



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

RIDDLE OF THE RAVEN QUEEN



Embark on a rescue mission into the heart of the Shadowfell in
this adventure for the world's greatest role-playing game

RIDDLE OF THE RAVEN QUEEN



An Adventure for Three to Seven 5th to 10th Level Characters

Optimized For: APL 8

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Riddle of the Raven Queen*, a D&D 5th edition adventure set in a small elven village in the Cormathyr forest. This adventure showcases the lives of elves as presented in *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*™

This adventure is designed for three to seven 5th to 10th level characters and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8. Characters outside this level range would be either unable to complete or have far too easy of a time in this adventure.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the party strength for the adventure, consult the following table.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Dripping Leaves is a small elven village on the Mistle Trail and the River Ashaba between Elven Crossing and Shadowdale in the western Cormathyr forest. There was a time when the village of Dripping Leaves was prosperous and welcomed travelers. While mainly the home of moon elves, the village acts as a base for several clans of wood elves as well. The village is spread out with various glades as hubs of activity. Unfortunately, this spread out nature has left it an easy target for raids by drow. In the last few months these raids have gone from a seasonal annoyance to two or three times a month. Just three days ago was the worst raid to date. The drow came from the north and focused their attack on the Glade of the Moon, the village's temple of Sehanine Moonbow. While the shrine still stands, the acolytes and the family of the Starsinger Alyndra Eiltris were all killed. When the raid occurred, the priestess was not in the shrine, instead she was at a home nearer the Mistle Road, attending the birth of twins and thus was not there to protect them when the drow attacked. Though she managed to perform the funeral rites for the fallen, it was obvious to the villagers that her sorrow was causing her to slip into the Remembrance, much earlier than would be normal. She is slipping away from them with no one to take up her mantle. Unfortunately, the magnitude of her sorrow and grief has caught the notice of the Raven Queen. Her Shadar-kai have captured the sorrowing priestess and they have taken her to the Shadowfell where the Raven Queen might bask in Alyndra's emotions.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This adventure focuses on the different cultures of the elves, drow, and shadar-kai as circumstances cause them to collide.

Part One – Dripping Leaves: The party arrives in the village of Dripping Leaves and learns about the trials it has undergone. While there the Starsinger is found missing and suspicions point towards the drow.

Part Two – Phorkyryl Outpost: Searching the nearby hills, the party locates a small cave in which drow raiders have set up an outpost by which they can keep an eye on the elves. In the outpost, they encounter a shadar-kai prisoner, and learn that the Starsinger has been captured as tribute for the Raven Queen and taken into the Shadowfell.

Part Three – Broken Dreams: The characters travel to the shadar-kai village of Broken Dreams outside the Raven Queen's Fortress of Memories. The party struggles to locate the captive while also undergoing a series of trials related to their own emotions and ideals culminating with an audience of sorts with the Raven Queen.

Part Four – The Rotted Heart: The party heads to the ruined fortress of Rotten Heart to recover the *conspirator's visage*, an artifact stolen from the Raven Queen by followers of Vecna. If they can win it back, they just might be able to trade it for the Starsinger's freedom.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are a number of ways the characters might become embroiled in the problems of Dripping Leaves.

Defensive Measures. The characters are traveling along the Mistle Road in the western Cormathyr forest, likely on their way to Hillsfar, when they come upon the village of Dripping Leaves in time for their midday meal break. While there, they learn of the drow raids and are asked if they have any suggestions for additional defenses or ways to handle the raids. During their time in the village, the absence of Alyndra is discovered and they are asked to find her.

False Assumptions. The party is passing through Dripping Leaves on the way to the Dalelands when Starsinger Alyndra Eiltris is discovered missing. Being strangers, the characters are initially suspected of being involved in her disappearance and must prove their innocence.

Against the Drow. Dripping Leaves has suffered several drow raids over the last few months and the elves of Cormathyr have put out a call for aid. The characters have answered that call.

Aid in Prophecy. A prophecy of a great treasure to be found on the Sword Coast is unearthed. As a Starsinger of Sehanine Moonbow, Alyndra Eiltris is renowned for interpreting prophecies. The characters have come in search of her seeking aid in finding their next adventure.





PART ONE: THE VILLAGE OF DRIPPING LEAVES

The village is a mixture of ground and tree dwellings. Being on a trade route, most of the businesses are ground level, but the moon elves prefer homes in the trees. Some of the ground level structures are made of lashed branches with thatched roofs, most of those being homes of the transient wood elves. Spread out over approximately fifty acres, the village has five glades around which activities are centered. Some homes are adjacent to these glades, but others wanting more solitude are dispersed about in the woods. Currently there are only sixty able bodied adult elves, and fifteen children. There are about twenty elves, such as those who have been severely injured and the new mother, who cannot fight. They have lost thirty to the drow raids and almost half of those died in the last attack. One of the three clans of wood elves that reside here from time to time are likely to arrive in two or three tendays. There are a number of uninhabited tree homes and numerous wood elf cabins in the village.

GLADES

There are five main glades that act as a center of activity.

The Gathering Glade. The Tavern Tree is the center of this area. The Mistle Trail cuts through one side. Here also are merchant's stalls, some more permeant than others, where various goods made in the village are sold or exchanged for items not made here.

Crafter's Glade. This southern most of the glades lies between the road and the river. Those who work with metal, clay and leather have their workshops there and some of their homes are in the trees adjacent. There was a shrine to Darahl Tilvenar, but it was destroyed in one of the early raids.

Elebrin's Glade. Named in honor of the god of gardens and the harvest, some of the gardens that produce both food and herbs are found here. It is the centermost point of the village. A small shrine to Elebrin Liothiel is located here.

The Training Glade. As its names suggests, this is where those who need space to train their craft – be it learning to shoot a bow, or practicing spells – can do so without harming innocent bystanders. More innocent arts such as dance are also practiced here. This glade is in the north east quadrant of the village. Small shrines to various members of the Seldarine, such as Tethrin Veralde (battle, sword fighting), Solonor Thelanddria (archery, hunting) are in the adjacent trees.

Glade of the Moon. A white spiraling tower is the centerpiece of this glade in the northwest quadrant of the village. This temple predates the village and is the only remnant of some ancient elven hold. Alyndra's parents and younger sister lived in one of the trees along the edge of the glade.

STORY BEAT

The characters can observe the evolving life of elves as they tour the village as well as gain clues regarding both the possible locations of the drow. Thus, the characters should not learn too quickly that Starsinger Alyndra is missing.

THE CHARACTERS ENTER

The trees hug the side of the road offering only a glimpse of the river from time to time. When approaching along the Mistle Trail from Shadowdale, the first visible indication of a settlement is the trees pulling back from the road on characters' right (assume traveling north) allowing them to view an enormous tree in the center of an open area. Encircling the tree is a flat roofed one story building. There are spots on the walls of the building that look a bit scorched and the shutters on the windows seem new. There are three entrances spaced around the building. Two are double doors currently wide open inviting people to enter. One is a single, shut and locked, door. Writing above the doors in both elvish and common "Errant Breeze Tavern and Inn."

On the far side of the space, another building nestles up to the trees bordering the glade. The door along with the sign above it, that says Meldath's Exchange, are obviously new. Next to the building, a three-foot-high fence juts out into the glade about twenty feet before snaking back into the woods.

THE ERRANT BREEZE TAVERN AND INN

It is said that the original owner claimed an errant breeze led him to shelter here, and so he thought it would be a good place to create a place for others to shelter. Prices for food and drink purchased by travelers starts at 3 silvers for ale and lunch of meat and bread, wine costs 5 silvers more. As an alternative, stew is available (though it is actually intended for the evening meal), rabbit with lots of vegetables but it costs 5 silvers (villagers prices are the same but coppers as they helped provide the food).

Interior. The roots of the tree have been worked into the tavern furnishings, some as benches, others act bases for tables with chairs set to either side. The additional furniture is plain, though the curved bar is polished and gleams in the light. To the right of the bar, a staircase goes up to a trap door in the ceiling. Overnight accommodations are in the tree above. Comfortable beds, two to a room.

Two thirds of the circle make up the public area, the other third reserved, for storage and meal prep.

People. Beiro Raethan (archer) moon elf male, short by elven standards (4'8) and muscular, cold blue eyes and long black hair braided close to his head. Brown leather vest and brown pants, short boots. Originally the cook, he now also runs the inn after his Uncle died in the first raid.

Calenda. His daughter, moon elf female, (mage) gold flecked green eyes, silver white hair in multiple braids, (5'2). She answers questions with as few as words possible. She will be wearing grey leathers and working on carving supports for shelves (replacing broken ones) when not serving drinks. "Wandering is okay, but home is ...well it wasn't so bad until the raids picked up."

Silla. Calenda's 10-year-old daughter, barely three feet tall, silver white hair in two braids that barely reach her shoulders and wears a hip length tunic over pants.

ROLE-PLAYING WITH THE STAFF

Berio is curious and open to questioning the characters about who they are and where are they going. He is gravely welcoming, not jovial, but interested. If asked, he talks of the damage and ongoing fear of the villagers. (see bullet points below)

"Grief is for the living, for the deeds unfinished. They who have passed do not need our tears."

Calenda answers questions with as few as words possible. She is concerned, if the Starsinger laspes into Remembrance who will guide her daughter through the Drawing of the Veil? *"Wandering is okay, but home is ...well it wasn't so bad until the raids picked up."*

Silla's current job is sweeping floors. In her trances, Silla remembers her past life as a bard and is fascinated with anyone who carries an instrument. Pleads to simply touch it. She tries to sing or hum, but it always seems to be in the wrong key for her voice.

"I hope the Starsinger is willing to see me later today." Silla is having trouble dealing with the visions she has in her trances.

Information the Staff can impart:

- The village is made up of moon elves, though various clans of wood elves come and stay for a month or two throughout the year, as well as during the winter.
- Drow raids have increased in frequency and it is taking a toll on the village.
- Basic details of the last raid and the tragic death of the Starsinger's family and the acolytes. (see Background)
- The Council that leads the village meets here each day and should be around in an hour or so. This meeting allows the village to come and air grievances or bring problems to their attention.
- Basic information on the council (see "Developments The Council Enters" below).

OTHER LOCATIONS IN THIS GLADE

The party can explore the following additional locations.

MELDATH'S EXCHANGE

Located across from the tavern, this shop uses the barter system as well as coinage. Shelves line the walls, except for the far-right corner, where a high counter angles across the space. The wooden floor is scuffed, and discolorations indicate there might have been free standing shelves or cabinets previously. Currently the shelves are a bit bare, but what is there is all excellent quality. A quick glance reveals a few lengths of cloth, some glazed pottery a bin of nails & hinges, and a couple of embossed leather waterskins. Adjacent to the counter is a small barrel of oats and a slightly larger barrel marked "flour." A woman sits behind the counter. She seems to be working with green yarn and a hooked needle (crocheting lace).

People. Illtern is a moon elf. Wearing robes of blue and green that hang on her thin body she seems very fragile. Delicate hands are rarely still, continuing to work with the thin yarn even as she speaks with the characters, seemingly not needing to look at her handwork.



A shrewd bargainer, she is more interested in acquiring items the villagers might need rather than gold. If asked who Meldath is, she explains that the original owner was her great grandmother, but she has run the place for the last hundred years.

