

SCOUT'S HONOR

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING* *FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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Amongst the towering trees of the Forest of Wyrms live countless serpents, dragons and other fell creatures that few dare brave. Only the strongest adventurers can best the dangers within and help the paladins of Elturgard achieve victory. A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Elturgard for characters levels 14-17.

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

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OFFICIAL D&D PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an event, or you received it from your organizer. To play this adventure and receive rewards for it, you must schedule it as an event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To schedule a game for public play, you must be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network. Information on enrolling in the program can be found at www.wizards.com/wpn. If you are scheduling the game for private play, you do not need to be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network. The person who schedules the event, called the organizer, is in charge of making sure the event is scheduled before play, runs smoothly on the date scheduled, and gets reported back to Wizards in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the organizer is also the table DM. You don't have to be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network to DM this adventure if you are not the organizer.

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

To learn more about event scheduling and DM REWARDS, visit the D&D Events website at www.wizards.com/dnd and click on "Events."

PREPARING FOR PLAY

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

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

Along with this adventure, you'll find a session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an officially scheduled event, complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

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

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

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

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

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

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware

of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

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

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

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 14 - 17. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

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

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

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

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

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

CHARACTER DEATH

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

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

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. **Encounters that do not give**

out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

LASTING EFFECTS

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

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

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

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

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The nation of Elturgard is a bastion of law and morality in the Western Heartlands of Faerun. The nation is a theocracy, ruled by paladins of Torm that unceasingly pursue the cause of good. They are also often seen as proud, inflexible, and overly righteous. Though surrounded by many evil lands, Elturgard need not fear

darkness. A magical second sun, called the Companion or Amaunator's Gift, shines overhead at all times.

Furthermore, while the nearby Forest of Wyrms is home to many fell creatures, they often war with each other. For purposes of this adventure, this is simplified into two main factions: the dragons (primarily green dragons and their allies) and the snakes of the land of Najara (yuan-ti and their reptilian allies). In addition, evil fey of the forest are represented as a minor third faction.

As the adventure begins, Elturgard has summoned adventurers to assist with preparations for an expedition to explore the active plagueland a few miles south of Elturel. Unbeknownst to them, a spy (whose identity is beyond the scope of this adventure) has shared the knighthood's plans with some of the evil fey within the Forest of Wyrms to the north. The fey now seek to form an alliance with the dragons so as to strike at Elturgard while it is distracted and while a large number of the paladins who normally guard the city are occupied with the expedition to the plagueland. If an alliance can be formed with the dragons, the fey will next hold a meeting with the snakes. An allied Forest of Wyrms would be poised to strike Elturgard from the north at the very moment the paladins march away to the south!

A scout named Laesa the Quick learns of the first meeting between the evil fey and the dragons. She is wounded trying to learn more, falling unconscious and near death due to her poisoned wounds. Her griffon steed carries her back towards Elturgard.

She is not the only scout to play a role. The ghost of another scout, Dartholos of the Twisted Path, stirs deep within the forest. Dartholos was an intrepid explorer, legendary for both the ruins he plundered and his knowledge of magical disturbances and areas of wild magic. He died in a Najaran ruin more than a decade ago, rising as a trap haunt from the very trap that claimed him. The yuan-ti recently realized that his knowledge could help them understand the defenses of Elturgard. They have begun rituals to change and control him. He now reaches out into the forest, trying to find saviors.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

This adventure is designed to be a challenging Special adventure. Monsters often have high defenses and in two combats they have the capability to dominate and control (slow or daze) multiple PCs. This can create a frustrating experience. Results from playtesting were taken into account to reduce the likelihood of this, but table experiences varied greatly. Therefore, it falls on the DM's shoulders to adjust difficulty as needed to ensure a

hard but fair challenge. Suggestions have been made in the encounters to assist with this process. By design this adventure should be able to be completed in a 4-to-5-hour convention time slot. Calling a combat once it is obvious the PCs will win may be necessary to allow some groups a chance of completing the adventure in a convention setting.

This adventure takes place during the early spring. The weather is chilly and rain falls during most of the adventure.

The adventure begins with the PCs in Elturel, the capital of Elturgard. The griffon carrying Laesa arrives, interrupting their tour. Though the paladins are too proud to consider that the Forest of Wyrms could unite against them, the PCs can pledge to help.

An enigmatic being known as Tyrangal approaches the PCs, providing additional information and suggesting that the PCs should both recover Dartholos' body and sow discord between the forest's factions.

The PCs reach the meeting site and can listen in on the conversation, verifying the threat to Elturgard. Defeating the fey and draconic representatives, they are then approached by the spirit of Dartholos. Unable to speak, he can only gesture in the right direction.

An exploration/role-playing encounter takes place as the PCs have some opportunity to sow discord between their foes as they travel to reach ruins belonging to the ancient snake kingdom of Najara. After fighting medusa guardians, the PCs can speak with Dartholos, learning the location where his body is held.

The PCs find the chamber containing the body of Dartholos, and must liberate him before succumbing to the yuan-ti and naga forces. If successful, they reach the edge of the forest, at which point Dartholos bonds his spirit with his favorite item, his knapsack. This allows him to exit the forest with the PCs. With his knowledge and Elturgard's foes in disarray, they return victorious.

DMs may wish to read the Forgotten Realms novel *The Edge of Chaos: The Wilds* or the Dungeon article *Gregor's Tangent* in issue 172 for additional background on the NPC Tyrangal, however doing so is not necessary to run this adventure.

Note that the light of the Companion is such that creatures of darkness, especially undead, avoid the area. PCs that have the undead keyword (such as revenants) will be uncomfortable while within the city of Elturel and the area immediately around it. Keeping their skin covered and their face shaded in some way would be advisable. The light does not visibly mark them. Since no combat encounters occur within the city during this adventure, there are no game-mechanical effects needed for the Companion on undead PCs, but it should

still be mentioned as a factor for appropriate roleplaying.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

Before play begins, ask each player for their character's alignment and whether their PC would normally answer the summons of a land known for righteous morality and unceasing pursuit of good. If they would, provide them with a copy of **Handout 1**. For those who would not, provide a copy of **Handout 2**. This is meant to provide some insight into the region and to foster some role-playing between PCs. Note that some PCs might have the Story Award CORE39 *Elturgadan Gratitude*. In that case, their invitation also includes the information that they were personally recommended to Knight-Commander Vessen by High Morninglord Orman and Inquisitor Tellar as being persons of valor. This is true even if the PC receives Handout #2.

Each PC's individual sponsor determines the story award they can earn later in the adventure. Use **Appendix 1: Elturgard** to answer any questions the players may have regarding the country that has summoned them.

Read or paraphrase the following:

On this cold and wet spring day the excitement in the city of Elturel is tangible, as the paladins prepare for a great expedition to cleanse the plagueland to the south. Though hundreds of adventurers have responded to the call for volunteers to participate in this dangerous mission, you have earned an exalted reputation, and have already been offered lodgings within the most prominent keep in the city. Furthermore, you have been granted a personal audience with one of the highest-ranking paladins in all of Elturgard.

Allow the PCs the chance to introduce themselves to each other if necessary before proceeding. PCs that would have declined the invitation to lodge at the paladins' keep may be assumed to have located suitable lodgings of their own choosing, either elsewhere in Elturel or in the open plains outside the city. A large tent city has sprung up outside Elturel's southern gates, as hundreds of adventurers from companies across Faerun have arrived and set up tents and pavilions in anticipation of the coming expedition to the plagueland. It would be quite easy for any PC to remain unnoticed within such a crowd. PCs that want to skip the meeting with Vessen are free to do so, although Tyrangal is able to find them no matter what.

It is no surprise that the large and imposing keep that serves as the headquarters of the Knights of Torm is spotlessly maintained and impressively well-equipped.

The sound of metal upon stone rings across the hallway as a squadron of heavily armored paladins passes you by. The man escorting you pauses to admire them, his pride evident.

Dressed in plate mail adorned with precious metals and a cape of brilliant gold, your escort is Knight-Commander Vessen, esteemed paladin of the nation of Elturgard, appointed by the High Observer to lead the expedition that the Tormites are forming to explore the plagueland to the south of Elturel.

After the soldiers pass, Knight-Commander Vessen resumes your tour of the keep and its fortifications. His forceful voice describes the righteous wrath that shall be inflicted upon Elturgard's foes, and the glory that soon shall be yours as you follow him into the coming battle.

Vessen leads you onto a covered balcony from where you can gaze out over the keep and the capital city of Elturel. Despite the light rain, the view is still majestic. "It would be my pleasure to next show you some of the holy armaments that shall ensure our upcoming victory..."

He trails off, looking over your shoulders as a griffon circles above the courtyard, soldiers calling out in alarm as it descends. A body is slumped in the saddle; her blood-soaked clothes those of a ranger or scout. Though Vessen at first dismisses it as a minor event, he shows surprise when a paladin calls out her name. "Fetch a healer! It's Laesa! I think she's dead!"

"By Torm, that is one of our finest scouts! Please, come with me," Vessen says, rushing for the stairs to the courtyard below. Arriving, you have a chance to look at the body for yourselves.

The PCs may inspect the body of the deceased scout, as well as speak to the paladins, learning the following:

- The scout, Laesa the Quick, appears to be dead
- DC 15 Heal check: Though the wounds are significant, including sword and talon marks, she suffers from an unnatural poison-related slumber. The Remove Affliction ritual can cure this. (The paladins note this eventually if the PCs do not)
- Laesa is a female human ranger/paladin. From Vessen's remarks and the comments of others in the courtyard it is clear that she is regarded as one of their best scouts
- Her griffon is a magnificent steed
- She is tall and beautiful, but her body is bruised and battered with several gashes and punctures

A senior cleric of Torm quickly arrives, and after examining the body, begins casting a ritual. Upon its completion an hour later, the scout draws a sudden rasping breath, returning to consciousness. Her eyes flutter open and she looks wildly about before her eyes focus on Vessen.

"My lord, there is danger in the Forest of Wyrms. The snakes and dragons may know of our plans!"

The gathered paladins look at one another in disbelief. Vessen seems worried and turns to you, indicating that you may ask questions of the scout.

The PCs may interact with Laesa and ask questions. The PCs should learn the following through brief role-play:

- Laesa saw signs that the creatures of the forest were unusually alert and active
- The Forest of Wyrms is home to two primary factions: dragons and snake creatures (particularly yuan-ti). Evil fey also abound, sowing mischief.
- The three groups often fight each other, which lessens the threat they pose to Elturgard.
- She spied on some fey discussing a meeting to be held with a dragon representative, and worries they may be making preparations for war
- Laesa tried to reach the meeting site but two green dragons happened across her. She tried to retreat but was intercepted by a patrol of twisted eladrin. She barely reached her griffon, succumbing to poison as she flew away.
- She can share the location of the site but does not know when the meeting is to take place
- Laesa worries the factions may ally to strike a blow against Elturgard if they believe the paladins will be distracted by the coming battle to the south.
- Though she is weak, Laesa's voice is urgent as she presses her main point: if the dragons and fey team up, the serpents are more likely to go along, and the combined forces of the Forest of Wyrms would present a powerful threat to Elturgard. With so many paladins from Elturel participating in the expedition to the plagueland, there would be few reinforcements to send to the northern border keeps and the city of Triel, which would be the most likely places for an attack.
- Initially the paladins disagree, especially Vessen. However, after hearing the PCs and Laesa discussing the situation, some of the paladins change their mind, saying that this possibility is too risky not to have someone follow up on it, and Vessen begins to relent.

Vessen turns to you. “Friends, though I value Laesa's skills and trust her words, I believe it is unlikely the creatures within the Forest of Wyrms have stopped their chaotic in-fighting long enough to learn of our plans. With our preparations and focus on the battle to the south I cannot spare the troops it would take to explore such a perilous forest to the north. However,” he says with some hesitation, “Torm also teaches us to be guardians. Might I trouble you skilled heroes to seek this meeting site and return with any evidence you can find to confirm Laesa’s story? What say you?”

Whether they agree or not, the PCs are intercepted by Tyrangal as they head to their rooms (either to gather their gear or to rest) in the next encounter.

Some players may want to know how they will travel to the Forest of Wyrms. Vessen replies that the paladins will provide the PCs with access to the appropriate rituals. Permanent teleportation circles exist in Elturel and the northern city of Triel, which is the nearest defensible position to the Forest of Wyrms. From Triel, the PCs can head north into the forest itself using whatever means of conveyance they prefer. Mounts are inadvisable due to the thickness of the forest and the rocky terrain, but the PCs are free to use whatever mounts they possess, if they wish.

Players may desire additional information on Elturgard or the Forest of Wyrms. You can refer to **Appendix 1** to provide additional information or use it as a handout.

TREASURE

Vessen will reward each PC with 750/1800 gp for their assistance, though he only mentions this up front if they ask.

ENCOUNTER 1: ADVICE FROM A FRIEND?

SETUP

Important NPCs: Tyrangal (Cannot be bluffed, copper dragon shapechanged into humanoid form, it is not possible for them to identify her nature except as noted below)

The enigmatic Tyrangal intercepts the PCs. A wise and resourceful being, she will only hint at the extent of her knowledge, answering most questions indirectly.

