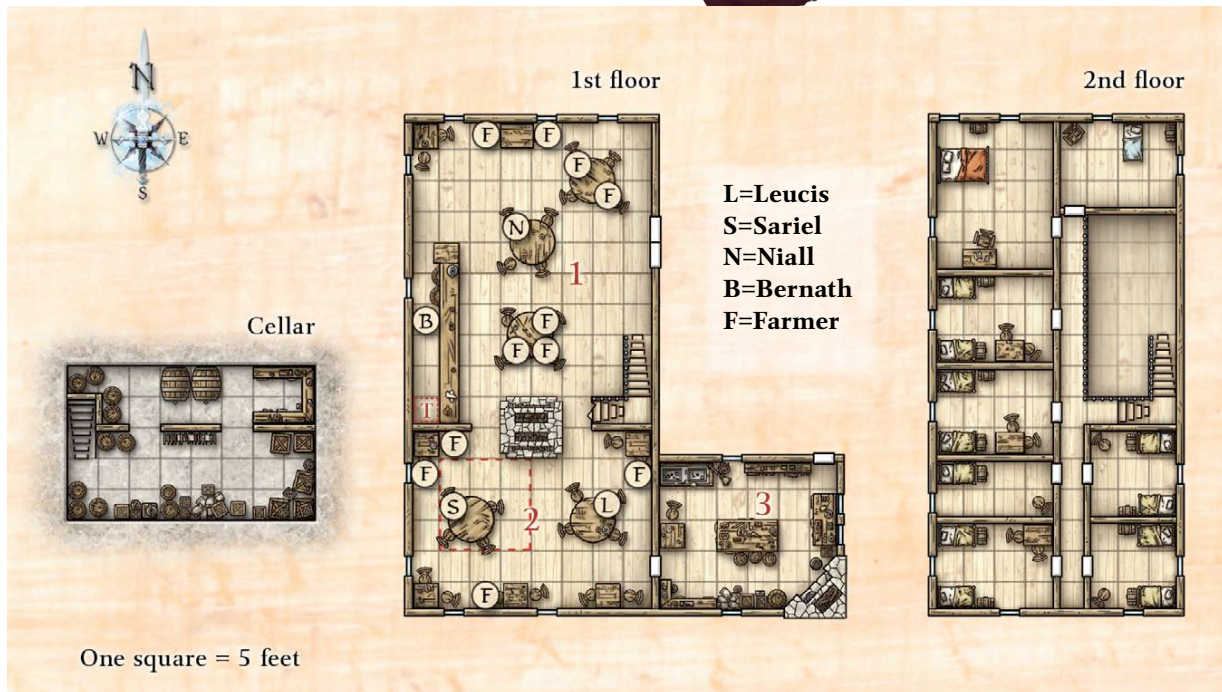
When the earthquake hits, the merchant Leucis is struck by a roof beam that knocks him unconscious. Unless he is rendered conscious with healing or hauled out, he dies when the roof collapses.

### CRUMBLING FLOOR

A section of floor gives way, dropping characters into the cellar below.

*The floor groans ominously as its planks and timbers begin to twist and splinter.*

The collapsing floor makes a melee attack against each character in the area: +15 vs. Reflex; 1d10 falling damage, and the target lands prone in the cellar amid a shower of debris. The party earns 1 failure if any of the PCs fall into the cellar.



ahead of the tavern’s collapse, though you might call for final Athletics or Acrobatics checks for dramatic effect. PCs knocked prone by the collapse can dig themselves out with assistance.

### TRAPPED VILLAGER

A villager is trapped under a fallen table with either broken bones or a head wound.

*Across the room, you make out the form of a villager trapped beneath a heavy table.*

With a successful Athletics check, a PC can heave the table off the villager and drag him out of the tavern. This earns 1 success in the skill challenge.

### TERRIFIED VILLAGER

One of the villagers, believing that giants or monstrous beasts are outside the tavern, cowers beneath a table, refusing to come out.

*One of the terrified locals crouches beneath a table, whimpering as the tavern is torn apart around him.*

The villager believes that if he emerges from under the table, he will die. A successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check coaxes him out. This earns 1 success in the skill challenge.

Use the named NPCs as the subjects of this event.

### AFTERMATH

When the PCs stagger from the ruins of the Green Dragon, a scene of chaos and destruction greets them. Proceed to the “Flowing Death” tactical encounter on the next page.

### FIRE

A fire in the common room spreads quickly unless it is extinguished.

*A particularly violent tremor shakes the inn, hurling a shower of burning hot embers from the fireplace into the common room. A tapestry torn from the wall by a fleeing patron quickly begins to smolder.*

If the PCs do not deal with the smoldering tapestry, it bursts into flames the following round. Those flames then spread to the adjacent tapestries the round after. With a successful Athletics check, a PC can smother or beat out the flames in the first or second round. This earns 1 success in the skill challenge. If the PCs fail to put out the flames, they earn 1 failure in the challenge.

### ROOF COLLAPSE

The Green Dragon’s weakened ceiling timbers begin to collapse in round 6.

*The tavern convulses as more violent tremors strike. The great beams holding the upper floor aloft begin to buckle ominously.*

It should be clear to the PCs that the tavern is about to collapse. In round 7, read:

*The aging timbers above your head snap like kindling. A shower of floorboards and furniture heralds the upper floor’s collapse.*

The collapsing roof makes an attack against each character still in the tavern: +15 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 8 damage, and the target is knocked prone. Characters not hit by the attack manage to stagger clear just



## FLOWING DEATH

Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 scion of chaos (C)
- 8 chaos maulers (M)
- 2 skulking terrors (S)

When the PCs escape or dig themselves out from the ruined tavern, a scene of devastation greets them. In only a few moments, this vibrant, thriving community has been reduced to ruins.

*Flames leap high in the air, silhouetting huddled survivors against the heaped mounds of rubble that were once their homes. Many of the buildings in the immediate vicinity have at least partially collapsed, and fires are spreading through the ruins. A terrified screaming rises in the distance along the main track, Villagers are running toward you, a dark shape oozing down the street behind them.*

To give the villagers time to flee the destruction, the PCs must defeat the monsters that have accompanied the release of the blood chaos.

**When the PCs are in a position to see the blood chaos flowing from below the Mottled Tower, read:**

*A viscous purple-red tide is flowing into Talar, pouring out from a low, craggy hill at the edge of the village. A tower of mottled stone stands atop the hill, the ooze flowing out through a hole blasted out beneath it. Where twin arms of the flow have circled a collapsed house, fire suddenly flares, trapping a terrified and heavily pregnant woman on an adjacent wagon.*

Scion of Chaos (C)		Level 11 Controller	
Huge elemental animate		XP 600	
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +9		
<b>Whirling Tentacles</b> aura 2; the scion of chaos slides any creature that starts its turn in the aura 2 squares.			
HP 117; <b>Bloodied</b> 58			
AC 25; <b>Fortitude</b> 24, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 24			
Resist acid 10, fire 10			
Speed 6			
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire</b>			
Reach 3; +16 vs. AC; 2d8+4 fire damage			
⊗ <b>Staggering Strike</b> (standard; at-will)			
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+6 damage and the target is pushed 3 squares.			
✱ <b>Coils of Immobility</b> (standard; recharge ☼ ☼)			
Area burst 2 within 10; targets enemies only; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d8+4 damage and the target is restrained (save ends)			
<b>Liquid Body</b>			
The scion of chaos is perfectly adapted to living in blood chaos. It can move through blood chaos without penalty and takes no damage from contact with blood chaos.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –	
Str 17 (+8)	Dex 19 (+9)	Wis 19 (+9)	
Con 21 (+10)	Int 16 (+8)	Cha 21 (+10)	

8 Chaos Maulers (M)		Level 11 Minion	
Large elemental animate		XP 150	
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +7		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion			
AC 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 22			
Speed 6			
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will)			
Reach 2; +14 vs. AC; 8 fire damage			
<b>Liquid Body</b>			
The chaos mauler is perfectly adapted to living in blood chaos. It can move through blood chaos without penalty and takes no damage from contact with blood chaos.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –	
Str 23 (+11)	Dex 18 (+9)	Wis 14 (+7)	
Con 16 (+8)	Int 11 (+5)	Cha 16 (+8)	

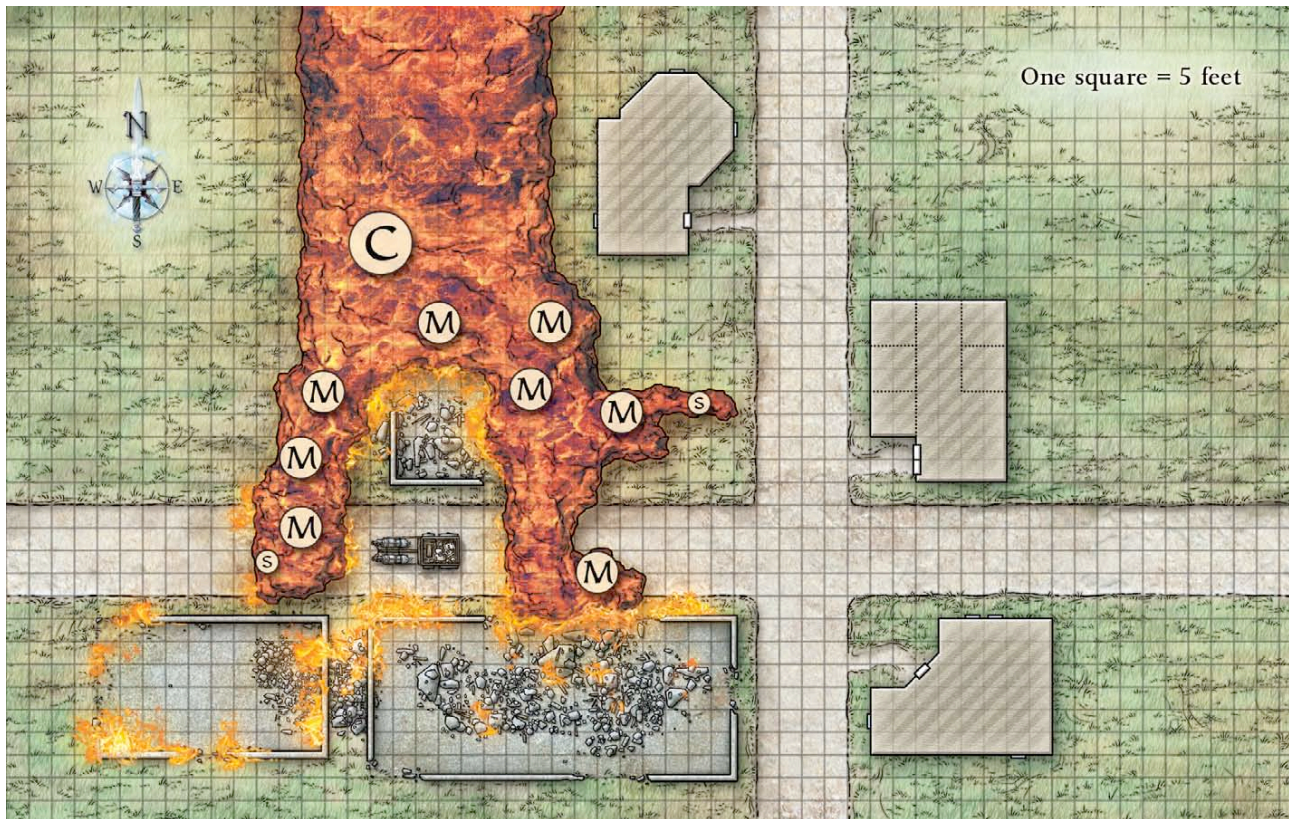
2 Skulking Terrors (S)		Level 11 Lurker	
Medium elemental animate		XP 600	
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +11		
HP 83; <b>Bloodied</b> 41			
AC 25; <b>Fortitude</b> 21, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 21			
Speed 6, fly 6			
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will)			
+16 vs. AC; 2d6+6 damage			
↩ <b>Lethargic Countenance</b> (standard action; at-will)			
Close burst 3; +12 vs. Will; the target is slowed and grants combat advantage to the skulking terror until the end of the skulking terror's next turn. After all attacks are resolved, the skulking terror teleports 8 squares and gains a +4 power bonus to all defenses against ranged and area attacks.			
<b>Combat Advantage</b>			
The skulking terror deals an extra 2d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.			
<b>Liquid Body</b>			
The skulking terror is perfectly adapted to living in blood chaos. It can move through blood chaos without penalty and takes no damage from contact with blood chaos.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –	
Str 14 (+7)	Dex 19 (+9)	Wis 13 (+6)	
Con 11 (+5)	Int 13 (+6)	Cha 12 (+6)	

### TACTICS

The scion of chaos hangs back from melee, using its *coils of immobility* to halt foes in their tracks. While that power recharges, it makes *staggering strike* attacks to batter strikers and defenders out of position.

The skulking terrors fight from within the blood chaos to maintain concealment. They use *lethargic countenance* against PCs already engaged in melee with the chaos maulers, then follow up with slam attacks against slowed targets.

The chaos maulers flank to maintain combat advantage, moving freely through the blood chaos in the hope that foes follow them.



terrain. A creature that enters or begins its turn in an area of blood chaos takes  $2d6 + 3$  acid and fire damage and is slowed (save ends).

## AFTERMATH

Once the PCs have defeated the monsters here, it becomes apparent that the flow of liquid engulfing the village shows no sign of abating. Unless the blood chaos is stopped at its source, Talar will be destroyed. Return to “At the Tower,” page 17.

## CREATURES OF CHAOS

This encounter features new monsters spawned from the raging blood chaos. Use these descriptive notes when the creatures appear.

**Scion of Chaos:** This undulating orb of melting orange and purple flesh writhes toward you on a bed of muscular tentacles. A ring of larger tentacles juts from the top of the orb.

**Chaos Mauler:** This hulking creature is seemingly composed of congealed purple-orange liquid. Its head has no eyes or other features, and a single thick tentacle grows from its belly.

**Skulking Terror:** This paper-thin creature resembles a headless, flattened orange and purple bat. It drips a viscous ichor in its wake from a number of small holes on its underside.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The fires spreading through the village fill the area with dim light.

**Burning and Ruined Buildings:** The three ruined buildings are now little more than piles of rubble with burning roofs. Squares containing rubble are difficult terrain. A creature that enters or starts its turn in a burning square takes  $1d10$  fire damage.

**Smoke:** A haze of thick, acrid smoke billows across the area. Squares of smoke are heavily obscured. Within the smoke, adjacent creatures have concealment, while creatures not adjacent have total concealment.

**Trapped Wagon:** The blood chaos flow reaches the trapped wagon in 5 rounds, but the PCs’ performance in the previous skill challenge affects how long it takes them to enter this encounter. If the PCs failed the skill challenge, they have only 2 rounds until the blood chaos reaches the wagon. Once the blood chaos reaches the wagon, it destroys it and kills the terrified villager in 1 round.

