CORM1-1

The Black Knight of Arabel

A Dungeons & Dragons® *Living Forgotten Realms* Adventure

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Your party is sent to investigate allegations of Netherese activity near the city of Arabel: A dark rider commanding legions of shadow. Can you turn back the tide before it's too late? A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Cormyr for characters levels 1-4.

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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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2011.

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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 RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your Senior GM 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 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 every word on the page; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. A great deal of good information on being a DM for a D&D game can be found in Chapters 1-2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide.*

Appropriate Character Levels

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 1-4. 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 first two levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the last two levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play riskier and play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group is in agreement 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 is in agreement to do so; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

Reading the Numbers: Each encounter will have a level and other values (such as XP or sometimes skill checks) 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 on 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 back 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 amongst 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's still more of the adventure 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 back 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. 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.

Adventure Background

This adventure assumes the letter mentioned in the Living Forgotten Realms preview adventure *Escape from Sembia* found its way to the King of Cormyr. The letter tells of an unlikely and terrible alliance that threatens to bring Cormyr to its knees.

Among other things, the letter warns of Netherese activities along the northern border of Cormyr. This corresponds with recent reports of a dark rider terrorizing the outskirts of Arabel, and the two together give those in power cause to order an investigation.

The dark rider is actually Sir Severin, once a lesser knight of the King's Court. He was wrongfully charged with treason and has since fled to his hometown of Arabel. He is trying desperately to protect his people from the shadows while at the same time evading the law.

Player's Introduction

Read or paraphrase the following:

Only a few days ago you stood in the King's Court where Lord Prio, Knight Exalted, King Foril's Regent of Special Affairs, tasked your party to investigate and resolve reports of a dark rider terrorizing the outskirts of the city of Arabel.

A riding horse and rations were supplied to you, along with a King's Writ granting limited authority to execute the King's justice in the vicinity of Arabel as it pertains to your mission.

Give the players The King's Writ (Handout 1).

DM's Introduction

A missive from Arabel reports a dark rider waylaying people on the roads outside the city.

- Normally such a message would come from the governor or local burgomaster, but this one came anonymously by courier.
- The message tells of a warrior with a charred skull for a head seen fleeing the scene of the crime.
- The warrior was preceded by a host of shadow creatures.

In reality, the rider is trying to protect the people of Arabel by fighting the dark creatures that are drawn to the place. The townsfolk see *him* as the threat, but ironically, the real threat is from within Arabel itself.

The party is granted a King's Writ allowing them to carry out justice in Arabel. This writ gives the party the authority to arrest, detain, and levy judgment where it benefits the resolution of their mission. The party represents the King's Court, so they have a responsibility to act with prudence. If they take extreme measures, they must later justify their actions. (If the players abuse this and it causes distractions at the table, feel free to remove the writ from their possession.) Also do not give the Badge of Temperance story award to those PCs that abuse the power of the writ.

Encounter 1: Shades of Black

Encounter Level 1/3 (550/750 XP)

Setup

This encounter includes the following creatures.
5 shadow motes (M)
3 shadow seekers (S)
1 shadow juggernaut (J)

Dusk approaches as the party comes upon Otro, a carriage man, on the road outside the Lower West Ward of Arabel. Otro is trying unsuccessfully to fix his carriage before nightfall. The PCs are attacked by shadow creatures as they pass or interact with Otro. Dark Skull makes a brief appearance before retreating into the shadows.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

Daylight is fading as you approach Arabel. You see a man on the road ahead. He is working frantically at a broken wheel on his carriage, all the while looking nervously at the setting sun.

If the PCs hail Otro, ask him any question, or even ignore him as they walk by, read:

"Quickly, I need your help! The sun sets, and the shadows are hasty. No, it's too late!" As the last rays of the sun disappear, light gives way to darkness, and from the darkness surge creatures of living shadow.

At the end of the first round of combat, read:

A warrior clad in black plate appears astride a dusky warhorse at the edge of twilight. His head is a blackened skull, and he stares at you through lidless blue eyes.

Dark Skull appears at the edge of the map somewhere behind the shadow creatures, more than 200 feet away from the closest PC. At the end of the next round he vanishes using his *fade to shadow* ability to teleport ten squares and ride away. He would like to help, but he's a wanted man and knows the PCs may have been sent to capture him.

If the PCs manage to close and attack Dark Skull, use his statistics from Encounter 3. He does not fight the party at this time, escaping at all costs.

Features of the Area

This area has a few important features:

Illumination: The sun has just set, so visibility is poor: The combat takes place in the dim light of dusk. The shadow creatures all have darkvision, so they can see normally in areas of darkness and dim illumination.

Trees: Any square that contains mostly foliage counts as covering terrain. The center square of the big trees (where the trunk is located) counts as blocking terrain.

Wagon: The wagon counts as blocking terrain. A DC 20 Athletics check (DC 10 with a running start) allows a character to jump on top of the wagon. Climbing onto the wagon takes 2 squares of movement.

Boulders: Squares with large boulders are difficult terrain and block line of effect.

Pond: The pond is relatively shallow. All pond squares count as difficult terrain.

Hedge Rows: The top and bottom edges of the maps are lined with hedge rows, blocking sight.

Tactics

The motes swarm the nearest PC. The seekers attack at random using their *flitting shadows* ability to move past the rest of the party. The hulk tries to position itself so that it can hit as many PCs as possible with *wave of shadows*. The shadow creatures attack the PCs in preference to the carriage man. They all fly inches off the ground and fight to the death.

When the shadow creatures are slain, they dissipate into the air.

Otro cowers behind his carriage but fights ineffectually if cornered.

Otro's horse, Suzy, fights if freed from the carriage. As Suzy is agitated, cutting the harness requires one standard action and a DC 15 Nature check as a minor action to calm the horse.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove one shadow seeker.