You leave the rain-soaked courtyard to gather your belongings. As you enter the hall that leads to your quarters, a woman approaches suddenly and silently from a corridor ahead of you.

She seems to be a young elf, unusually tall; with copper-colored skin and metallic auburn hair that reaches the back of her knees. Her rust-red robes whisper as she moves in your direction, her golden eyes intent on your group.

Allow the PCs to react to Tyrangal. She pauses when she reaches them, studying them.

Because of Tyrangal's shapechange, a Nature skill check will not identify her as a dragon. If they ask, PCs may make the following knowledge checks to learn more about Tyrangal:

Arcana DC 20: Tyrangal looks distinctly different from most eladrin (known as moon or sun elves) you have met in your travels through Faerun, but she may be native to the Feywild, a magical world that is the motherland of all fey.

Arcana DC 35: A shapechange might explain Tyrangal's appearance.

Insight DC 20: Tyrangal seems trustworthy and is not attempting to deceive you.

History DC 35: A copper dragon named Gaulauntyr lost her mind and caused great devastation during the Rage of Dragons (1373 DR). It is said the dragon recovered and returned after Mystra's death, using the name Tyrangal instead. She involves herself in many affairs but primarily those involving the Spellplague. Her motives are cloaked in mystery and she often acts through intermediaries.

Modify the text below as needed as she introduces herself and sets her plan in motion.

"My name is Tyrangal," she says in a mellifluous voice. "As a moth is drawn to flame, so the paladins march to the plagueland. It is imperative for all of Faerun that you play your role. The Forest of Wyrms is a very dangerous place. I fear that interrupting a single meeting between dragons and fey creatures will not suffice to defuse this situation."

Use the information below to communicate the salient points as reactions to the PCs. The PCs should receive all of the information before leaving. You may want to cross each section out as the PCs learn the information.

Q: Who are you and why should we trust you?

Q: How did you gain this information?

"I act in the interest not only of Elturgard, but of all Faerun. I have many resources and there is much that I know. Just as a spy learned of Elturgard's plans, so too have I learned something of the terrible events at hand."

Q: What is taking place in the forest?

Q: What must we do?

Q: Should we do as the paladin's asked?

"Follow Laesa's directions. If you prevail, that will slow our enemies' efforts. Be aware that this alone will not suffice."

Q: What else must we do?

Q: What creatures might we encounter?

"The Forest loves discord. I can grant you the ability to mark yourselves as belonging to either the dragon or Najaran factions. By adopting each faction's guise in the other's territory, you can sow doubt and the alliance will perish."

Q: What will you gain from this?

Q: What if we don't believe you?

"Do as the paladins ask. See for yourselves. I only ask that you take a few more steps."

Q: What do you know of the plagueland and the upcoming expedition?

Q: Is there anything else we should know?

"I have devoted much time and energy to understanding the mysteries of the Spellplague, and the grave threat it represents. It is not easy to defeat. There is one within the Forest of Wyrms who has important knowledge,

knowledge that even I do not possess. The paladins will not fare well without that information.”

Q: Where do we find this one you speak of?

“There are many ruins where the Forest of Wyrms leads into Najara. A daring scout once explored these ruins. When not robbing tombs, he was a scholar of magical disturbance and magic turned wild. He fell to the serpents, but his ghost lingers. They seek to awaken and change him. Though it will be a difficult journey, you must seek the ruins beyond a raging river, marked by a still-standing spire of sinuous marble. You must bring this scholar and his books back to Elturel.”

Improvise as needed until the party has all of the information above.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the party agrees to assist, or at least to consider what she has said, Tyrangal provides each PC with several items designed to foment dissent between the dragon and serpent factions.

Wearing the items and tattoos for the dragon faction will cause the serpent faction to believe them to be in the employ of the dragons. Similarly, wearing the items and tattoos for the serpent faction will fool the dragons.

PCs should understand that the effect only works on members of the opposite faction. Items of one faction do not have an effect on that same faction.

The items are:

- A mundane necklace, bracelet, brooch, or earrings shaped like a dragon’s claw.
- A magical tattoo. When pressed to flesh, the skin gains a slight coloration, as if the bearer has some measure of draconic heritage. (Each PC may choose their coloration and minor features as desired.)
- A mundane fetish or talisman bearing a hooded serpent’s head.
- A magical tattoo. When pressed to the flesh, the skin gains a slightly reptilian appearance. The PC’s eyes also gain a slightly reptilian appearance.

The tattoos may be pulled off or exchanged only during a short rest. Only one tattoo may be worn at a time. Other magical tattoos (such as those in *Adventurer’s Vault* 2) function normally even when one of these tattoos is worn.

Note that dragonborn need no enhancement to show a draconic heritage. Opinions are varied among individual dragonborn regarding dragons. Many despise dragons and believe that “the only good dragon is a dead dragon.” This view is quite prevalent among the dragonborn of Tymanther, for example. Others actually are proud of their draconic heritage. A player of a dragonborn PC might wish to come up with additional methods for the PC to show her allegiance to the snakes or simply use verbal clues as they go into battle such as “kill all dragons!” On the other hand, some players won’t care at all about it, and should not be forced into anything. An entire party of dragonborn should consider how to handle this aspect but do not let play bog down because of it.

Once the party heads into the Forest of Wyrms, proceed to Encounter 2.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

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

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter. The tattoos’ power fades by the time the adventure concludes.

ENCOUNTER 2: A MEETING OF MINDS MOST FOUL

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 16/18 (7600/10000 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 elder storm dragon (level 17) (S)
- 1 eldritch giant (E)
- 1 air dragon (level 16) (A)
- 1 windrage harpy (level 14) (H)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 elder storm dragon (level 17) (S)
- 2 eldritch giants (E & E2)
- 1 air dragon (level 17) (A)
- 1 windrage harpy (level 15) (H)

The paladins provide the use of a teleportation circle to speed the PCs' trip to the Forest of Wyrms. The ritual gets them to the city of Triel from which the PCs make their way to the forest. Rain continues to fall as the PCs head into the forest. If necessary, remind PCs that they should don the tattoos and fetishes of the serpents when they reach the forest, so as to appear to be enemies of the dragons.

Leaving the city of Triel and the nation of Elturgard behind, you travel north through rain-swept plains until you reach the fabled Forest of Wyrms. Massive redwoods rise out of moss-covered rocky terrain and into the gray sky above.

Though the trees soar to staggering heights, the undergrowth is dense in places and the ground changes elevation often, making for strenuous travel. Glancing at a map provided by Laesa, you head northeast, approaching cautiously as you search for signs of the meeting place.

Finally you catch sight of a stone circle amongst the trees and falling rain. You can glimpse some sort of a crevasse arcing through the clearing. You hear several voices, but at too great a distance to distinguish what is being said.

Allow the PCs to discuss tactics. Some PCs will likely wish to make a Stealth check to approach and

eavesdrop. The DM may allow rituals and powers if they seem applicable.

Stealth (DC 25): PCs may make individual Stealth checks to approach through the cover of the woods and rain. Note: the stated DC is based on the eldritch giants' +20 Perception, with a -5 penalty for the conditions and distance.

- Any PCs not making a check do not affect overall success/failure. When initiative begins they must move at least 5 squares to appear on the edge of the map (actual tile not the black border) by or on the path.
- PCs failing the skill check also begin off the map and must move at least 5 squares to appear on the edge of the map by or on the path.
- PCs succeeding at the skill check are able to reach the clearing. They may place their minis in any forested square bordering the path to the upper left of the map.
- If all PCs that attempted Stealth succeeded, they are able to reach the clearing without triggering a surprise round. If there was at least one failure, the monsters are alerted and get a surprise round, as described in tactics.

If all the PCs that attempted Stealth succeeded, read the following to them:

Like a mouse you sneak through the drenched underbrush, drawing closer. Gathered under the ancient stone circle are several strange creatures. A massively tall humanoid stands near the center, his purple skin writhing with energy as he converses animatedly with a cruel-faced winged woman. A mottled blue dragon straddles two of the standing stones, periodically contradicting the others.

You learn that the scout spoke the truth. The winged woman and the giant discuss the paladins' upcoming plans to lead an army to the south, promising the dragon exact troop numbers and details on the borderland keeps if the dragons will join their alliance. Reluctantly, the dragon vows to convince his kind, promising that Elturgard will be bathed in blood!

If at least one PC fails, read the following to them instead:

Though the ground is drenched, you move only a few paces before something stirs atop the stone circle. A mottled blue dragon cranes its long neck, alert. A deep voice and a high-pitched woman's voice call to it, drawing its attention. You strain to hear their words,

but can only make out that they are adjourning the meeting and preparing to disperse.

The PCs should roll initiative as they move to stop the creatures before they can depart.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Rain: Creatures that are more than 5 squares apart have concealment (but not total concealment) from each other due to the swirling rain and gusting winds.

Trees and boulders: Any square that contains mostly foliage or stone is considered to be difficult terrain. Large boulders and the statue are considered blocking terrain.

Stone circle: Each standing stone is blocking terrain. A cross-piece rests upon the standing stone, 20 feet above the ground, and is wide enough to support a large creature. A standing stone may be climbed with a DC 23 Athletics check.

Crevasse: A natural crevasse surrounds part of the area. The crevasse is one continuous pit, similar to an empty moat, and is 40 feet deep and 20 feet wide (requiring a minimum of a DC 25 Athletics check to jump across). A DC 15 Athletics check is required to climb the walls. The floor of the crevasse contains leaves, small plants, and other detritus. A creature covering itself with the detritus as a move action has total cover.

Bridge: The bridge is difficult terrain and does not have railings.

TACTICS

Surprise Round: If granted a surprise round, an eldritch giant attacks with *force missile*. The storm dragon initiates its *growing tempest* so as to expand its aura. A harpy flies closer but takes cover behind a standing stone so its own aura is closer to approaching foes. The air dragon remains hidden under the detritus in the pit.

In regular rounds, the foes wait or attack at range until the PCs come near the crevasse. They only move forward if the party lacks melee combatants.

The air dragon rises and attacks a visible target to pull/push PCs into the pit. If it does not see targets it readies for when PCs cross the bridge or jump across. The air dragon remains within the pit and hovering at all times and uses reach and teleportation to limit which foes can harm it, all while attacking PCs on the edge or in the pit. If necessary it can use *whirlwind escape* twice in a round to move, fling a PC into the pit, and return to cover.

An eldritch giant engages any foe that crosses the crevasse and uses *eldritch field* to slow them and increase

damage. It teleports as needed to protect others or strike at weak targets.

The storm dragon grows its *howling storm* aura to size 5 on the first round (or in the surprise round), then to 10 in the next round. It positions itself so as to get as many foes as possible in the aura, but preferably using terrain as a shield (such as resting on the stone circle). It engages one or more targets with *double attack* and uses *furios winds* whenever possible, all augmented by its aura.

The harpy tries to stay behind cover and cause damage with its aura, especially on PCs within the dragon's aura, but will approach and use *acid gale* if the PCs are grouped together.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: At low tier, remove the harpy and reduce the level of the eldritch giant by 1 (-1 to attacks and defenses, lower HP by 8).

At high tier, remove the harpy and reduce the level of both of the eldritch giants by 1 (-1 to attacks and defenses, lower HP by 8).

Six PCs: At low tier, use two level 15 harpies from the high-tier statistics (place the second harpy at location H2 on the map) instead of a single level 14 harpy. At high tier, add a second level 15 harpy (H2) and increase the storm dragon by one level (+1 to attacks and defenses, +20 HP).

This encounter is meant to provide a slightly above average challenge to most tables. If the players request a particularly challenging encounter, you can change the air dragon's damage from lighting to thunder so as to gain a damage boost from the storm dragon's aura.

If the table is composed of casual players or those desiring less of a challenge, the ghost of Dartholos can appear before a monster as it attacks, causing an attack to go awry, or even suspend a zone for a round. Normal DME guidelines should otherwise be followed to provide each table with the appropriate experience.

RESKINNED MONSTERS

The elder storm dragon is a reskinned elder volcanic dragon (*Dragon Magazine* 376, page 51). The following changes have been made:

- All fire keywords and damage changed to thunder; affected powers renamed to reflect the new element
- Removed swim speed

The air dragon is a reskinned air archon zephyrhaunt (*Manual of the Planes*, p.114) with the following changes:

- Type changed to Magical Beast (Dragon)
- Renamed *spiked chain* power to *lightning chain*.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The creatures fight until killed, unwilling to lose face in front of members of the other faction. PCs may interrogate prisoners, but do not learn anything beyond what is written above for a successful Stealth check.

When the foes are defeated, allow the party a short rest and the opportunity to interrogate any foes or set the scene to look like the serpent faction was responsible. Once they are finished, the ghost of the scout, Dartholos of the Twisted Path, appears. It is faint, being far from its body. Read the following:

A faint ghostly form appears before you. He has half-elven facial features and is dressed in the unkempt garb of an explorer. A gnarled staff is in one hand and a sheathed rapier hangs from his belt. His back bears what seems to be a beaten rucksack, seemingly packed to the bursting point and held together with rope and straps, though all of it insubstantial.