"The raids have made it hard for our people to produce excess goods to sell. What have you to offer?"

THE SHELTERING BRANCHES

While the locals refer to it as stables, this is more a corral, which includes trees and an area protected by higher walls with a thatched roof.

Draft and riding animals are kept in this glade, but each glade has one or more of these shelters for animals. There are no charges for stabling; the younger members of the village are tasked with care of the various animals. Owners are expected to provide feed for their animal, though visitors can purchase feed.

People. Rilleran is a young elf of only 16 years, diligent in his care of the various animals, but his dreams are filled with the song of swords. (in past life he was a bladesinger, but in his current life he has an affinity for animals and is more likely to end up a druid.)

THE COUNCIL ENTERS

The Council is not made up of the eldest in the village, but rather those of mature years still interested in this world. They are charged with hearing any disputes and organizing the village in times of need. The council members are rotated so that no one is overburdened.

However, the raids have whittled down those who might be so tasked. The current members are:

- **Haimath Berevan.** Lean and wearing serviceable green robes his long black hair is held back from his face by embossed copper headband. A mage and usual teacher for those who wish to begin learning the art of magery.
- **Dara Cithreth.** Tall silver white hair, distinct blue tint to her skin and green eyed. Has a high lilting voice and is known to sing as she weaves or spins. Wears the same copper embossed headband mentioned above. She is more philosophical about the possibility that Alyndra might pull away from everyday life. Her calm manner and matter of fact attitude has been key to keeping the village together.
- **Sariel.** Short black hair, blue eyed and pale of complexion, she wears splint mail and has both a longsword carried in a back sheath and a short sword on her hip. Intended to stop only overnight in the village last month, as she wished to wander the great forest, but the drow attacked that night and she felt compelled to stay with her fellow moon elves and assist in their defense.

ROLEPLAYING WITH THE COUNCIL

When the council members enter, they sit at a table where they can observe the characters. Depending on how the characters have been behaving, one or more of them may approach the group. If the characters have already expressed interest in helping the village to Berio or Calenda, that NPC informs the Council. Otherwise, one of the following occurs (DM choses what works best for the group or their personal style):

- If there is someone among the characters who is obviously a magic user or priest, Hamith approaches them, striking up a conversation about their studies and travels, feeling them out to see if they could help the village. His concern about the possible loss of Alyndra's guidance is very personal. The village has three children that may soon experience the Drawing of the Veil, two of which are his direct descendants.

- Characters that are obviously fighters or possibly leaders are soon visited by Sariel. She asks the characters for suggestions to improve the villages defenses. She is not yet comfortable in the role thrust upon her when the former elder that had this role died in the last attack. While she has experience as a fighter (veteran), she knows her training in fortifications can be improved. (Most of the other elves that are left count as scouts for combat purposes with a few apprentice mages and mages.) She offers to take them around to the sites of the attacks..

Additional Information the Council can convey on the raids.

- Some of the raids have been on individual residences, or occasionally a group of residences if they are closer together.
- The earliest raids were against this glade and the Crafter's Glade. The raiders could be sure of finding items of value in both of those locations.
- The last raid was the deadliest, though we have lost people every time those foul drow raid.

DEVELOPMENTS

At the very least, the characters are asked to offer advice on training and defenses. One of the Council takes them on a tour of the village. If the group is not one that enjoys investigation, have an elf run up to them and address whichever Council member is the group's guide. *"She is gone! The Starsinger is Gone! I was sent to bring her some restorative broth but she is not there!"* Use this at any point in the tour.

OTHER LOCATIONS IN THE VILLAGE

The party can explore the following additional locations.

CRAFTERS GLADE

Located between the river and the road, it has easy access to water and clay. The ground in the glade is packed dirt with areas of small rocks. In the center is a large covered area, the center of which holds a small forge and several kilns. Downstream of the glade (and the village) is a building and vats used for tanning hides. Work goes on in the main center and in several small buildings situate around the glade. There were ten buildings before the raids started, now only the central building and four others are still whole.

Central Building. The sides are all open to allow the heat of the forge to dissipate.

Tal's. The blacksmith keeps his tools and the items he needs for his craft here. Unless he is doing custom work or shoeing a horse, his finished product is sold through Meldath's Exchange. He mainly makes nails, straps, axels and horse shoes, though he can do knives.

Adian's. He usually makes dinnerware and decorative items in equal measure, now he is focused solely on dinnerware, so families can replace broken/lost items.

Varis and Tenith. They work with herbs and other natural substances to make dyes for thread and cloth. They spin colored thread of various weights but do not weave cloth, though they have vats that can dye large bolts of cloth.

Destroyed buildings. The previous crafters who used these have either died or been injured during the raids. Two buildings are basically rubble. The others can be repaired however any items of value have been removed, whether by the raiders or the villagers. There was a jeweler, two other potters, a leatherworker and a fletcher. The latter two hope to be able to return to their craft as soon as their broken bones are finished mending.

Clues to be found here. This area was attacked last 3 tendays ago but had been attacked four times previously. There is some concern that the drow are simply waiting for more items to be made in order to make attacking this part of the village of value again. Which is one reason none of the damaged buildings are currently being rebuilt.

TRAINING GLADE

The smallest of the glades, and one that has not been attacked. The surrounding woods include the homes of Haimath (council and mage), Caelyn and Amil (acolytes of Hanali Celanil, goddess of love, beauty and the arts) and Kentah, the former sword master of the village who removed himself from everyday village life ten years ago having entered the Remembrance.

People. Sariel is usually here training with some of the villagers (refreshing skills not used lately for most) Archery targets are set up and a few are doing sword drills. Also, some of the "older" of the children (age 15+) are getting basic instructions. If for some reason the characters have not yet met her, she asks them if they have any suggestions regarding training or defenses.

ELEBRIN'S GLADE

No real reason for them to go here, but if they do, some of the gardens show signs of having been trampled when people panicked during a raid. Herbs, vegetables and flowers grow intermingled together in a harmonious whole. There are also some smaller versions of the Sheltering Branches corrals. One has a number of goats that look longingly at the garden even though they have well filled feeding troughs while another has a lone pregnant sow. The woods surrounding this glade include many homes and usually two or more elves are tending to the gardens or animals. This glade has not seen a direct attack. .

MOON GLADE

If not informed before they reach here, then the characters discover that the Starsinger is missing. Whichever member of the Council is with them instigates a search of the village confirming she is not to be found and no one has seen her this day.

The Temple. A white spiraling tower is the centerpiece of this glade. Stairs wind up its outside giving access to the various levels within. Crescent shaped rooms, like petals of a flower, jut out from the penultimate floor. These are bedrooms for the acolytes and the priestess, arranged such that they can always sleep with the light of the moon shining in their room. The tower is high enough that the bedrooms are above tree height. The level above is clear glass. A shaft from this level reflects moonlight to the chapel below. The first level is classrooms, kitchen and storage. The second level is the shrine to Sehanine Moonbow. The chapel's central area is open to the top of the tower allowing moonlight to filter down from the glass point. Shrines around the edge of the room reflect the various aspects of Sehanine Moonbow. The tower only has three levels despite its lofty height.

Clues to be found here.

- Three of the trees on the northwest edge of the glade show signs of serious damage. Further examination reveals damage from both spells, swords, and crossbows.
- If the bedroom level is investigated, it is obvious that most of the acolytes died in their beds.
- The Starsinger's bedchamber shows no signs that she intended to leave.
- Evidence of a fight on the chapel level is numerous. Some marks are from three days ago, but a few are less than 12 hours old.
- Along with the more recent damage to the floor, the shrines took damage in the recent fight, however no additional items seem to be missing. There are also a few black crow feathers scattered about the shrines.
- The more recent damage is from when the priestess was taken. An Intelligence (Investigation) DC 20 check reveals that a group of humanoids entered the tower and after a short fight took away the priestess.

- If the check succeeds by 5 or more, then the characters know that spiked chains were used by some of the combatants and the fight occurred around midnight.
- There have not been many people in the glade today, so if the characters take some time looking for tracks they can discover with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check the path taken out of the glade by the kidnappers, and the drow raiders (same path which reinforces the villages belief that the drow have their priestess).
- If anyone asks, there have been a few crows in the area recently, but nothing seemed odd about it. They did not bother the crops, so no real notice was taken.

DEVELOPMENTS

The Council asks the characters to retrieve their priestess from the hands of the drow. The characters may keep any items of value they find on the drow. The path the characters found lead them to Part Two.





PART TWO: PHORKYRYL OUTPOST

The characters investigate the Phorkyryl drow outpost in Cormathyr forest to learn Starsinger Alyndra Eiltris' fate. In this cave, the characters meet Batarn Alloit, a captive shadar-kai who can give them Alyndra's whereabouts and get them to the Shadowfell.

WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

The Phorkyryl drow came from the Underdark city of Menzoberranzan and use this outpost to make raids on Dripping Leaves and other elf villages on the surface. Renix T'will, the first son of House T'will and accomplished warrior, leads the forces here with the help of his twin sister Uvella. These drow forces raided Dripping Leaves several times over the last few months and have no plan to stop.

A few days after their last raid, drow scouts came upon Batarn Alloit, a shadar-kai, in the forest around Dripping Leaves. The scouts captured Batarn. Uvella tortured him, but Batarn stays silent. Renix suspects the shadar-kai of spying on the drow.

Batarn is one of the Raven Queen's servants that abducted Alyndra and brought her to the village of Broken Dreams in the Shadowfell at the deity's command.

APPROACHING THE OUTPOST

The entrance to the outpost is a cave opening in the side of a hill covered by two **earth elemental myrmidons** buried in dirt with orders to attack any non-drow creature not escorted by a drow that comes within 10 feet of the entrance. The myrmidons also have orders to stand aside and reveal the entrance to any drow that get within 10 feet of the entrance, which the elementals do for the characters if one of them is a drow, half-elf with a drow parent, or disguised as a drow.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the outline of the elemental's armor under the dirt. Characters who do not notice the outline of the armor are surprised if the myrmidons rise to attack.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** Only one **earth elemental myrmidon** guards the door.
- **Weak:** Replace both **earth elemental myrmidons** with **earth elementals**.
- **Strong:** The **earth elemental myrmidons** each have 177 hit points.
- **Very strong:** A third **earth elemental myrmidon** guards the entrance.

FEATURES OF THE OUTPOST

The outpost has the following features:

Ceilings. The ceilings in the outpost are 8 feet high.

Doors. The doors in the outpost are wood and have AC 15, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If a door is locked, a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools picks it lock and a successful DC 17 Strength check forces the door open. Renix and Uvella T'will hold keys to any locked doors.

Earthen Rooms. Whenever a creature rolls a 1 on an ability check to interact with the environment or on an attack roll, the dirt ceiling above them partially collapses. That creature must immediately succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Illumination. Unless otherwise noted in an area's description, there are no sources of illumination in the outpost.

Smells and Sounds. A strong earthy smell permeates the halls and the sounds of drow practicing swordplay and talking quietly can be heard throughout the complex.

O1. ENTRANCE HALL

An earthen hall curves to the east and north. You can hear murmured voices speaking in Elvish down the east hall and the faint sounds of swords clinking down the north.