Six PCs: Add one shadow seeker.

Ending the Encounter

The party can see the low walls of Arabel in the distance.

If Otro lives, he introduces himself and offers to help the party find lodging at *The Goblin's Grotto*. Otro gladly accepts help fixing the wagon, but he is too rattled by the recent encounter to provide any other useful information. **Go to Encounter 2a**.

If the party goes after Dark Skull, **go to Encounter 2b**.

If the party chooses to camp outside the city, they are wakened by shouting coming from the city. It is clear that something is happening in town, and absolutely nothing is happening out on the road. **Go to Encounter 2a.**

Experience Points

The characters receive 110/150 experience points each for defeating the shadow creatures.

Treasure

The shadow creatures have no treasure.

Encounter 1: Shades of Black Statistics (Low Level)

Wisps of swirling blackness surround you, confounding your attacks.

Shadow Mote	**Level 1 Minion**
Small elemental magical beast (shadow)	XP 25

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 1 damage.

Shadowplay Distraction
Opponents adjacent to a shadow mote take a -1 penalty to melee or ranged attacks per mote (up to -5).

Alignment Evil **Languages** -
Skills Stealth +8

Str 10 (+0)	**Dex** 16 (+3)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 10 (+0)

Ghostlike shadows move around you whispering terrible portents and clutching at your heart as they drift by.

Shadow Seeker	**Level 1 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (shadow)	XP 100

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 16; **Bloodied** 8
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.

M **Flitting Shadows** (standard; at-will)
+5 vs. AC; 1d8 damage; a shadow seeker can move its speed and make this attack, gaining a +5 bonus to AC vs. opportunity attacks incurred by the movement.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +9

Str 10 (+0)	**Dex** 16 (+3)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0)	**Int** 12 (+1)	**Cha** 12 (+1)

A massive cloud of shadow roils towards you like a wave of darkness.

Shadow Juggernaut	**Level 2 Brute**
Large elemental magical beast (shadow)	XP 125

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 14; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 11
Speed 5; fly 5 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+5 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage.

C **Wave of Shadows** (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 1; +3 vs. Will; 1d6+1 damage and enemies fall prone.
Miss: Enemies fall prone.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Skills Intimidate +6

Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 14 (+2)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 12 (+1)

A doughty draft horse is harnessed to the unmoving broken carriage. She whinnies a challenge and bucks against her harness as the shadows approach.

Draft Horse (Suzy)	**Level 1 Brute**
Large natural beast	XP NA

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 14; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 10
Speed 10

m **Kick** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+5 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage. A draft horse can't attack while harnessed to a carriage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** -

Str 19 (+4)	**Dex** 13 (+1)	**Wis** 11 (+0)
Con 16 (+3)	**Int** 2 (-4)	**Cha** 9 (-1)

Encounter 1: Shades of Black Statistics (High Level)

Wisps of swirling blackness surround you, confounding your attacks.

Shadow Mote	**Level 1 Minion**
Small elemental magical beast (shadow)	XP 25
Initiative +3	**Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11	
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*	
m **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 1 damage.	
Shadowplay Distraction	
Opponents adjacent to a shadow mote take a -1 penalty to melee or ranged attacks per mote (up to -5).	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** -
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 10 (+0)	**Dex** 16 (+3)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 10 (+0)

Ghostlike shadows move around you, whispering terrible portents and clutching at your heart as they drift by.

Shadow Seeker (Level 3)	**Level 3 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (shadow)	XP 150
Initiative +4	**Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16	
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13	
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*	
m **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
+8 vs. AC; 1d8+1 damage.	
M **Flitting Shadows** (standard; at-will)	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage; a shadow seeker can move its speed and make this attack, gaining a +5 bonus to AC vs. opportunity attacks incurred by the movement.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** –
Skills Stealth +10	
Str 10 (+0)	**Dex** 16 (+3)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0)	**Int** 12 (+1)	**Cha** 12 (+1)

A massive cloud of shadow rolls towards you like a wave of darkness.