**Blood Chaos Flow:** The oozing tide of purple-red ooze is blood chaos. Blood chaos moves only 1 square per round, but this potent distillation of elemental energy burns inanimate objects and melts living flesh. Squares filled with blood chaos are difficult



## UNBOUND

## Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

## SETUP

2 grimlock ambushers (G)

1 foulspawn seer (F)

2 mezzodemons (M)

A group of monsters kept by Falrinth for experimental purposes has been freed by the tower's collapse. Though enraged by their long incarceration, these creatures remain fearful as a result of the tower's ongoing collapse. Claiming their stolen weapons from a nearby storage locker, they lurk here among the ruins of their prison, awaiting prey upon which they can revenge themselves.

## Perception Check

**DC 16:** *Something large is moving beyond the bottom of the stairs ahead.*

## When the PCs enter this area, read:

*Three large cells stand along the walls of this gloomy chamber. All show signs of extensive damage, their bars wrenched free and scattered across the floor. To the left, open double doors provide access to another area beyond. To the right, a large insectoid creature bearing a trident lurks between the cells. At the sight of you, it snarls and begins to advance.*

2 Grimlock Ambushers (G)		Level 11 Skirmisher	
Medium natural humanoid (blind)		XP 600	
<b>Initiative</b> +9		<b>Senses</b> Perception +7; blindsight 10	
<b>HP</b> 110; <b>Bloodied</b> 55; see also <i>offensive shift</i>			
<b>AC</b> 26; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 23			
Immune gaze			
<b>Speed</b> 6			
⊕ <b>Greataxe</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
+16 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 2d12 + 17)			
⊕ <b>Offensive Shift</b> (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves within 2 squares of the grimlock ambusher and attacks an ally of the grimlock; recharges when first bloodied)			
The grimlock ambusher shifts and makes a melee basic attack against the triggering creature.			
<b>Alignment</b> Evil		<b>Languages</b> Common, Deep Speech	
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +15, <b>Endurance</b> +12			
<b>Str</b> 20 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Wis</b> 15 (+7)	
<b>Con</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 9 (+4)	<b>Cha</b> 9 (+4)	
<b>Equipment</b> greataxe			

Foulspawn Seer (F)		Level 11 Artillery (Leader)	
Medium aberrant humanoid		XP 600	
<b>Initiative</b> +7		<b>Senses</b> Perception +9; low-light vision	
<b>Foul Insight</b> aura 10; an ally in the aura that can hear the foulspawn seer gains a +2 power bonus to one attack roll, skill check, ability check, or saving throw on its turn.			
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 19, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 21			
<b>HP</b> 86; <b>Bloodied</b> 43			
<b>Speed</b> 6, teleport 3			
⊕ <b>Twisted Staff</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.			
↗ <b>Warp Orb</b> (standard; at-will)			
Ranged 10; + 16 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).			
↖ <b>Distortion Blast</b> (standard; daily)			
Close blast 5; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). Aberrant creatures take half damage.			
<b>Bend Space</b> (immediate interrupt, when the foulspawn seer would be hit by an attack; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>			
The foulspawn seer teleports 3 squares.			
<b>Alignment</b> Evil		<b>Languages</b> Deep Speech, telepathy 10	
<b>Str</b> 10 (+5)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Wis</b> 8 (+4)	
<b>Con</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 22 (+11)	<b>Cha</b> 18 (+9)	
<b>Equipment</b> staff			

2 Mezzodemons (M)		Level 11 Soldier	
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)		XP 600	
<b>Initiative</b> +9		<b>Senses</b> Perception +13; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 113; <b>Bloodied</b> 56			
<b>AC</b> 27; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 22, <b>Will</b> 23			
<b>Resist</b> 20 poison, 10 variable (2/encounter; see <i>MM</i> glossary)			
<b>Speed</b> 6			
⊕ <b>Trident</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.			
⊕ <b>Skewering Tines</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
Requires trident; Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is restrained (save ends both). While the target is restrained, the mezzodemon cannot make trident attacks.			
↗ <b>Poison Breath</b> (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ <b>Poison</b>			
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +16 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 3 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).			
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil		<b>Languages</b> Abyssal	
<b>Skills</b> Intimidate +11			
<b>Str</b> 20 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 15 (+7)	<b>Wis</b> 16 (+8)	
<b>Con</b> 17 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+5)	<b>Cha</b> 13 (+6)	
<b>Equipment</b> trident			

## TACTICS

The mezzodemon in the cells uses *skewering tines* to pin an opponent in front of it, ideally preventing that PC from entering melee. The other mezzodemon charges into the fray, using *poison breath* as soon as it can target two or more opponents.

Lurking by the open double doors, the grimlock ambushers fight as a pair, flanking for combat advantage and enabling their *offensive shift*.

The foulspawn seer stays back from melee, using the grimlock ambushers as a screen. It hurls *warp orbs* at targets at the edge of the fray, switching to *distortion blast* against foes that press it. It uses *bend space* as often as possible, moving to position another monster between it and the PCs.

These former prisoners are allied in their rage but they do not flank except with creatures of their own kind. They fight to the death.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Debris:** Squares adjacent to the bookshelves, desks, and tables are covered with debris and are difficult terrain.

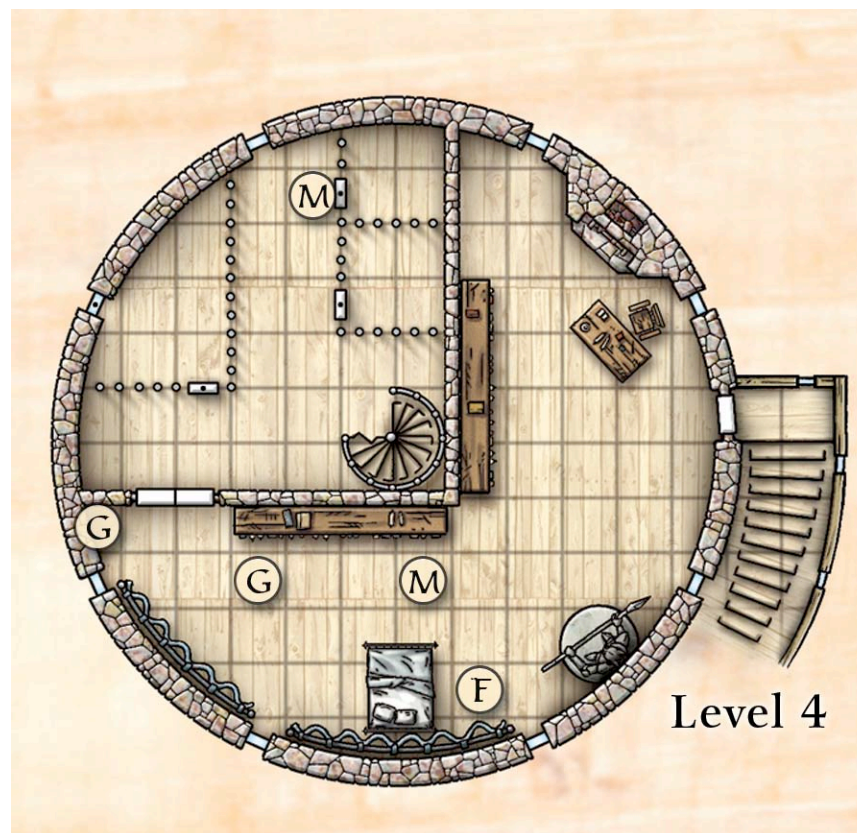
**Tables:** The tables are tall enough that a Small creature can move under them and gain cover. It costs 2 squares of movement to hop up onto a table. A character can make a DC 10 Strength check to tip over a table, which then grants superior cover.

**Double Doors:** These doors stand open. Because of damage from the collapse, closing them requires a DC 15 Strength check.

**Cages:** The earthquake loosened the bars of these floor-to-ceiling cages, allowing the creatures here to escape. Medium or smaller characters can squeeze through the remaining bars, but doing so requires 2 extra squares of movement.

**Shattered Weapons Locker:** Falrinth kept his prisoners' equipment in a case near their cages. As soon as they escaped, they shattered the case and reclaimed their weapons.

**Structural Damage:** As detailed in "Mottled Tower Overview," this area of the tower has suffered structural damage from its plunge into the earth. Although the combatants are in no danger here, describe the floor creaking and bowing alarmingly, dust falling from above, and so on.





## BLOOD CHAOS CAVERNS

Encounter Level 14 (5,150 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 shadar-kai witch (S)
- 2 githyanki warriors (G)
- 8 troglodyte warriors (T)

Sarshan's agents have successfully initiated the blood chaos flow far below the Mottled Tower. Having finally completed their work, the team is in the process of activating an escape portal before the chamber is completely inundated.

**When the PCs reach the hole leading into this area, read:**

*A jagged hole splits the stone floor, flickering light welling up from a natural cavern below. Shadows move within the light, signs of something lurking deep beneath the tower.*

### Perception Check

**DC 21:** *From ahead, a voice speaks the words of a ritual.*

### Arcana Check (after a successful Perception check)

**DC 21:** *The ritual being performed is Linked Portal, and the speaker is close to completion.*

The shadar-kai witch and her guards attack as soon as they notice the PCs.

### TACTICS

The shadar-kai witch cloaks herself with *deep shadow*, which she sustains as a minor action for as long as possible. She attacks first with *beshadowed mind*, reusing that power each time it recharges and making blackfire touch attacks otherwise. She uses *ebon burst* if attacked by more than one opponent, followed by *shadow jaunt* to reposition herself.

Shadar-Kai Witch (S)	Level 14 Elite Controller
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 2,000
<b>Initiative</b> +11	<b>Senses</b> Perception +9, low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 272; <b>Bloodied</b> 136	
<b>AC</b> 30; <b>Fortitude</b> 27, <b>Reflex</b> 29, <b>Will</b> 25	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>shadow jaunt</i>	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
⊕ <b>Blackfire Touch</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire, Necrotic</b>	
+18 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 fire and necrotic damage.	
↓ <b>Beshadowed Mind</b> (standard; recharge ☹️☹️☹️) ♦ <b>Necrotic</b>	
Ranged 10; +18 vs. Will; 3d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target has no line of sight to anything more than 2 squares from it (save ends).	
↩️ <b>Deep Shadow</b> (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ <b>Necrotic</b>	
Aura 2; thick, writhing shadows surround the shadar-kai witch. The witch and any other shadow creatures in the aura gain concealment. In addition, enemies that enter or start their turns in the aura take 5 necrotic damage, and enemies (including flying ones) also treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain. The shadar-kai witch can sustain the aura as a minor action. However, the effect ends if she uses <i>shadow jaunt</i> or moves more than half her speed on her turn. <i>Sustain Minor:</i> The aura persists.	
↩️ <b>Ebon Burst</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Necrotic</b>	
Close burst 2; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the shadar-kai witch's next turn.	
<b>Shadow Jaunt</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>	
The shadar-kai witch teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of her next turn.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +13, Arcana +18, Religion +18, Stealth +18	
<b>Str</b> 17 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 19 (+11) <b>Wis</b> 15 (+9)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+10)	<b>Int</b> 23 (+13) <b>Cha</b> 17 (+10)
<b>Equipment</b> ritual book containing Linked Portal	

The githyanki warriors use *telekinetic leap* to bypass the party's front line, then use *telekinetic grasp* on lightly armored opponents before attacking with their silver greatswords.

2 Githyanki Warriors (G)	Level 12 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 700
<b>Initiative</b> +13	<b>Senses</b> Perception +12
<b>HP</b> 118; <b>Bloodied</b> 59	
<b>AC</b> 28; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 22	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2 against charm effects	
<b>Speed</b> 5; see also <i>telekinetic leap</i>	
⊕ <b>Silver Greatsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Psychic, Weapon</b>	
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 plus 1d6 psychic damage, and an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.	
✂️ <b>Telekinetic Grasp</b> (standard; sustain minor; encounter)	
Ranged 5; Medium or small target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
✂️ <b>Telekinetic Leap</b> (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; the githyanki warrior or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Deep Speech
<b>Skills</b> History +9, Insight +12	
<b>Str</b> 21 (+11)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+9) <b>Wis</b> 12 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+7) <b>Cha</b> 13 (+7)
<b>Equipment</b> plate armor, silver greatsword	

8 Troglodyte Warriors (T)	Level 12 Minion
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 175
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses</b> Perception +5; darkvision
<b>Troglodyte Stench</b> aura 1; living enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.	
<b>HP</b> 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
<b>AC</b> 25; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 22, <b>Will</b> 21	
<b>Speed</b> 5	
⊕ <b>Club</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
+15 vs. AC; 7 damage	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Draconic
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +14, Endurance +13	
<b>Str</b> 18 (+9)	<b>Dex</b> 12 (+6) <b>Wis</b> 11 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 6 (+3) <b>Cha</b> 8 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> light shield, club	

The troglodyte warriors move to surround and cut down the closest enemies, flanking for combat advantage.

**Deadly Rockslide**  
Hazard**Level 8 Lurker**  
XP 350

*A shower of rock and stone falls from the crumbling foundations of the sinking tower.*

**Hazard:** Rocks tumble down in a target square and make a burst 3 attack.

**Perception**

Characters can't use Perception to detect this hazard.

**Additional Skills:** Nature or Dungeoneering

A DC 16 Nature or Dungeoneering check notices that the cavern is unstable.

**Initiative** +13

**Trigger**

The rockslide is triggered by the start of combat in the cavern. When combat begins, the rockslide rolls for initiative. Between the start of combat and the rockslide's first attack, characters know that a rockslide is beginning but they do not know which squares it will effect.

**Attack**

**Standard Action** Close burst 3

**Targets:** Creatures in burst

**Attack:** +11 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 3d6 + 5 damage

**Miss:** Half damage

**Sustain Standard:** The rockslide continues until the floodgates are closed.

**Countermeasures**

- ◆ A character in the burst can take advantage of natural openings in the slide to avoid damage by making a DC 21 Nature or Dungeoneering check. With a successful check, a character takes half damage (no damage if the slide misses).

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Bright light from a lantern set in the center of the teleportation circle illuminates the floodgates and the surrounding area. The rest of the chamber is in darkness.

**Ceiling:** 20 feet high. A wide, jagged hole in the ceiling provides access to the tower. The rubble-filled squares directly below the hole are difficult terrain.

**Natural Cavern Walls:** The rough cavern walls can be easily climbed (Athletics DC 10).

**Portal Circle:** The shadar-kai witch has inscribed a circle for a Linked Portal ritual on the floor in chalk and powdered gemstone.