The drow placed a magic trap in this hall to harm intruders and alert the complex at the same time.

Glyph of Warding. A *glyph of warding* is placed in the first hall intersection closest to the outpost entrance. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices the glyph. The glyph triggers an explosive runes effect that deals thunder damage when a non-drow creature passes over the area (see the *glyph of warding's* description in the Player's Handbook). A creature that notices the rune can simply skirt by it. If the glyph is triggered, the drow in area O4 investigate at the start of the next round and the drow in area O2 arrive two rounds after them.

O2. OUTPOST COMMON ROOM

Swords clash, forks clink, and voices chat in this dirt chamber where drow practice swordplay with practice dummies, eat rations at two round tables, and rest on bedrolls scattered around the edge of the room. A stack of crates and barrels stands along the east wall.

There are sixteen **drow** practicing, eating, sleeping, or socializing in this room. A drow character can pretend to be an ally of the assembled drow here (and pass of the other characters as captives) with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check. If the drow are duped, they point the characters to the prison cells (area O5) as a place to keep new slaves.

If the characters have no drow among them or fail to convince the Phorkyryl drow they are allies, the Phorkyryl drow attack. If eight or more of the drow fall, the remaining flee to the officer quarters (area O4).

Barrels and Crates. There are six 2-foot-cubic barrels that each hold 50 pounds of dried meat, mushrooms, and hard bread. The 4-foot-tall barrels each weigh 500 pounds and are filled with water.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** There are only eight **drow** in the room.
- **Weak:** There are only twelve **drow** in the room.
- **Strong:** There are eighteen **drow** in the room.
- **Very strong:** There are twenty-four **drow** in the room.

O3. SHRINE TO LOLTH

This area is brightly lit by the brazier within.

The burning scent of holy incense permeates this chamber lit by a brazier shaped like a bloated spider in the northwest corner of the room. The firelight dances around a stone altar set with a small statue of a beautiful drow woman standing on a pile of severed elf heads. Red script is carved into the altar's obsidian front.

The drow pray at the altar before raids and when they need guidance from Lolth. If a fight breaks out here, the drow in area O2 investigate.



Altar. A detect magic spell reveals and aura of conjuration magic about the altar. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals the statue on the altar is one of Lolth's many forms. The Elvish script on the altar reads, "Offer fealty to the Spider Queen or face her wrath."

If a creature leaves this room without offering a verbal prayer to Lolth or damages the altar, the altar summons an **armanite** who attacks the creature that triggered its summoning as well as any other non-drow creatures it can see. The demon fights to the death.

Secret Door. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the outline of a secret door. This door leads to a tunnel that leads to cell B of area O5. The drow know of this passage and use it to escape and surround intruders.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** The **armanite** has 50 hit points.
- **Weak:** The **armanite** has 64 hit points.
- **Strong:** The **armanite** has 124 hit points.
- **Very strong:** Two **armanites** appear when the altar is triggered.



O4. OFFICER QUARTERS

Renix and Uvella T'will sleep and hold meetings in this area of the outpost.

A. WAR ROOM

A drow dressed in red robes woven with a black spider web pattern stands next to a drow in chainmail as they pore over a circular table in the center of the room set with a map. They speak to each other in Elvish, having an excited conversation about something violent.

Renix T'will, a **drow house captain**, is planning the next raid on Dripping Leaves with Marr'zak D'vel, a **drow mage**. The drow attack intruders on sight. Each fights until reduced to half his hit points and then retreats to the common room (area O2).

ROLEPLAYING RENIX T'WILL (REN ICKS TAH WILL)

Renix T'will is a cunning pragmatist who wants nothing more than to return home to the Underdark. He rose through the ranks by remaining loyal to the matron mother of House T'will and enjoys her protection as long as he remains in the drow city of Menzoberranzan. He has a soft spot for his sister Uvella, but abandons it if he learns of her plot to kill him.

A drow character can pretend to be Renix and Marr'zak's ally (and pass off the other characters as captives) with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Deception) check. If the check succeeds, Renix yells at the characters for interrupting and tells any drow characters to escort the captives to the prisoner pens (area O5).

Renix is overworked, irritable, and eager to strike Dripping Leaves again. The drow captain hates life on the surface. Once the elf settlement falls, he can return victorious to the Underdark. He is devoted to his house and has no idea that his sister is plotting to kill him (see area O4B). If the characters present Renix with the letter in Uvella's room, he promises to release any prisoners into the characters care and leave the surface to return home with news of his sister's death, provided the characters murder Uvella first. Renix is true to his word.

Map. The map on the table is a map of Dripping Leaves. The notes in Elvish around the map indicate the drow of the outpost are preparing for a final assault on the village in a tenday's time.

Treasure. In addition to the drow's equipment, Renix carries a key to the doors in the outpost.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** Replace Renix's **drow house captain** statistics with **drow elite warrior** statistics.
- **Weak:** The **drow house captain** has 120 hit points.
- **Strong:** The **drow house captain** has 200 hit points.
- **Very strong:** Add eight **drow** to the encounter.

B. UVELLA'S ROOM

The door to this room is locked (see “Features of the Outpost”).

This cramped room sports a bedroll at its center and a small wood box at the back of the room.

Uvella sleeps and keeps her personal possessions in this room.

Chest. The chest is wood and has AC 15, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. It is locked. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools picks it lock and a successful DC 15 Strength check forces the door open. Uvella T'will holds key to the chest.

The chest has a lock with a poison needle trap (see “Traps” in chapter 5, “Adventure Environments,” of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The needle is poisoned with drow poison (see “Poisons” in chapter 8, “Running the Game,” of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The chest holds gems (see “Treasure”) and letter to Uvella's lover from her (see “Letter”).

Letters. Uvella has written a letter in Elvish to her lover, a drow in the Underdark named Carro Maz'wa. The letter is in the chest as she waits for a drow scout to return to Underdark to deliver it. The contents of the letter reveal Carro is next in line to be the house captain of House T'will after Renix. In the letter, Uvella promises to find a way to kill her brother without raising suspicion so Carro can climb the ranks.

Treasure. The chest contains two bloodstones (50 gp each).

C. RENIX'S ROOM

The door to this room is locked (see “Features of the Outpost”).

A neatly rolled up bedroll and a tidy backpack on the floor against the wall are the only things this room has to offer.

Renix sleeps here and keeps his personal possession in this room.

Treasure. In addition to the ten days of rations, 50 feet of silk rope, waterskin, and clothes in Renix's backpack, he also keeps a purse of 200 gp behind his pack against the wall.

O5. PRISON CELLS

The drow don't take many prisoners on their raids, but when someone strikes them as valuable or curious, they put them in the prison cells to be questioned later.

A. EMPTY CELL

This cell is unlocked and is empty.

B. SECRET PASSAGE CELL

This cell is unlocked and empty. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the outline of a secret door at the back of the cell. This door leads to a tunnel leads to area O3. The drow know of this passage and use it to escape and surround intruders.

C. CORPSE CELL

This cell door is locked (see “Features of the Outpost”).

Inside the cell is the corpse of a young elf named Sarcoset Feydrake, wearing a signet ring of his family.

Treasure. If Sarcoset's body is returned to his family in Dripping Leaves, they give the characters a reward of 100 gp as thanks.

D. CAPTIVE'S CELL

The cell door is locked (see “Features of the Outpost”). Inside the cell is Elleema Carrowtree (CG female wood elf **commoner**), a captive of Dripping Leaves who had her tongue removed by Uvella for refusing to share any information. Elleema is grateful if the characters rescue her and keeps pointing at the door to cell G to indicate Uvella's location. If she is escorted to the entrance of the outpost, she gets herself home.

E. EMPTY CELL

This cell is unlocked and is empty.

F. SKELETON CELL

This cell door is locked (see “Features of the Outpost”). Inside the cell is a skeleton that a **swarm of insects** (spiders) crawls all over. If the spiders are disturbed, they attack and fight to the death.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a small purse in the skeleton’s rib cage, covered in spiders.

Treasure. The purse contains 25 gp.

G. BATERN’S CELL

This cell door is locked (see “Features of the Outpost”). When the characters enter, read or paraphrase:

A steel coffin lies in the center of this large prison cell. Atop the coffin a drow woman with close-shaved hair stands looking down at you with red eyes, her hands on her swords. “What have we here?” she whispers as she draws forth her blade.

Uvella T’will, a **drow shadowblade**, stands on an iron maiden containing Bart Alloit, a shadar-kai **shadow dancer** with 1 hit point remaining, inside. If the characters attack, Uvella fights back, taking full advantage of her ability to teleport in darkness. Uvella fights until reduced to 20 hit points and then flees the outpost.

ROLEPLAYING UVELLA T’WILL (OO VELL UH TAH WILL)

U’vella T’will is a sadist who cares for no one but herself and her lover, Carro Maz’wa, a drow who remains in Menzoberranzan. The cruel woman plots to murder her brother Renix so her lover can rise through House T’will’s ranks. She enjoys killing above all.

If the characters talk with her, Uvella stops them mid-sentence and asks them to kill her brother Renix. The characters are the answer to her prayers to Lolth, a way for Renix to die without his blood on her hands. If the characters agree, Uvella promises to take the rest of the drow in the complex and return to the Underdark after freeing any living captives. A DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals she is lying. Uvella plans to let the characters kill her brother while she rallies the other drow in the complex to kill them.

Iron Maiden. The heavy lid of the iron maiden requires a successful DC 15 Strength check to open. The iron maiden has AC 19, 50 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

The inside of the iron maiden is lined with spikes and can hold one Medium creature. A creature inside the iron maiden when it is closed takes 16 (3d10) piercing damage.

The iron maiden contains Batern, gagged and bound with rope.

Treasure. In addition to her equipment, Uvella carries a key to the doors in the outpost and the chest in her room (area O4B).

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** Replace Uvella’s **drow shadowblade** statistics with **drow priestess of Lolth** statistics.
- **Weak:** The **drow shadowblade** has 120 hit points.
- **Strong:** The **drow shadowblade** has 200 hit points.
- **Very strong:** Add six **drow** to the encounter.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the characters free Batern, they notice the shadar-kai has the same crow feathers in his hair and on his torn clothes found at the scene of Starsinger Alyndra Eiltris’ disappearance.

Batern is too weak to talk, but if the characters restore any number of hit points to him, or allow the shadar-kai to take a short rest, he gratefully thanks them and introduces himself before inquiring about the characters and what they seek. If the characters do not mention Alyndra, the shadar-kai asks them point blank if they are looking for her.

Batern, feeling he owes the characters his life, shares the following details of Alyndra’s story with the characters:

- The Raven Queen, goddess of death and shadar-kai, keeps a collection of sad, painful, guilty, and remorseful memories harvested from mortals.
- Because of her family’s slaughter, the Raven Queen wanted to harvest Alyndra’s sorrowful memories for her collection.
- A group of shadar-kai including Batern came to the Material Plane to take Alyndra back to the village of Broken Dreams outside the Raven Queen’s fortress in the Shadowfell.
- Batern stayed behind to watch Dripping Leaves for other elves that might interest the Raven Queen, while the rest of his group abducted and returned with Alyndra.
- After a long rest, Batern can perform a ritual to open a gate to the Shadowfell for the characters to allow them a chance to petition for the Alyndra’s return.