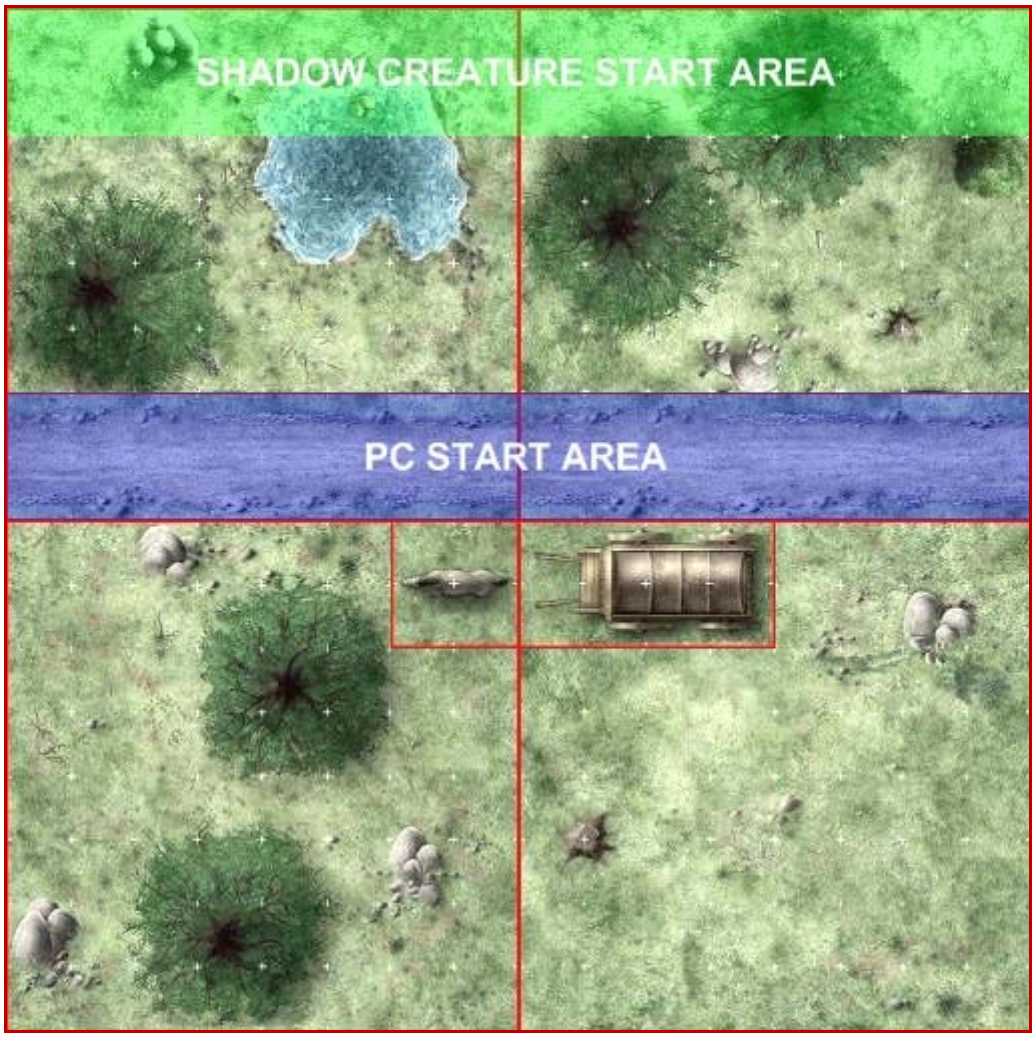
Shadow Hulk (Level 4)	**Level 4 Brute**
Large elemental magical beast (shadow)	XP 175
Initiative +5	**Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 48; **Bloodied** 24	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13	
Speed 5; fly 5 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*	
m **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
+8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.	
C **Wave of Shadows** (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Fear**	
Close burst 1; +5 vs. Will; 1d6+1 damage and enemies fall prone. Miss: Enemies fall prone.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** –
Skills Intimidate +7	
Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 14 (+2)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 12 (+1)

A doughty draft horse is harnessed to the unmoving broken carriage.

Draft Horse (Suzy)	**Level 1 Brute**
Large natural beast	XP NA
Initiative +1	**Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16	
AC 14; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 10	
Speed 10	
m **Kick** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+5 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage. A draft horse can't attack while harnessed to a carriage.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** -
Str 19 (+4)	**Dex** 13 (+1)	**Wis** 11 (+0)
Con 16 (+3)	**Int** 2 (-4)	**Cha** 9 (-1)

Encounter 1: Shades of Black Map

Ruins of the Wild		
Camp / Field	8x8	x1
Road / Crevasse	8x2	x1
Cabin / Field w/Trees	8x8	x1
Stream / Road	8x2	x1
Stonehenge / Field w/Pond	8x8	x1
Ruined Tower / Field w/Trees	8x8	x1
Horse / Road Bend	2x2	x1
Covered Wagon / Field w/Log	4x2	x1



Encounter 2a: Casting Shadows

Skill Challenge Level 1/3, Complexity 3 (300/450 XP)

Setup

Number of Successes: 8
Number of Failures: 4
Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate, Bluff, Insight, Perception.
Important NPCs: The Burgomaster, Brewmaster Bruin, Tavernkeep Jarl.

The PCs are free to visit the locations of Arabel in any order, but they happen upon *The Lower West Square* first.

This part of town is run by the burgomaster, who acts as an assistant mayor. Problems in The Lower West don't go higher than the burgomaster unless he chooses to bring them to the Lord of Arabel. The Lower West Quarter operates like an isolated neighborhood. Most people who live here have only seen the rest of Arabel once or twice.

In spite of the shadow attacks, the Lower West Quarter has a lively night life. Shops are open well past dark, and while people travel in groups, the city is nonetheless vibrant and alive.

When the party enters Arabel, read:

A pale moon glares balefully through a veil of clouds, casting long shadows from the old war-pocked buildings of Arabel. Oppressive rain begins to drizzle from a darkening sky.

The characters encounter The Lower West Square as they enter the city, unless they decide to go elsewhere.

Skill Challenge

This challenge decides how much the PCs learn about what's really going on, and how much rapport they have with the townsfolk.

Give the party a map of The Lower West Quarter (Handout 2). You may wish to hide the key and reveal areas as the PCs find them.

Reveal Location 7: The Lower West Square, and Location 12: The Goblin's Grotto. Remember to reveal other locations on the map as the PCs proceed in their investigation.

Most of the checks in this challenge can be performed by multiple PCs. If more than one PC attempts a check, at least half of the PCs must succeed for the check to count as successful. A group failure is a failure by more than half of the participating PCs, even if only one PC participates.

Note that for the purposes of this encounter, the term "social checks" refers to the following skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate, and Streetwise.

The checks and results listed are important for motivating the party to continue investigating. Feel free to improvise as appropriate, but only award successes/failures on checks that advance the investigation.

Keep track of successes/failures. Once the party succeeds or fails the challenge, skip to *The Frightened Boy*.

Note: If at any time the PCs produce The King's Writ in an attempt to elicit compliance, nearby NPCs question its validity by saying, "How do I know that this writ even belongs to you?" This forces the PC to perform the final instructions of the writ, proving that bearer and privileged are one-in-the-same.

7. The Lower West Square

Read:

Dozens of townsfolk with torches are gathered on a grassy square around the base of a broken obelisk, arguing about the scourge of Dark Skull and his shadow creatures. Nobody seems to be in charge, and citizens are shouting over each other to get a word in.