**Floodgates:** Three floodgates pierce the north wall near the ceiling. The left gates are open and spewing blood chaos toward the village (it is this flow that has blasted the tunnel through the hill). The flow from the open right-hand gates has burned another tunnel through the hill to the tower's moat. The middle gates remain closed. Large gear wheels can be turned to open and close the floodgates (Strength DC 21).

**Blood Chaos:** Blood chaos covers the indicated squares to a depth of 3 feet. These squares are difficult terrain. This potent distillation of elemental energy burns inanimate objects and melts living flesh. A creature that enters or begins its turn in an area of blood chaos takes 2d6 + 3 acid and fire damage and is slowed (save ends).

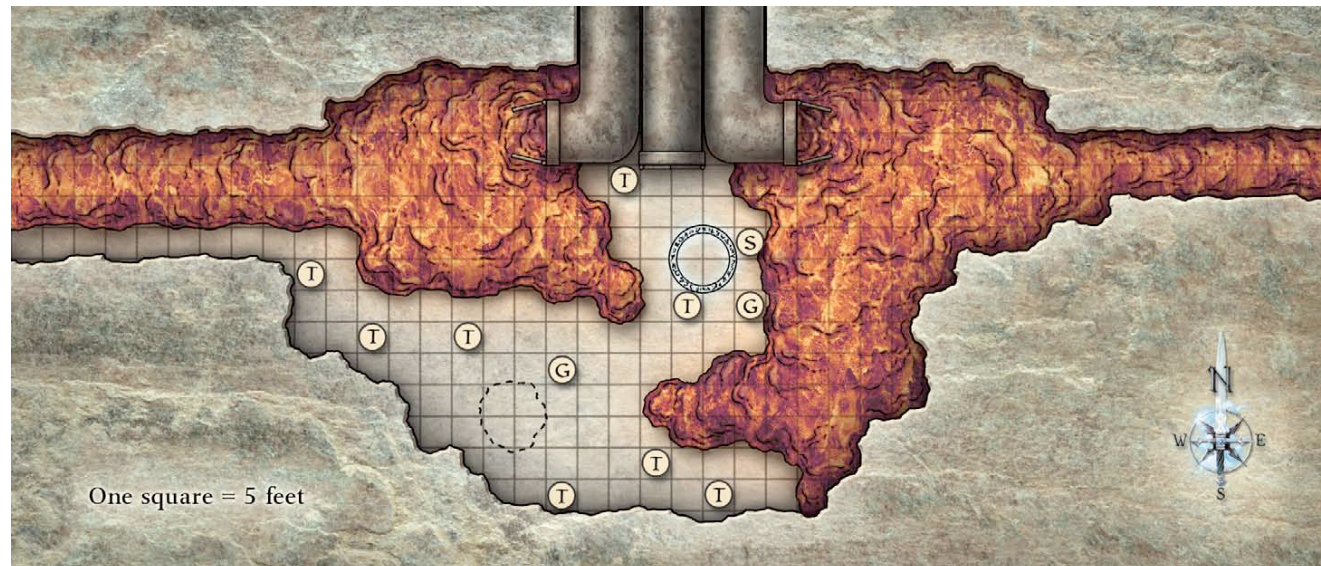
**Unstable Cavern:** The earthquake and the subsequent flow of blood chaos into the chamber have undercut the foundations of this cavern. A shower of dust and stones falls constantly from the walls and ceiling. Each round, a rockslide hits (see the statistics block), centered on a square occupied by a randomly determined combatant.

## CLOSING THE GATES

After the battle is over, the PCs can shut the two open floodgates without difficulty. During the battle, an adjacent character can shut the floodgates as a full-round action.

## AFTERMATH

Once the PCs have defeated Sarshan's servants, they can learn more about recent events. Proceed to "The Chase Is On (Part 1)" skill challenge on the next page.





## THE CHASE IS ON (PART 1)

Encounter Level 11 (1,200 XP)

### SETUP

The PCs' pursuit of Sarshan plays out as a connected two-part skill challenge. In this first part, they must glean what Megan and Falrinth know even as they search the blood chaos caverns for clues.

#### The Chase Is On (Part 1) Skill Challenge

Level 11  
XP 1,200

*The threat under the tower has been vanquished. Now, even as you attempt to activate the teleportation circle, you must overcome Megan and Falrinth's animosity to discover who or what is behind the destruction in Talar.*

Once the PCs have defeated the threat under the tower, they can learn more about recent events and discover the danger Sarshan's plans pose to Elsir Vale. Once they return to the roof to speak with Megan and Falrinth, or if they seem likely to activate the teleportation circle, begin the skill challenge.

#### Complexity

2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

#### Primary Skills

Arcana, Diplomacy, Intimidate.

#### Other Skills

Bluff.

#### Victory

The PCs collect the information they need and activate the teleportation circle in a timely fashion.

#### Defeat

Although the PCs manage to gain some relevant information and to activate the teleportation circle, the time they take in doing so alerts Sarshan that something has gone wrong with the attack. As a result, the PCs face a greater challenge in the "Draconic Wrath" encounter (page 31).

#### Arcana (DC 16)

(1 success or failure, maximum 2 successes)

The PC is able to recover information regarding the disrupted Linked Portal ritual. The PCs can determine the coordinates of the teleportation circle to which the shadar-kai and her allies were attempting to flee, but they must consult Falrinth to determine where that location is (see below).

#### Arcana (DC 21)

(1 success or failure, maximum 1 success)

By investigating the floodgates, the PC discovers the secrets of their operation. The gates are of ancient construction, and were built to channel the flow of magical energy. The activation of these ancient gates caused the earthquake that preceded the blood chaos attack.

#### Bluff (DC 16)

(0 successes or failures)

With a successful check, the PC manages to get on Megan and Falrinth's good side. The next Diplomacy check made in the challenge gains a +2 bonus.

#### Diplomacy (DC 16)

(1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes)

The PC attempts to convince Falrinth or Megan to work with the party. See below for more information.

#### Intimidate (DC 16)

(1 success or failure, maximum 2 successes)

The PC forgoes pleasantries in an attempt to force Falrinth or Megan's aid. Though Falrinth can be swayed with threats (see below for more information), attempts to intimidate Megan meet with no success. She gives the PCs no information, earning the party 1 failure in the skill challenge.

## FALRINTH

The PCs can use Diplomacy or Intimidate to learn more information from Falrinth. The sage is extremely untrusting and insular, and his single-minded dedication to his work has turned him somewhat surly over the years. Falrinth is also extremely greedy, loving gold like the friends and family that abandoned him years before. Although he is grateful for the PCs' assistance, he fears that they will attempt to shake him down for a reward.

Successful Diplomacy or Intimidate checks inspire Falrinth to reveal some or all of the following.

- ◆ He had no idea that tunnels existed under his tower.
- ◆ He does not know the attackers and has no notion of who they work for. He has no enemies that he is aware of, and knows no shadar-kai.
- ◆ If he is given the sigil sequence of the teleportation circle the shadar-kai witch was

attempting to teleport to, Falrinth recognizes it as a permanent circle in a fetid swamp far to the south. The swamp is known to sages for its rampant primordial fauna and huge trees.

## MEGAN SWIFTBLADE

Megan already resents the party for outstripping the Freeriders' reputation, and having been rescued by them has not improved her attitude. The PCs must tread carefully if they wish to learn more from her.

Successful Diplomacy checks inspire Megan to reveal some or all of the following information.

- ◆ Three assassination attempts have so far been made against Megan and the Freeriders. The rest of the group have scattered across Elsir Vale in an attempt to prevent further attacks.
- ◆ Through a mercenary band that escaped from the failed attack on Overlook, the Freeriders discovered that a shadar-kai arms dealer—Sarshan—was providing mercenaries, intelligence, support, and even arms and armor to the githyanki assault.
- ◆ Sarshan's current plots revolve around something called blood chaos, with which he means to take retribution against Overlook and Elsir Vale.

Though Megan had not previously known what "blood chaos" referred to, Falrinth knows the name. He can guess that this is the elemental ooze being funneled through the floodgates. Though Sarshan's full plans remain unknown, Falrinth knows that dozens of hidden and secret portals are said to be scattered across Elsir Vale. Sarshan's mastery of portal and planar magic gives him the power to deliver blood chaos to any part of the vale. The scene the PCs witnessed in Talar is set to be repeated across Elsir Vale unless Sarshan can be stopped.

## DRACONIC WRATH

Encounter Level 13 (4,500 XP)

### SETUP

**Antharosk, green dragon (A)**

**Calaunxin, green dragon (C)**

Using the teleportation circle beneath the Mottled Tower, the PCs arrive at the Ever-Tree—an immense oak rising within a lake of blood chaos. Two dragons—Antharosk and Calaunxin—guard the approaches to this living tower.

**When the PCs step through the portal, read:**

*As you shift through the haze of the portal, you emerge on a wooden platform set upon the skeletal branch of an immense oak tree. This stands in the middle of a dismal, fog-shrouded swamp, the tree surrounded by a lake of blood chaos. Its huge roots snake through the boiling ooze like great vipers, while above you, a thick canopy of leaves cuts the light to a perpetual gloom.*

As soon as the PCs investigate their surroundings, Antharosk and Calaunxin become aware of their presence and attack.

If the PCs failed the skill challenge of “The Chase Is On (Part 1),” Sarshan has sent a warning to Antharosk and Calaunxin to be ready for intruders. The dragons gain a surprise round, attacking with their breath weapons as soon as the PCs appear on the platform.

Antharosk, Level 10 Solo Controller	
Adult Green Dragon (A)	
Large natural magical beast (dragon)	XP 2,500
<b>Initiative</b> +10	<b>Senses</b> Perception +13; darkvision
<b>Lashing Tail</b> aura 1; all creatures other than Antharosk treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain. Antharosk loses this aura while airborne.	
<b>HP</b> 428; <b>Bloodied</b> 214; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>	
<b>AC</b> 26; <b>Fortitude</b> 23, <b>Reflex</b> 24, <b>Will</b> 23	
<b>Resist</b> 20 poison	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +5	
<b>Speed</b> 8, fly 12 (hover), overland flight 15; see also <i>flyby attack</i>	
<b>Action Points</b> 2	
⊕ <b>Bite</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison</b>	
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
⊕ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.	
⊕ <b>Double Attack</b> (standard; at-will)	
Antharosk makes two claw attacks.	
⊕ <b>Flyby Attack</b> (standard; recharge ☒ ☒)	
Antharosk flies up to 12 squares and makes a bite attack at any point during the move without provoking opportunity attacks from the target.	
⊕ <b>Tail Sweep</b> (immediate reaction, if an adjacent enemy does not move on its turn; at-will)	
+13 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⊕ <b>Breath Weapon</b> (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ <b>Poison</b>	
Close blast 5; +13 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is slowed (save ends both). <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target is slowed (save ends).	
⊕ <b>Bloodied Breath</b> (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ <b>Poison</b>	
Antharosk's breath weapon recharges, and he uses it immediately.	
⊕ <b>Frightful Presence</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Fear</b>	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +13 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of Antharosk's next turn. <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Draconic
<b>Skills</b> Bluff +19, Diplomacy +14, Insight +18, Intimidate +14	
<b>Str</b> 16 (+8)	<b>Dex</b> 20 (+10) <b>Wis</b> 17 (+8)
<b>Con</b> 19 (+9)	<b>Int</b> 16 (+8) <b>Cha</b> 18 (+9)

Calaunxin, Level 9 Solo Brute	
Adult Green Dragon (C)	
Large natural magical beast (dragon)	XP 2,000
<b>Initiative</b> +5	<b>Senses</b> Perception +11; darkvision
<b>HP</b> 408; <b>Bloodied</b> 204; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>	
<b>AC</b> 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 26, <b>Reflex</b> 21, <b>Will</b> 22	
<b>Resist</b> 20 poison	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +5	
<b>Speed</b> 8, fly 12 (hover), overland flight 15; see also <i>flyby attack</i>	
<b>Action Points</b> 2	
⊕ <b>Bite</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison</b>	
Reach 2; +12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
⊕ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.	
⊕ <b>Dragon's Fury</b> (standard; at-will)	
Calaunxin makes two claw attacks. If she hits a single target with both claws, she makes a bite attack against the same target.	
⊕ <b>Flyby Attack</b> (standard; recharge ☒ ☒)	
Calaunxin flies up to 12 squares and makes a bite attack at any point during the move without provoking opportunity attacks from the target.	
⊕ <b>Luring Glare</b> (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ <b>Charm, Gaze</b>	
Ranged 10; +10 vs. Will; the target slides 2 squares.	
⊕ <b>Breath Weapon</b> (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ <b>Poison</b>	
Close blast 5; +10 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 6 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends both). <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target is slowed and weakened (save ends both).	
⊕ <b>Bloodied Breath</b> (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ <b>Poison</b>	
Calaunxin's breath weapon recharges, and she uses it immediately.	
⊕ <b>Frightful Presence</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Fear</b>	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +10 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of Calaunxin's next turn. <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Draconic
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +19	
<b>Str</b> 20 (+9)	<b>Dex</b> 12 (+5) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+6)
<b>Con</b> 22 (+10)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+5) <b>Cha</b> 10 (+4)



## TACTICS

Antharosk and Calaunxin are merciless combatants, and are well versed in fighting together.

Antharosk uses his *breath weapon* to slow opponents fighting Calaunxin before switching to *flyby attack*. If an opponent is dealing significant damage with ranged attacks, he uses *frightful presence* to stun it. Antharosk uses one action point in the first round of combat, reserving the other for an extra double attack to finish off a badly injured target.

Calaunxin is more impetuous than Antharosk, and she hurtles into melee using *dragon's fury*. If two or more targets present themselves, she uses her *breath weapon*, relying on *frightful presence* to prevent foes from fleeing. Calaunxin uses her action points to make double *dragon's fury* attacks in the early rounds of combat.

As a mated pair, the dragons are fiercely loyal to each other. If one is slain, the other goes into a berserk fury, focusing all attacks on the opponent that delivered the killing blow.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Daylight filtering down through the tree canopy fills the area with dim light.

**Teleportation Circle:** This permanent teleportation circle is set atop a wooden platform 40 feet above the ground. AC/Reflex 2, Fortitude 20, 200 hit points.

**Stairway:** A narrow stairway leads downward through the trunk of the Ever-Tree from the teleportation portal. The stairway is difficult terrain.

**Thick Mud:** The Ever-Tree grows upon a low island of heavy mud. Squares of mud are difficult terrain.

**Blood Chaos Lake:** The wide, swampy lake surrounding the Ever-Tree consists of a layer of blood chaos floating atop the water. The lake is typically calm (Athletics DC 10 to swim). Around the Ever-Tree, the lake is 20 feet deep.

The enchanted bole of the Ever-Tree resists the fell effect of the blood chaos, but the lake is dangerous to all other creatures. This potent distillation of elemental energy burns inanimate objects and melts living flesh. A creature that enters or begins its turn in an area of blood chaos takes 2d6 + 3 acid and fire damage and is slowed (save ends).