When the characters are ready, Batern opens a portal for them.

ROLEPLAYING BATERN ALLOIT (BAY TURN AH LOIT)

Batern Alloit is a stoic shadar-kai who is loyal to his goddess and those who show him kindness. Once Batern makes a friend, he defends that friend with his life. The shadar-kai is as gentle as he is quiet and resolute.



PART THREE: THE VILLAGE OF BROKEN DREAMS

Having arrived in the company of Batern Alloit, the characters in the village of Broken Dream, just outside the Fortress of Memories. Still on the trail of Starsinger Alyndra Eiltris, the party must deal with an undead incursion, the disconnected inhabitants, and the tests of Raven Queen.

WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

The village of Broken Dreams is one of many similar shadar-kai enclaves in the Shadowfell, but what makes it special is its proximity to the Fortress of Memories and the Raven Queen. From here, her minions gather the choicest memories to stave off the oppression of the Shadowfell.

Unfortunately, the Raven Queen's minions are not alone in the Shadowfell. Followers of the Whispered One, Vecna, are a constant threat. Undead and cultists frequently raid the village in their quest to gain access to the Fortress of Memories and all of its secrets.

It is exceedingly rare for outsiders to voluntarily come to Broken Dreams. The bright flame of the characters' emotion almost immediately catches the Raven Queen's attention and she decides to test them.

FEATURES OF BROKEN DREAMS

The following features apply throughout Broken Dreams:

Curse of the Evergloom. All within the village's boundaries are afflicted with the curse of the evergloom. The characters must attempt a saving throw every hour they are in Broken Dreams.

Empty and Abandoned. The small village is built as if the densest of cities sprouted here and spread a dozen or so blocks in each direction. Walls are painted in shades of black and grey, splotches of lichen and moss crumbling the masonry. Tall tenements of rotten wood and peeling paint have only a few occupied rooms; the rest given over to dust, rats, or worse. Characters see only one or two hooded and masked humanoids in the mist as they walk the garbage crowded cobblestone streets. Through grimy windows, the characters can peer at the empty shelves of a business, a single candle struggling to hold the darkness at bay. Doors are unlocked and squeal loudly on badly rusted hinges. Everywhere is the feeling of neglect, apathy, and alienation from other residents.

Illumination. The pervasive gloom of the Shadowfell prevents the light levels from ever rising above dim; even in the presence of magic. Most streets have only a few lanterns; a desperate attempt to illuminate dark corners. Total darkness is even more common.

Smells and Sounds. The air is filled with smells of rotting wood and smoke. Whispers and occasional far-off weeping echo through the mist.

Weather. It is constantly damp and cold, with a heavy mist swirling on unfelt breezes.

CURSE OF THE EVERGLOOM

Proximity to the Raven Queen and the soul crushing despair of the Shadowfell combine to create an insidious curse for those that linger too long in Broken Dreams. The curse of the evergloom slowly drains away every memory that gives a creature passion. Every hour that a creature with an Intelligence of 6 or higher is within the borders of Broken Dreams, they must succeed in on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be afflicted.

A creature that succumbs is affected by a calm emotions spell and loses a Personality Trait, Bond, Ideal, or Flaw; usually starting with those most tied to strong emotion. Such a creature intellectually knows the missing personal characteristic was part of them but cannot muster any desire to recover it. This curse cannot be removed within Broken Dreams without venturing into the Fortress of Memories to retrieve it from the Raven Queen herself.

Touchstones. Objects have meaning, and in Broken Dreams, they can help fend off the curse. Any item that reminds of or symbolizes a trait might help protect the creature. For example, a cleric with the Ideal “I trust my deity guides my actions,” might find solace clutching a holy symbol of their faith, while a rogue with the Flaw “I value coin over friendship,” might hold onto that part of herself by pocketing a gold piece he stole from the cleric. Any such reminder gives the character advantage on their next saving throw against the curse and if the character succeeds, the object becomes a touchstone. While in Broken Dreams, a touchstone houses a memory crucial to one’s identity (such as a Personality Trait, Bond, Ideal, or Flaw) and may keep the curse from ever siphoning away that memory. A character with four touchstones becomes immune to the curse.

In Broken Dreams, touchstones are coveted as extremely valuable and are sometimes stolen, used as currency, or offered as tribute to the Raven Queen. Anyone handling a touchstone for a short rest experiences the feelings associated with the touchstone, and any creature losing their touchstone loses that piece of themselves. The characters would do well to guard any touchstones they create.

GATE OF DISCARDED MEMORIES

Batern snuffs out all the light in the room while muttering arcane words, and when he next lights a candle, you are in a different room. One filled with clutter. Dented copper pots, moldering dolls with cracked porcelain faces, furniture with stuffing poking through the upholstery; all of it piled haphazardly against wooden plank walls whose paint peels free in long strips.

Batern Alloit has performed the ritual to enter the Shadowfell and transported the party to third floor of an empty tenement building on the far edge of the city-like village. Unfortunately, Ghoriliath’s undead forces are probing for a foothold among the empty edges of the village and are quickly drawn to this new source of life. A **wraith** and 5 **shadows** come through the walls in the darkness and confusion. They fight until destroyed.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** Replace the **wraith** with a **ghost**. Remove one **shadow**.
- **Weak:** Remove two **shadows**.
- **Strong:** Replace two **shadows** with a **ghost**.
- **Very strong:** Add a **ghost**.

TREASURE

When the wraith dies, a ruby pendant on a silver chain falls to the floor. The ruby is shaped in the form of a hand holding an eye. This holy symbol of Vecna is worth 500 gp.

THE SECRETS OF BROKEN DREAMS

Batern is deeply concerned about the presence of undead inside the village. He is quick to tell the characters the following important details:

- Broken Dreams has been under attack by undead loyal to a cult of Vecna. He has never known them to have successfully gotten inside the village before. Things must have escalated since he left for the characters’ plane.
- Batern is adamant that they must warn the rest of his people, even though the characters might be hesitant to trust the shadar-kai of Broken Dreams. He wants to seek out Markella, the village’s leader. She interprets the Raven Queen’s will and helps decide which memories will please her most. If anyone will be able to rally the village it is her. They must go to the Court of Empty Desires. If anyone would be able to help them recover the Starsinger, it is her.
- However, because of the Shadowfell, the village is cursed and it’s likely to affect the characters. The curse of the evergloom will drain them of every thought and feeling important to who they are. They will each need a touchstone.

Before Batern is able to warn the party about the details of the curse and touchstones, the Raven Queen decides to begin their trial and removes Batern.

Batern pauses at the sound of scratching coming from the boarded-up window. Suddenly one of the boards flies free and hundreds of ravens stream into the room pecking and scratching at Batern. You lose all sight of him as the swirling mass of cawing black feathers assaults your senses.

Then just as suddenly as it began, it ends. With the sound of rushing wind, the mass explodes showering the room in black feathers. Batern is gone and you are alone in this strange place.

NAVIGATING THE VILLAGE

Travel through Broken Dreams is confusing and ethereal. The characters should feel lost, stumbling from one trial to the next, and feeling like they are being toyed with. The residents of the area avoid them are unhelpful, resistant to dealing with strangers. The feeling of alienation is palpable.



The search through the village is left to the DM to describe, adjusting to the style of the players. Role-play the search and encounters as much appropriate remembering that for every hour in the village, the characters must make a save against the curse of the evergloom.

Discovering Touchstones. Throughout their search and the trials, the theme of the curse and the touchstones that stave it off should reoccur until the characters are confident to form their own.

Possible things the characters might interact with:

- A shadar-kai urchin that offers to show the characters how to form a talisman to protect themselves. Anything they hand the child is pocketed as he teleports away and tries to run. His touchstone is bracelet woven of his sister's hair that reminds him of his dedication to her.
- The characters see a general shop with only a few sickly beets and a single bottle of sour wine. The shop owner is a quiet elderly woman who charges exorbitant prices, or a touchstone, for the food. She wishes only to speak of her goods unless the characters buy something, in which case she will offer them a hint about the curse or give directions that lead to their next trial. Her touchstone is her shawl that reminds her how much she hates being out in the cold.
- A masked and robed man who is in a hurry. He is very impatient and assumes that characters are amusing themselves by delaying him with questions they know the answers to. He tries angrily to tell the party to leave him be. His touchstone is a cane that fills him with an impatience for others.
- A kindly young woman is cutting up a corpse and feeding it to an ennuis. She is helpful and warns the characters to form touchstones as soon as they can. Hers is the cleaver which houses her dedication to do anything to protect her friend, the ennuis.

- A bloodied woman cries softly in a corner over a scrap of torn baby blanket. She has been robbed and is already beginning to forget her love for her children now that her touchstone has been stolen.

TRIALS OF THE RAVEN QUEEN

As the party travels through the village, searching for clues that might lead them to Markella, they face three challenges. They encounter approximately one each hour. Using their personalities and experiences, the Raven Queen twists the streets of Broken Dreams with the intent of challenging the characters' fears and desires.

Keep track of which characters play to their traits and which do not. It will matter to the Raven Queen in the end.

TAILORING THE TRIALS

Trials of the Raven Queen are tailored to the individuals undergoing them. As such the DM is encouraged to adjust them based on the Personality Traits, Bonds, Ideals, and Flaws of characters present. As such, each trial has the following sections

Traits. This subsection at the beginning of each encounter lists examples of traits that are that likely to feature most prominently and how the encounter might be adjusted to focus on them.

Conflicts. This highlights potentially conflicting traits that might cause a character to avoid or limit their interaction with the encounter. The Raven Queen watches for those with strong personalities. The DM should liberally award Inspiration to those that hold true to their traits, even if it's to the disadvantage of the party as a whole.

ALLEY OF FORGOTTEN INSPIRATION

As the party searches for the Court of Empty Desires, they hear screams coming from a nearby alley.

Customizing this encounter:

Traits. Choose to focus on characters that have traits around protecting the innocent or close ties to a non-adventuring friend or relative. If a character has such a tie, then the shadar-kai have abducted that person and brought them here specifically for this tableau. After its completed, they disappear in a swarm of ravens, similar to how Batern was taken away.

Conflicts. Characters who seek to protect animals might be tempted to chase off or subdue the ennuisis. Characters with flaws centered around not caring for others or not getting involved in trouble, might not assist the innocent. Play up these traits.

This maze of alleys has the following features:

- The sides are littered with old crates and garbage made all the much harder to see by the ever-present mist.
- Screams and barking can be heard as a **shadow dancer** and two **ennuisi** chase an innocent.

Hunters. The shadow dancer uses the ennuisi to harry their target, clearly trying to frighten more than harm. Their goal is to motivate the characters to action in order to see if they hold true their core values. Characters who try to negotiate find the shadow dancer more than willing. He offers to give the characters the life of the innocent and directions on the next stage of their journey, but only if one of them does something that violates one of their core values: such as a character with a greedy trait paying a large sum of gold, or a cagey character betraying a secret. Any directions given lead to the Plaza of the Lost.