If the PCs listen or ask any questions, a citizen tells them that it's not just the attacks that worry the people, but the fact that Burgomaster Morte hasn't done anything about it, and letters to the King's Court go unanswered. Casual questioning reveals that the Burgomaster is eccentric, and keeps unusually late hours. **Reveal Location 11: The Burgomaster's House on the map.**

Insight/Streetwise (DC 15 / 16): Dark Skull has been seen on the outskirts of town. His appearance is always heralded by a wave of shadow creatures.

Perception/Religion (DC 15 / 16): The stump of what was once a white marble obelisk sits in the middle of the square on a stone base. Numbers are carved into the base around the obelisk stump, in the manner of a sundial. If the party asks, a passerby says that the

obelisk broke and fell suddenly in the middle of the night a couple months ago (when the attacks started) and was hauled-off by Brewmaster Bruin. A Streetwise/Diplomacy check (DC 12 / 13) reveals that the obelisk was dedicated to Amaunator, and its breaking is a dark omen to the townsfolk. **Reveal Location 4: The Brewery on the map.**

Diplomacy/Intimidate (DC 12 / 13): Address the people: The PCs may produce their writ and console/threaten the people (which gives a+2 bonus to all social checks in town prior to the final encounter). In failure, the people are not impressed by the party (which gives a -2 penalty to all social checks in town prior to the final encounter).

12. The Goblin's Grotto

Read:

The Goblin's Grotto is an old tavern where a serious-looking man is busily serving-up beers to a thirsty crowd of teamsters and porters.

The tavernkeep Jarl is particularly fearful that shadow creatures may steal his newborn son from its crib, and he wants something done about this Dark Skull.

Diplomacy/Streetwise (DC 15 / 16): General conversation: The tavernkeep Jarl says that the Old Theater has been undergoing renovations in the last few weeks. He says he loves a good show and hopes they open soon. On a group failure, the party comes-off awkwardly in front of a packed tavern (which gives a -1 penalty on all social checks in town prior to the final encounter). **Reveal Location 8: The Old Theater on the map.**

Tavernkeep Jarl is actually a nightcloak, a Netherese agent in disguise. The nightcloak has taken the place of the real Jarl after locking him, his wife, and his infant son in the cellar about two months ago.

The nightcloak's disguise is a blessing from Shar. It is impossible to tell this Jarl from the real Jarl to any but the closest relations. If the PCs suspect Jarl and make a DC 20 Insight check, they can tell that something is not right about him, but no more than that. Do not give the Insight check unless the PCs expressly ask for it.

4. The Brewery

A maze of huge wooden barrels and copper piping lead to a broad man in a white smock who is just now tasting his latest brew. He looks up and smiles.

The broad man is Brewmaster Bruin. He runs this centuries-old brewery much as his father did, and his father's father did before him. Bruin lives a slow, easy life, and insists his customers take it easy as well.

Intimidate/Diplomacy (DC 12 / 13): If asked about the shadow creatures, Bruin tells the PCs, in slow, laconic speech, to slow down, and asks for a tale from the road. Once he knows the PCs are "good people," Bruin vouches for them. His name carries weight with the people of The Lower West Quarter (a +1 bonus on all social checks in town prior to the final encounter). If the PCs brandish The King's Writ, they automatically opt for an Intimidate check with a -4 penalty.

Additionally, Bruin tells the PCs to be wary of the proprietor of The Pretentious Pot; he is a shady foreigner from the Southlands who arrived a couple months ago. Group failure gives Bruin a poor opinion of the PCs (a -1 penalty on all social checks in town prior to the final encounter). **Reveal Location 5: The Pretentious Pot on the map.**

If the party asks about the obelisk, Bruin tells them that the burgomaster asked him to haul it off when it broke about two months ago. Bruin has the obelisk in the basement, but the basement is haunted. He grumbles that one of his best reserves is stocked in the basement: *Bruin's Special Rainy Day Stout.* Bruin lets the PCs into the basement if one of them can drink a full pint of his new quintuplebock. **Reveal Location 11: The Burgomaster's House on the map.**

Endurance/Bluff (DC 20 / 21): Drink a pint of Bruin's quintuplebock. A PC can drink the brew (Endurance) or fake it (Bluff), and Bruin shows the PCs to the basement. Only one PC needs to succeed. (Note any PCs that failed while using Endurance for the check. They are affected if the party makes it into the basement.) PCs may try again at successive -5 penalties. The party gets a success for the skill challenge if even one PC succeeds, and the party only gets a failure if they concede defeat. If the PCs concede defeat, Bruin sends them on their way, laughing that they probably aren't "stout" enough to handle what's in the basement anyway. If the PCs are successful, Bruin shows them to the basement (**Encounter 2a-Optional**). If the PCs complain or produce the King's Writ, Bruin just shrugs and lets them into his basement. Determined PCs could also sneak into the basement (Stealth DC 11).

5. The Pretentious Pot

Bells on the door jingle, stinking incense fills the air, and a dark-skinned man wrings his hands eagerly

behind the counter of the dimly lit curio shop. The bulk of the merchandise seems to consist of ornate pottery.

Edo is a Mulhorandi man who buys and sells ornate pottery. The wily merchant arrived in town about two months ago. If asked, he says that business is not good and suggests that it might have something to do with the recent shadow creature attacks. The timing of the merchant's arrival in town is coincidental. He has nothing to do with the shadow creature attacks.

If a PC haggles over a pot and tells the merchant, "A storm is coming; you should really close up for the day," then *Task 1* for the *Zhentarim Infiltration* quest can be marked as completed. All PCs can benefit if they have that Quest card in their stack.

Diplomacy/Intimidate/Insight (DC 12 / 13): Chat with the merchant. Edo does not fear the dark like the locals, and he's seen a lot of strange activity on his midnight walks, especially at The Old Theater. **Reveal Location 8: The Old Theater on the map.**

8. The Old Theater

The paint is peeling off this dilapidated theater. The sounds of construction can be heard from within, and four laymen stand guard outside in the flickering torchlight.