PCs making a DC 20 Religion check can realize he is some type of ghost, likely a trap haunt. With a DC 25 they know he is changed in some way (trap haunts are usually unable to leave the immediate site of their death, yet there are no traps in this area). Allow the PCs to react, and then continue.

His mouth moves, but no sound comes forth. He begins to fade and becomes desperate. He re-appears briefly pointing urgently to the north, and then fades.

Once the spirit fades, proceed directly to the next encounter.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 1520/2000 experience points each for defeating the monsters.

TREASURE

A giant carries a sword crafted by Ejkros, a famed giant smith, and is worth a total of 800/2200 gp per PC. In addition, the harpy carries a bag containing *hero's gauntlets*.

ENCOUNTER 2: A MEETING OF MINDS MOST FOUL STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Air Dragon (Level 16)		Level 16 Lurker
Medium elemental magical beast (dragon)		XP 1,400
Initiative +18		Senses Perception +12
HP 122; Bloodied 61		
AC 30; Fortitude 28; Reflex 29; Will 27		
Immune disease; poison; Resist 15 lightning		
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)		
m Lightning Chain (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning, Weapon		
Reach 2; +22 vs AC; 2d4 + 5 damage plus 2d6 lightning damage, and the target is pulled 1 square		
C Cyclone Fling (standard; recharge 4 5 6)		
Close burst 1; +19 vs Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone		
Whirlwind Escape (move; at-will) ♦ Teleportation		
Adjacent creatures are pushed 1 square, and the air dragon teleports 8 squares.		
Alignment Chaotic Evil		Languages Primordial
Skills Stealth +19		
Str 16 (+11)	Dex 23 (+14)	Wis 18 (+12)
Con 20 (+13)	Int 15 (+10)	Cha 14 (+10)

The Air Dragon has the following Monster Theme power (DMG2, p.122):

C Dragon Breath (minor; encounter) ♦ Lightning
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +17 vs Reflex; 2d8 lightning damage

Eldritch Giant		Level 18 Skirmisher
Large fey humanoid		XP 2,000
Initiative +12		Senses Perception +20; low-light vision
HP 171; Bloodied 85		
AC 32; Fortitude 29; Reflex 31; Will 33		
Resist 10 force		
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects		
Speed 6, teleport 6		
m Eldritch Blade (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon		
Reach 2; +21 vs Reflex; 3d6 + 7 force damage		
r Force Missile (standard; at-will) ♦ Force		
Ranged 20; +21 vs Reflex; 2d6 + 7 force damage		
C Sweeping Sword (standard; encounter) ♦ Force, Weapon		
Close burst 2; +21 vs AC; 3d6 + 7 force damage, and the target is knocked prone. Special: When charging, the eldritch giant can use this power in place of a melee basic attack		
Consume Magic (minor 1/round; at-will)		
Targets an adjacent conjuration or zone created by an enemy; +21 vs. the Will of the creator of the conjuration or zone; the conjuration or zone is destroyed, and its effects end. The eldritch giant's attacks deal 3d6 extra force damage until the end of its next turn.		
Eldritch Field (minor; recharge 5 6) ♦ Zone		
Close blast 5; the blast creates a zone of rippling magic that lasts until the end of the encounter or until the eldritch giant uses this power again. The zone is difficult terrain, and the giant's attacks deal 1d6 extra force damage against creatures within the zone.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Elven, Giant
Skills Arcana +21, Insight +20		
Str 21 (+14)	Dex 12 (+10)	Wis 22 (+15)
Con 19 (+13)	Int 24 (+16)	Cha 13 (+10)

Elder Storm Dragon (Level 17)		Level 17 Elite Brute
Huge elemental magical beast (dragon)		XP 3,200
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +15; darkvision	
Howling Storm aura 2; enemies within the aura gain vulnerable 10 thunder.		
HP 408; Bloodied 204		
AC 29; Fortitude 30; Reflex 28; Will 29		
Resist 25 thunder		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 10, fly 10 (clumsy), overland flight 14		
Action Points 1		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Thunder		
Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 thunder damage (save ends).		
m Claw (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and the target loses thunder resistance until the end of the storm dragon's next turn.		
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)		
The storm dragon makes a claw and bite attack or two claw attacks.		
Growing Tempest (standard; at-will) ♦ Thunder		
Each enemy in the storm dragon's howling storm aura takes 5 thunder damage, then the howling storm expands to aura 5. Sustain free: Each enemy in the storm dragon's howling storm aura takes 5 thunder damage, then the howling storm expands to aura 10. Each round thereafter, the storm dragon can sustain it to maintain the size and damage of the aura.		
C Echoing Catastrophe (free, when the storm dragon's howling storm is aura 10 at the start of its turn; at-will) ♦ Thunder		
Close burst 10; targets enemies; +18 vs Reflex; 4d10 + 7 thunder damage and ongoing 10 thunder damage (save ends). Effect: The howling storm aura reverts to its original state and size (aura 2).		
A Furious Winds (minor/1 per round; recharge 6) ♦ Thunder, Zone		
Area burst 1 within 10; the burst becomes a zone of furious winds. Any creature that moves into or starts its turn in the zone takes 10 thunder damage.		
Thunder Absorption (free; whenever the storm dragon is hit by a thunder attack; at-will) ♦ Thunder		
Each enemy in the dragon's howling storm aura takes 5 thunder damage.		
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Common, Draconic, Primordial	
Str 26 (+17)	Dex 23 (+15)	Wis 25 (+16)
Con 24 (+16)	Int 20 (+13)	Cha 22 (+15)

Windrage Harpy (Level 14)		Level 14 Artillery
Medium fey humanoid		XP 1,000
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +14	
Windrage Song (Acid) aura 10; an enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 10 acid damage (deafened creatures take 5 acid damage).		
HP 112; Bloodied 56		
AC 26; Fortitude 26; Reflex 25; Will 26		
Resist 10 acid		
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)		
m Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid		
+22 vs AC; 2d8 + 6 acid damage		
C Acid Gale (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Acid		
Close blast 3; +20 vs Reflex; 2d8 + 6 acid damage, and the target is blinded (save ends)		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Elven	
Str 16 (+10)	Dex 20 (+12)	Wis 15 (+9)
Con 22 (+13)	Int 13 (+8)	Cha 22 (+13)

ENCOUNTER 2: A MEETING OF MINDS MOST FOUL STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Air Dragon (Level 17)		Level 17 Lurker	
Medium elemental magical beast (dragon)		XP 1,600	
Initiative +18		Senses Perception +12	
HP 128; Bloodied 64			
AC 31; Fortitude 29; Reflex 30; Will 28			
Immune disease; poison; Resist 15 lightning			
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)			
m Lightning Chain (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning, Weapon			
Reach 2; +23 vs AC; 2d4 + 5 damage plus 2d6 lightning damage, and the target is pulled 1 square			
C Cyclone Fling (standard; recharge 4 5 6)			
Close burst 1; +20 vs Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone			
Whirlwind Escape (move; at-will) ♦ Teleportation			
Adjacent creatures are pushed 1 square, and the air dragon teleports 8 squares.			
Alignment Chaotic Evil		Languages Primordial	
Skills Stealth +19			
Str 16 (+11)	Dex 23 (+14)	Wis 18 (+12)	
Con 20 (+13)	Int 15 (+10)	Cha 14 (+10)	

The Air Dragon has the following Monster Theme power (DMG2, p.122):

C Dragon Breath (minor; encounter) ♦ Lightning
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +18 vs Reflex; 2d8 lightning damage

Eldritch Giant		Level 18 Skirmisher	
Large fey humanoid		XP 2,000	
Initiative +12		Senses Perception +20; low-light vision	
HP 171; Bloodied 85			
AC 32; Fortitude 29; Reflex 31; Will 33			
Resist 10 force			
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects			
Speed 6, teleport 6			
m Eldritch Blade (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon			
Reach 2; +21 vs Reflex; 3d6 + 7 force damage			
r Force Missile (standard; at-will) ♦ Force			
Ranged 20; +21 vs Reflex; 2d6 + 7 force damage			
C Sweeping Sword (standard; encounter) ♦ Force, Weapon			
Close burst 2; +21 vs AC; 3d6 + 7 force damage, and the target is knocked prone. Special: When charging, the eldritch giant can use this power in place of a melee basic attack			
Consume Magic (minor 1/round; at-will)			
Targets an adjacent conjuration or zone created by an enemy; +21 vs. the Will of the creator of the conjuration or zone; the conjuration or zone is destroyed, and its effects end. The eldritch giant's attacks deal 3d6 extra force damage until the end of its next turn.			
Eldritch Field (minor; recharge 5 6) ♦ Zone			
Close blast 5; the blast creates a zone of rippling magic that lasts until the end of the encounter or until the eldritch giant uses this power again. The zone is difficult terrain, and the giant's attacks deal 1d6 extra force damage against creatures within the zone.			
Alignment Evil		Languages Elven, Giant	
Skills Arcana +21, Insight +20			
Str 21 (+14)	Dex 12 (+10)	Wis 22 (+15)	
Con 19 (+13)	Int 24 (+16)	Cha 13 (+10)	

Elder Storm Dragon (level 17)		Level 17 Elite Brute
Huge elemental magical beast (dragon)		XP 3,200
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +15; darkvision	
Howling Storm aura 2; enemies within the aura gain vulnerable 10 thunder.		
HP 408; Bloodied 204		
AC 29; Fortitude 30; Reflex 28; Will 29		
Resist 25 thunder		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 10, fly 10 (clumsy), overland flight 14		
Action Points 1		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Thunder		
Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 thunder damage (save ends).		
m Claw (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and the target loses thunder resistance until the end of the storm dragon's next turn.		
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)		
The storm dragon makes a claw and bite attack or two claw attacks.		
Growing Tempest (standard; at-will) ♦ Thunder		
Each enemy in the storm dragon's howling storm aura takes 5 thunder damage, then the howling storm expands to aura 5. Sustain free: Each enemy in the storm dragon's howling storm aura takes 5 thunder damage, then the howling storm expands to aura 10. Each round thereafter, the storm dragon can sustain it to maintain the size and damage of the aura.		
C Echoing Catastrophe (free, when the storm dragon's howling storm is aura 10 at the start of its turn; at-will) ♦ Thunder		
Close burst 10; targets enemies; +18 vs Reflex; 4d10 + 7 thunder damage and ongoing 10 thunder damage (save ends). Effect: The howling storm aura reverts to its original state and size (aura 2).		
A Furious Winds (minor/1 per round; recharge 6) ♦ Thunder, Zone		
Area burst 1 within 10; the burst becomes a zone of furious winds. Any creature that moves into or starts its turn in the zone takes 10 thunder damage.		
Thunder Absorption (free; whenever the storm dragon is hit by a thunder attack; at-will) ♦ Thunder		
Each enemy in the dragon's howling storm aura takes 5 thunder damage.		
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Common, Draconic, Primordial	
Str 26 (+17)	Dex 23 (+15)	Wis 25 (+16)
Con 24 (+16)	Int 20 (+13)	Cha 22 (+15)

Windrage Harpy		Level 15 Artillery	
Medium fey humanoid		XP 1,200	
Initiative +12		Senses Perception +14	
Windrage Song (Acid) aura 10; an enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 10 acid damage (deafened creatures take 5 acid damage).			
HP 118; Bloodied 59			
AC 27; Fortitude 27; Reflex 26; Will 27			
Resist 10 acid			
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)			
m Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid			
+22 vs AC; 2d8 + 6 acid damage			
C Acid Gale (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Acid			
Close blast 3; +20 vs Reflex; 2d8 + 6 acid damage, and the target is blinded (save ends)			
Alignment Evil		Languages Common, Elven	
Str 16 (+10)	Dex 20 (+12)	Wis 15 (+9)	
Con 22 (+13)	Int 13 (+8)	Cha 22 (+13)	

ENCOUNTER 2: A MEETING OF MINDS MOST FOUL MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Sinister Woods x1, *Caves of Carnage* x1, *Ruins of the Wild* x1

Note that a 4x2 area of one *Sinister Woods* tile is covered with black to create the right crevasse size. (Alternately, the map from WEEK1-4 may be used, along with tiles to represent the standing stones and crevasse.) PCs start in an actual forested square bordering the path if they succeeded at Stealth (not the black border). Otherwise, they begin 5 squares east off the map.



ENCOUNTER 3: BETWEEN DRAGONS AND SNAKES

SETUP

The PCs were asked to help sow distrust between the groups active in the Forest of Wyrms. This exploration and role-playing encounter allows them to incite distrust between the groups as they travel through the forest. The party should not need to expend non-renewable resources.

You can forego dice and just reward ideas and descriptions if you wish. If players seem to want to roll dice, you may use skill checks (easy DCs are 11/13, moderate 18/20, hard 23/25) but reward ideas over dice.

In a convention setting, this encounter should run for roughly 10-15 minutes.

Be fluid and creative; don't limit player options just to what is listed. Encourage the players to think and act in heroic terms, using this opportunity to describe how their PC reacts to these situations. Be willing to coach players who are not experienced with this type of a role-playing encounter. Above all, have fun! (Conversely, if the players are not enjoying the encounter or are uncomfortable role-playing, feel free to cut the encounter short.)