If the characters solve their problem with violence, they are more than willing to repay in kind. The ennuisi fight to the death, but if all hope is lost, the shadow dancer tries to teleport away.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** Remove one **ennuisi**.
- **Weak or Strong:** No change.
- **Very strong:** Add a **shadow dancer**.

Treasure. The shadow dancer wears a pouch with an oil of etherealness, 50 gp, and a well-worn jade whistle worth 10 gp. While in Broken Dreams, the whistle serves as a touchstone and bestows the bond “I like canines more than people.”

PLAZA OF THE LOST

A break in the fog leads the characters to a plaza where several shadar-kai mill about.

Customizing this encounter:

Traits. Characters with traits centered around community, concern for others’ well-being, spreading joy, or personal grief make a good center piece for this encounter. If there is a particular type of focus for their feelings, such as children, they are present in the crowd.

Conflicts. Characters that are out for themselves or seek to torment the weak might find easy prey in the plaza, and make it harder for those trying to do a good deed.

The plaza has the following features:

- The cobblestone plaza is centered around a dry fountain that depicts a masked woman wearing a feathered cloak. Stains suggest that at one time, water flowed from her empty eye sockets like tears.
- The bottom of the fountain is filled with mud and dead leaves.
- A dozen shadar-kai wander aimlessly, taking no heed of each other.

Fountain. The fountain has broken due to age. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) notes a grime covered access panel in the back of the pedestal the statue rests upon, suggesting that the fountain’s workings could be repaired. Any character who succeeds in a DC 15 Intelligence (appropriate tool proficiency) can repair the fountain in 10 minutes. If the fountain is flowing, characters gain advantage on ability checks to rouse the Lost.

The Lost. These emaciated shadar-kai have lost all memories of their past and are emotionless shells of their former selves. Each wanders lost, mumbling to themselves. It is clear that eventually, they will starve and die. They do not acknowledge others unless they can be made feel something again. None of these shadar-kai carry touchstones, or any possessions beyond their clothes.



Possible solutions to rouse one or more of the Lost include:

- **Ability Checks:** It is possible to bestow a flicker of emotion in one of the Lost through a particular good performance or tale. At the DM's discretion significant role-playing and a DC 20 Charisma related check evokes a feeling in one. The feeling is hollow and fleeting, but sufficient to allow interaction.
- **Touchstones:** Giving one of the Lost a touchstone that the characters have found elsewhere or created themselves rouses one of the Lost. Note that giving away touchstones created by one of the characters also gives away that trait.
- **Using Magic:** Beacon of hope, fear, heroism, or suggestion, or other spells that force emotion onto another automatically succeed.

If the characters manage to rouse one of the Lost, they can offer the following information:

- This is the Plaza of the Lost. Those who lose all hope and feeling find their way here, until they die only to be resurrected anew by the Raven Queen. Death for the shadar-kai is only the passing of a used-up shell. They will have another.
- The poor or unlucky who lose all of their touchstones and are no longer to craft any more frequently end up as the Lost. It is why shadar-kai are so willing to undertake missions to the Prime Material plane, as it lets them gather more memories and feelings, as well as mementos, that allow them to stave off the curse of the evergloom.
- The Lost can give directions to the Court of Empty Desires where Markella can be found, but warns that those found wanting by the Raven Queen will have to pay a tribute, and the Raven Queen only values passionate memories.

Treasure. Searching the fountain basin and succeeding on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check locates a platinum coin (see Treasure).

While in Broken Dreams, the coin serves as a touchstone and bestows the personality trait “You know that better days are right around the corner, if you just keep hoping for them.”

COURT OF EMPTY DESIRES

Markella has set up a revel in an out of the way courtyard where shadar-kai tell tales, sing songs, and ape the rituals of elven society without the vibrancy found under the forest.

Customizing this encounter:

Traits. Those with traits that promote accommodating others, honoring rituals or others' cultures, or even those who embrace celebration will find themselves a focus for this encounter.

Conflicts. Characters who spit in the face of tradition, hate elves, or disrupt others' celebrations will cause conflict in the Court.

The court has the following immediately apparent:

- Markella, a **gloom weaver**, sits upon a raised platform petting an **ennuisis**. A **shadow dancer** watches over her

protectively. The group stands watching passively unless directly approached.

- Ten masked shadar-kai **scouts** play sad elven music, eating tasteless elven dishes at long tables, or otherwise take part in daily rituals that should be eerily familiar to those witnessed by the characters in Dripping Leaves. Those with a Passive Insight of 15 or higher note that the shadar-kai are desperate to enact these rituals, as if they are particularly important to them.
- A dozen ravens silently watch the court intently.

SHADAR-KAI SCOUTS

The shadar-kai scouts have the same statistics as normal **scouts** with these modifications:

- They have 60-ft. darkvision, advantage on saves against being charmed, can't be put to sleep, and have resistance to necrotic damage.
- They can use *Blessing of the Raven Queen* once.

As soon as the party enters the courtyard or make their appearance known, the scouts move to welcome them. They give them food, drink, and try to include them into their sad revels. If any of the characters resist, the revels become more and more frenzied, as the shadar-kai become more frantic. If characters still try to avoid celebrating, the celebrants try to force them to dance, drink, or take part in their pantomime.

At this point combat is likely, though the shadar-kai only knock characters unconscious. The party on the stage does not join in the melee unless attacked or someone is killed, at which point they angrily focus on the aggressor until they are unconscious.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** Remove five shadar-kai **scouts**.
- **Weak:** Remove three shadar-kai **scouts**.
- **Strong:** Add one **ennuisis**.
- **Very strong:** Add one **ennuisis** and three shadar-kai **scouts**.

If the characters participate in the revels, they have honored the shadar-kai's memories of what they have lost in the service of the Raven Queen and passed the final test.

DM Note: At this point, note which characters stayed true to their traits. Those have passed the trials. Note that this includes those that caused a Conflict by staying true to themselves. Any character that violated one of their tenets is found wanting.

Markella knows the following:

- She is the Arbiter of Memory. In Broken Dreams, she speaks for the Raven Queen until the mistress deigns to speak to the characters herself.
- The characters have undergone the Trials of the Raven Queen.

- Starsinger Alyndra Eiltris has been taken into the Fortress of Memories to pass her memories into the Raven Queen. If all the characters have passed the trials, or if those found wanting pay their tribute, she will open the gate to the Fortress of Memories and beseech the Raven Queen to treat with them.
- If any of the characters have been found wanting, she points them out as the ravens angrily caw and flutter their wings. She asks what the characters offer as tribute?

ROLE-PLAYING MARKELLA

Markella is known as the Arbiter of Memory among her people, as it is her role to interpret signs for the wishes of the Raven Queen. Unlike most shadar-kai in Broken Dreams, she eschews wearing a mask and instead paints her face a deep shade of purple and dyes her hair black. She carries the skull which she gestures with.

Markella is somber and deliberate. Thinking carefully before answering questions or offering comment, lest she miss some sign. She frequently looks to the ravens that seem to follow her to see if there is some subtle omen in their stance. She believes that if the Raven Queen wants her attention, a raven will land on the skull.

Quote: "Look to the flock. See how they circle to the west. It is the call of the Raven Queen. We must send the hunt again!"

Tribute. Characters that seek the Raven Queen's blessing but failed one or more of the trials, will need to part with something important to them. Anything that is a touchstone, would qualify as a touchstone, or is especially unique is acceptable. It does not have to be financially valuable, as long as it has sentimental value.

Treasure. One of the scouts carries a set of *pipes of haunting* which Markella gifts to the characters if they pass the test without violence.

RIDDLE OF THE RAVEN QUEEN

Having undergone the trials, the characters have convinced Markella of their worth, and made it to the gate of the Fortress of Memories.

Markella stands before the massive doors set into the walls that seem to go on forever. Abruptly raising her arms, the assembled unkindness of ravens flies into the metal doors. Instead of the expected wet thuds, the ravens somehow fly through the metal, which grows darker and darker until all you can see is the darkest of night.

In the darkness, you are alone. You hear the fluttering of wings and feel their wind on your face. A series of images flash through your mind: a female shadar-kai looking desperate, a simple mithral mask inlaid with

flecks of pale-blue and dark-red crystal being grabbed by a rotted hand, a crumbling keep circled by ravens till it collapses to an irregular hemisphere of ill-fitting stone bricks covered in muck and rotted vegetation, and the weeping face of Starsinger Alyndra Eiltris.

With a loud screech, you find yourself standing before the gates once again.

As the Arbiter of Memory, Markella is happy to help the characters interpret what they have seen. She recognizes the mask as the conspirator's visage, the touchstone of Val'shandrass; a shadar-kai that was over the agents of Vecna in the distant past. Markella believes that the Vecnans have the touchstone and the Raven Queen wishes the characters to travel to The Rotten Heart and retrieve it in exchange for releasing the Starsinger.





PART FOUR: THE ROTTED HEART

The characters have been tasked with the search for the Conspirator's Visage.

THE CONSPIRATOR'S VISAGE

This item appears to be a simple mithral mask inlaid with flecks of pale-blue and dark-red crystal. Within the mask resides the memories of Val'shandrass, a long-dead Shadar-Kai.

Eons ago, agents of Vecna seduced Val'shandrass, and she betrayed the Raven Queen in exchange for the promise of an existence free from the Shadowfell. She knew of a great secret about the Fortress of Memories, and once so armed, Vecna would be free to plunder the fortress of its secrets. Her betrayal was short-lived, and the Raven Queen imprisoned Val'shandrass within her mask—forced to relive the agony of her treachery for the rest of time.

Those who would attempt to tap into the *Visage's* memories for their own ends are cursed to betray those whom they swear loyalty to or become debilitated.

Recently, the cultists have obtained the *Conspirator's Visage*, and with it, the memories of Val'shandrass and her secrets knowledge regarding the Fortress of Memories. Ghorilath originally planned to take the Fortress of Memories to reclaim Vecna's favor and be rid of its curse. What Ghorilath didn't anticipate, however, was the debilitating curse that the *Visage* bears. So now, it is torn between redeeming itself in Vecna's eye and just being rid of the thing.

SKULL LORDS: BETRAYERS AND TRAITORS

Following his betrayal of Vecna, many of Kas' generals turned upon one another—vying for control over what vestiges of the Undying King's domain still remained. In his anger, Vecna gathered up his squabbling minions and bound them together in groups of three—cursed to fight against one another for all time.

WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

On the borders of the Raven Queen's domain within the Shadowfell lies the Rotted Heart—a fetid place of evil and foulness. While the origins of the Rotted Heart have been lost to time, it currently plays home to a sect of Vecnan cultists, agents of the Maimed God led by a particularly foul skull lord called Ghorilath.

APPROACHING THE KEEP

The Rotted Heart is a macabre structure—little more than an irregular hemisphere of ill-fitting stone bricks covered in muck, rotted vegetation, and other grotesquenesses.

Two 15-foot wide corridors once served as entrances to the keep, extending 30 feet away from the main structure, but one of them collapsed long ago. The remaining entrance is unbarred—no door, gate, or any other obstacle bars egress.

VECNAV PATROL

If the characters spend more than ten minutes watching the Rotted Heart from afar, they see two humanoid-looking creatures (**deathlocks**) emerge from the keep, walk the perimeter of the structure, and then return inside—a process that takes a total of thirty minutes.