As the party approaches they can hear the men griping about The Goblin's Grotto being out of Bruin's Special Rainy Day Stout, and how they'd give anything for a grog of the stuff on this miserable day. **Reveal Location 4: The Brewery on the map.**

Diplomacy/Bluff/Intimidate/Stealth (DC 15 / 16): Get inside the theater. If the party gives the guards a bottle of *Bruin's Special Rainy Day Stout*, they automatically succeed on this check. On a failure, the PCs proves themselves inept, and their reputation spreads fast (a -1 penalty on all social checks in town prior to the final encounter).

If the party gets inside the theater, read:

Several workers are here draping the sagging theater and painting the walls entirely in black.

The people here were told that they are preparing the theater for a show, and the dress rehearsal would be tonight. No one seems to know what the show is called. The PCs realize that these are all just laypeople (Insight DC 10). The PCs might also suspect some of the styling to be reminiscent of Sharran cult worship (Religion DC 21), though no holy symbols exist to prove it. If the party used Stealth to get in, some PCs could begin a stakeout by hiding in the unused balcony. The PCs notice a half-closed roof hatch above the unused balcony (Perception DC 14).

11. The Burgomaster's House

A glassy-eyed servant answers the door of this decrepit manor. He walks down a corridor of scowling portraits and into a bizarre drawing room. This macabre chamber is furnished with couches depicting demonic scenes, and the walls are lined with mounted heads of domestic animals.

If the PCs start looking around, describe the strange décor and items that fill the room: a snuff box filled with teeth and jars of warm bodily fluids. After a few moments the burgomaster enters the room:

A gaunt figure swathed in red velour enters the room. "I have other names, but you may call me Burgomaster Morte. And to what do I owe the pleasure of your company?"

The burgomaster may be eccentric, but he has nothing to do with the shadow creature attacks. Continue playing up his eccentricities – such as having him offer the party wine, and commenting on how much it reminds him of blood.

Diplomacy/Bluff/Intimidate (DC 15 / 16): Ask about the shadow creatures/obelisk/Dark Skull. If the PCs have shown it in town, the Burgomaster is aware that they possess a King's Writ, but he denies its legitimacy until they prove it. He gives them the runaround unless they impress him. The PCs can change his attitude with a successful check and gain his support (a +2 bonus on all social checks in town prior to the final encounter). Otherwise they fail to impress the burgomaster (a -2 penalty on all social checks in town prior to the final encounter). The burgomaster tells the party it was bad for business to have a broken obelisk laying in the town square, so he had the brewer haul the thing away. **Reveal Location 4: The Brewery on the map.**

Insight (DC 14 / 15): The burgomaster is woefully underqualified for his position, and he hopes the shadow creature problem just goes away. A successful (Diplomacy/Intimidate DC 12) check reveals that the burgomaster has been undermining requests for help. He tells the party that he hid reports of shadow creature attacks at Brainard's Books and Birds Emporium. He admits there might be some evil at work in town,

perhaps a cult, and that he was hoping it would pass. Then he begins to sob uncontrollably and begs the party to forgive him. Once the party breaks him, the burgomaster drops his pretense. His real name is Morton. **Reveal Location 16: Brainard's Books and Bird Emporium.**

16. Brainard's Books and Birds Emporium

This tall windowed atrium is lined with wood shelves stacked with books. The squawking of birds fills the air, and evidence of their habitation is heaped upon the unfortunate tomes. Adding to the plight of the books is the steady drizzle of rain pouring in through a broken window pane in the ceiling overhead. A slight old woman hobbles among the decomposing literature.

Ms. Brainard is a pleasant old widow. She freely admits that birds and books don't go well together, but that it seemed a good idea at the time. If the PCs spend time talking to Ms. Brainard, she asks them to help her fix the window pane in the ceiling.

"I've gotten myself into quite a mess. One of the glass panes fell out of the ceiling. I have tarp enough to cover the gap, but I'm hardly able to get myself on the roof. And there's no ladder."

Athletics and Acrobatics (DC 13 / 14): Cover the broken window pane with a tarp. A PC needs to climb the outside of the 25-foot-high building (Athletics), then walk to the middle of the glass ceiling without falling through one of the other panes of glass, and affix the tarp over the area of the broken pane (Acrobatics). On a success, Ms. Brainard is very appreciative and reveals everything she knows as if the PCs had succeeded on the Diplomacy/Insight challenge below. Failure results in the PC falling through another ceiling pane (2d10 falling damage), and discouraged, Ms. Brainard asks the party to leave. She does not prevent them from staying if they ignore her, but she does not help them.

Diplomacy/Insight (DC 15 / 16): Talk to Ms. Brainard. Ms. Brainard reveals that she hid some documents for the burgomaster, and she admits that she sent an anonymous missive to the King's Court against the burgomaster's wishes. If the party shows her the King's writ, they get an automatic success.

Perception (DC 19 / 20): Find the letters. The emporium is a mess, so even with Ms. Brainard's help it's not guaranteed that the party can find the hidden missives. If Ms. Brainard is helping the PCs, give them a +4 bonus. If the party doesn't know what they are searching for, give them a -10 penalty. Only one PC needs to be successful. On a success the party finds the hidden letters and can expose the burgomaster's duplicity. They gain favor with the people (a +3 bonus on social checks in the final encounter ***only***).

The letters are reports much like the one that made it to King Foril's Court. Only a few reports put Dark Skull at the scene, and none of them prove his guilt. A few even suggest that the attacks actually began before Dark Skull's arrival. Some letters report cult-like activity, but they are vague.

It would take *all day* to search the Emporium methodically. If the PCs insist on doing this, be clear that searching in this manner would take this long, then award an automatic success and go to final encounter (**Encounter 4**) when they leave the Emporium.