You head out, using the ghost and Tyrangal's directions. Without warning a shadow falls upon you as something huge flies overhead high amongst the clouds. From cover you watch, but it does not return. Up ahead, in the direction from which it came, you can see a structure. You can investigate where the dragon came from or bypass it, heading away and following the direction the ghost indicated.

Allow the PCs some time to discuss. There is no correct choice. The PCs may make Perception checks or use Nature to identify the creature as having been a green dragon of at least Elder age. The structure appears to be small, an unlikely place for a dragon of that size to live.

If the PCs decide to investigate, continue with Scene 1. If the PCs decide to bypass the structure, continue with Scene 2.

SCENE 1: TEMPORARY NEST

Allow the PCs to briefly describe how they will approach the structure.

This stone structure is an old mausoleum, now in ruins. One entire wall is missing, the tombs inside long plundered. Brush has been recently piled in one corner.

Once the PCs investigate, continue.

Hidden amongst the brush are three large eggs, their shells light green in color.

Carvings found inside the mausoleum depict human slaves serving draconic masters.

The following skills may be used in this scene as the PCs decide what to do with the eggs.

Nature: The eggs belong to a particularly massive green dragon – from the size of the claw marks, a fight with it would mean certain death. The nest seems temporary, indicating that the dragon laid the eggs unexpectedly and is likely to return.

Heal: The eggs are healthy and can withstand a day's travel without damage.

Bluff or Stealth: The eggs can be hidden or the scene altered to suggest that the eggs have been taken in a certain direction or destroyed by serpents.

The PCs can destroy the eggs or take them. Though they would normally have value, the paladins would want them destroyed and will not pay for them.

The PCs could use the eggs to foment dissension between the dragon and serpent factions, such as by planting them in the serpents' territory or by making it look as if snakes destroyed them.

Skip Scene 2 and continue with Scene 3.

SCENE 2: SHRINE

You bypass the structure and continue into the dark forest. An hour later you reach a lake roughly fifty feet across. The lake is covered in green mist. A small island is in the center, and upon it, some sort of shrine.

The following skills may be used in this scene as the PCs evade the dragons and search for a way across.

Arcana or Nature: The lake is not entirely natural. Wisps of mist rise and fade, often resembling curling winged dragons. There is a connection to the Feywild here and the gas given off by the lake is poisonous. Anyone entering will be slowly drained of life.

Endurance or Heal: PCs approaching the lake can hold their breath or treat themselves with an antidote.

Perception and Acrobatics: A PC can spot a rough path of rocks that can be used as stepping stones to walk across the lake.

Building a raft: A raft cut from trees would allow access to the shrine. PCs may use other methods, such as rituals or flight, to reach the shrine.

Teleportation: A PC with the fey origin will sense that teleportation is magnified near the lake. Any teleportation power will allow transportation to the shrine.

Religion: The shrine is dedicated to Tiamat.

Carvings found upon the shrine's walls depict human slaves serving draconic masters.

PCs reaching the shrine may choose to deface it. Evidence can be planted to suggest the damage was done by the serpent faction.

SCENE 3: WATERFALL

As you press on, the terrain turns rocky and you hear the roar of a raging river. Weaving through the large boulders along the banks, you seek a way across.

The river finally narrows as it passes through an area of dense trees. Peering over the bank you can see many large rocks and several logs jammed against them.

PCs may wish to scout the area or may simply stumble upon the trees as they approach the water.

Lining the riverbank on the far side is a row of strange trees. The shiny dark brown and black trunks have a bark resembling tiny scales. As you study them, a bird approaches one of the trees. A branch suddenly elongates, the leaves parting as a fanged maw grabs and swallows the bird.

The following skills may be used in this scene as the PCs try to find a way across.

Nature: The PCs can determine that the trees are unlikely to eat anything as large as them, at least not whole. The snake trees will leave some scratches if they get too close, something the PCs may want to avoid.

Perception: The PCs spot an area where there are fewer trees or where the terrain provides some cover.

Acrobatics, Athletics: PCs can balance on the logs or jump from rock to rock. They can also dash past the trees.

Acrobatics, Athletics, Heal or Perception: If anyone falls in or is grabbed by the trees, other PCs can react and help rescue them before any real damage is incurred.

Religion: The PC detects the presence of water spirits, which if pleased through **Diplomacy** will aid their crossing.

Bluff or Stealth: The trees ignore PCs that display their snake tattoos and pretend to belong (Bluff). Alternatively, PCs can employ Stealth to sneak past the trees.

The PCs will not suffer any damage if the trees catch them. Play up the dramatic value of this scene, but do not apply any actual damage or penalty.

SCENE 4: PIXIES!

Leaving the river behind, you find it is unclear where you are. Something giggles to your left. Then something sings to your right. High-pitched voices can be heard, but their source eludes you.

The following skills may be used in this scene as the PCs gain help from the pixies. They are flighty and silly tricksters with high-pitched sing-song voices.

Nature: The behavior suggests friendly fey, a rarity in this forest.

Perception: The PC's sharp eyes spot the pixies, helping to keep their pranks to a minimum.

Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate: The pixies can be convinced to assist and even show themselves, though they continue to try to play. The pixies can share that this is Najaran territory. They saw a ghost recently. It tried to speak, but finally just pointed (the pixies eventually recall the direction). The pixies can also share that a white spire can be seen to the northwest.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter ends when the players seem satisfied and have reached the area belonging to the serpent (Najaran) faction. If the PCs require a short rest, they should be provided with one.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

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

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4: ALL THAT MEETS THE GAZE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 16/17 (7000/9200 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps at the low tier:

- 1 altar of zealotry (A)
- 2 medusa shrouds of zehir (female) (level 16) (S)
- 1 medusa warrior (male) (W)
- 1 firebred hell hound (level 16) (H)

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps at the high tier:

- 1 altar of zealotry (A)
- 2 medusa shrouds of zehir (female) (S)
- 1 medusa warrior (male) (level 15) (W)
- 1 firebred hell hound (H)

The PCs are now in an area dominated by the serpent faction. Remind them to adopt their draconic disguises if necessary.

The rain has finally ceased, leaving the forest green and eerily quiet. Ruins are everywhere, nature doing its best to slowly break up signs of what must have once been a mighty civilization. When you examine the ruins you find the walls are covered with carvings depicting snakes, yuan-ti, and nagas, often performing despicable acts on enslaved humans and other good races.

Soon you spot an anomaly. In the distance a thin white spire rises sinuously to extend above the canopy. You enter the ruins, seeing that the incredibly tall spire somehow stands unblemished, its perfect surface scaled and tapering like a snake's tail.

The medusas and their pet, a specially bred hell hound, hide amongst the ruins. The altar has warned them of the PCs' arrival. The players should place their miniatures on the edge of the map, and then decide how to move forward. When one or more PCs reach the squares indicated on the map, roll initiative, as the medusa lack the stealth to gain surprise.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The rain has stopped. The area has normal illumination.

Ruin walls: the black ruin walls are 10 feet high and can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check due to the carvings. The walls provide cover/concealment normally.

Trees: Trees are particularly dense, requiring three squares of movement.

Gray platforms: Steep steps are difficult terrain and climb up 10 feet to 10-foot-square stone surfaces stained with the blood of many sacrifices. When standing on or adjacent to the stone surface any attack with the necrotic keyword gains a +1 attack bonus. The benefit becomes apparent whenever it triggers as the stone glows briefly. None of the monsters have necrotic powers, so it is only a potential boon to PCs.

Altar: The central raised area is an altar to Zehir, an evil deity that has many reptilian worshipers. Attacks against the altar must be directed to the central 2x2 statue tile, which represents the base of the sinuous spire. When the altar is destroyed, the spire crashes into the ruins.

TACTICS

All enemies begin behind 10-foot tall complete cover, springing forth when the PCs approach.

The altar attacks at range with evil cunning, seeking to control whichever PC is causing the most damage. The altar can dominate more than one PC on successive rounds but you may limit the altar to one dominated PC at a time.

Each medusa shroud starts with *petrifying gaze* on groups of several PCs. Each shroud fights independently, using *fangs of death* to target multiple opponents and reach the rear ranks. They attack different targets and try to spread ongoing damage. They use *snaky hair* when *fangs of death* does not recharge. They repeat *petrifying gaze* when PCs make their saving throws.

The medusa warrior uses *venomous gaze* liberally, as dazing and weakening prevents PCs from inflicting damage. He engages the PCs' front line as needed.

The firebred hell hound attacks the front line as well, working with the medusa warrior to overlay area damage and apply its aura against immobilized or dazed foes.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: At low tier remove the altar. At high tier remove the altar and lower the medusa warrior 1 level (-1 to all defenses and attacks and -16 HP). Optionally, for a group requesting a challenge, remove the hell

hound instead of the altar. However, dominating one of four PCs is too strong for most groups to overcome.

Six PCs: Add another medusa shroud of Zehir.

Note: If the altar is presenting too strong a challenge for the party, consider allowing the PCs to employ additional countermeasures, such as Thievery or Religion checks as standard actions to suppress the altar for one round and end any current domination. After a few such checks the altar could be defeated. Use your judgment to provide a challenging encounter but prevent frustration.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The foes generally fight to the death. If there are time pressures, the medusa shrouds can decide to flee. The altar loses its power if all other foes are defeated.

Any petrified PCs can be recovered, even without the Remove Affliction ritual. A character knows the following with a successful Nature check.

Nature DC 30: The blood of a medusa can reverse petrification. One must apply a few drops of the creature's blood to the lips or mouth of a petrified creature and succeed on a DC 20 Heal check. The medusa must have been killed within the past 24 hours for the blood to work.

Once the combat has concluded and a short rest taken, the ghost of Dartholos appears once more. Improvise his speech or use the text below.

The ghostly half-elf appears atop a ruined wall, this time seeming stronger. He moves along the wall, his rapier drawn as he pretends to fight, mimicking some of your actions.

"Ah, I miss that! Energy, excitement, danger! The world before you - all of its secrets waiting to be discovered."

Allow the PCs to respond as they choose. When they have spoken he introduces himself.

Finally, he sheaths his weapon and takes a bow, his knapsack almost causing him to lose his balance.

"I am, I should say I was, Dartholos of the Twisted Path. I was called that by the paladins... they didn't approve of my style. There was little I did not dare to do when I was young. My age and my greed finally caught up to me below these ruins. My bones rest inside the very tomb I sought to plunder."

PCs likely have questions regarding his knowledge or how he can come back to them.

Dartholos climbs down from the wall. "I do not know much about the time after I died. I was something other, protecting the traps. The snakes below recently began to use rituals and binding magic, slowly changing me. I regained my memories." He looks at his worn knapsack. "Why, the stories I could tell you about this! My favorite thing in the world! Surely you must recover it, and me, and bring me back to the world? I think those snakes want my knowledge."

His form begins to waver. "Quickly, come this way!" Dartholos hastily leads you to a doorway further in the ruins, just as his form fades.

The PCs can enter, finding a dark corridor sloping down into the darkness. Proceed to Encounter 5 when the PCs descend.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs each earn 1400/1840 experience points for defeating the encounter, half if they fail.

TREASURE

The female medusas each wear a hooded cobra talisman similar to the ones provided by Tyrangal but covered in gold and emeralds and worth a total of 1200 / 3500 gp.

The PCs also find that one of the female medusas wears a *coif of mindiron*.

ENCOUNTER 4: ALL THAT MEETS THE GAZE STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Altar of Zealotry	Level 15 Lurker
Trap	XP 1,200
Trap: Taking the form of a large altar devoted to a dread god, this shrine attempts to dominate those who approach it. The trigger area is the entire shrine. It draws its energy from living creatures not devoted to its deity, and functions only so long as such creatures are within the shrine.	
Perception ♦ No check is required to see the altar.	
Additional Skill: Religion ♦ DC 27: The character recognizes the nature of the altar	
Initiative: +6	
Trigger When the characters enter the area, the trap activates and rolls initiative. The trap continues its attacks until no living unbelievers remain in the area	
Attack Standard Action Ranged sight Target: A random creature not wearing the holy symbol of the deity it is dedicated to. Attack: +19 vs. Will Hit: Target is dominated (save ends) Aftereffect: Target is dazed (save ends)	
Countermeasures ♦ A character can attack the altar (AC 26, other defenses 24; hp125; resist 10 all). Destroying the altar disables the trap.	

Firebred Hell Hound (Level 16)	Level 16 Brute
Medium elemental beast	XP 1,400
Initiative +10 Senses Perception +17 Fire Shield aura 1; any creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura takes 1d10 fire damage. HP 195; Bloodied 97 AC 29; Fortitude 29; Reflex 27; Will 28 Resist 40 fire Speed 8	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire +19 vs AC; 1d10 + 6 damage plus 1d10 fire damage	
C Fiery Breath (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Fire Close blast 3; +17 vs Reflex; 4d6 + 7 fire damage	
C Fiery Burst (standard; recharge 6) ♦ Fire Close burst 3; +17 vs Reflex; 4d10 + 7 fire damage	
Alignment Unaligned Languages – Str 22 (+14) Dex 14 (+10) Wis 19 (+12) Con 25 (+15) Int 2 (+4) Cha 12 (+9)	

The firebred hell hound has the following Monster Theme power (DMG p.119):

Serpentine Body
This creature gains a +5 bonus to saving throws against being immobilized or restrained, and a +5 bonus to checks made as part of an escape action. This creature can also stand up from prone as a minor action.