Characters that succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a third creature skulking in the shadows behind them—an **allip**. If the characters try to discern greater detail about the “humanoids,” those that succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check realize that they’re undead. They’re wearing filthy vestments of green and yellow, which a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals to be the trappings of Vecnav cultists.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** Replace the **deathlocks** with an **allip**. The allips are instead encountered investigating three slain **deathlocks** outside of the keep.
- **Weak:** Replace the **allip** with a **deathlock**.
- **Strong:** Add a **deathlock**.
- **Very strong:** Add an **allip**.

Allip. The allip (if present) moves and uses its Howling Babble on its first turn if more than half of the characters are within range. Otherwise, if the characters are approaching, it flies towards the characters (at least 15 feet off the ground if more than one of the character appears to be a potent melee combatant) and uses its Whispers of Madness—especially if the targets are within melee reach of one another. As an optional rule, characters that the allip reduces to 0 hit points are given a glimpse into madness (see below).

Madness-Induced Flaws. Characters reduced to 0 hit points by an allip gain a new flaw—determined randomly or chosen from this table; each character shouldn’t receive more than one such flaw in this manner:

MADNESS-INDUCED FLAWS

1d6 Flaw

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | “Children terrify me, and I am likely to flee from those I see, screaming in terror.” |
| 2 | “I have seen my own death, and as a result, I am fearless in combat—often to my own peril.” |
| 3 | “Being immersed in darkness occasionally leaves me paralyzed with fear” |
| 4 | “I refuse to eat cooked food—meat or otherwise. The bloodier, the better.” |
| 5 | “I have seen all that I love wither and die. As such, I shall never love again.” |
| 6 | “I rely on ale, wine, and other immoral vices to block out the terrible truths I’ve seen.” |

Deathlocks. The deathlocks (if present) begin combat having already cast *mage armor*. The first to have a turn in combat casts *faerie fire*. If more than half of the characters are unaffected by the first deathlock’s spell, the second deathlock to have a turn casts it on their turn. The deathlocks are undead shadar-kai, and still retain their Blessing of the Raven Queen trait (below), which they try to reserve until casting *arms of hadar*.

Blessing of the Raven Queen. As a bonus action, the deathlock can magically teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Once it uses this trait, it can’t do so again until it finishes a long rest.

Treasure. The deathlocks carry a total of 65 gp worth of polished black gems, a string of bone-white pearls, and coins. While they won’t willingly betray Ghoriliath, if the deathlocks are defeated, the characters can recover three complete sets of Vecnav vestments for covertly entering the keep. If no deathlocks are encountered here, the vestments are found on corpses just outside the entrance to the keep.



FEATURES OF THE ROTTED HEART

The keep has the following features:

Ceilings. The ceilings within the keep are concave, and angle gently upwards towards the center of the structure to a full height of 15 feet, but only 10 feet at the outer walls.

Doors. The doors within the keep are made of soggy, rotted wood. The doors are locked and require a set of thieves' tools and a successful 17 Dexterity check, but the doors themselves are fragile and can be bashed to splinters by any creature succeeding on a DC 11 Strength (Athletics) check—though doing so alerts any creatures on the Heart's first level.

Bloody Muck. The floor of the keep is covered in a shin-deep layer of thick, cloying mud that oozes down the walls, and drips from the ceiling. The muck is infused with necromantic energy, any creature in contact with it that casts a spell that causes a target to regain hit points must succeed on a spellcasting ability check with a DC equal to 10 plus the level of the spell. Conversely, creatures in contact with the muck that are resistant or immune to necrotic damage regain 7 (2d6) hit points at the start of each of their turns.

The muck radiates powerful necromantic magic, and its properties are revealed by *identify* or similar spells.

Illumination. Spheres of pitted, black iron fitted with chains hang from regularly spaced iron spikes driven into the wall. The spheres glow with a sickly green light, casting dim light throughout the keep. The magic illuminating the spheres is dispelled if removed from the keep.

Smells and Sounds. The air is thick with the metallic tang of blood, and the sickly-sweet stench of rot.

H1. UPPER LEVEL

The halls of this wide corridor are uneven, but finished, stone. Thick, black mud squelches underfoot with each step and threatens to suck the boots right off your feet as you walk.

The hallway proceeds towards area H1A, below.

This room is devoid of any sort of décor or furnishings. Cloying muck coats the floor—running in thick rivulets down the walls.

H1A. CHAMBER

There is nothing of interest in this room but disgusting, bloody mud.



H1B. CHAMBER

This area is brightly lit by the brazier within.

Four bookshelves and three moldering wooden chairs are placed around the walls of this room.

There is no respite from the muck here, and the books on the lowest tier of the shelves all bear the stains of exposure.

There are three **deathlocks** in this chamber. Each is seated in a chair, reading one of the journals from the bookshelves.

Deathlocks. The deathlocks begin the encounter having already cast *mage armor*. In life, the deathlocks were shadar-kai, and have the Blessing of the Raven Queen trait (see Vecnan Patrol). If more than half of their number are defeated, the remaining use Blessing of the Raven Queen (if still available) and flee into Area H1C to summon the allip(s) in Area H1D.

Allip. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by an allip (if present) may incur a new flaw (see Vecnan Patrol, above) at the DM's discretion.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** Replace the **deathlocks** with **wights**.
- **Weak:** Replace the **deathlocks** with four **wights**.
- **Strong:** Add a **deathlock**.
- **Very strong:** Add an **allip**.

Bookshelves. The bookshelves are laden with hundreds upon hundreds of journals, diaries, and other personal works containing the private and secret thoughts of hundreds upon hundreds of people of every walk of life. Characters inspecting the journals may come across a journal that appears blank at first but fills with torrid thoughts and revelations that appear to be written in an unseen pen before their very eyes.

H1C. SHRINE OF VECNA

A pair of raggedy bookshelves are set against the walls of this room, and a squat slab of black stone sits against the western wall. A hand with splayed fingers is engraved into the altar's surface. A fist-sized emerald carved to resemble an eye rests in a shallow indentation in the hand palm.

A three-foot wide hole is set in the floor at the southern edge of the room—complete with a ladder. The ever-present muck oozes through the hole into whatever lies below.

This chamber is empty save for the bookshelves, the altar, and the ladder. As in Area H1B, the bookshelves contain hundreds of journals and diaries. The ladder leads to Area H2, below.

Emerald. The emerald (see Treasure, below), is trapped; removing it reveals a *glyph of warding*. Detecting the *glyph* without removing the *emerald* is impossible—even with *detect magic* the two effects overlap one another enough to make them indistinguishable from one another. The two effects radiate different types of magic (the *emerald* radiates transmutation magic, while the *glyph* radiates abjuration and illusion magic). If triggered, the *glyph* casts *mental prison* upon whomever removed the *emerald*. While subject to the *mental prison* the target believes themselves to be sinking slowly and steadily into the muck on the chamber floor.

If *dispel magic* is cast upon the *emerald* nothing happens, but if cast upon the altar, the *glyph* is successfully dispelled with a successful DC 15 spellcasting ability check.

Treasure. The emerald is an *emerald of the war mage* (functions as a *ruby of the war mage*; see *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*). The altar is inlaid with ten additional ordinary emeralds—each worth 50 gp.

H1D. CHAMBER

The room has none of the glowing spheres of iron featured elsewhere; the only light that exists is that which the characters have with them.

Characters that can see in the dark, see:

This chamber was once full of the same bookshelves as the previous rooms, but dislodged bricks have reduced most of them to splinters—left to rot in the muck that covers the floor.

If the characters enter the room, and didn't encounter the allip in Area H1C, read:

The shadows in the room stir, coalesce, and move towards you!

This room plays host to an **allip**.

Allip. The allip remains in the room until a living creature enters or if alerted to combat by any of the keep's inhabitants in Area H1B, above. It maneuvers itself to make the best use of its abilities. If defeat is inevitable, the allip flees the keep—flying through the walls to Area H1A (or to this chamber, and then west if encountered in Area H1C, above).

Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by an allip may incur a new flaw (see "Vecnan Patrol" above).

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very strong:** Add an **allip**.

H2. LOWER LEVEL

The denizens of the Rotted Heart avoid the bowels of the keep for good reason—it's where Ghoriliath spends most of his time in argument with his ever-conflicting personalities.

The ladder deposits you in a dark hallway that winds to the north and opens into a large chamber illuminated in flickering, yellow light.

Shouting can be heard in the room.

H2A. GHORILIATH'S STUDY

Rounding the corner, you see a room bathed in the flickering, yellow light of thousands upon thousands of bone-white candles. The ever-present muck is still here, but the walls are bare.



A rotting wooden desk sits at the far end of the room covered in sheafs of paper and moldering tomes. Seated behind the desk is a creature—humanoid in shape—but with three skeletal heads staring down at a simple mithral mask inlaid with blue and red crystals laying on the desk before him.

Ghoriliath (a **skull lord**) plots and schemes in this area—when it's not arguing with itself, that is. Two **deathlocks** are also here, bearing the brunt of his anger over the curse imposed by the *Conspirator's Visage* in its possession.

Ghoriliath. The skull lord spends most of its time contemplating its options as they pertain to the *Visage*. On one hand, it wishes to redeem itself and be freed from its current form, but on the other hand it has no desire to remain subject to the powerlessness imposed by the *Visage*.

If the characters are noticed by Ghoriliath, the skull lord is angered by their intrusion in its keep and orders its minions to attack before joining the fray itself. It casts *haste* in the first round of combat, followed by *fear* in the following round—weaving in Bone Staff attacks as it's able.

If the characters are sneaky, however, they may overhear Ghoriliath lamenting its condition to its underlings and use its frustration with the *Conspirator's Visage* to their advantage. While difficult, it's possible for the characters to convince the skull lord to voluntarily relinquish the *Conspirator's Visage* if a particularly compelling argument is provided.

ROLEPLAYING GHORILIATH (GORE ILL EE ATH)

This particularly loathsome skull lord is even more so due to the curse imposed upon it by the *Conspirator's Visage*. It's a vile, sharp-tongued being of pure malevolence. It seeks freedom from its current status and is willing to do nearly anything to achieve it—even if it includes betraying Vecna.

Quote: "Existence is agony. Come; I'll show you."

The Conspirator's Curse. Ghoriliath's current predicament is how best to deal with the *Conspirator's Visage* and the debilitating affect it has upon him. While the *Visage* in Ghoriliath's possession, his Challenge Rating is reduced to 8 (3,900 XP). He has no 5th, 6th, or 7th level spell slots available, and makes only two attacks using Multiattack, instead of three. In addition, he suffers a -2 penalty to all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws that he makes.

Deathlocks. The deathlocks begin the encounter having already cast *mage armor*. In life, the deathlocks were shadar-kai, and have the Blessing of the Raven Queen trait (see Vecnan Patrol). The first deathlock to act in initiative casts *faerie fire* upon the intruders.

Allip. If defeat is inevitable, the allip flees the keep—flying up through the ceiling to Area H1D, then west through the wall to Area H1A.

Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by an allip (if present) may incur a new flaw (see Vecnan Patrol, above) at the DM's discretion.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak:** Remove a **deathlock**.
- **Very strong:** Add an **allip**.