Creatures in the blood chaos must use their swim speed or make a DC 10 Athletics check to move. They gain cover except against attacks from submerged

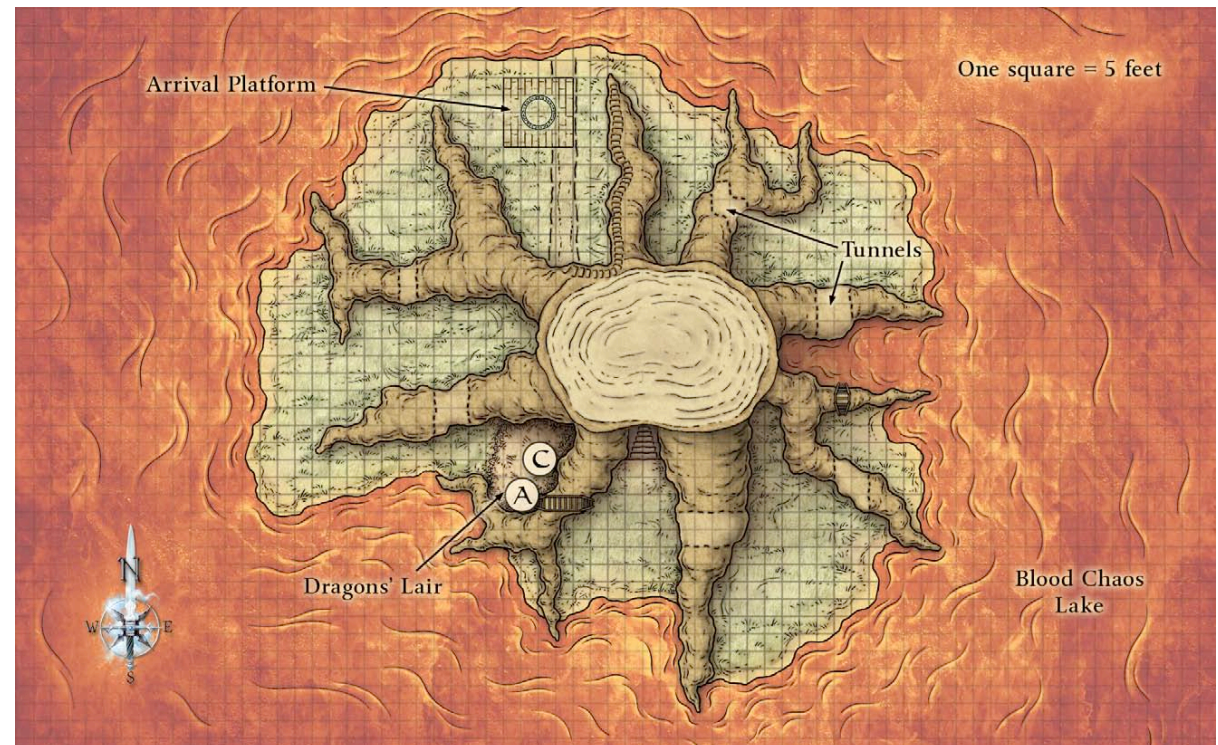
enemies. Fighting in the blood chaos imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls except with spears and crossbows. Powers that have the fire keyword take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

**Tunnels:** Sarshan's servants have carved 7-foot-high tunnels through the Ever-Tree's vast roots.

**Ladder:** Wooden ladders have been set over the Ever-Tree's smaller roots. Moving over a ladder costs 1 extra square of movement.

## DEVELOPMENT

Once the PCs have defeated Antharosk and Calaunxin, they can enter the tunnels below the Ever-Tree. Go to "The Chase Is On (Part 2)" on the next page.



## THE CHASE IS ON (PART 2)

Encounter Level 11 (1,800 XP)

### SETUP

In this second part of the connected skill challenge, the PCs enter the tunnels below the Ever-Tree in search of Sarshan. At the culmination of the skill challenge, the PCs catch a first glimpse of the shadar-kai as he works to redirect the flow of blood chaos to another location in the Vale. When he spies the PCs, he flees to an island amid the Sea of Fire deep in the Elemental Chaos.

#### The Chase Is On (Part 2) Skill Challenge

Level 11  
XP 1,800

*The fetid tunnels beneath the Ever-Tree are a dark labyrinth, but you have no time to lose.*

The PCs make their way through the twisting tunnels beneath the Ever-Tree.

#### Complexity

3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

#### Primary Skills

Acrobatics, Athletics, Dungeoneering, Stealth.

#### Other Skills

Nature.

#### Victory

The PCs make their way through the tunnels beneath the Ever-Tree without expending significant resources. As a result, they are ready to take the fight to Sarshan's servants.

#### Defeat

The PCs emerge from the labyrinthine tunnels after a tiring journey. All the PCs lose 1 healing surge and take a -1 penalty to all defenses until the end of the next encounter.

#### Acrobatics (DC 16)

(1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes).

The PCs must move carefully to traverse the tunnels without losing time. This is a group check. One character acts as lead, while the others make checks to aid that character. Each ally that gets a result of 10 or higher provides a +2 bonus to the lead character's check (which counts as the check to determine success or failure).

#### Athletics (DC 16)

(1 success or failure, maximum 2 successes)

Huge tree roots and other hazards partially block several of the tunnels (see "Features of the Tunnels"). With a successful Athletics check, the PC clears a path.

#### Dungeoneering (DC 16)

(1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes)

With a successful check, the PC picks out the correct route through the tunnel warren.

#### Nature (DC 16)

(0 successes or failures)

With a successful check, the PC senses the presence of a natural hazard. This provides a +2 bonus to one subsequent Acrobatics, Athletics, or Dungeoneering check.

#### Stealth (DC 16)

(1 success or failure, maximum 3 successes)

With a successful Stealth check, the party manages to slip past a group of guards. This is a group check. One character acts as lead, while the others make checks to aid that character. Each ally that gets a result of 10 or higher provides a +2 bonus to the lead character's check (which counts as the check to determine success or failure). On a failed check, the PCs manage to flee from the guards, but this sets back their progress. Alternatively, turn a failed check into an impromptu combat encounter (see the sidebar).

## DEVELOPMENT

After making their way through the labyrinth of tunnels beneath the Ever-Tree, the PCs catch a glimpse of Sarshan and must face his servants in a cavern filled with blood chaos. Go to the "In Fetid Darkness" skill challenge on the next page.

## FEATURES OF THE TUNNELS

**Illumination:** Passageways are in darkness; chambers are illuminated by bright light shed by strategically placed lanterns.

**Tunnels:** Tunnels are normally 10 feet wide.

**Chambers:** Chambers are normally in better repair than tunnels. Most have flat, packed-mud floors and walls sheathed in wood.

**Stench:** The smell of mold and decay hangs heavy in the chambers and passages beneath the Ever-Tree. Though unpleasant, the stench has no harmful effect.

**Root Curtains:** Curtains of roots hang from the ceiling to within 2 feet of the floor. It costs an extra square of movement to push through them. The roots provide cover and block line of sight for any creature not adjacent to them, except creatures that are prone. The roots in a square can be hacked down (AC/Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, 10 hit points).

**Huge Roots:** In places, huge roots pierce the island's muck. These roots are blocking terrain; creatures must either climb over them (Athletics DC 10) or duck under them (costing 2 squares of movement).

**Mudslide:** Mud fallen away from the wall creates an obstruction. These squares are difficult terrain.

## ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

If it appears that the PCs will be short of 12th level when they reach the final section of the adventure, consider creating a few additional encounters with Sarshan's followers in this section. Use the notes in "Features of the Tunnels" to create an interesting battle site, then place one of the following groups of monsters or use these groups as inspiration to create your own.

**Group 1 (Level 11, 3,000 XP):** 1 vampire lord (MM 258), 1 banshræ dartsworder (MM 25), 8 ogre thugs (MM 198).

**Group 2 (Level 12, 3,475 XP):** 1 ogre warhulk (MM 199), 5 troglodyte warriors (MM 252), 1 ettin spirit-talker (MM 108).

**Group 3 (Level 11; 2,800 XP):** 1 stormrage shambler (MM 232), 4 shambling mounds (MM 232).



## IN FETID DARKNESS

Encounter Level 14 (5,100 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 skull lord servitor (L)
- 2 battle wight bodyguards (W)
- 1 elder troglodyte curse chanter (C)
- 4 cyclops guards (G)

As they enter this chamber, the PCs catch their first glimpse of the elusive Sarshan as he flees through a portal. Unfortunately, the shadar-kai's defenders have no intention of allowing the PCs to pursue their master.

#### When the PCs reach this chamber, read:

*A pool of blood chaos and two teleportation circles dominate this chamber, a horribly disfigured shadar-kai fleeing across a slender catwalk as you enter. Even as Sarshan disappears into a misty haze that obscures the rear of the chamber, a three-headed skeletal figure steps out in front of you. A cyclops, a troglodyte, and an armored wight stand close behind.*

### TACTICS

The skull lord takes on the most powerful looking melee combatant with bone staff attacks, making *skull of bonechilling fear* or *skull of withering flame* attacks each round at enemies at the edge of the fray.

The skull lord's battle wight bodyguards fight adjacent to one another to gain the benefit of their *shieldbearer* ability. They focus on PCs seeking to move to the rear of the chamber.

The troglodyte curse chanter stays at the edge of combat, targeting controllers and ranged combatants with *poison ray* and *cavern curse*.

The cyclops guards lay into the closest opponents, flanking for combat advantage and trusting their *evil eye* to grant them extra melee attacks.

4 Cyclops Guards (G)		Level 14 Minion
Large fey humanoid		XP 250
Initiative +8	Perception +13; truesight 6	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 23, Will 23		
Speed 6		
⬇ Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ⬆ Weapon		
Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 7 damage.		
⬇ Evil Eye (immediate reaction, when a melee attack misses the cyclops guard; at-will)		
The cyclops guard makes a melee basic attack against the triggering attacker.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, 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		

Skull Lord Servitor (L)		Level 14 Artillery (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 1,000
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +10; darkvision	
Master of the Grave (Healing) aura 2; undead allies in the aura gain regeneration 5 and a +2 bonus to saving throws. This aura ends when the <i>skull of death's command</i> is destroyed.		
HP 55; Bloodied 27; see also <i>triple skulls</i>		
AC 28; Fortitude 25, Reflex 26, Will 27		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic;		
Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 6		
⬇ Bone Staff (standard; at-will) ⬆ Necrotic, Weapon		
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage plus 1d6 necrotic damage.		
⬆ Skull of Bonechilling Fear (minor 1/round; at-will) ⬆		
Cold, Fear		
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Will; 1d10 + 3 cold damage, and the target is pushed 5 squares.		
⬆ Skull of Death's Command (minor 1/round; at-will) ⬆		
Necrotic		
Ranged 10; the skull lord restores a destroyed undead minion within range. The restored undead minion's level must be no higher than the skull lord's level +2. The restored minion stands in the space where it fell (or in any adjacent space if that space is occupied) as a free action, has normal full hit points, and can take actions (as normal) on its next turn.		
⬆ Skull of Withering Flame (minor 1/round; at-will) ⬆		
Fire, Necrotic		
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage.		
Triple Skulls ⬆ Healing		
When a skull lord is reduced to 0 hit points, one of its skulls (determined randomly from the three powers above) is destroyed, and it loses the ability to use that power. If the creature has any skulls remaining, it instantly heals to full hit points (55 hit points). When all three skulls are destroyed, the skull lord is destroyed as well.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Bluff +18, Insight +15, Intimidate +18		
Str 14 (+9)	Dex 18 (+11)	Wis 16 (+10)
Con 19 (+11)	Int 17 (+10)	Cha 23 (+13)
Equipment staff, 3 iron crowns, ritual book		

2 Battle Wight Bodyguards (W)		Level 11 Elite Soldier	
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 1,200	
<b>Initiative</b> +9		<b>Senses</b> Perception +4; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 230; <b>Bloodied</b> 115		<b>AC</b> 29; <b>Fortitude</b> 26, <b>Reflex</b> 22, <b>Will</b> 23	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2		<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 10 necrotic; <b>Vulnerable</b> 5 radiant	
<b>Speed</b> 5		<b>Action Points</b> 1	
⊕ <b>Soul draining Longsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Necrotic, Weapon</b>			
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses 1 healing surge and is immobilized (save ends); see also <i>indomitable presence</i> .			
↗ <b>Soul Reaping</b> (standard; recharge ☞☞☞) ♦ <b>Healing, Necrotic</b>			
Ranged 5; affects an immobilized target only; +16 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the battle wight regains 10 hit points; see also <i>indomitable presence</i> .			
⊕ <b>Chosen Target</b> (immediate interrupt, when a marked enemy shifts or makes an attack that does not include the bodyguard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
The battle wight bodyguard makes a melee basic attack against the triggering creature.			
<b>Indomitable Presence</b>			
Each time a bodyguard attacks an enemy, the target is marked until the end of the bodyguard's next turn.			
<b>Shieldbearer</b>			
Allies adjacent to the bodyguard gain a +2 power bonus to AC.			
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common		
<b>Skills</b> Intimidate +15			
<b>Str</b> 21 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Wis</b> 9 (+4)	
<b>Con</b> 19 (+9)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+6)	<b>Cha</b> 21 (+10)	

Elder Troglodyte Curse Chanter (C)		Level 12 Controller (Leader)	
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 700	
<b>Initiative</b> +7		<b>Senses</b> Perception +15; darkvision	
<b>Troglodyte Stench</b> aura 1; living enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.			
<b>HP</b> 127; <b>Bloodied</b> 63			
<b>AC</b> 27; <b>Fortitude</b> 26, <b>Reflex</b> 21, <b>Will</b> 26			
<b>Speed</b> 5			
⊕ <b>Quarterstaff</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
+16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.			
⊕ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will)			
+14 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.			
↗ <b>Poison Ray</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison</b>			
Ranged 10; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 6 poison damage, and the target is weakened (save ends)			
↗ <b>Cavern Curse</b> (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞) ♦ <b>Necrotic</b>			
Ranged 5; +16 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage and is slowed (save ends both)			
↖ <b>Tunnel Grace</b> (minor 1/round; recharge ☞☞☞☞)			
Close burst 10; all allies in the burst gain +5 speed until the end of the troglodyte curse chanter's next turn.			
↖ <b>Chant of Renewal</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Healing</b>			
Close burst 5; bloodied allies in the burst regain 15 hit points.			
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil		<b>Languages</b> Common, Draconic	
<b>Skills</b> Dungeoneering +15, Endurance +17, Religion +11			
<b>Str</b> 16 (+9)	<b>Dex</b> 12 (+7)	<b>Wis</b> 19 (+10)	
<b>Con</b> 23 (+12)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+6)	<b>Cha</b> 15 (+8)	
<b>Equipment</b> robes, quarterstaff, skull mask			

## DEVELOPMENT

Once these defenders have been defeated, the PCs can pursue Sarshan. The entire northern portion of the cavern is undercut by a buried permanent teleportation circle that acts as a portal to the Elemental Chaos. The skull lord's ritual book contains the location of Sarshan's lair.