Medusa Shroud of Zehir (Level 16)	Level 16 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (female)	XP 1,400
Initiative +17 Senses Perception +11 HP 156; Bloodied 78 AC 30; Fortitude 26; Reflex 28; Will 27 Immune petrification; Resist 10 acid, 10 poison Speed 8	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid, Poison, Weapon +21 vs AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 acid and poison damage (save ends)	
M Fangs of Death (standard; recharge 4 5 6) The medusa shroud of Zehir makes two melee basic attacks and can shift up to 3 squares between attacks.	
M Snaky Hair (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid, Poison +21 vs AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 acid and poison damage and takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude defense (save ends both)	
C Petrifying Gaze (standard; at-will) ♦ Gaze, Petrification Close blast 5; blind creatures are immune; +19 vs Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends). <i>First Failed Save:</i> The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). <i>Second Failed Save:</i> The target is petrified (no save)	
Alignment Evil Languages Common Skills Acrobatics +20, Bluff +19, Stealth +20 Str 16 (+11) Dex 24 (+15) Wis 17 (+11) Con 20 (+13) Int 13 (+9) Cha 22 (+14)	
Equipment black hooded cloak, short sword x2	

Medusa Warrior	Level 13 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (male)	XP 1,600
Initiative +13 Senses Perception +16 HP 272; Bloodied 136 AC 29; Fortitude 28; Reflex 26; Will 27 Immune petrification; Resist 20 poison Saving Throws +2 Speed 6 Action Points 1	
m Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon +20 vs AC; 1d8 + 8 damage, and the medusa warrior makes a secondary attack <i>Secondary attack:</i> +18 vs Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both)	
r Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon Ranged 20/40; +17 vs AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends)	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon The medusa warrior makes two longsword attacks, dealing an extra 2d8 damage on a hit against a dazed target.	
C Venomous Gaze (standard; at-will) ♦ Gaze, Poison, Psychic Close blast 5; blind creatures are immune; +19 vs Will; 3d6+6 poison and psychic damage, and the target is dazed and weakened (save ends both)	
Alignment Evil Languages Common Skills Bluff +17, Intimidate +17, Stealth +15 Str 26 (+14) Dex 20 (+11) Wis 20 (+11) Con 24 (+13) Int 16 (+9) Cha 22 (+12)	
Equipment chainmail, longsword, longbow, arrows (30)	

ENCOUNTER 4: ALL THAT MEETS THE GAZE STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Altar of Zealotry	Level 15 Lurker
Trap	XP 1,200
Trap: Taking the form of a large altar devoted to a dread god, this shrine attempts to dominate those who approach it. The trigger area is the entire shrine. It draws its energy from living creatures not devoted to its deity, and functions only so long as such creatures are within the shrine.	
Perception ♦ No check is required to see the altar.	
Additional Skill: Religion ♦ DC 27: The character recognizes the nature of the altar	
Initiative: +6	
Trigger When the characters enter the area, the trap activates and rolls initiative. The trap continues its attacks until no living unbelievers remain in the area	
Attack Standard Action Ranged sight Target: A random creature not wearing the holy symbol of the deity it is dedicated to. Attack: +19 vs. Will Hit: Target is dominated (save ends) Aftereffect: Target is dazed (save ends)	
Countermeasures ♦ A character can attack the altar (AC 26, other defenses 24; hp125; resist 10 all). Destroying the altar disables the trap.	

Firebred Hell Hound	Level 17 Brute
Medium elemental beast	XP 1,600
Initiative +10 Senses Perception +17 Fire Shield aura 1; any creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura takes 1d10 fire damage. HP 205; Bloodied 102 AC 30; Fortitude 30; Reflex 28; Will 29 Resist 40 fire Speed 8	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire +20 vs AC; 1d10 + 6 damage plus 1d10 fire damage	
C Fiery Breath (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Fire Close blast 3; +18 vs Reflex; 4d6 + 7 fire damage	
C Fiery Burst (standard; recharge 6) ♦ Fire Close burst 3; +18 vs Reflex; 4d10 + 7 fire damage	
Alignment Unaligned Languages – Str 22 (+14) Dex 14 (+10) Wis 19 (+12) Con 25 (+15) Int 2 (+4) Cha 12 (+9)	

The firebred hell hound has the following Monster Theme power (DMG p.119):

Serpentine Body
This creature gains a +5 bonus to saving throws against being immobilized or restrained, and a +5 bonus to checks made as part of an escape action. This creature can also stand up from prone as a minor action.

Medusa Shroud of Zehir	Level 18 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (female)	XP 2,000
Initiative +18 Senses Perception +12 HP 172; Bloodied 86 AC 32; Fortitude 28; Reflex 30; Will 29 Immune petrification; Resist 10 acid, 10 poison Speed 8	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid, Poison, Weapon +23 vs AC; 1d6 +7 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 acid and poison damage (save ends)	
M Fangs of Death (standard; recharge 4 5 6) The medusa shroud of Zehir makes two melee basic attacks and can shift up to 3 squares between attacks.	
M Snaky Hair (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid, Poison +23 vs AC; 1d6 + 7 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 acid and poison damage and takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude defense (save ends both)	
C Petrifying Gaze (standard; at-will) ♦ Gaze, Petrification Close blast 5; blind creatures are immune; +21 vs Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends). <i>First Failed Save:</i> The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). <i>Second Failed Save:</i> The target is petrified (no save)	
Alignment Evil Languages Common Skills Acrobatics +20, Bluff +19, Stealth +20 Str 16 (+12) Dex 24 (+16) Wis 17 (+12) Con 20 (+14) Int 13 (+10) Cha 22 (+15)	
Equipment black hooded cloak, short sword x2	

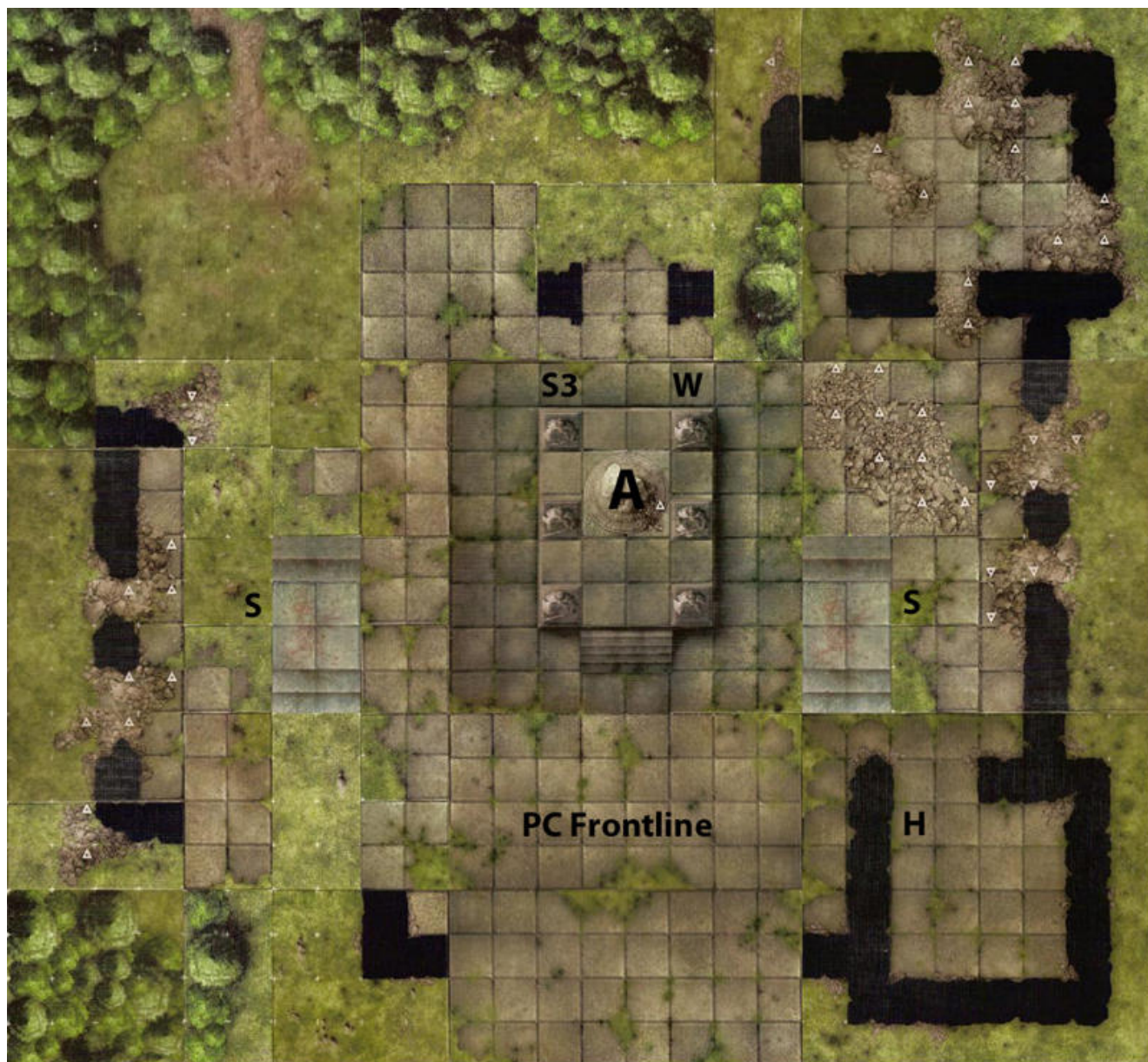
Medusa Warrior (Level 15)	Level 15 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (male)	XP 2,400
Initiative +14 Senses Perception +17 HP 306; Bloodied 153 AC 32; Fortitude 30; Reflex 28; Will 29 Immune petrification; Resist 20 poison Saving Throws +2 Speed 6 Action Points 1	
m Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon +22 vs AC; 1d8 + 9 damage, and the medusa warrior makes a secondary attack <i>Secondary attack:</i> +20 vs Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both)	
r Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon Ranged 20/40; +19 vs AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends)	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon The medusa warrior makes two longsword attacks, dealing an extra 2d8 damage on a hit against a dazed target.	
C Venomous Gaze (standard; at-will) ♦ Gaze, Poison, Psychic Close blast 5; blind creatures are immune; +21 vs Will; 3d6+7 poison and psychic damage, and the target is dazed and weakened (save ends both)	
Alignment Evil Languages Common Skills Bluff +17, Intimidate +17, Stealth +15 Str 26 (+14) Dex 20 (+11) Wis 20 (+11) Con 24 (+13) Int 16 (+9) Cha 22 (+12)	
Equipment chainmail, longsword, longbow, arrows (30)	

ENCOUNTER 4: ALL THAT MEETS THE GAZE MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Sinister Woods x2, *Halls of the Giant Kings* x2

Combat begins when PCs reach the area marked “PC Frontline”.



ENCOUNTER 5: IT HAD TO BE SNAKES!

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 17/19 (8000/11200 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps at the low tier:

- 1 snake-covered chamber trap
- 1 yuan-ti malison sharp-eye (level 15) (S)
- 1 yuan-ti malison incanter (level 16) (I)
- 1 yuan-ti malison disciple of zehir (level 16) (D)
- 1 yuan-ti anathema (level 16) (A)

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps at the high tier:

- 1 snake-covered chamber trap
- 1 yuan-ti malison sharp-eye (level 17) (S)
- 1 yuan-ti malison incanter (level 18) (I)
- 1 yuan-ti malison disciple of zehir (D)
- 1 yuan-ti anathema (level 18) (A)
- 2 yuan-ti archers (level 17) (M)

Note: Darthalos appears as an NPC at both tiers.

The PCs travel through a few corridors, finally reaching a chamber. Not being reptiles, they spring a trap. Yuan-ti arrive shortly thereafter to defend the chamber.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

The sharp acrid odor of reptiles assaults you as you descend down a stone ramp. Soon you reach a long room. Four braziers burn intensely, casting light upon walls deeply carved with snakes and snake-men, many of them with large open fanged mouths. A closer look shows the carvings on the walls, floor, and ceiling to be riddled with circular holes. No light shines wherever they lead. Semi-transparent canopic jars rest in niches to the sides, holding reptilian remains and giving off an acrid odor.

Investigating the holes does not show anything beyond that they lead far into the walls.

As you enter you can make out a sarcophagus in a small raised chamber at the far end of the room. Two large locks and sigils secure the sarcophagus. Darthalos stands next to it, shaking his head. "I am afraid they know you are here! They will take my knowledge and I

will never bear my rucksack again! Hurry, come get me out!"

A loud grinding noise begins as a massive stone wall begins to drop. It will soon seal off the room with Darthalos' bones!