Treasure. Ghoriliath wears a suit of *mithral plate* emblazoned with an unblinking, lidless eye in the center of the breastplate. In addition to the armor, they find the *Conspirator's Visage*, as well as 1,000 gp in coins and gems in the various drawers of the skull lord's desk.

CONCLUSION

Now in possession of the *Conspirator's Visage*, the characters may return the item to the Raven Queen. If removed from the Shadowfell, the mask disincorporates into wispy motes of shadowstuff before disappearing completely.

THE FORTRESS OF MEMORIES

Provided the characters retrieve the *Conspirator's Visage*, they are free to return to the Fortress of Memories.

The gates still stand closed and impassible, and the walls to either side stretch beyond the range of your vision. Drawing near, the ravens fly to it once more, immersing you in darkness.

This time, there is no pomp or circumstance; no visions beyond the unkindness of ravens that flock around you casting thousands upon thousands of eyes upon you; scanning for something.

If the characters openly display the *visage*, the character carrying it is swarmed by ravens for a few moments before the ravens disperse. When they do so, the *Conspirator's Visage* is nowhere to be seen.

If the characters carry the *Visage* in a pack or otherwise out of sight, read:

Scores of ravens light upon your shoulders, hands, and head; they peck at you gently at first, but more and more insistently—as if they are seeking for some unseen treasure or bauble.

If the characters reveal the *Visage*, the ravens swarm the character as above.

Once the characters have surrendered the *Visage*, read:

The ravens rapidly disperse in flurry of frantically flapping wings and raucous cawing. In their wake, is Alyndra Eiltris, the Starsinger, kneeling in front of the gate with her hands on the ground before her.

The Starsinger remembers nothing of the events that transpired.

TREASURE

In addition to the sudden appearance of the Starsinger, the character that the ravens took the *Visage* from has a *cloak of the bat* draped over their shoulders. This cloak is made of hundreds of large, black feathers, and instead of transforming its wearer into a bat, this cloak allows its wearer to transform into a raven.

RETURNING TO DRIPPING LEAVES

Upon return to Dripping Leaves, the characters find the council already gathered to receive them in the Gathering Glade.

They welcome the Starsinger, assessing her condition with a palpable mixture of relief and happiness, before addressing the characters:

"You've done a great thing," Sariel says unlimbering a thick, gnarled longbow from her back. "There is no possible way to afford you the thanks you truly deserve but may this be a start."

The bow is *Gwa'thern Faln* (see appendix E), a bow that is ancient even by elven standards.



APPENDIX A. MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

This appendix details new monsters that do not appear in the *Monster Manual*.

ALLIP

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +5

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The allip can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Maddening Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) psychic damage.

Whispers of Madness. The allip chooses up to three creatures it can see within 60 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, or it takes 7 (1d8 + 3) psychic damage and must use its reaction to make a melee weapon attack against one creature of the allip's choice that the allip can see. Constructs and undead are immune to this effect.

Howling Babble (Recharge 6). Each creature within 30 feet of the allip that can hear it must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 12 (2d8 + 3) psychic damage, and it is stunned until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage and isn't stunned. Constructs and undead are immune to this effect.

ARMANITE

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Magic Resistance. The armanite has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The armanite's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The armanite makes three attacks: one with its hooves, one with its claws, and one with its serrated tail.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage.

Serrated Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage.

Lightning Lance (Recharge 5-6). The armanite looses a bolt of lightning in a line 60 feet long and 10 feet wide. Each creature in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

DEATHLOCK

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +4, Cha +5

Skills Arcana +4, History +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The deathlock's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *disguise self*, *mage armor*
1/day: *plane shift* (self only)

Spellcasting. The deathlock is a 5th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *mage hand*
1st–3rd level: (2 3rd-level slots): *arms of Hadar*, *dispel magic*, *faerie fire*, *hold person*, *invisibility*, *spider climb*

ACTIONS

Deathly Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage.

DROW HOUSE CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 162 (25d8 + 50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +6, Wis +6

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +8

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Battle Command. As a bonus action, the drow targets one ally he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see or hear the drow, the target can use its reaction to make one melee attack or to take the Dodge or Hide action.

Fey Ancestry. The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. The drow's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drow makes three attacks: two with his scimitar and one with his whip or his hand crossbow.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is an ally, it has advantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned this way. The target regains consciousness if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it.

REACTIONS

Parry. The drow adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, the drow must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

DROW SHADOWBLADE

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (studded leather)

Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +7, Wis +6

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +9

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Fey Ancestry. The drow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. The drow's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*

1/day: *darkness*, *faerie fire*, *levitate* (self only)

Shadow Step. While in dim light or darkness, the drow can teleport as a bonus action up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see that is also in dim light or darkness. It then has advantage on the first melee attack it makes before the end of the turn.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the drow has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drow makes two attacks with its shadow sword. If either attack hits and the target is within 10 feet of a 5-foot cub of darkness created by the shadow sword on a previous turn, the drow can dismiss that darkness and cause the target to take 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. The drow can dismiss darkness in this way no more than once per turn.

Shadow Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and 10 (3d6) poison damage. The drow can then fill an unoccupied 5-foot cube within 5 feet of the target with magical darkness, which remains for 1 minute.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned this way. The target regains consciousness if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it.

EARTH ELEMENTAL MYRMIDON

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Terran, one language of its creator's choice

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Magic Weapons. The myrmidon's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The myrmidon makes two maul attacks.

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Thunderous Strike (Recharge 6). The myrmidon makes one maul attack. On a hit, the target takes an extra 16 (3d10) thunder damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ENNUISIS

Packs of shadow mastiffs are a well-known sight to travelers in the Shadowfell, but some are captured by the shadar-kai who serve the Raven Queen and turned into something more.

Guided Evolution. When the shadar-kai need help finding particularly choice memories for their Queen, they captured a shadow mastiff alpha pup and force it to consume a touchstone. Such pups become a fully grown ennuisis within a fortnight.

Hunters of Passion. Ennuisis are drawn to strong emotions and can smell them, going so far to track them over great distances. Only those who are dead inside leave no trail.

Forgetful Bite. The bite of an ennuisis temporarily drains away all thoughts and memories, causing the victim to stand motionless as the empty shell they now are. Shadar-kai call the bite "the draining sadness" and believe that all the memories of the victim flee to the Raven Queen and those that do not succumb are thought to be wholly unworthy of offering any memories to the Raven Queen.

ENNUISIS

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances necrotic, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks while in dim light or darkness

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Ethereal Awareness. The ennuisis can see ethereal creatures and objects.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The ennuisis has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Scent Passion. The ennuisis can smell emotions felt by living creatures within 30 feet. The ennuisis cannot detect constructs or undead with its blindsight.

Shadow Blend. While in dim light or darkness, the ennuisis can use a bonus action to become invisible, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. The invisibility lasts until the ennuisis uses a bonus action to end it or until the ennuisis attacks, is in bright light, or is incapacitated.

Sunlight Weakness. While in bright light created by sunlight, the ennuisis has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ennuisis makes two bite attacks.

Forgetful Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature that is not undead or a construct, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed. While charmed, the target is incapacitated and has a speed of 0. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the charm ends on the target.

GLOOM WEAVER

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral

Armor Class 14 (17 with mage armor)

Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +6

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Burden of Time. Beasts and humanoids, other than shadar-kai, have disadvantage on saving throws while within 10 feet of the gloom weaver.

Fey Ancestry. The gloom weaver has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put it to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. The gloom weaver's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *arcane eye*, *mage armor*, *speak with dead*

1/day: *arcane gate*, *bane*, *compulsion*, *confusion*, *true seeing*

Spellcasting. The gloom weaver is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch* (3d8 damage), *eldritch blast* (3 beams, +4 bonus to each damage roll), *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*

1st–5th level: (3 5th-level slots): *armor of Agathys*, *blight*, *darkness*, *dream*, *invisibility*, *fear*, *hypnotic pattern*, *major image*, *contact other plane*, *vampiric touch*, *witch bolt*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gloom weaver makes two spear attacks and casts one spell that takes 1 action to cast.

Shadow Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands, plus 26 (4d12) necrotic damage.

REACTIONS

Misty Escape (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). When the gloom weaver takes damage, it turns invisible and teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. It remains invisible until the start of its next turn or until it attacks or casts a spell.

SHADOW DANCER

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +4

Skills Stealth +6

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Fey Ancestry. The shadow dancer has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put it to sleep.

Shadow Jump. As a bonus action, the shadow dancer can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Both the space it teleports from and the space it teleports to must be in dim light or darkness. The shadow dancer can use this ability between weapon attacks of another action it takes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shadow dancer makes three spiked chain attacks.

Spiked Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or suffer one additional effect of the shadow dancer's choice:

- The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if it is a Medium or smaller creature. Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the shadow dancer can't grapple another target.
- The target is knocked prone.
- The target takes 22 (4d10) necrotic damage.

SKULL LORD

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (mithral plate)

Hit Points 105 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)

Skills Athletics +8, History +8, Perception +12, Stealth +8

Damage Resistances cold, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, stunned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Common

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If the skull lord fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Master of the Grave. While within 30 feet of the skull lord, any undead ally of the skull lord makes saving throws with advantage, and that ally regains 1d6 hit points whenever it starts its turn there.

Evasion. If the skull lord is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a dexterity saving throw to take only half the damage, the skull lord instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Spellcasting. The skull lord is a 13th level spellcaster, its spellcasting ability is Charism (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). The skull lord knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *poison spray*, *ray of frost*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *arms of Hadar*, *dispel magic*, *faerie fire*, *hold person*, *invisibility*, *spider climb*

2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *fear*, *haste*

4th level (3 slots): *dimension door*, *ice storm**

5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill**, *cone of cold**

6th level (1 slot): *eyebite**

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death**

*In his debilitated state, Ghoriliath may be unable to cast these spells

Special Equipment (Mithral Plate). Ghoriliath's armor doesn't impose disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The skull lord makes three bone staff attacks.

Bone Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The skull lord can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn.