The Frightened Boy

The frightened boy shows up once the party has completed the skill challenge or gone to bed. Read:

You hear a boy scream nearby: "Help," he cries. "Dark Skull is after me!"

The boy explains through heavy panting that he wandered into a grove outside of town where the trees were painted white and human skeletons hung from the trees. The boy is exaggerating, and Dark Skull is not after him. The boy tells the party exactly where the grove is. As he does, read:

The night sky is suddenly tinged with red, and a dark circle begins to eclipse the moon.

See *Ending the Encounter* below.

Ending the Encounter

The party has a little time before the midnight ritual is upon them. They can finish-up their investigation, and then seek out Dark Skull (**Encounter 3**).

Success: Winning the challenge gives a significant advantage in convincing the cultists to abandon their worship of Shar in the final encounter (a +5 bonus on social checks ***only*** in the final encounter).

Failure: Failing hinders the PCs to some extent. It's quite possible that the party must fight the cultist townsfolk.

Experience Points

The characters receive 60/90 experience points each for succeeding in the skill challenge.

Encounter 2a (Optional): Bruin's Basement (Optional Encounter)

Encounter Level 1 / 3 (Special 300/450 XP)

Setup

This encounter includes the following creatures.
2 shadow juggernauts (H)
1 shadow seeker (S)

The party descends into the basement where three shadow creatures lie in wait.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

The basement is lined with kegs, and Bruin reminds you that they are filled with a valuable reserve. The obelisk is here: a single clean break across the bottom, as if it was sheared from its stand.

If any of the PCs failed the Endurance check to drink Bruin's quintuplebock, they are affected when the encounter begins. The PC is *dazed*. A save ends the condition and wears off at the end of the encounter.

Features of the Area

This area has a few important features:

Illumination: This room is dark. The only light here is the light the party brings.

Stairs: These stairs descend 4 squares to the basement floor. Moving up the stairs counts as difficult terrain.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 10 feet high.

Keg-Lined Walls: Any damage-causing power must be positioned so that its area is completely in the room. Otherwise it is considered to rupture the kegs lining the walls.

Spilled Beer: If a damage-causing area power overlaps the wall, it ruptures the kegs lining the walls. Beer spews out into the room (burst 1 from the overlapped square), creating challenging terrain (Acrobatics DC 12 / 13 or fall prone).

Obelisk: The obelisk counts as blocking terrain. A DC 20 Athletics check (or DC 10 Athletics check with a running start) allows a character to jump on top of the obelisk and occupy that square.

Tactics

The hulks try to position themselves so that they can hit as many PCs as possible with *wave of shadows*. They all fly inches off the ground and fight to the death. The seeker moves around to flank the party. When the shadow creatures are slain, they dissipate into the air.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove the shadow seeker.

Six PCs: Add one shadow seeker.

Ending the Encounter

Bruin loans the party a wagon and some mortar if they want to restore the obelisk to *The Lower West Square*. Repairing the obelisk reminds the citizens that Amaunator is their patron god. There is no need to play this out. If the PCs wish to repair the obelisk, consider it done. They gain favor with the people (a +3 bonus on social checks ***only*** in the final encounter).

For clearing his basement, Bruin gives the PCs a crate of items. He tells the party that he found the items inside the obelisk, and that it just seems right that the PCs should have them now.

Among the items in the crate is a scroll. It reads, "When the moon turns black, darkness falls on the house of twelve". ("Twelve" on the obelisk sundial would point to the theater.)

If the party managed to defeat the shadow hulks without damaging any of his kegs, Bruin gives each member of the party a full growler of *Bruin's Special Rainy Day Stout*, It's his way of saying, "Thanks for respecting my brew." This might be used as a bribe at the theater, and it's very good stout at that.

The party may continue the investigations in **Encounter 2a**.

Experience Points

The characters receive no experience points for this optional encounter unless they failed the skill challenge. If that was the case, the PCs can gain the XP they would have gained for succeeding in the skill challenge: 60/90 XP.

Treasure

Bruin gives the party a crate of magic item he recovered from the obelisk:

flaming weapon +1
+1 symbol of battle
bag of holding

Encounter 2a - Optional: Bruin's Basement (Low Level)

A massive cloud of shadow rolls towards you like a wave of darkness.

Shadow Hulk (Level 2)		**Level 2 Brute**
Large elemental magical beast (shadow)		XP 125
Initiative +4	**Senses** Perception +3; darkvision	
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16		
AC 14; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 11		
Speed 5; fly 5 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*		
m **Slam** (standard; at-will)		
+5 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage.		
Wave of Shadows (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Fear**		
Close burst 1; +3 vs. Will; 1d6+1 damage and enemies fall prone. *Miss*: Enemies fall prone.		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** –	
Skills Intimidate +6		
Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 14 (+2)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 12 (+1)

Ghostlike shadows move around you whispering terrible portents and clutching at your heart as they drift by.

Shadow Seeker		**Level 1 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (shadow)		XP 100
Initiative +3	**Senses** Perception +5; darkvision	
HP 16; **Bloodied** 8		
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11		
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*		
m **Slam** (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.		
M **Flitting Shadows** (standard; at-will)		
+5 vs. AC; 1d8 damage; a shadow seeker can move its speed and make this attack, gaining a +5 bonus to AC vs. opportunity attacks incurred by the movement.		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** –	
Skills Stealth +9		
Str 10 (+0)	**Dex** 16 (+3)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0)	**Int** 12 (+1)	**Cha** 12 (+1)

Encounter 2a - Optional: Bruin's Basement (High Level)

A massive cloud of shadow rolls towards you like a wave of darkness.