Before you can move towards the sarcophagus a strange slithering and hissing noise can be heard. Thousands of poisonous snakes begin pouring out of the holes in the ceilings, walls, and floors. And then you hear more sounds; rattles and hisses herald the arrival of much larger snake creatures.

PCs with a passive Perception of 25 or better realize that the chamber the sarcophagus is in is carved out of solid rock and the slab closing it is 5' (1 square) thick. If it closes there is no guarantee that anything other than a ritual will get someone through the door.

PCs start in the designated area, though their placement can be adjusted if they provide suitable reasons. PCs begin within the trap and with no other visible foes. Both PCs and monsters roll initiative, with the yuan-ti appearing on the map on their turn by slithering through the larger holes in the walls. This takes a move action.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The chamber is brightly lit. However, if two braziers are extinguished, the illumination becomes dim light.

Balconies: Four balconies are arranged around the room. A creature on a balcony has cover from those below. Small covered corridors lead to the balconies and are used by the archers and incanter to gain total cover and break line of sight. A DC 15 Athletics check is needed to climb the walls.

Massive Stone Door: A stone door begins to drop between the small chamber with the sarcophagus and the steps. Each round at the end of the round, the stone door drops a little further. The stone door closes on the fifth round. You may wish to use a six-sided die to visibly count the rounds so the players don't forget.

A PC may spend a standard action to delay the door by a round (such as by trying to stop it with brute strength or jamming something into the track). This delay can only be done twice, though if the PCs are unable to get to the sarcophagus through no fault of their own, you could provide additional chances or have the door catch for a round.

It should be clear to PCs that if they are locked inside they will likely be trapped and may die. See the notes under Ending the Encounter.

Sarcophagus: The sarcophagus contains Dartholos' bones and knapsack. The sarcophagus has two locks and each lock also has a magical sigil that can be used to open the lock. A successful Thievery or Arcana check at DC 20 / 22 opens one lock. Once the two locks are open, the sarcophagus can be opened and the remains retrieved.

Braziers: The braziers may be used against the endless tide of poisonous snakes, as described in the Countermeasures. Additionally, the braziers are damaging terrain. Any creature entering one of these squares takes 2d8 + 6 fire damage. As always, a creature gets a saving throw to fall prone at the edge instead of being pushed into the damaging terrain.

Throne: The throne is blocking terrain.

Steps: All steps are difficult terrain.

Columns: The columns in the hallway leading into the room are blocking terrain.

TACTICS

All foes other than the trap begin outside the room and cannot be targeted by the PCs until they enter.

The trap is constantly active, attacking at the start of each PC's turn. PCs may make the skill check to learn the countermeasures with a minor action. The trap extends onto the steps and corridor but not the balconies or room with the sarcophagus.

The yuan-ti anathema moves into the room on the first round using *swarm of snakes*. He uses *horde of snakes* whenever he can get most of the party in the area of effect. If several foes are dazed (and therefore unable to take opportunity attacks), he instead uses *trample*, which knocks PCs prone (resulting in more damage from the trap). If he cannot attack several foes he uses his reach and *double attack* to target opponents that have low defenses or have taken damage.

The malison sharp-eye (at both tiers) and yuan-ti archer minions (at high tier only) start out of sight, moving and then firing to daze opponents. On the next round they fire and then move to cover, repeating the cycle to minimize exposure. (For a greater challenge, they can drop prone behind cover as a free action and rise to fire with a move action).

The yuan-ti incanter positions herself next to a minion or other ally so she can use *deflect attack*. She uses *poison domination* as early as possible. Because that power and *zehir's venom* require the target to be taking ongoing poison damage, she will ready or delay for allies to inflict ongoing poison damage. She otherwise concentrates fire with *mindwarp*.

The disciple stays near the frontlines, ensuring the aura is effective. He uses *soothing words* whenever it is available.

At both tiers, Dartholos appears as an NPC and should be given an initiative count. His sole role is to remind PCs that they must get his bones and his prized knapsack out of the sarcophagus before the stone wall descends. He cannot be affected by either side's attacks or powers and the endless snakes slither right through him.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove the disciple at both tiers.

Six PCs: At low tier add two minions and increase the level of the disciple and incanter by 1 each (from 16th to 17th level). This gives both monsters +1 to all attacks and all defenses, and gives the disciple +8 HP and the incanter +6 HP.

At high tier add two more minions and a second incanter (I2 on map).

Note: This can be a very difficult encounter if multiple PCs are dazed and dominated. This can frustrate players. Adjust monster tactics as needed to present a challenge without too much frustration. You can consider limiting the use of domination powers to no more than two PCs at a time or one PC for a table of four.

RESKINNED MONSTERS

The yuan-ti archer minions are reskinned githyanki psychic archers (*Dungeon Magazine* 167). The following changes have been made:

- Added the reptile keyword and modified racial traits; changed psychic damage to poison
- Changed *telekinetic jump* to *surprising slither* and its effect from fly 5 to shift 5
- Changed basic melee attack from silver dagger to shortsword and adjusted equipment accordingly

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

It is important that the players understand the importance of recovering the body. They will lose significant rewards if the contents of the sarcophagus are not recovered. If the PCs are having a difficult time, they should realize they could grab the body and flee.

If any PCs are trapped with the sarcophagus when the massive stone door closes, they have a total of 10

minutes before yuan-ti reinforcements arrive. This is enough time to allow for the casting of a ritual such as Passwall, or for the party to make a small hole to allow line of sight for a teleportation power to allow a trapped PC to exit. (If this matters for some reason, it takes 200 hit points of damage to create even a small hole in the wall.) If a PC inside can use Linked Portal or a power that does not require line of sight, they may also be able to escape. Finally, the Passwall scroll within Dartholos' knapsack can be used if the PC is a ritual caster (it is assumed that only a PC with the Ritual Caster feat will have access to the 1000 gp in required components, but a PC without the feat would not).

If the party flat-out lacks any means to help a trapped PC escape, the other party members will just have to flee the scene and come back later. The trapped PC will be killed by the yuan-ti reinforcements (of which there are effectively an infinite number) but later recovered by the paladins.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC earns 1600/2240 XP for defeating the encounter (defeating the monsters) or half if they fail.

TREASURE

Dartholos' knapsack (found with his remains inside the sarcophagus) contains various items, acting exactly like a *bag of holding*. Inside are a suit of *snakefang armor* +4, *transference weapon* +4, *vistani eye amulet* +4, and a *ring of tenacious will*. In addition, a ritual scroll of Passwall and a ritual scroll of Shadow Walk are found in a scroll tube.

ENCOUNTER 5: IT HAD TO BE SNAKES! STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Snake-Covered Chamber	Level 15 Lurker
Trap	XP 1,200
<i>Slithering from holes in the walls and ceiling, hundreds of snakes quickly cover the floor. They sink their poisonous fangs into anything that isn't another snake.</i>	
Trap: When the PCs reach the designated point in the room, snakes begin pouring from the walls and ceiling, filling the floor of the chamber.	
Perception	
No perception check is needed to spot the snakes.	
Additional Skill: Nature	
DC 23: The character recognizes that a burst of elemental energy could momentarily rid an area of snakes, but that physical weapon damage and poison are unlikely to be effective.	
Trigger	
Once PCs reach the designated area, the snakes begin filling the room. When a living creature starts its turn in contact with the floor or walls, the trap attacks. The trap ignores creatures with the reptile type.	
Attack ♦ Poison	
Opportunity Action	Area the entire room
Target: Each living non-reptile creature starting its turn in contact with the floor or walls.	
Attack: +16 vs. Fort	
Hit: 1d10 + 6 poison damage. On a critical hit, the target is knocked prone and is attacked one additional time.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: If the target has resistance to poison, it is reduced by 5 (save ends).	
Countermeasures	
♦ Any close or area attack that does at least 15 points of energy damage will render that area non-damaging for one round. The trap is unaffected by weapon damage and poison damage.	
♦ Shelves containing canopic jars line the walls. As a move action, an adjacent PC may empty a shelf. The pungent, acidic remains will clear snakes in a blast 3 area for one round.	
♦ A PC may use a standard action and a DC 23 Athletics check to overturn one of the four braziers, clearing a blast 4 area for two rounds. Any creature in the blast area is subjected to an attack: +16 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 fire damage.	

Yuan-ti Malison Sharp-Eye	Level 15 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 1,200
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +14
HP 110; Bloodied 55	
AC 29; Fortitude 25; Reflex 27; Will 25	
Resist 10 poison	
Speed 7; see also <i>chameleon defense</i>	
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+18 vs AC; 1d8 + 5 damage (crit 2d8 + 13).	
r Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +20 vs AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the yuan-ti malison sharp-eye makes a secondary attack against the same target.	
<i>Secondary attack:</i> +18 vs Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage, and the target is dazed (save ends both).	
Chameleon Defense	
The yuan-ti malison sharp-eye has concealment against attacks that originate more than 3 squares away.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +16, History +13, Insight +14, Stealth +18	
Str 18 (+11)	Dex 23 (+13)
Con 14 (+9)	Int 12 (+8)
	Cha 18 (+11)
Equipment scimitar, longbow, arrows (30)	

Yuan-ti Malison Disciple of Zehir (Level 16)	Level 16 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 1,400
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +12
Zehir's Favor aura 10; allies in the aura at the start of their turns regain 5 hit points, while enemies in the aura at the start of their turns take 5 poison damage.	
HP 156; Bloodied 78	
AC 30; Fortitude 28; Reflex 28; Will 31	
Resist 10 poison	
Speed 7	
m Morningstar (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
+21 vs AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the yuan-ti malison disciple of Zehir makes a secondary attack against the same target.	
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +19 vs Fortitude; ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).	
R Soothing Words (standard; recharge 3 4 5 6) ♦ Charm	
Ranged 5; the target must be able to hear the disciple of Zehir; +23 vs Will; the target is dominated (save ends).	
<i>Aftereffect:</i> The target is dazed (save ends).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +21, History +18, Insight +17, Religion +18, Stealth +18	
Str 16 (+11)	Dex 20 (+13)
Con 20 (+13)	Int 20 (+13)
	Cha 26 (+16)
Equipment morningstar	

Yuan-ti Anathema (Level 16)		Level 16 Elite Skirmisher
Huge natural magical beast (reptile)		XP 2,800
Initiative +16		Senses Perception +14
HP 332; Bloodied 166		
AC 32; Fortitude 34; Reflex 30; Will 30		
Resist 20 poison		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 8; see also <i>swarm of snakes</i> and <i>trample</i>		
Action Points 1		
m Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
Reach 3; +21 vs AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).		
M Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
The yuan-ti anathema makes two slam attacks, each against a different target.		
M Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
Reach 3; +21 vs AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the yuan-ti anathema makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary attack</i> : +19 vs Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 15 poison damage and a -4 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).		
M Trample (standard; at-will)		
The yuan-ti anathema can move up to its speed and enter enemies' spaces. This movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the anathema must end its move in an unoccupied space. When it enters an enemy's space, the anathema makes a trample attack; +19 vs Reflex; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
C Horde of Snakes (standard; encounter; recharges when the yuan-ti anathema uses <i>swarm of snakes</i>) ♦ Poison		
Close burst 1; +21 vs Fortitude; 2d4 + 4 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).		
Swarm of Snakes (move; at-will)		
The yuan-ti anathema collapses into hundreds of snakes, which shift up to 8 squares away and then reform as the anathema in an unoccupied space. The anathema ignores difficult terrain while moving in this fashion.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Draconic
Str 25 (+14)	Dex 23 (+15)	Wis 15 (+9)
Con 30 (+17)	Int 5 (+4)	Cha 22 (+13)

Yuan-ti Malison Incanter (Level 16)		Level 16 Artillery (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 1,400
Initiative +14		Senses Perception +14
Zehir's Shield aura 10; allies in the aura gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses.		
HP 124; Bloodied 62; see also <i>poisoned domination</i> and <i>slither away</i>		
AC 30; Fortitude 27; Reflex 28; Will 28; see also <i>deflect attack</i> and <i>slither away</i>		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 7		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+17 vs Fortitude; 1d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
r Mindwarp (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic		
Ranged 20; +21 vs AC; 2d6 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
R Poisoned Domination (standard; encounter; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Charm		
Ranged 5; affects a creature taking ongoing poison damage; +21 vs Will; the target is dominated until the end of the incanter's next turn. <i>Aftereffect</i> : The target is dazed (save ends).		
R Zehir's Venom (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Poison		
Ranged 10; affects a creature taking ongoing poison damage; +21 vs Fortitude; 2d10 + 6 poison damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
Deflect Attack (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; recharge 5 6)		
The yuan-ti malison incanter transfers the attack's damage and effects to an adjacent ally.		
Slither Away		
While bloodied, the yuan-ti malison incanter gains +2 speed and a +5 bonus to all defenses.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Arcana +20, Bluff +20, History +20, Insight +19, Stealth +19		
Str 16 (+10)	Dex 22 (+14)	Wis 22 (+14)
Con 22 (+14)	Int 25 (+15)	Cha 25 (+14)

ENCOUNTER 5: IT HAD TO BE SNAKES! STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Snake-Covered Chamber	Level 15 Lurker
Trap	XP 1,200
<i>Slithering from holes in the walls and ceiling, hundreds of snakes quickly cover the floor. They sink their poisonous fangs into anything that isn't another snake.</i>	
Trap: When the PCs reach the designated point in the room, snakes begin pouring from the walls and ceiling, filling the floor of the chamber.	
Perception	
No perception check is needed to spot the snakes.	
Additional Skill: Nature	
DC 23: The character recognizes that a burst of elemental energy could momentarily rid an area of snakes, but that physical weapon damage and poison are unlikely to be effective.	
Trigger	
Once PCs reach the designated area, the snakes begin filling the room. When a living creature starts its turn in contact with the floor or walls, the trap attacks. The trap ignores creatures with the reptile type.	
Attack ♦ Poison	
Opportunity Action	Area the entire room
Target: Each living non-reptile creature starting its turn in contact with the floor or walls.	
Attack: +16 vs. Fort	
Hit: 1d10 + 6 poison damage. On a critical hit, the target is knocked prone and is attacked one additional time.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: If the target has resistance to poison, it is reduced by 5 (save ends).	
Countermeasures	
♦ Any close or area attack that does at least 15 points of energy damage will render that area non-damaging for one round. The trap is unaffected by weapon damage and poison damage.	
♦ Shelves containing canopic jars line the walls. As a move action, an adjacent PC may empty a shelf. The pungent, acidic remains will clear snakes in a blast 3 area for one round.	
♦ A PC may use a standard action and a DC 23 Athletics check to overturn one of the four braziers, clearing a blast 4 area for two rounds. Any creature in the blast area is subjected to an attack: +16 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 fire damage.	