A DC 16 Arcana check reveals that strengthening magic has been applied to the portal by Sarshan. As such, activating the portal does not require a full Planar Portal ritual. However, the shadar-kai magically locked the portal when he fled, so that the PCs must successfully complete a skill challenge to activate it: complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures); Arcana, Religion, Nature; all checks DC 21. If successful, the portal opens up 4 hours later. If unsuccessful, the PCs can attempt the skill challenge again (repeatedly if necessary) after 12 hours.

Documents carried by the skull lord identify it as an envoy of Onthorirfel, a lich dwelling in the Shadowfell. These documents also suggest that Sarshan and the lich have been collaborating on some plot, though no details are provided. A DC 21 Arcana check confirms that Onthorirfel is a powerful lich famed for his specialization in ritual magic. Although this information is not immediately relevant, it will become important in later adventures.



## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Bright light is shed by lanterns set about the chamber.

**Walls:** The walls of the chamber are a mixture of packed mud and thick root growth (Athletics DC 15 to scale).

**Wooden Steps:** Wooden facing panels hold together these crumbling mud steps.

**Catwalk:** A thick tree trunk planed flat on one side serves as a bridge across the blood chaos pool. It is not perfectly set in the mud floor and rocks slightly when walked on (Acrobatics DC 10 to cross).

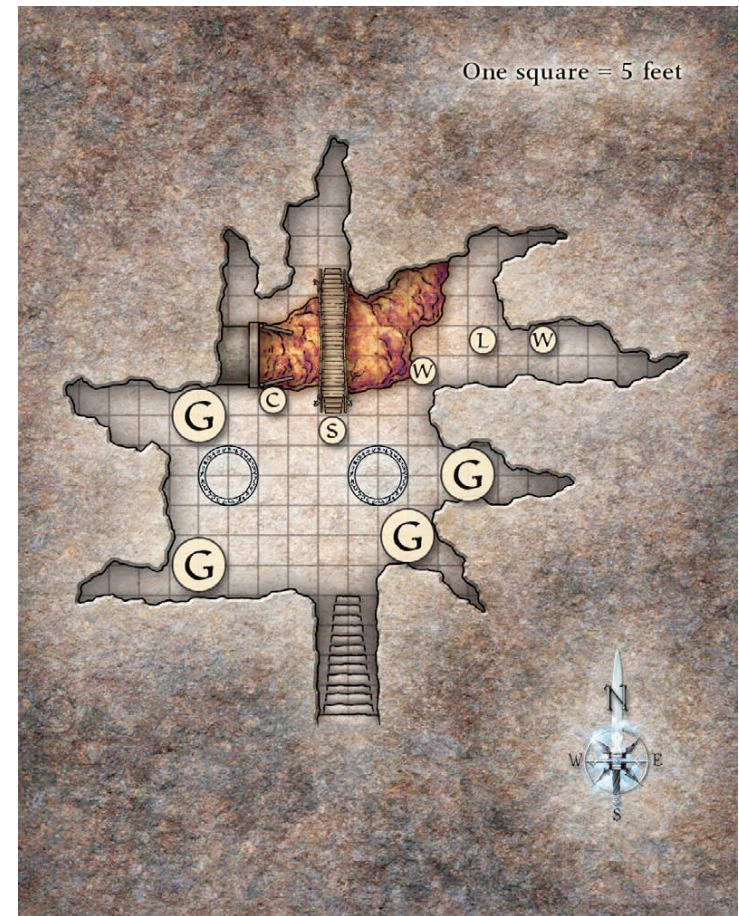
**Floodgate:** A great quantity of blood chaos siphoned from Sarshan's main reservoir bubbles at the other end of the floodgate. Blood chaos flows from the floodgate in the northwest wall into the pool below. The pipe has a cap that can be closed as a full-round action by a character adjacent to or on the pipe. Characters can close the pipe while standing in the blood chaos pool (but see below).

It takes a DC 20 Acrobatics check for characters to perch atop the slick pipe.

**Portal Circles:** The portions of the floor containing teleportation circles are magically hardened mud, within which mystic sigils have been burned. These portals are currently inactive, but a DC 16 Arcana check determines that they are designed to allow the flow of blood chaos to other locations.

**Pool of Blood Chaos:** The pool of blood chaos stands between 10 and 15 feet deep. Squares filled with blood chaos are difficult terrain. This potent distillation of elemental energy burns inanimate objects and melts living flesh. A creature that enters or begins its turn in an area of blood chaos takes 2d6 + 3 acid and fire damage and is slowed (save ends).

Creatures in the blood chaos must use their swim speed or make a DC 10 Athletics check to move. They gain cover except against attacks from submerged enemies. Fighting in the blood chaos imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls except with spears and crossbows. Powers that have the fire keyword take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.



## SEA OF FIRE

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 flame shard (S)
- 1 duergar hellcaller (D)
- 1 redspawn firebelcher (R)
- 2 githyanki warriors (G)

Sarshan keeps the perimeter of his island lair well guarded. Because the shadar-kai's business dealings cross every known plane, his servants are a diverse lot.

When the PCs arrive on the portal earthberg, they find the island guard alert and ready for them. They take advantage of the shifting position of the earthbergs (see "Features of the Area"), attempting to keep the PCs from reaching the main island and the tower path.

**When the PCs arrive in the teleportation circle, read:**

*A blast of heat heralds your arrival in the midst of an ocean of molten rock. Around the destination teleportation circle, numerous small islands float on this burning sea like icebergs of rock and earth. These earthbergs drift in proximity to a much larger island to the south. Tall dikes on this main island shield it from the worst of the molten waves.*

*Through the heat haze, creatures are visible. A dwarf with coal-dark skin and blonde hair is stationed on one of the earthbergs, while a large, wingless dragon guards another. On the island, two githyanki stand with silver swords drawn. Close by, a red crystal floats above the lava sea.*

### Perception Check

**DC 16:** *The air above the fiery sea shimmers and dances with the incredible heat. However, a magnificent city is visible far to the north, its brass towers and minarets glittering on the horizon.*

**DC 21:** *The dike around the large island has clearly kept it safe from the lava for countless years, but even as you watch, high waves break over the top. Molten rock is beginning to pool and spread within the wall, the island shuddering with a faint groan.*

### DEVELOPMENT

Once the PCs have overcome the island's defenders, they can follow the path to the tower. Go to the "Galleries" encounter on page 39.

Flame Shard (S)		Level 12 Artillery
Medium elemental magical beast		XP 700
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +8; darkvision	
<b>Heat Wave (Fire)</b> aura 2; any enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 5 fire damage and takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against ongoing fire damage during its current turn.		
HP 100; Bloodied 50		
AC 24; Fortitude 25, Reflex 23, Will 23		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 variable (2/encounter)		
Speed 4, fly 4 (hover)		
⊕ <b>Burning Shard</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire</b>	Melee 1; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 fire damage.	
⚡ <b>Flame Shatter</b> (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ <b>Fire</b>	Close burst 2; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 fire damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
✱ <b>Flame Burst</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire</b>	Area burst 2 within 20; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 fire damage.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Str 19 (+10)	Dex 19 (+10)	Wis 15 (+8)
Con 22 (+12)	Int 7 (+4)	Cha 18 (+10)

Duergar Hellcaller (D)		Level 12 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf (devil)		XP 700
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 96; Bloodied 48		
AC 24; Fortitude 23, Reflex 23, Will 25		
Resist 10 fire, 10 poison		
Speed 5		
⊕ <b>Mace</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	Melee 1; +19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.	
✂ <b>Infernal Quills</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire, Poison</b>	Ranged 10; +19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 fire and poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 fire and poison damage and a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).	
✂ <b>Quick Quill Strike</b> (minor; encounter) ♦ <b>Fire, Poison</b>	The duergar hellcaller makes an <i>infernal quills</i> attack.	
⚡ <b>Asmodeus's Ruby Curse</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Fear, Psychic</b>	Close blast 5; targets enemies; +16 vs. Will; 3d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the duergar slides the target to the nearest space outside the blast. This forced movement provokes opportunity attacks.	
✱ <b>Quill Storm</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Fire, Poison</b>	Area burst 2 within 10; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d8 fire and poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire and poison damage and a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).	
<b>Devilish Sacrifice</b> (immediate interrupt, when an enemy makes a melee attack roll against the duergar hellcaller; encounter)		
The duergar hellcaller shifts to the nearest space beyond the triggering attack's reach. A legion devil hellguard (MM 64) appears in the duergar's former space and becomes the target of the triggering attack. The devil acts immediately after the duergar hellcaller's initiative.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Deep Speech, Dwarven	
Skills Arcana +11, Dungeoneering +13, Religion +11		
Str 14 (+8)	Dex 19 (+10)	Wis 14 (+8)
Con 18 (+10)	Int 11 (+6)	Cha 22 (+12)
Equipment leather armor, mace		



**Redspawn Firebelcher (F)** **Level 12 Artillery**  
 Large natural beast (reptile) XP 700

**Initiative** +7 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision  
**Fire Within (Fire)** aura 5; allies in the aura gain resist 10 fire.  
**HP** 97; **Bloodied** 48  
**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21  
**Resist** 20 fire  
**Speed** 4  
 ⚔ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**  
 +16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).  
 ⚔ **Fire Belch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**  
 Ranged 12; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).  
 ✨ **Fire Burst** (standard; recharge ☹️) ♦ **Fire**  
 Area burst 2 within 10; +15 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). *Miss:* Half damage, and no ongoing fire damage.  
**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** –  
**Str** 18 (+10) **Dex** 13 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+6)  
**Con** 19 (+10) **Int** 2 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+5)

**2 Githyanki Warriors (G)** **Level 12 Soldier**  
 Medium natural humanoid XP 700

**Initiative** +13 **Senses** Perception +12  
**HP** 118; **Bloodied** 59  
**AC** 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22  
**Saving Throws** +2 against charm effects  
**Speed** 5; see also telekinetic leap  
 ⚔ **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic, Weapon**  
 +17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 plus 1d6 psychic damage, and an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.  
 ⚔ **Telekinetic Grasp** (standard; encounter)  
 Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).  
 ⚔ **Telekinetic Leap** (move; encounter)  
 Ranged 10; the githyanki warrior or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.  
**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech  
**Skills** History +9, Insight +12  
**Str** 21 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)  
**Con** 14 (+8) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)  
**Equipment** plate armor, silver greatsword

**TACTICS**

The duergar hellcaller uses *Asmodeus's ruby curse* to push as many PCs as possible into the magma. It then uses *quick quill strike* and *infernal quills* to target foes on other earthbergs. If pressed in melee, the duergar uses *devilish sacrifice* to gain an unexpected ally.

The flame shard hammers all foes within range with *flame burst* attacks, keeping enemies close to take advantage of its *heat wave* aura.

The redspawn firebelcher hits the PCs first with *fire burst*, then alternates *fire belch* and bite attacks.

The githyanki use *telekinetic grasp* to immobilize PCs fighting their allies on the earthbergs. If those defenders fall, or if the PCs make it to the island, the githyanki attack with their silver greatswords, using *telekinetic leap* to get quickly into the fray.

Sarshan's guards attempt to keep intruders off the island, following the PCs inland if necessary.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Illumination:** The molten sea provides bright illumination throughout the area.

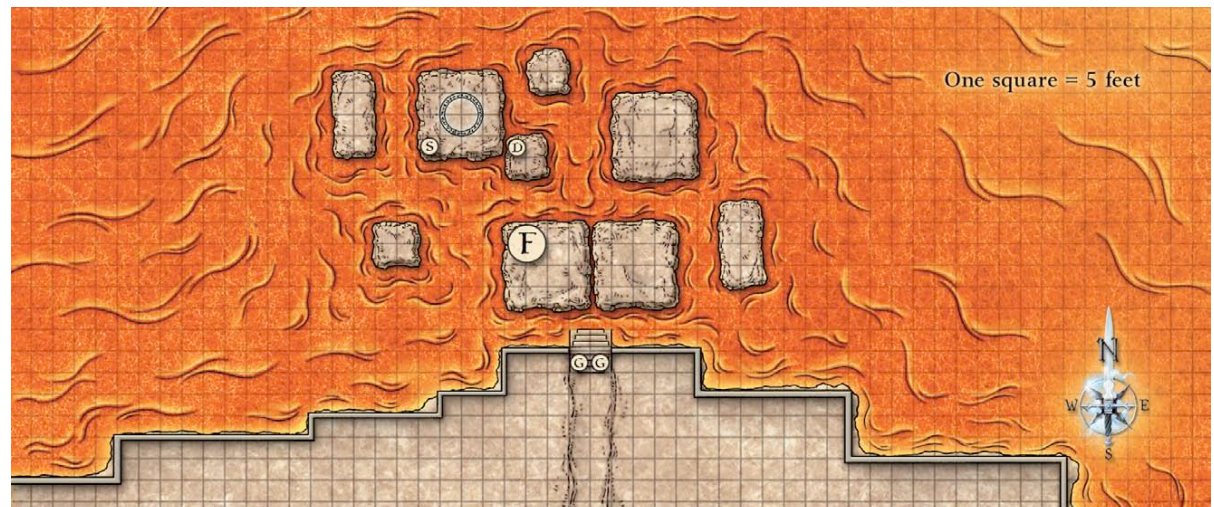
**Burning Heat:** The heat of the Sea of Fire taxes creatures in proximity to it. A creature that ends its turn standing on an earthberg gains vulnerable 5 fire.

**Earthbergs:** Like icebergs in the world, the earthbergs stay in constant motion on the lava sea. If you use separate dungeon tiles or other maps for the earthbergs, roll 1d4 and 1d8 for each one at the end of each round of combat. The d8 determines the direction of the earthberg's drift, while the d4 indicates the number of spaces it moves. Earthbergs can end up next to each other, but an earthberg stops if it would move into another's space.

**Lava:** Creatures that fall into the molten lava of the Sea of Fire take 10d10 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

**Dikes:** The eroded stone dikes that protect the island are 20 feet high (Athletics DC 16 to climb).

**Stile:** The steps that climb up and over the dikes are difficult terrain.



## GALLERIES

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

### SETUP

2 storm abishai snipers (S)

1 githyanki warrior (G)

1 centaur ravager (C)

1 arctide spiralith (A)

The exterior of the 200-foot-high monolith tower is smooth-sided, polished obsidian (Athletics DC 30 to climb). Its only entrance is a single gate that opens into the upper portion of an inverse gallery. This chamber drops in a series of stepped ledges to a reservoir of blood chaos that covers the floor. This access point is guarded by more of Sarshan's servants.