Shadow Hulk (Level 4)		**Level 4 Brute**
Large elemental magical beast (shadow)		XP 175
Initiative +5	**Senses** Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 48; **Bloodied** 24		
AC 16; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13		
Speed 5; fly 5 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*		
m **Slam** (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.		
Wave of Shadows (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Fear**		
Close burst 1; +5 vs. Will; 1d6+2 damage and enemies fall prone; *Miss*: Enemies fall prone.		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** –	
Skills Intimidate +7		
Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 14 (+2)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 12 (+1)

Ghostlike shadows move around you whispering terrible portents and clutching at your heart as they drift by.

Shadow Seeker (Level 3)		**Level 3 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (shadow)		XP 150
Initiative +4	**Senses** Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16		
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13		
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*		
m **Slam** (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8+1 damage.		
M **Flitting Shadows** (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage; a shadow seeker can move its speed and make this attack, gaining a +5 bonus to AC vs. opportunity attacks incurred by the movement.		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** –	
Skills Stealth +10		
Str 10 (+0)	**Dex** 16 (+3)	**Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0)	**Int** 12 (+1)	**Cha** 12 (+1)

Encounter 2a - Optional: Bruin's Basement (Optional Encounter) Map

Dungeon Tiles		
Obelisk / Floor	2x2	x1
Stairs / Floor	4x2	x1

Hidden Crypts		
Barn / Empty Crypt	8x10	x1

Encounter 2b: The Scenic Route

Skill Challenge Level 1/3, Complexity 3 (300 / 450 XP)

Setup

Number of Successes: 8
Number of Failures: 4
Primary Skills: Nature, Endurance, Perception, Athletics
Important NPCs: None.

The party decides to chase Dark Skull after initially seeing him on the road. He leads them on a harrowing chase through the pine barrens outside Arabel.

Dark Skull's warhorse crashes through the foliage ahead. Light is fading fast, and the tall pines overhead grant meager passage to the rising moon.

The party is moving as a group. Checks marked "group" must be performed by everyone in the party. At least half the PCs must succeed to the check, but individual failures have individual consequences. Group consequences are specifically noted. All other rolls can be performed by one or more party members.

Use a combination of improvised checks and suggested checks listed below to run the chase. Checks marked with an asterisk (*) are repeatable.

The first scenes are scripted. They happen at specific times and are important to the advancement of the module. The other scenes can happen in any order along with improvised scenes.

Skill Challenge

Dead Horse

Scripted: When the PCs fail two checks or win the challenge.

The party hears the awful scream of a dying horse, and they come upon Dark Skull's warhorse on the path ahead. The moan of escaping shadow creatures can be heard in the distance.

The dead horse can be found with the obelisk at the end of the encounter if the party has won the challenge. The horse has grievous wounds inflicted by shadow creatures (Heal DC 12/13).

Valley of the Obelisk

Scripted: When the PCs fail three checks, or win the challenge. Note that if the obelisk is found here, it is not in the brewer's basement.

The party sees a broken marble obelisk lying in the foliage. It looks out of place here. If the PCs stop to examine the obelisk, they need two additional successes to win the challenge. The party can return to the obelisk easily by backtracking.

This obelisk is dedicated to Amaunator. Such obelisks are often used as sundials and found in gardens, parks, town squares, and the like—not out in the wilderness. Broken, they are a dark omen. The obelisk is whole aside from the single clean break that shears across the bottom.

Items spill from a crack in the obelisk:-a secret compartment that opened when the heavy stone was tossed here. Among the items is a scroll. It reads, "When the moon turns black, darkness falls on the house of twelve". ("Twelve" on the obelisk sun-dial would point to the theater in Arabel.)

Ancient Trails

History (DC 14/15): Old, unused trails wind through the barrens. Only the most studious scholars remember such trails. On success/failure the party gains a +2/-2 on the next check.

Dangerous Slope (group)

Athletics (climb)/Acrobatics (run down)/Nature (guide mount) (DC 12/13): The steep slope ahead threatens to send you on a rough fall. On a success, gain a +2 on the next check. On a failure, the PCs horse breaks a leg and must be left behind. A PC without a horse takes a tumble and loses one healing surge.

Dark Mote Swarms (group)

Stealth (DC 10/11): Avoid swarms of dark motes ahead. On a group success, gain a +2 on the next check. If *any* PC fails, *all* PCs lose one healing surge from fighting off motes.

Darkness Falls (group)

Perception (DC 14/15): Darkness settles in, hiding dangers like jutting rocks and low-hanging trees. PCs with low-light vision/darkvision gain a +2/+4 bonus on this roll, respectively. On a success, gain a +2 on the next check. On a failure, the PCs horse breaks a leg tripping on a rock or in a ditch (Nature DC 20 to avoid) and must be left behind. A PC without a horse loses one healing surge from scrapes and bruises.

Fast-Moving River (group)

Athletics (swim)/Nature (guide mount) (DC 14/15): Twenty feet of water separate the party from Dark Skull's trail. There's only one way through to keep up the chase. PCs who are doubled up on mounts take a -4 to this check, but only the rider needs to make the check. On a success gain a +2 on the next check. On a failure, the PC's horse is washed downstream. A PC without a horse is almost washed downstream, and causes the whole party to lose a healing surge as they fight the current to drag him in. No PC can lose more than one healing surge on this check.

I Know These Woods

Nature (DC 12/13): It's been a while, but the PC has been thorough these woods or similar terrain before. On a success/failure, the party gains a +2/-2 on the next check, respectively.

*It's a Trap!

Thievery (DC 18/19): Dark Skull has led the party into one of his traps. Only one PC needs to succeed, but if any PC fails, one of the following traps goes off: a swinging log, a board with spikes, or a shallow pit with downward pointing spikes. In all cases a random PC triggers the trap and loses a healing surge. Success gives all PCs a +2 bonus on the next roll.