The skull lord regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

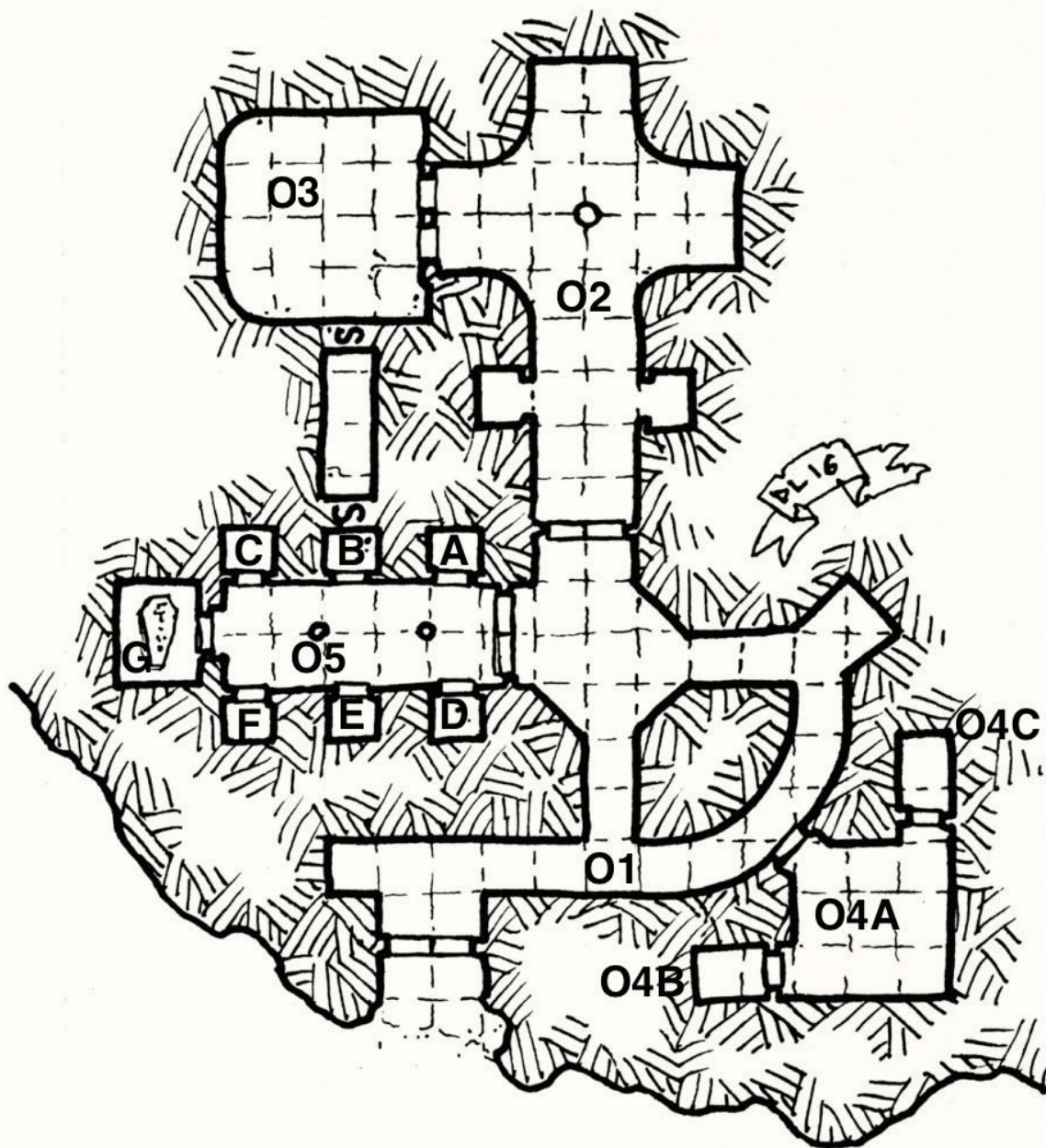
Cantrip. The skull lord casts a cantrip.

Move. The skull lord moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Bone Staff (Costs 2 Actions). The skull lord makes a bone staff attack.

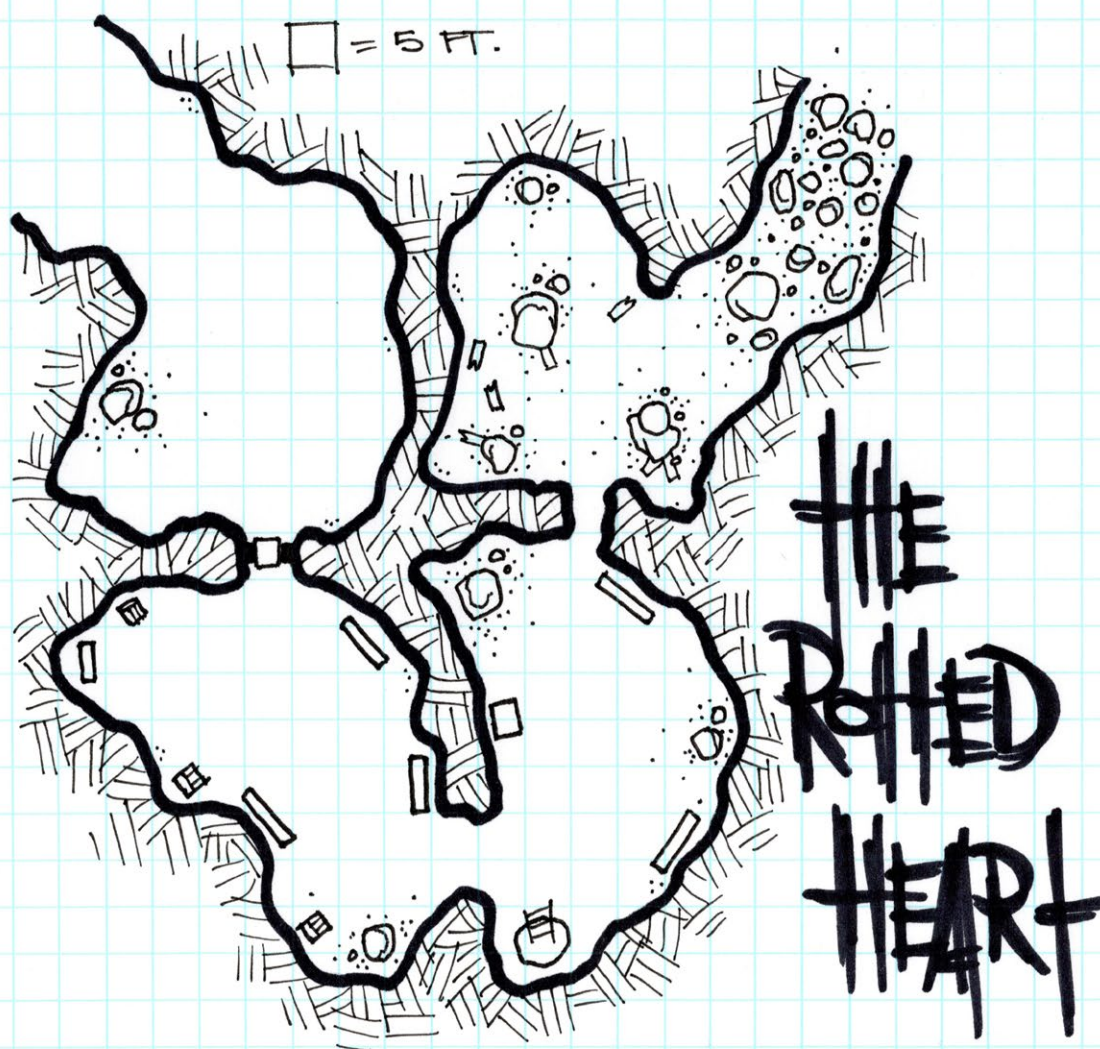
Summon Undead (Costs 3 Actions). Up to five skeletons or zombies appear in unoccupied spaces within 30 feet of the skull lord and remain until destroyed. Undead summoned in this way roll initiative and act in the next available turn. The skull lord can have up to five undead summoned by this ability at a time.

APPENDIX B. PHORKYRYL OUTPOST

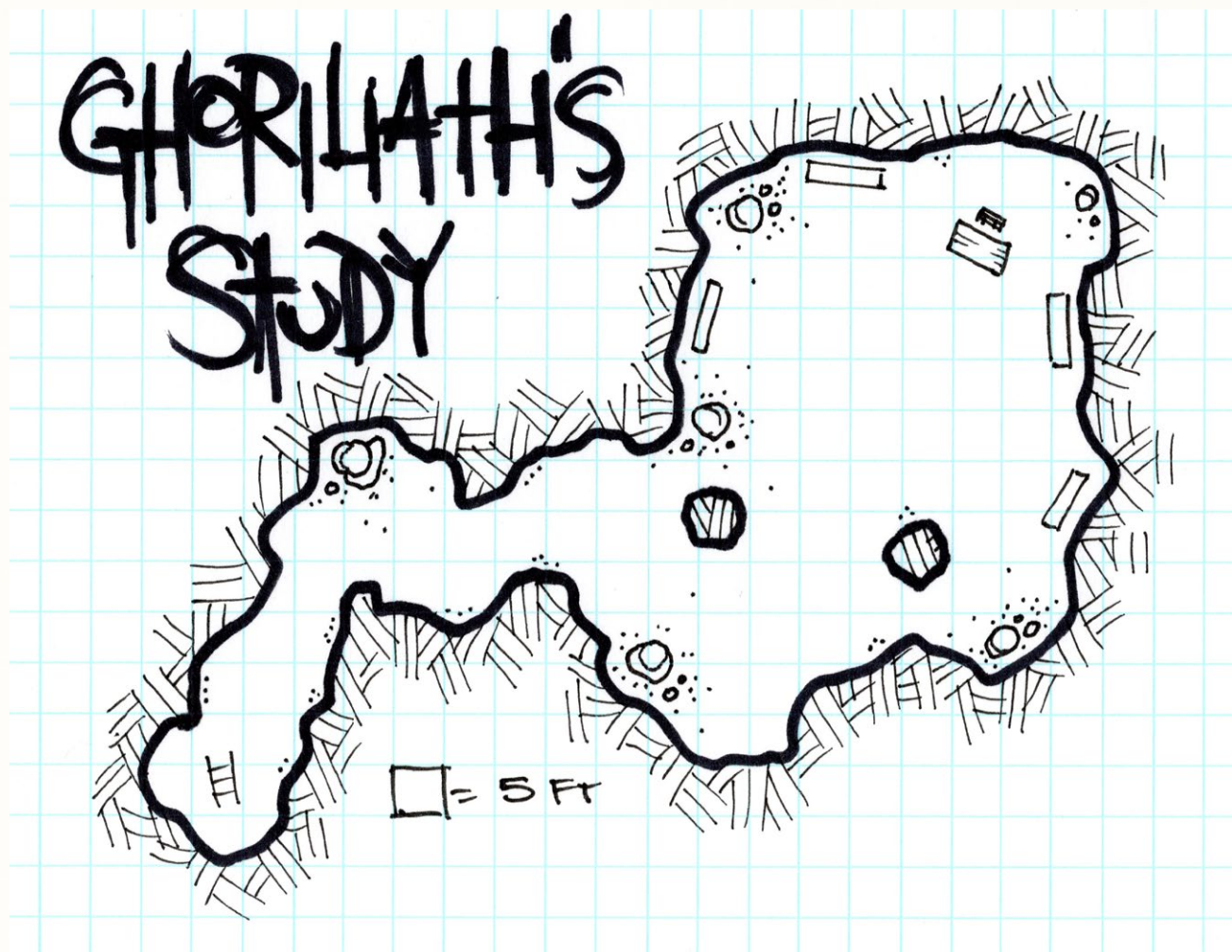


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APPENDIX C. THE ROTTED HEART MAP



APPENDIX D. GHORILIATH'S STUDY MAP



APPENDIX E. MAGIC ITEM

GWA'THERN FALN

Weapon (longbow), rare (requires attunement)

This ancient longbow's staff is fashioned from a thick, gnarled piece of yew and polished to a lustrous shine. The weapon (whose name means *Shadowbreaker* in Elvish) was once wielded by a legendary elven warrior

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon—which can also be used as a quarterstaff. By whispering the bow's name and firing an arrow at a point you can see within 60 feet, you can use an action to cast *faerie fire* (save DC 15). Once used, this property of the bow can't be used again until the following dawn.