#### When the PCs can see into this area, read:

*This cavernous chamber drops 50 feet to a vast reservoir of seething blood chaos. A series of stepped ledges work their way down the sides of the chamber, some connected by stairs, others by wooden ladders. Several ledges are decorated with statues. Straight across from the entrance and at the same level, a ledge contains the glowing sigils of a permanent teleportation circle.*

*The defenders of this chamber stand in wait—two humanoid fiends with leathery wings, another githyanki warrior, a centaur bearing a greatsword, and a demon ensconced in a rune-scribed shell.*

In the second round of combat, the tower shudders as the foundations of the island are inundated with inflowing lava.

**At the beginning of the second round of combat, read:**

*A groaning roar suddenly shakes the tower. The seething blood chaos below begins to boil as a jet of magma shoots into the reservoir through a wide-gaping crack in the wall. Foul-smelling steam vents upward as the level of the swirling pool begins to rise.*

Refer to "Features of the Area" for information on how the lava and the blood chaos interact, and for the speed at which the chamber fills.

2 Storm Abishai Snipers (S)		Level 12 Artillery
Medium immortal magical beast		XP 700
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +23; low-light vision	
HP 98; Bloodied 49		
Regeneration 5		
AC 24; Fortitude 24, Reflex 24, Will 22		
Resist 10 lightning, 10 thunder		
Speed 8, fly 6, overland flight 12		
⚡ Lightning Sting (standard; at-will) ⚡ Lightning		
+19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 lightning damage.		
⚡ Lightning Discharge (immediate reaction, when an enemy hits the abishai with a melee attack; encounter) ⚡ Lightning		
Close burst 1; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 8 lightning damage, and the triggering enemy is pushed 1 square and stunned until the end of its next turn.		
⚡ Shockbolt (standard; at-will) ⚡ Thunder		
Area burst 2 within 10; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 8 thunder damage.		
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Draconic		
Str 18 (+20)	Dex 16 (+9)	Wis 13 (+7)
Con 20 (+11)	Int 11 (+6)	Cha 21 (+11)

## TACTICS

The creatures here seek to prevent the PCs from reaching the portal on the 50-foot-high ledge across from the entry, even as the slurry of blood chaos and magma begins to rise.

The storm abishai snipers use their *shockbolts* as they weave through melee, hoping that their *lightning discharge* allows them to push a PC into the magma slurry below.

The githyanki warrior harries defenders and strikers with silver greatsword attacks, reserving his *telekinetic leap* to jump up to another ledge as the magma slurry rises.

The centaur ravager begins with a *berserk rush*, then attacks the closest foes with greatsword attacks. It uses its *brash retaliation* and its recharged *berserk rush* to knock foes off the ledge and into the magma slurry.

The arctide spiralith stays in the thick of combat to make use of its *arcane arc*, alternating *focused strike* and *charged lightning burst* attacks.



Centaur Ravager (C)		Level 12 Brute	
Large fey humanoid		XP 700	
<b>Initiative</b> +10		<b>Senses</b> Perception +9; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 150; <b>Bloodied</b> 75; see also <i>brash retaliation</i>			
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 26, <b>Reflex</b> 24, <b>Will</b> 23			
<b>Speed</b> 8			
⊕ <b>Greatsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
Melee 1; +15 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, plus 1d10 damage when charging.			
↓ <b>Quick Kick</b> (immediate reaction, when a creature moves into a space where it flanks the centaur ravager; at-will)			
Melee 1; targets the triggering creature; +14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage.			
↓ <b>Berserk Rush</b> (standard; usable only while wielding a greatsword; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
Usable in place of a charge's melee basic attack; melee 1; +15 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 6 damage (plus 1d10 damage when charging), and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.			
↓ <b>Brash Retaliation</b> (free, when first bloodied; usable only while wielding a greatsword; encounter) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
Melee 1; +15 vs. AC; 3d10 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.			
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven	
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +17, Nature +14			
<b>Str</b> 22 (+12)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+10)	<b>Wis</b> 16 (+9)	
<b>Con</b> 20 (+11)	<b>Int</b> 9 (+5)	<b>Cha</b> 10 (+6)	
<b>Equipment</b> greatsword			

Arctide Spiralith (A)		Level 12 Artillery	
Large elemental magical beast (demon)		XP 700	
<b>Initiative</b> +12		<b>Senses</b> Perception +10	
<b>HP</b> 97; <b>Bloodied</b> 48; see also <i>bloodied shock</i>			
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 23, <b>Reflex</b> 25, <b>Will</b> 23			
<b>Resist</b> 15 variable (2/encounter)			
<b>Speed</b> 7			
⊕ <b>Bite</b> (standard; at-will)			
Melee 1; +17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage.			
↓ <b>Arcane Arc</b> (immediate interrupt, when an enemy moves adjacent to the arctide spiralith; at-will) ♦ <b>Lightning</b>			
Melee 1; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 lightning damage.			
↗ <b>Focused Strike</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Lightning</b>			
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 lightning damage			
↖ <b>Bloodied Shock</b> (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ <b>Lightning</b>			
Close burst 1; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 lightning damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).			
✦ <b>Charged Lightning Burst</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Lightning</b>			
Area burst 2 within 10; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 lightning damage. The attack deals 1 extra lightning damage for each creature in the burst. Any ally damaged by the attack gains a +1 bonus to any recharge rolls at the start of its next turn. If the bonus causes a recharge roll to exceed six, the result is considered six.			
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil		<b>Languages</b> Abyssal, Common	
<b>Str</b> 15 (+8)	<b>Dex</b> 23 (+12)	<b>Wis</b> 19 (+10)	
<b>Con</b> 19 (+10)	<b>Int</b> 7 (+4)	<b>Cha</b> 12 (+7)	

Githyanki Warrior (G)		Level 12 Soldier	
Medium natural humanoid		XP 700	
<b>Initiative</b> +13		<b>Senses</b> Perception +12	
<b>HP</b> 118; <b>Bloodied</b> 59			
<b>AC</b> 28; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 22			
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2 against charm effects			
<b>Speed</b> 5; see also telekinetic leap			
⊕ <b>Silver Greatsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Psychic, Weapon</b>			
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 plus 1d6 psychic damage, and an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.			
↗ <b>Telekinetic Grasp</b> (standard; encounter)			
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).			
↗ <b>Telekinetic Leap</b> (move; encounter)			
Ranged 10; the githyanki warrior or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.			
<b>Alignment</b> Evil		<b>Languages</b> Common, Deep Speech	
<b>Skills</b> History +9, Insight +12			
<b>Str</b> 21 (+11)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+9)	<b>Wis</b> 12 (+7)	
<b>Con</b> 14 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+7)	<b>Cha</b> 13 (+7)	
<b>Equipment</b> plate armor, silver greatsword			

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Everburning torches and bubbling magma fill the area with bright light.

**Stairs:** Creatures ascending the stairs treat them as difficult terrain.

**Statues:** These provide cover. A statue can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check.

**Ladders:** These wooden ladders are safe to climb. However, a ladder catches fire when the lava reaches its base. A character can climb a burning ladder for the first 3 rounds, but takes 1d8 fire damage in the process. After 3 rounds, a burning ladder collapses into charred cinders if anyone tries to climb it.

**Blood Chaos:** When the PCs first enter, the lower section of this deep chamber is filled with blood chaos to a depth of 20 feet. This potent distillation of elemental energy burns inanimate objects and melts living flesh. A creature that enters or begins its turn in an area of blood chaos takes 2d6 + 3 acid and fire damage and is slowed (save ends).

Creatures in the blood chaos must use their swim speed or make a DC 10 Athletics check to move. They gain cover except against attacks from submerged enemies. Fighting in the blood chaos imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls except with spears and crossbows. Powers that have the fire keyword take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Once magma begins to flow into the chamber from cracks in the foundation, the blood chaos becomes even more deadly (see below).

**Rising Magma:** At the beginning of the second round of combat, magma begins filling the chamber, rising at a rate of 5 feet per round. The magma level begins 5 feet below the lowest ledge. Ledges and ladders are submerged in the following order:

*Round 3:* 10-foot ledge, ladder to 30-foot ledge.

*Round 4:* 15-foot ledge, ladder to 25-foot ledge.

*Round 6:* 25-foot ledge, ladder to rear 50-foot ledge.

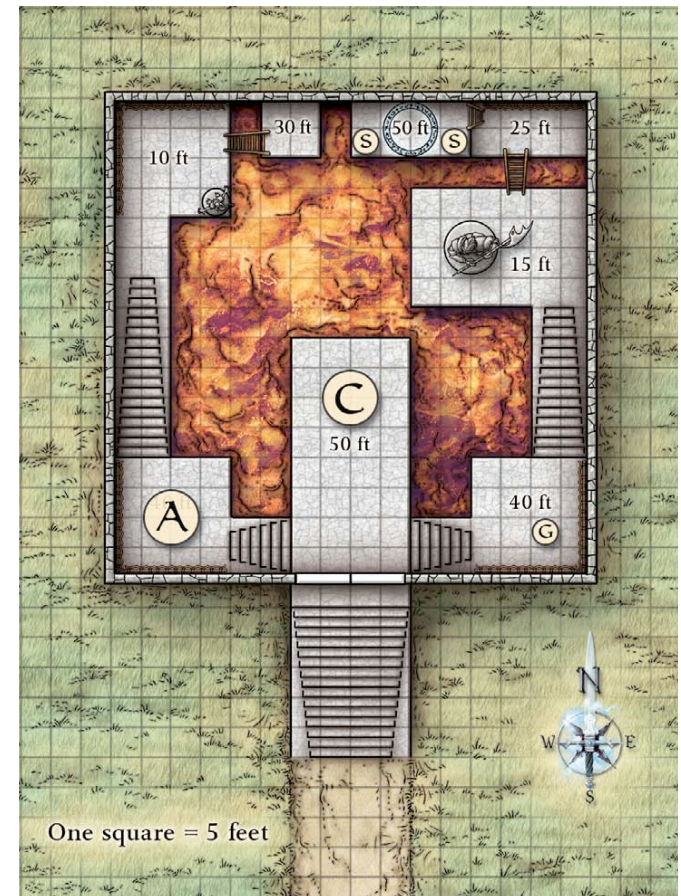
*Round 7:* 30-foot ledge.

*Round 11:* Both 40-foot ledges.

*Round 13:* The lava stops just short of the two 50-foot ledges.

Creatures that fall into the slurry of blood chaos and magma take 10d10 acid and fire damage and ongoing 15 acid and fire damage (save ends).

**Teleportation Circle:** This permanent teleportation circle has been set by Sarshan to send creatures to the teleportation circle in the next encounter. It cannot be reconfigured.





## CRUSHER ROOMS

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

### SETUP

1 wailing ghost (banshee) (B)

1 lingering specter (S)

1 flesh golem (G)

Sarshan's reconfigured portal system leads PCs who enter the portal in the previous encounter to the permanent teleportation circle inscribed here. Unfortunately, the portal is one way. Once they enter this chamber, the PCs' only choice is to continue through it.

This L-shaped chamber consists of three subchambers, each set 5 feet lower than the next. Each section is 40 feet high. The southern section and the eastern section contain a crushing walls trap. The middle section contains a crushing ceiling trap.

When the PCs step off the teleportation circle, the first section's trap is triggered. Each time a creature steps into a new section, that section's trap is triggered. All three traps can be operational at the same time.

A banshee, a lingering specter, and a flesh golem also defend the chamber, making it difficult to simply bolt from one end to the other. However, none of these creatures are initially visible. The banshee and specter are beneath the floor, while the golem lingers out of sight around the corner.

The guardian creatures do not trigger the traps. The banshee and the specter can phase through the crushing walls and ceiling without harm. Once the traps are activated, the golem is subject to attack, but it stays with the PCs regardless.

**When the PCs can see into this chamber, read:**

*This L-shaped chamber is bare stone except for the glowing sigils of the permanent teleportation circle within which you stand. The chamber is divided into three subchambers, each set 5 feet below the previous, but the far end of the last section cannot be seen.*

### Perception Check

**DC 16:** *Scratches mar the floor and ceiling, as if the walls have moved inward at some point, then back out.*

**DC 21:** *The dull echo of your footsteps suggests that hollow spaces lie beneath the floor.*

**When the walls begin to move, read:**

*With a grinding of stone on stone, the walls of the subchamber lurch forward. At the same time, two ghostly forms shoot up from beneath the floorboards.*

Wailing Ghost (Banshee) (B)		Level 12 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 700
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 91; Bloodied 45		
AC 23; Fortitude 23, Reflex 23, Will 24		
Immune disease, poison; Resist insubstantial		
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing		
Ⓣ Spirit Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+15 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 2 necrotic damage.		
✂ Death's Visage (standard; at-will) ♦ Fear, Psychic		
Ranged 5; +15 vs. Will; 2d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).		
⬅ Terrifying Shriek (standard; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ) ♦ Fear, Psychic		
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage, the target is pushed 5 squares and is immobilized (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +13		
Str 14 (+8)	Dex 15 (+8)	Wis 14 (+8)
Con 13 (+7)	Int 10 (+6)	Cha 17 (+9)

### TACTICS

The flesh golem makes *double attacks* to daze targets, hindering their advance across the trapped chamber.

The banshee uses its *terrifying shriek* as often as possible, immobilizing PCs and pushing them back into the area of an activated trap.

The specter uses *spectral barrage* as often as possible, falling back on spectral touch attacks while that power recharges.

The ghost and the specter ignore the walls, passing through and behind them to confound the PCs.

**Crushing Walls and Ceiling** **Level 12 Blaster**  
Trap **XP 700**

*As you step off the portal, the walls suddenly lurch forward and begin to press in.*

**Trap:** The first and third sections of the chamber are crushing walls traps, while the middle section is a crushing ceiling trap. All sections are activated individually.

**Perception**

◆ DC 16: Scratches in the floors and ceiling make it look as if the walls have moved inward at some point, then back out.

**Initiative** +2 (roll separately for each section)

**Trigger**

The chamber is divided into three sections. Each section is triggered when a creature enters the area while standing on the floor.

**Special**

The southern section has crushing walls, the central section has a crushing ceiling, and the eastern section has crushing walls. The walls move inward every other turn, while the ceiling moves downward every turn. The walls meet each other and the ceiling meets the floor in the eighth round, assuming no countermeasures are taken.

**Attack**

**Standard Action** **Melee**

**Targets:** Creatures in the area of each section of the trap.

Once triggered, the walls in the southern and eastern sections move inward 1 square every other turn. Once triggered, the ceiling in the central area moves down 1 square every turn. Creatures adjacent to a wall are pushed 1 square. When the crushing walls come together, or when the ceiling meets the floor, all creatures in the area are slowed and are subject to an attack.