Yuan-ti Archer (Level 17)		Level 17 Minion Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 400
Initiative +10		Senses Perception +11
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 29; Fortitude 28; Reflex 29; Will 28		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 6; see also <i>surprising slither</i>		
m Shortsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+24 vs AC; 6 damage.		
R Poisonous Shot (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +22 vs Will; 8 poison damage and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.		
Surprising Slither (move; encounter)		
The yuan-ti archer shifts 5 squares.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common, Draconic
Str 18 (+12)	Dex 15 (+10)	Wis 17 (+11)
Con 21 (+13)	Int 24 (+15)	Cha 21 (+13)
Equipment leather armor, shortsword, longbow, arrows (20)		

Yuan-ti Malison Sharp-Eye (Level 17)		Level 17 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 1,600
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +15	
HP 122; Bloodied 61		
AC 31; Fortitude 27; Reflex 29; Will 27		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 7; see also <i>chameleon defense</i>		
M Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+20 vs AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 2d8 + 14).		
r Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
Ranged 20/40; +22 vs AC; 1d10 + 8 damage, and the yuan-ti malison sharp-eye makes a secondary attack against the same target.		
<i>Secondary attack:</i> +20 vs Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage, and the target is dazed (save ends both).		
Chameleon Defense		
The yuan-ti malison sharp-eye has concealment against attacks that originate more than 3 squares away.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Bluff +17, History +14, Insight +15, Stealth +19		
Str 18 (+12)	Dex 23 (+14)	Wis 14 (+10)
Con 14 (+10)	Int 12 (+9)	Cha 18 (+12)
Equipment scimitar, longbow, arrows (30)		

Yuan-ti Malison Disciple of Zehir		Level 17 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 1,600
Initiative +13		Senses Perception +12
Zehir's Favor aura 10; allies in the aura at the start of their turns regain 5 hit points, while enemies in the aura at the start of their turns take 5 poison damage.		
HP 164; Bloodied 82		
AC 31; Fortitude 29; Reflex 29; Will 32		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 7		
m Morningstar (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
+22 vs AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the yuan-ti malison disciple of Zehir makes a secondary attack against the same target.		
Secondary Attack: +20 vs Fortitude; ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).		
R Soothing Words (standard; recharge 3 4 5 6) ♦ Charm		
Ranged 5; the target must be able to hear the disciple of Zehir; +24 vs Will; the target is dominated (save ends).		
Aftereffect: The target is dazed (save ends).		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +21, History +18, Insight +17, Religion +18, Stealth +18		
Str 16 (+11)	Dex 20 (+13)	Wis 18 (+12)
Con 20 (+13)	Int 20 (+13)	Cha 26 (+16)
Equipment morningstar		

Yuan-ti Anathema (Level 18)		Level 18 Elite Skirmisher
Huge natural magical beast (reptile)		XP 4,000
Initiative +17		Senses Perception +15
HP 364; Bloodied 182		
AC 34; Fortitude 36; Reflex 32; Will 32		
Resist 20 poison		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 8; see also <i>swarm of snakes</i> and <i>trample</i>		
Action Points 1		
m Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
Reach 3; +23 vs AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).		
M Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
The yuan-ti anathema makes two slam attacks, each against a different target.		
M Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
Reach 3; +23 vs AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the yuan-ti anathema makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary attack</i> : +21 vs Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 15 poison damage and a -4 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).		
M Trample (standard; at-will)		
The yuan-ti anathema can move up to its speed and enter enemies' spaces. This movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the anathema must end its move in an unoccupied space. When it enters an enemy's space, the anathema makes a trample attack; +21 vs Reflex; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
C Horde of Snakes (standard; encounter; recharges when the yuan-ti anathema uses <i>swarm of snakes</i>) ♦ Poison		
Close burst 1; +23 vs Fortitude; 2d4 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).		
Swarm of Snakes (move; at-will)		
The yuan-ti anathema collapses into hundreds of snakes, which shift up to 8 squares away and then reform as the anathema in an unoccupied space. The anathema ignores difficult terrain while moving in this fashion.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Draconic
Str 25 (+15)	Dex 23 (+16)	Wis 15 (+10)
Con 30 (+18)	Int 5 (+5)	Cha 22 (+14)

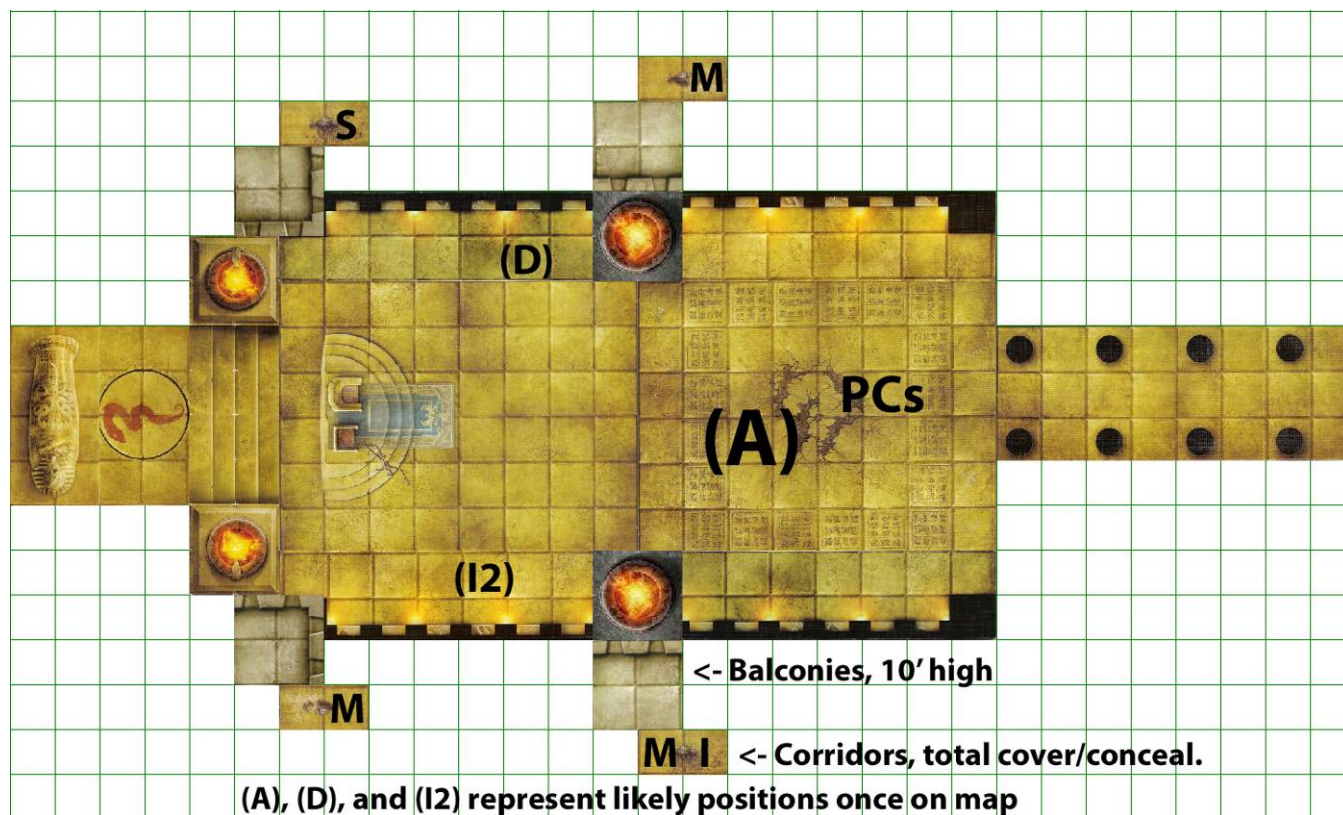
Yuan-ti Malison Incanter (Level 18)		Level 18 Artillery (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile)		XP 2,000
Initiative +15		Senses Perception +15
Zehir's Shield aura 10; allies in the aura gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses.		
HP 136; Bloodied 68; see also <i>poisoned domination</i> and <i>slither away</i>		
AC 32; Fortitude 29; Reflex 30; Will 30; see also <i>deflect attack</i> and <i>slither away</i>		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 7		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+19 vs Fortitude; 1d6 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
r Mindwarp (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic		
Ranged 20; +23 vs AC; 2d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
R Poisoned Domination (standard; encounter; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Charm		
Ranged 5; affects a creature taking ongoing poison damage; +23 vs Will; the target is dominated until the end of the incanter's next turn. <i>Aftereffect</i> : The target is dazed (save ends).		
R Zehir's Venom (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Poison		
Ranged 10; affects a creature taking ongoing poison damage; +23 vs Fortitude; 2d10 + 7 poison damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
Deflect Attack (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; recharge 5 6)		
The yuan-ti malison incanter transfers the attack's damage and effects to an adjacent ally.		
Slither Away		
While bloodied, the yuan-ti malison incanter gains +2 speed and a +5 bonus to all defenses.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Arcana +21, Bluff +21, History +21, Insight +20, Stealth +20		
Str 16 (+11)	Dex 22 (+15)	Wis 22 (+15)
Con 22 (+15)	Int 25 (+16)	Cha 25 (+15)

ENCOUNTER 5: IT HAD TO BE SNAKES! MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Dire Tombs x2, Arcane Towers x2

Monsters begin out of sight and take the indicated positions after taking a move action to travel through the holes in the walls or ceilings.



ENCOUNTER 6: CONCLUSION

SETUP

If they have been successful, the adventurers flee the Najaran ruins with Dartholos' remains and knapsack.

With great caution you carry Dartholos' remains and old knapsack out of the serpents' territory. At one point you watch from cover as several dragons fly towards the Najaran ruins. A while later you hear the sounds of breath weapons and magic being exchanged. It seems Elturgard will be able to march into battle without fearing an attack from the Forest of Wyrms.

It is dark when you reach the edge of the forest. Dartholos suddenly appears, his insubstantial form flickering.

"I... I feel the call of that sarcophagus. I don't know if I can leave the forest. My soul must have a focus."

Allow the PCs to think of his knapsack. If they do not, Dartholos will come up with the idea on his own.

Dartholos focuses on the knapsack you carry. His form wavers and shifts, then flows into the knapsack, infusing it with the explorer's spirit. Everything is quiet, though somehow, the knapsack looks different. Just when you begin to think the ghost has perished, Dartholos' voice calls forth. "Ah! A dream come true! To Elturgard! Adventure awaits!"

The old scout doesn't stop talking for the rest of the trip.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

PCs returning with the ghost are greeted with disbelief. The paladins are surprised that the threat was real, impressed that the PCs ended it, and overjoyed that Dartholos' knowledge could help them in the coming battle, though no one seems to know exactly how. For her part, Tyrangal has mysteriously disappeared, perhaps to check on the progress of her other agents.

Dartholos explains that the yuan-ti sought his knowledge of areas of magical disturbance, although he does not know exactly what information they were after. However, when he learns about the upcoming expedition to the plagueland, Dartholos is glad to share all of his knowledge with the paladins so as to help their upcoming efforts.

TREASURE

Knight-Command Vessen presents the adventurers with a reward of gold as described in the Player's Introduction. In addition, for those that did not find anything interesting within the ruins he offers the choice of a few additional magic items, or additional gold from Elturgard's vast treasury.

In addition, the paladins cover the cost of any Remove Affliction rituals which may be needed.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The players may wish to roleplay a second meeting with Laesa, who is slowly recovering from being poisoned. Perhaps they even want to introduce the two scouts to one another. Although she is confused by the possessed haversack at first, Laesa is soon entranced by Dartholos' charming personality, and the scouts launch into an excited discussion of the various wild places they have explored.