The walls and floor stay in this position for 3 rounds, then move back at 1 square per round and reset.

**Attack:** +15 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 3d6 + 6 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

**Miss:** Half damage.

**Countermeasures**

◆ A character adjacent to a wall can delay the trigger 1 round with a DC 16 Thievery check.

◆ A character adjacent to a moving wall can delay its movement for 1 round with a DC 21 Thievery check.

◆ A character adjacent to a moving wall or who is tall enough to reach the moving ceiling can prevent the wall or ceiling's movement with a DC 16 Strength check (DC 21 if the walls are 1 square apart). All characters in the area can aid the character making this check.

◆ The floors are riddled with niches under secret sliding trapdoors (Perception DC 21). Opening a trapdoor is a minor action, while slipping into it is a move action. The floor contains one niche per square. Each niche can be occupied by one creature. A PC in a niche can ride out the crushing walls and ceiling. However, upon leaving a niche and stepping onto the floor again, the section of the trap the PC stands in is triggered once more.

**Lingering Specter (S)** **Level 12 Lurker**  
**Medium shadow humanoid (undead)** **XP 700**

**Initiative** +16 **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision

**Spectral Chill (Cold)** aura 1; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.

**HP** 66; **Bloodied** 33

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23

**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic, insubstantial;

**Vulnerable** 5 radiant

**Speed** fly 6 (hover); phasing

⊕ **Spectral Touch** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**  
+15 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage.

↵ **Spectral Barrage** (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ◆  
**Illusion, Psychic**

Close burst 2; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; 3d6 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone.

**Invisibility** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Illusion**

The specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

**Skills** Stealth +17

**Str** 19 (+10) **Dex** 22 (+12) **Wis** 12 (+7)

**Con** 16 (+9) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 19 (+10)

**Flesh Golem (G)** **Level 12 Elite Brute**  
Large natural animate (construct) **XP 1,400**

**Initiative** +4 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision

**HP** 304; **Bloodied** 152; see also *berserk attack*

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 6; can't shift

**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +16 vs. AC (+18 while bloodied); 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

The flesh golem makes two slam attacks.

⊕ **Berserk Attack** (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack while bloodied; at-will)

The flesh golem makes a slam attack against a random target within its reach.

⊕ **Golem Rampage** (standard; recharge ☒ ☒)

The flesh golem moves up to its speed plus 2 and can move through enemies' spaces, provoking opportunity attacks as normal. When it enters a creature's space (ally or enemy), the golem makes a slam attack against that creature. The creature remains in its space, and the golem must leave the space after it attacks. The golem must end its rampage in an unoccupied space.

**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** –

**Str** 20 (+11) **Dex** 7 (+4) **Wis** 8 (+5)

**Con** 22 (+12) **Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 3 (+2)



## DEVELOPMENT

As soon as the PCs pass through the double doors in the eastern chamber, they are teleported to the roof of the tower. Go to the “Final Battle” encounter on page 45.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

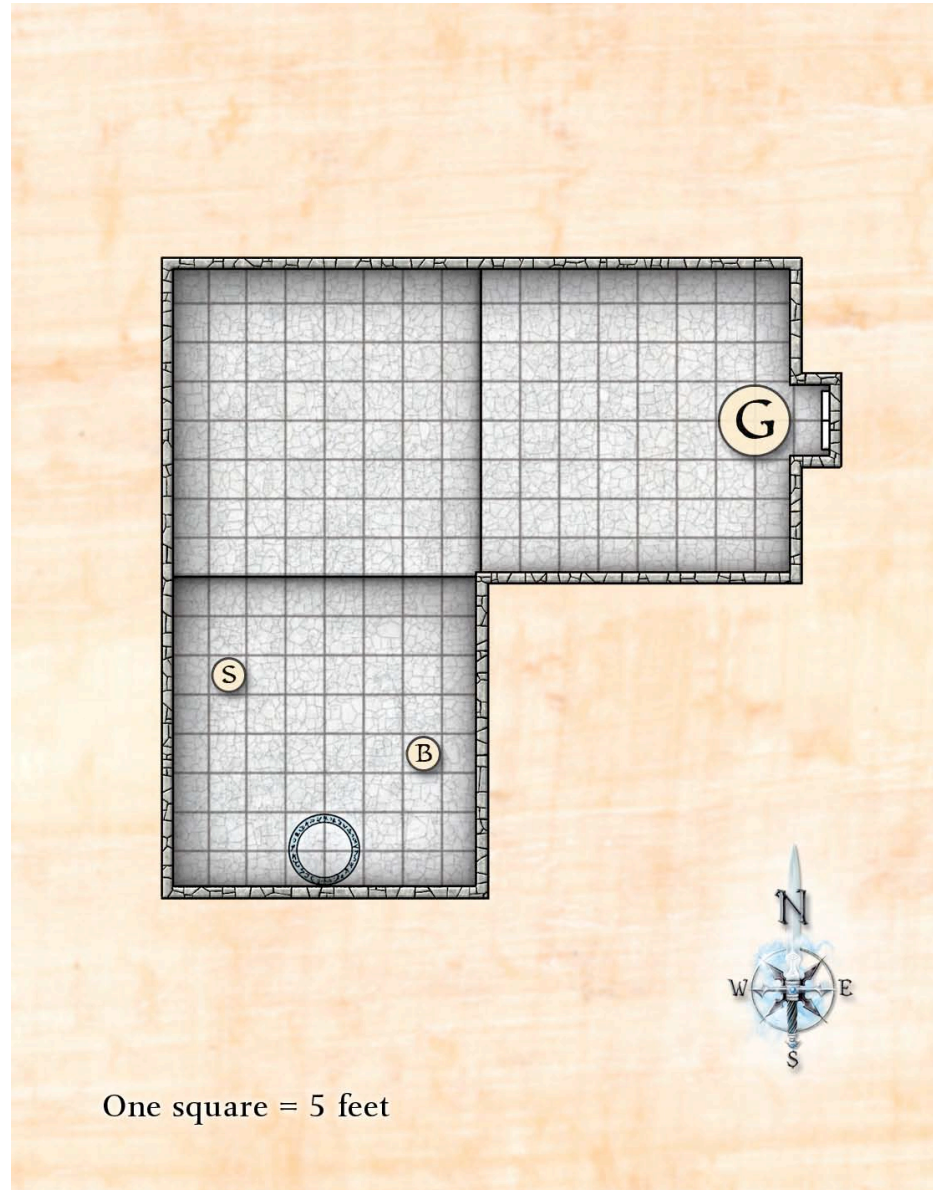
**Illumination:** Dark.

**Crushing Walls and Ceiling:** See the trap statistics block.

**Niches Beneath the Floor:** See “Countermeasures” in the trap statistics block.

**Teleportation Circle:** This permanent teleportation circle leads from the previous encounter to this chamber. Sarshan has configured the portal for one-way access into this area. However, a PC who spends 10 minutes and succeeds on five DC 21 Arcana checks can reconfigure the portal to take the PCs back to the galleries.

**Double Doors:** The double doors on the eastern side of the chamber are set in an alcove that provides enough space for two Medium creatures to avoid the crushing walls. The double doors are locked (Thievery DC 16 to open; Strength check 21 to break). Anyone who walks through the doors appears in the teleportation circle inscribed on the open roof of the monolith in the “Final Battle” encounter.



## FINAL BATTLE

Encounter Level 16 (7,800 XP)

### SETUP

4 githyanki thugs (T)  
 3 githyanki warriors (W)  
 1 githyanki mindslicer (G)  
 2 shadar-kai warriors (K)  
 Sarshan (S)

After overcoming the tower's defenses, the PCs finally catch up with Sarshan. The shadar-kai knows the characters are in the tower, and despite holding the upper hand in their first meeting ("Shadow Rift of Umbraforge," *Dungeon* 158) he has come to fear their power. Sarshan's escape portal was damaged when he miscalculated the amount of power needed to open the portals that vented blood chaos into Elsir Vale. As the PCs arrive on the roof of the tower, he labors behind a force sphere to activate his escape route, two shadar-kai warriors at his side. A squad of githyanki stands on guard outside the sphere.

When the PCs arrive on the tower roof, read:

*The top of the tower is guarded by eight warrior githyanki, all bearing silver greatswords. Their leader wields a sliver longsword, eyes flashing with mystic power. On the far side of a tower, a sphere of translucent force protects three figures: Sarshan and two shadar-kai bodyguards. However, the scars that the arms dealer bore when you saw him in Umbraforge pale in comparison to his current state. The shadar-kai's skin seethes and bubbles as tendrils of blood chaos erupt from open sores on his face and hands. Within the protective force sphere, he works intently over a teleportation circle, attempting to activate its power.*

Arcana Check

**DC 16:** *The teleportation circle has been prepared for a Linked Portal ritual—one that Sarshan is only minutes away from completing.*

4 Githyanki Thugs (T)		Level 12 Minion
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses Perception</b> +6	
<b>HP</b> 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 26, <b>Reflex</b> 21, <b>Will</b> 21		
<b>Speed</b> 5		
⊕ <b>Silver Greatsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Psychic, Weapon</b> +15 vs. AC; 6 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Deep Speech	
<b>Str</b> 21 (+11)	<b>Dex</b> 11 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 11 (+6)
<b>Con</b> 21 (+11)	<b>Int</b> 11 (+6)	<b>Cha</b> 13 (+7)
<b>Equipment</b> silver greatsword		

3 Githyanki Warriors (W)		Level 12 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid		XP 700
<b>Initiative</b> +13	<b>Senses Perception</b> +12	
<b>HP</b> 118; <b>Bloodied</b> 59		
<b>AC</b> 28; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 22		
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2 against charm effects		
<b>Speed</b> 5; see also telekinetic leap		
⊕ <b>Silver Greatsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Psychic, Weapon</b> +17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 plus 1d6 psychic damage, and an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.		
✂ <b>Telekinetic Grasp</b> (standard; encounter) Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).		
✂ <b>Telekinetic Leap</b> (move; encounter) Ranged 10; the githyanki warrior or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Deep Speech	
<b>Skills</b> History +9, <b>Insight</b> +12		
<b>Str</b> 21 (+11)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+9)	<b>Wis</b> 12 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+7)	<b>Cha</b> 13 (+7)
<b>Equipment</b> plate armor, silver greatsword		

Githyanki Mindslicer (G)	Level 13 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 800
<b>Initiative</b> +11	<b>Senses Perception</b> +12
<b>HP</b> 98; <b>Bloodied</b> 49	
<b>AC</b> 27; <b>Fortitude</b> 24, <b>Reflex</b> 25, <b>Will</b> 24	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2 against charm effects	
<b>Speed</b> 6; see also telekinetic leap	
⊕ <b>Silver Longsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Psychic, Weapon</b> +18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 plus 1d8 psychic damage.	
✂ <b>Mindslice</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Psychic</b> Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.	
✂ <b>Telekinetic Leap</b> (move; encounter) Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.	
✂ <b>Psychic Barrage</b> (standard; recharge [⊕]) ♦ <b>Psychic</b> Area burst 1 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage and cannot use daily or encounter powers (save ends both).	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Deep Speech
<b>Skills</b> History +11, <b>Insight</b> +12	
<b>Str</b> 14 (+8)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+9) <b>Wis</b> 12 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 17 (+9) <b>Cha</b> 11 (+6)
<b>Equipment</b> robes, overcoat, silver longsword	

2 Shadar-Kai Warriors (K)	Level 8 Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 350
<b>Initiative</b> +11	<b>Senses Perception</b> +6; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 86; <b>Bloodied</b> 43	
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 19, <b>Reflex</b> 20, <b>Will</b> 17	
<b>Speed</b> 5; see also shadow jaunt	
⊕ <b>Katar</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> +13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage (crit 1d6 + 9).	
⊕ <b>Double Attack</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> The shadar-kai warrior makes two katar attacks.	
⊕ <b>Cage of Gloom</b> (standard; recharge [⊕]) The shadar-kai warrior makes a katar attack. If the attack hits, the shadar-kai warrior makes a secondary attack as strands of shadow coil around the target. <b>Secondary Attack:</b> +11 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends).	
<b>Shadow Jaunt</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b> The 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, <b>Stealth</b> +15	
<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> shadowmail, 2 katars	



<b>Sarshan (S)</b>		<b>Level 12 Solo Controller</b>	
Medium shadow humanoid, shadar-kai		XP 3,500	
<b>Initiative</b> +10	<b>Senses</b> Perception +15; low-light vision		
<b>Blood Chaos</b> aura 2; an enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).			
<b>HP</b> 650; <b>Bloodied</b> 325			
<b>AC</b> 28; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 26, <b>Will</b> 25			
<b>Resist</b> 20 acid			
<b>Saving Throws</b> +5			
<b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>shadow attack</i>			
<b>Action Points</b> 2			
⊕ <b>Katar</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>			
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).			
⊕ <b>Triple Attack</b> (standard; at-will)			
Sarshan makes three katar attacks.			
⊕ <b>Shadow Attack</b> (standard; recharge Ⓜ) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>			
Sarshan teleports 6 squares, makes a <i>triple attack</i> and teleports 6 more squares, then becomes insubstantial until the start of his next turn.			
⚡ <b>Blood Chaos Flare</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Acid</b>			
Close blast 5; +16 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends). <i>First Failed Saving Throw</i> : The target is slowed and takes ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends). <i>Second Failed Saving Throw</i> : The target is transformed into a mass of slime (treat as petrified; no save). The Remove Affliction ritual can reverse this effect.			
⚡ <b>Chaos Nova</b> (standard; recharge Ⓜ) ♦ <b>Acid</b>			
Close burst 1; +15 vs. Fortitude; 4d10 + 5 acid damage. Miss: Half damage.			
⚡ <b>Chaos Scream</b> (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ <b>Acid</b>			
Sarshan makes a <i>blood chaos flare</i> attack.			
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> Abyssal, Common, Elven, Deep Speech	
<b>Skills</b> Arcana +23, Diplomacy +23			
<b>Str</b> 31 (+16)	<b>Dex</b> 19 (+10)	<b>Wis</b> 18 (+10)	
<b>Con</b> 26 (+14)	<b>Int</b> 17 (+9)	<b>Cha</b> 17 (+9)	

## TACTICS

The githyanki defenders outside the force sphere attempt to stop the PCs from interrupting Sarshan's work. The githyanki thugs flank with silver greatsword attacks against defenders and strikers.

The githyanki warrior joins its thug allies to flank a powerful melee combatant, using *telekinetic grasp* to immobilize any PC attempting to batter down the force sphere.

The githyanki mindslicer stays at the edge of the fray, targeting controllers and ranged combatants with *psychic barrage* and *mindslice* attacks.

The shadar-kai warriors fight as a pair, flanking the most powerful looking melee combatant with *double attacks*. When that foe is brought down, they split up to make *cage of gloom* attacks on separate PCs, hitting with *double attacks* while *cage of gloom* recharges.

Pushed to the brink, Sarshan abandons his plan to flee as he joins the fray. His exposure to blood chaos has granted him potent abilities, which he uses to maximum advantage from behind the protection of the force sphere (see "Features of the Area"). He uses *blood chaos flare* from within the force sphere, engaging a controller or defender with *shadow attack* and *triple attack* once the sphere falls.

## TWO-STAGE FIGHT

This high-level encounter is designed to push the PCs to the limit, and Sarshan's last stand promises to be a memorable fight. However, if the PCs are down on healing surges and daily powers (and especially if they have not yet attained 12th level), consider splitting this encounter into two separate combats, with the second beginning only after the force sphere is successfully brought down. In this optional encounter format, Sarshan and his shadar-kai guards ignore the PCs at first, trusting the githyanki to deal with the party while Sarshan activates his escape portal. When the force sphere is brought down, all the shadar-kai join in the fray.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Bright daylight.

**Tower Top:** 3-foot high crenellations run around the edge of the tower, granting a +2 bonus to saving throws made to avoid falling off. A creature that falls off the tower takes 20d10 damage.

**Force Sphere:** This translucent sphere is an invisible wall of force that protects Sarshan and his shadar-kai warriors. Creatures can pass out of the sphere but not into it. Once the shadar-kai warriors enter the fray, they cannot return to the sphere's protection.

The sphere prevents all weapons, powers, and effects from reaching Sarshan, but the shadar-kai can make *blood chaos flare* attacks through the sphere against the PCs.

As the force sphere is not subject to dispel magic, brute force is the quickest way to bring it down: AC/Reflex 2, Fortitude 20, 500 hit points. If the PCs simply wait, Sarshan concludes his ritual after 2 minutes (20 rounds) and teleports away to a redoubt in the City of Brass.

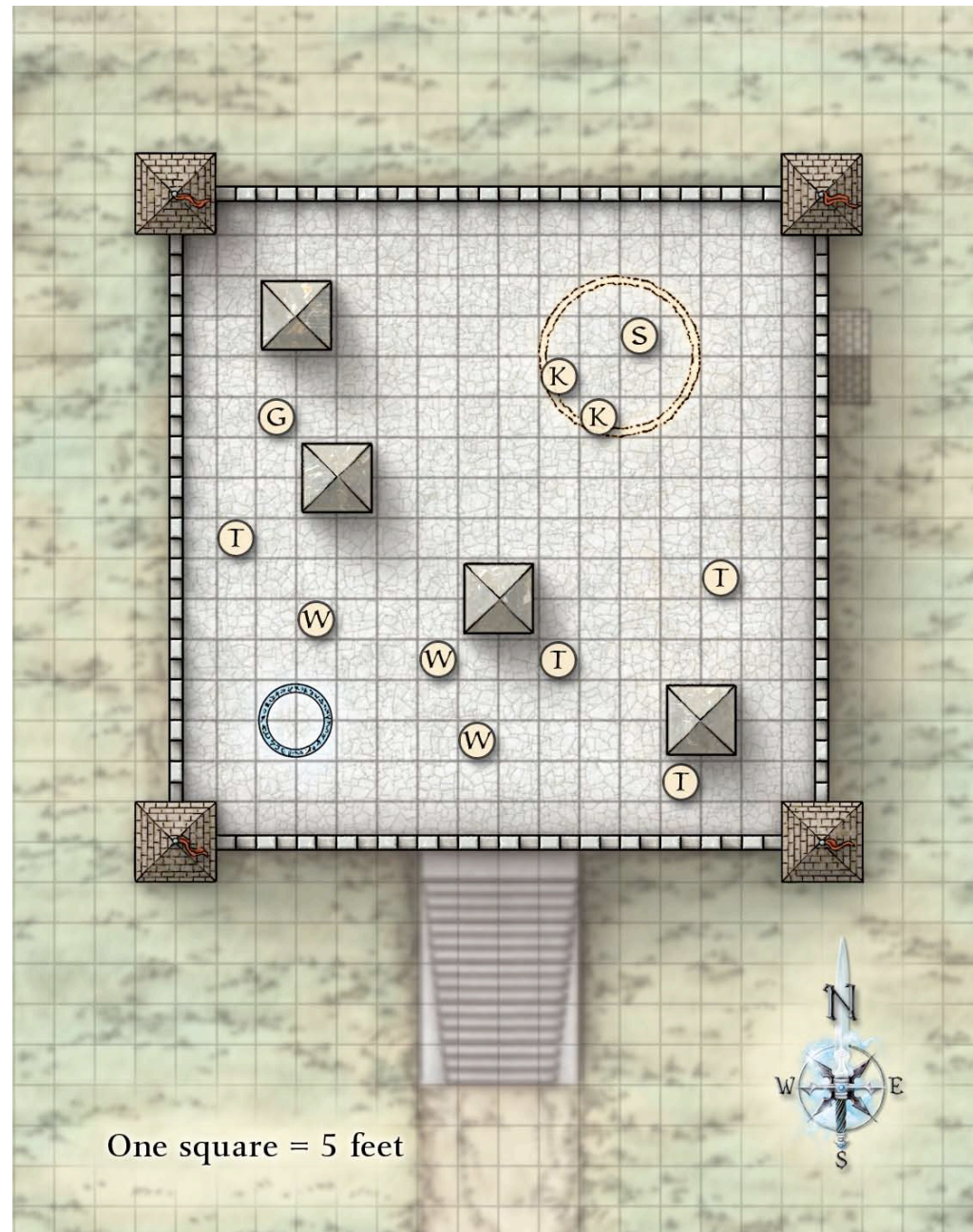
**Teleportation Circle:** This permanent teleportation circle teleports the PCs from the teleportation circle in the “Crusher Rooms” encounter.

**Treasure:** Sarshan has packed all the easily accessible loot from this lair into a large chest that sits within the teleportation circle. The PCs can claim 4,000 gp, one level 13 magic item, one level 14 magic item, and one level 16 magic item.

## CONCLUSION

In the aftermath of the battle, the PCs can search through Sarshan’s belongings to discover confirmation of the shadar-kai’s plots against the Freeriders and Elsir Vale. Sarshan’s notes and journals indicate that he fled to the Elemental Chaos after the fall of his fortress at Umbraforge, discovering Djamel’s island during his travels. After saving the island from the raging lava sea, the shadar-kai found fragments of the old efreet mage’s work, and had soon completed her dangerous research.

When this encounter is over, the characters have the opportunity to begin a journey back to Overlook—a likely destination. You can feel free to allow that journey to happen, or you can jump right into “The Bitter Glass,” the next installment in the Scales of War Adventure Path. The events at the beginning of “The Bitter Glass” will take place near the outskirts of Overlook, but they can also easily happen at any point during the characters journey overland through Elsir Vale or any other part of the world.





## APPENDIX: CREATURES OF BLOOD CHAOS

Blood chaos is an incredibly destructive force, but occasionally when it consumes sentient creatures, it warps and transforms them into new forms.

Creatures of blood chaos are normally encountered in the world nearby or in flows of blood chaos. In such rare encounters, normally only a few such creatures are encountered. Upon the elemental chaos, however, legions of them gather near massive lakes of blood chaos.

### CHAOS MAULER

Creatures of elemental destruction, chaos maulers are ruled by their primal instinct to smash and destroy. Willing servants of scions of chaos, chaos maulers are created when particularly evil or violent creatures are consumed by blood chaos. Such a creature's essence infuses the surrounding blood chaos birthing it in a new, terrifying form. In many cases, a small portion of the original creature's form survives this "rebirth," providing some small clue as to its origin.

Most chaos maulers appear as large, hulking creature composed entirely of frozen orange-purple liquid. Its head is mainly featureless and a single thick tentacle grows from its belly.

Chaos Mauler		Level 11 Minion
Large elemental animate		XP 150
<b>Initiative</b> +9	<b>Senses</b> Perception +7	
<b>HP</b> 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		
<b>AC</b> 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 22		
<b>Speed</b> 6		
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +14 vs. AC; 8 fire damage		
<b>Liquid Body</b>		
The chaos mauler is perfectly adapted to living in blood chaos. It can move through blood chaos without penalty and takes no damage from contact with blood chaos.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> –
<b>Str</b> 23 (+11)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+9)	<b>Wis</b> 14 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 11 (+5)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+8)

### CHAOS MAULER LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

**DC 25:** Chaos maulers are the most destructive of the creatures spawned by blood chaos. Creatures driven by an unquenchable rage, they batter their opponents to death.

**DC 30:** Chaos maulers are often encountered with other spawn of blood chaos. In particular, skulking terrors use their unsophisticated attacks as a distraction.

### CHAOS MAULER TACTICS

Chaos maulers tactics are simple ñ they move toward the nearest opponent and pound it to destruction before moving on to their next target. If they face no opposition, they incinerate any nearby flammable objects.

## SCION OF CHAOS

Creatures of chaos and entropy, scions of chaos lurk within blood chaos, striking out at any who venture too close.

Scions of chaos spawn when an area of blood chaos has consumed enough sentient beings. When such creatures die, a small part of their being infuses the blood chaos. Scions of chaos are intelligent, bloodthirsty foes driven by their desire to grow their numbers by consuming intelligent prey.

These malignant creatures appear as undulating orb of melted and mottled orange and purple flesh writhing upon a bed of small, muscular tentacles. A ring of larger tentacles juts from the top of the orb.

Scion of Chaos		Level 11 Controller
Huge elemental animate		XP 600
<b>Initiative</b> +9	<b>Senses</b> Perception +9	
<b>Whirling Tentacles</b> aura 2; the scion of chaos slides any creature that starts its turn in the aura 2 squares.		
<b>HP</b> 117; <b>Bloodied</b> 58		
<b>AC</b> 25; <b>Fortitude</b> 24, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 24		
<b>Resist</b> acid 10, fire 10		
<b>Speed</b> 6		
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire</b>		
Reach 3; +16 vs. AC; 2d8+4 fire damage		
⊗ <b>Staggering Strike</b> (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+6 damage and the target is pushed 3 squares.		
✱ <b>Coils of Immobility</b> (standard; recharge ☼, ☼)		
Area burst 2 within 10; targets enemies only; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d8+4 damage and the target is restrained (save ends)		
<b>Liquid Body</b>		
The scion of chaos is perfectly adapted to living in blood chaos. It can move through blood chaos without penalty and takes no damage from contact with blood chaos.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> –
<b>Str</b> 17 (+8)	<b>Dex</b> 19 (+9)	<b>Wis</b> 19 (+9)
<b>Con</b> 21 (+10)	<b>Int</b> 16 (+8)	<b>Cha</b> 21 (+10)

## SCION OF CHAOS LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

**DC 25:** Scions of chaos are spawned from the fragments of sentient beings consumed by blood chaos.

**DC 30:** Scions of chaos can lash out with parts of their body to immobilize their enemies and are immune to corrosion and flame.

## SCION OF CHAOS TACTICS

Scions of chaos prefer to hang back from melee, using *coils of immobility* to inhibit their foes tactical movements. If pressed, they use *staggering strike* to push enemies away and when cornered lash out with their mighty fists.

## SKULKING TERROR

Aptly named, skulking terrors are sinuous creatures of sudden ambush and merciless assault. Silent predators, they can glide through or above flows of blood chaos in search of prey. Skulking terrors much prefer to take their prey unaware and are the most cowardly of the blood chaos creatures. Skulking terrors will temporarily retreat if clearly overmatched, but often return when their opponents least expect it.

They are ribbed paper-thin creature that vaguely resembles a headless, flattened orange and purple bat. They drip thick viscous ichor in their wake from a number of small holes on their underside.

<b>Skulking Terror</b>	<b>Level 11 Lurker</b>
<b>Medium elemental animate</b>	<b>XP 600</b>
<b>Initiative</b> +13	<b>Senses Perception</b> +11
<b>HP</b> 83; <b>Bloodied</b> 41	
<b>AC</b> 25; <b>Fortitude</b> 21, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 21	
<b>Speed</b> 6, fly 6	
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will) +16 vs. AC; 2d6+6 damage	
↵ <b>Lethargic Countenance</b> (standard action; at-will) Close burst 3; +12 vs. Will; the target is slowed and grants combat advantage to the skulking terror until the end of the skulking terror's next turn. After all attacks are resolved, the skulking terror teleports 8 squares and gains a +4 power bonus to all defenses against ranged and area attacks.	
<b>Combat Advantage</b> The skulking terror deals an extra 2d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
<b>Liquid Body</b> The skulking terror is perfectly adapted to living in blood chaos. It can move through blood chaos without penalty and takes no damage from contact with blood chaos.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –
<b>Str</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 19 (+9) <b>Wis</b> 13 (+6)
<b>Con</b> 11 (+5)	<b>Int</b> 13 (+6) <b>Cha</b> 12 (+6)

## SKULKING TERROR LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

**DC 25:** Skulking terrors are perfectly at home in flows of blood chaos and often use them to get closer to their foes. Their attacks can slow down their opponents, making them easier targets.

**DC 30:** Skulking terrors retreat from battle if injured or outnumbered but always return at a time of their choosing to defeat their prey.

## SKULKING TERROR TACTICS

Skulking terrors prefer to strike from ambush, seeking combat advantage against a foe whenever possible. To this end, they hide in blood chaos flows or swoop silently down from above on unsuspecting targets. Masters of hit and run tactics, they use *lethargic countenance* to slow opponents. If badly injured, or obviously outnumbered, they flee to return at an advantageous moment.

### About the authors

**Creighton Broadhurst** lives in Torquay, England where, apparently, the palm trees are plastic and the weather is warm. He shares a ramshackle old mansion with his two children ("Genghis" and "Khan") and his very patient wife. He is famed locally for his enduring love affair with booze and pizza. A huge Greyhawk® fan he has just miraculously survived the terrors of the Temple of Elemental Evil and is now bravely investigating a certain ruined house outside Saltmarsh. His freelance credits include work with Wizards of the Coast, Paizo, and Expeditious Retreat Press. You can check out his blog at <http://raging-swan.livejournal.com>.

**Bruce R. Cordell** is an Origins and ENnie award-winning game designer whose long list of professional credits include the new *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide™*, *Keep on the Shad-owfell™*, *Draconomicon I: Chromatic Dragons™* and *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead™*. Bruce is also an author of *Forgotten Realms* novels, including *Plague of Spells*, first book in the new *Abolethic Sovereignty* series.

**David Noonan** has an extensive list of RPG credits, including *Martial Power*, *Scepter Tower of Spellgard*, and contributions to the 4th edition core rules. He lives in Washington state with his wife and two children.