If the PCs returned Dartholos' remains, they earn story award **SPEC29 Scout's Honor**.

Each PC can also earn one (and only one) of the following awards, depending on which NPC primarily recruited them to come to Elturgard in the Player's Introduction.

If a PC was recruited by the Paladins and succeeded in Encounter 2, the PC earns story award **SPEC30 Paladin's Grace**.

If a PC was recruited by Tyrangal and succeeded in Encounter 5, the PC earns story award **SPEC31 Tyrangal's Gaze**.

REWARDS SUMMARY

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

EXPERIENCE POINTS

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

Encounter 2: A Meeting of Minds Most Foul
1520 / 2000 XP

Encounter 4: All That Meets the Gaze
1400 / 1840 XP

Encounter 5: It Had to Be Snakes!
1600 / 2240 XP

Total Possible Experience
4520 / 6080 XP

Gold per PC
2750 / 7500 gp
(Player's Introduction: 750 / 1800 gp; Encounter 2: 800 / 2200 gp; Encounter 4: 1200 / 3500 gp)

Note: The XP and treasure awards in this adventure exceed the normal maximum for a levels 14-17 adventure (by about 25%). This is intentional, and the PCs may earn the full amounts listed if they achieve all of the objectives.

TREASURE

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

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character's base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character who spends more gold than he or she earns to have a negative total for the

adventure. PCs receive 20% of the item's market price when they sell any magic item or consumable. They receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

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

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

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BUNDLES:

Bundle A: *hero's gauntlets** (17th level; *Adventurer's Vault* 2)

Found in Encounter 2

Bundle B: *coif of mindiron** (18th level; *Adventurer's Vault*)

Found in Encounter 4

Bundle C: *snakefang armor +4** (18th level; *Adventurer's Vault*)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle D: *transference weapon +4** (17th level; *Adventurer's Vault*)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle E: *vistani eye amulet +4** (17th level; *Dragon Magazine* 380)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle F: *ring of tenacious will** (high-level version only) (21st level; *Adventurer's Vault*)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle G: Any weapon, implement, armor, or neck slot item of 16th level or lower from any player-legal source or a *scorpion tail blade +4** (18th level; *Adventurer's Vault* 2) (low-level version only)

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle H: Any weapon, implement, armor, or neck slot item of 18th level or lower from any player-legal source or a *defender's armor +4** (20th level; *Revenge of the Giants*) (high-level version only)

Found in Encounter 6

Ritual Scrolls plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add:

- a ritual scroll of Passwall plus 1525/5525 gp;
- or a ritual scroll of Shadow Walk plus 1525/5525 gp;
- or, at high tier only, both ritual scrolls plus 2925 gp to their rewards from this adventure. The player should write the scroll(s) gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the scroll(s) plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle. Ritual scrolls obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 4125/8125 gp to their rewards from this adventure. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards. In this adventure, the PCs can all earn SPEC29, but each individual PC may only earn either SPEC30 or SPEC31, not both.

SPEC29 Scout's Honor

The long-dead scout Dartholos appreciates your rescuing his remains. Sometimes he visits you, mentoring you on the best ways to explore ruins, brave wilderness, or deal with the unusual circumstances that invariably arise in the course of an adventurer's life. At the DM's discretion, the scout's insights can provide a bonus when in a related skill challenge or other appropriate situation.

SPEC30 Paladin's Grace

The righteous paladins of Elturgard have taken notice of the capabilities you displayed within the Forest of Wyrms. Seeing you as virtuous and brave, they hope you will return to their nation. Any one item you own may be emblazoned with the symbol of Elturgard and Torm, marking you as allies to their cause.

SPEC31 Tyrangal's Gaze

Your actions in the Forest of Wyrms have furthered the goals of the enigmatic Tyrangal. Perhaps, in time, she will call upon you once more. Whether mutual trust can be found remains to be seen.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

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

1. Were Dartholos' remains recovered during Encounter 5?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. The party did not reach that encounter.

2. Which best describes the exploration encounter (Encounter 3)?

- a. Players enjoyed the free-form roleplaying instead of a skill challenge
- b. Players did not like it
- c. Players would have preferred a structured skill challenge
- d. Neutral reaction
- e. We skipped the encounter

3. How difficult was the adventure?

- a. Too difficult to enjoy
- b. Very difficult but enjoyable
- c. Average / No opinion
- d. Easy but enjoyable
- e. Too easy to be enjoyable

4. Which encounter was most challenging?

- a. Encounter 2 (dragons/fey)
- b. Encounter 4 (medusas)
- c. Encounter 5 (yuan-ti)

5. What was the reaction to dazing/domination?

- a. Neutral; these conditions are just part of the game at this level of play
- b. Enjoyable; players liked figuring out how to overcome the extra challenge imposed by these conditions during combat
- c. Frustrating; players thought these conditions were overused or detracted from the fun of the battles

6. How would you and the players rate the adventure?

- a. Five stars (best)
- b. Four stars
- c. Three stars (average)
- d. Two stars
- e. One star (worst)

NEW RULES

Defender's Armor

Level 20

This armor glows with silver energy.

Lvl 20 +4 125,000 gp

Armor: Chain, Scale, Plate

Enhancement: AC

Property: Resist 10 cold and resist 10 fire.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. Until the end of your next turn an attack that hits and marks an enemy also dazes that enemy (save ends).

Reference: *Revenge of the Giants*, page 15

The above item is part of the Implements of Argent item set.

Hero's Gauntlets

Level 17

This steel gauntlets reward risk and heroism.

Item Slot: Hands 65,000 gp

Property: When you spend an action point to make an attack, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls for that attack.

Property: When you spend an action point to make an attack and the attack deals damage, you gain temporary hit points equal to one-half your healing surge value.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 59.

Coif of Mindiron

Level 18

Your head and mind are guarded by this glistening mail hood.

Lvl 18 85,000 gp

Item Slot: Head

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 radiant damage per plus, and you can spend a healing surge

Power (Encounter): Standard Action. Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when you would be dazed or stunned by an attack that targets your Will defense. You are not dazed or stunned by the attack

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 140

Snakefang Armor

Level 18+

Bedecked in the fangs of serpents, this armor not only bestows resistance to deadly venoms, but also endangers attackers.

Lvl 18 +4 85,000 gp

Armor: Leather, Hide

Enhancement: AC

Property: Resist 10 poison.

Power (Daily + Poison): Immediate reaction. When you take damage from a melee attack, the attacker takes on-going poison damage equal to this armor's resist value (save ends).

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 52

Transference Weapon

Level 17+

With this weapon, your enemies need take heed of what afflictions they place on you, lest they suffer them as well.

Lvl 17 +4 65,000 gp

Weapon: Any

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 radiant damage per plus

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with the weapon. Transfer a condition or ongoing damage effect that is affecting you to the target you hit. The condition or ongoing damage continues to run its course as normal on the target.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 81

Vistani Eye Amulet

Level 17+

The most prized weapon of any paladin.

Lvl 17 +4 65,000 gp

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex and Will

Critical: +1d6 radiant damage per plus, and you can spend a healing surge

Property: You gain an item bonus to saving throws equal to the enhancement bonus against effects imposed by attacks with the gaze keyword, that originate in the attacker's eye, or eyes (DM discretion), or that affect your eyes or sight.

Power (Daily): Free Action. You make a saving throw to end an effect against which this item grants a bonus to saving throws even if a save cannot normally end the effect. If you save the effect ends.

Reference: *Dragon 380*, page 91

Ring of Tenacious Will

Level 21

Stripped with platinum and amber, this band allows you to survive on force of personality rather than toughness of body.

Item Slot: Ring 225,000 gp

Property: Use Charisma instead of Constitution to determine the number of healing surges you possess.

Power (Daily + Healing): No Action. Use this power when you would be reduced to 0 hit points or fewer. You are reduced to 1 hit point instead.

If you've reached at least one milestone today, you also regain a number of hit points equal to your level.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 161

Scorpion Tail Blade

Level 13+

This magically envenomed blade leaves foes at your mercy.

Lvl 18 +4 85,000 gp

Weapon: Light Blade

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: The target is slowed and takes ongoing 10 poison damage

Power (Daily + Poison): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with a melee attack power using this weapon.

Effect: That enemy is immobilized (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The enemy is slowed (save ends).

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 131

The above item is part of the Armory of the Unvanquished group item equipment set.

HANDOUT 1

These handouts may be cut out and given to PCs that would answer the summons for a nation known to unceasingly follow the path of righteousness.

Being a renowned defender of good, the high-ranking paladin Vessen summons you to Elturgard, a theocracy of paladins devoted to Torm. Elturgard holds several wild evil lands at bay, including a forest filled with dragons and snakes. Knight-Commander Vessen asks for your assistance with preparations for an expedition to explore the plagueland south of Elturel, offering you a chance to witness their glorious triumph over evil.

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HANDOUT 2

These handouts may be cut out and given to PCs that would not answer the summons for a nation known to have inflexible laws and intolerant paladins.

Weeks ago you received a scroll from the high-ranking paladin Vessen, offering a modest sum of gold for your aid in assisting with preparations for an expedition to explore the active plagueland south of Elturel. You would not normally answer the summons of Elturgard, a theocracy known for its inflexible laws and self-righteous paladins. However, a second compelling missive arrived from a person named Tyrangal. It warned of the paladins' overconfidence and promised a challenge and rewards worthy of your talents.

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APPENDIX 1: ELTURGARD

The following information from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide* can be used for reference and shared with players.

ELTURGARD

Elturgard is a theocracy ruled by those who are certain they walk the path of righteousness. The paladins of this land take pride in their moral clarity and pursuit of good.

Elturgard is dominated by a “second sun” that hovers eternally in the sky above the city of Elturel, making this a realm of endless daylight. Creatures of darkness cannot abide even the sight of the city.

Unlike most countries, Elturgard has a state religion: Torm is revered in the temples that dot the landscape.

ELTURGARD LORE

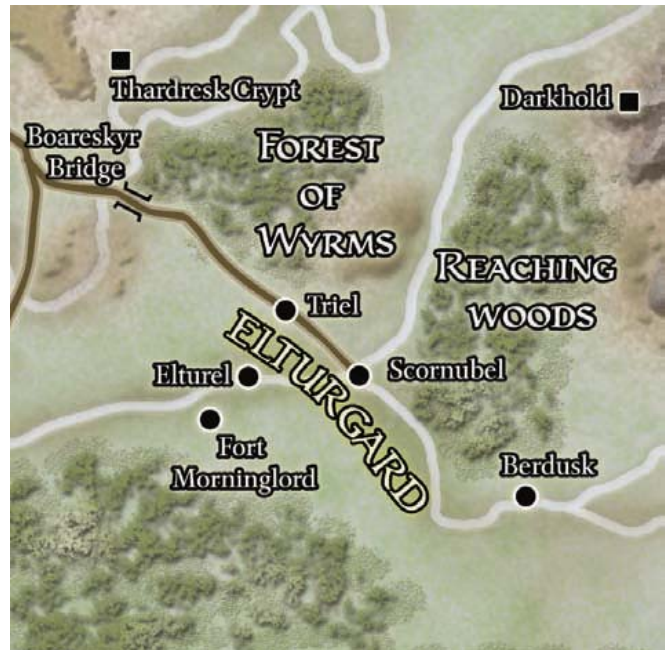
A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 15: Elturgard is a relatively small island of order and hope in an inhospitable swath of the Western Heartlands. Over the years, hundreds of people fleeing a mummy’s curse, a vampire’s service, or some other undead involvement have arrived here, settling in Elturel in particular. The forests surrounding this land have grown wild and dangerous.

A pocket of plagueland festering several miles to the south has a habit of spewing forth occasional monstrosities.

Streetwise DC 25: In some quarters, Elturgard has garnered a reputation for being too righteous. Many problems attend its inflexible laws, inquisitorial persecution of evil, and bold plans for “setting Faerûn aright.”

Streetwise or Religion DC 25: The high-ranking paladin Vessen is in charge of a large military operation. The exact nature of the operation is not known, but rumor has it that the paladins of Elturgard wish to explore the plagueland to the south of Elturel, perhaps in hopes of finding a way to contain or even destroy it.



NAJARA

Najara is one of the largest and most potent kingdoms in western Faerûn, though few are aware of that fact.

The land is littered with impressive ruins, including ancient serpentfolk strongholds, Netherese settlements abandoned for centuries, and the remnants of the collapsed human kingdom of Boareskyr.

FOREST OF WYRMS

Snake-Infested Forest

Despite the underlying rocky terrain, the Forest of Wyrms is composed of great redwoods and thick pines that soar to staggering heights. All manner of serpents reside therein. Small communities of yuan-ti are common, and the place is home to several youthful green dragons, whose alliance with the yuan-ti is tenuous at best.

Several locations of interest lie in the forest, including Ss'thar'tiss'ssun, one of the most ancient ruins in Faerûn, and Thlohtzin, an old lich stronghold turned slave citadel by its new yuan-ti residents.

Although most steer clear of the ancient ruin, sinister human and tiefling slavers travel to Thlohtzin to sell their merchandise for ancient gold. The slaves are then reapportioned throughout Najara.