*Keep Moving! (group)

Endurance (not mounted)/Nature (mounted) (DC 14/15): It's hard to keep up with a mounted rider who knows these woods. If any PCs are not mounted, all PCs take a -4 penalty on this check as mounted PCs must slow to keep pace. If the party has found Dark Skull's dead horse, ignore this penalty, and if the entire party is also mounted, award a +4 bonus to this check. On a success gain a +2 on the next check. On a failure, the PC's horse becomes exhausted and must be left behind. A PC who continues without a horse loses one healing surge from exhaustion. One PC can try once to negate another PC's failure (Heal DC 16) by patching up that PC or the PC's horse.

*On the Trail

Perception (DC 14/15): Normally it would be easy to track a warhorse through the woods, but fading light and the echoing pine barrens conspire against all but the keenest of trackers. On a success/failure, the party gains a +2/-2 on the next check, respectively.

What One Man Can Do, Another Can Do! (group)

Nature/Stealth (DC 12/13): A bear roars ahead. The party must avoid it or stand up to it. If anyone in the party fails, the bear charges the party. One PC can stand up to the bear (Intimidate DC 16) and chase him off. Otherwise all PCs lose one healing surge from fighting the bear, and take a -2 to all checks for the rest of the encounter for falling behind.

Ending the Encounter

The party eventually arrives at Dark Skull's camp.

Success: The party roars into Dark Skull's camp hot on his trail. They gain +4 to their initiative rolls against Dark Skull. **Go to Encounter 3**.

Failure: The party staggers into Dark Skull's camp, beaten and bruised. **Go to Encounter 3**.

Experience Points

The characters receive 60/90 experience points for successfully completing the skill challenge.

Treasure

The party recovers magic items from the obelisk:

flaming weapon +1
+1 symbol of hope +1
bag of holding

Encounter 3: Dead Man Walking

Encounter Level 1/3 (350/550 XP)

Setup

The low-level version of this encounter includes the following traps and creatures.
1 false-floor pit trap (P)
Dark Skull (D)

The high-level version of this encounter includes the following traps and creatures.
2 false-floor pit traps (P)
Dark Skull (D)

The party enters a foreboding glade where they face Dark Skull. Educated or quick-thinking PCs may turn Dark Skull into an ally.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

The moon is nearly eclipsed and casts a baleful red glow on the white-painted trees. Strings of bones hang from the branches, and the bones jingle in the wind. Just then a creature in blackened platemail and a burnt skull for a head steps from the shadows only footsteps away. He speaks, "So, the King's hounds are at my doorstep. Well, you'll not cut me down like some pitiless thief. Lay on!"

Dark Skull knows his camp was compromised, so he's expecting a visit. He uses his *fade to shadow* ability to get close to the party.

Roll initiative normally, but if the PCs attempt parlay, Dark Skull ceases fighting to talk. Dark Skull is more than willing to talk to the PCs, but he fears that they have been sent by the King to kill him.

- Dark Skull is a man once known as Sir Severin, a lesser knight of the King's Court.
- He was falsely accused of treason by Lord Erzoured. Erzoured claimed that Severin assaulted him with intent to kill and was forced to flee the Court about two months ago.
- Severin and Erzoured were competing for the attentions of Lady Redfern at the time. He suspects, though is not certain, that Erzoured accused him to get rid of the competition.
- He fled to his boyhood home of Arabel and hoped that his father, Jarl (proprietor of *The Goblin's Grotto*) would hide him. Instead his father cursed him to Shar and sent him on his way.
- This is not the father that Severin remembers, and he suspects him to be involved in some sort of cult.
- Severin followed Jarl to *The Old Theater* in town and found him petitioning the goddess Shar. Unable to do ill to his own father, Severin fled to the woods.
- His bizarre appearance is due to a mask that he wears (a soulmask). He was able to take it along with some provisions from the *Old Theater* before he left. (A soulmask reflects the wearer's soul in its visage. Severin's soul, spurned by country, King and father, has been burnt and blackened.) Severin doesn't know how it works, but he's been using it as a disguise.
- The curse of Shar has bestowed powers upon Severin, but it has also given him over to dark dreams and hopelessness.
- Severin has been unsuccessfully defending the countryside against shadow creature attacks, always arriving a little too late.
- Severin is willing to repent. He refuses to slowly waste away to the curse of Shar. He joins the party (if they will have him), and help them to take down his father.
- If the PCs accept Severin's help, he removes his mask, revealing his real face: fair of features with blue eyes and shoulder-length blond hair.
- Sir Severin knows that the PCs can grant him an appeal by the power of the King's Writ. His vindication is far from assured, but he takes the chance.
- If the PCs ask about the Obelisk, Severin explains that it was once a prominent symbol of Amaunator in the square outside of the Old Theater. It was found broken two months ago and disposed of at the Burgomaster's orders.
- If the PCs ask about the prophecy scroll from the obelisk, Severin does not know what it means, although he can provide hints to allow the PCs to solve the riddle.

The trees in the camp are painted white to ward-off evil spirits (Religion DC 12), and the bones hanging from the trees are animal bones (Heal DC 12) used to alert Dark Skull of trespassers.

Dark Skull's warhorse is not here. Unfortunately, it was recently killed by shadow creatures. If the party subdues and captures Dark Skull, he does not take offense. He still engages in parlay. If the party kills Dark Skull, the encounter is over.

Features of the Area

This area has a few important features:

Illumination: It is night. There is dim illumination from the stars and the moon. Dark Skull has darkvision, so he can see normally in areas of darkness and dim illumination.

Rise: Dark Skull is standing on a 5 foot rise. The rise slopes down behind Dark Skull. It counts as blocking terrain for movement, and cover in regards to ranged and melee attacks. A DC 20 Athletics check (or DC 10 Athletics check with a running start) allows a character to jump on top of the rise.

Trees: Any square that contains mostly foliage in it counts as covering terrain. The center square of the big trees (where the trunk is located) counts as blocking terrain.

Boulders: Squares with large boulders are difficult terrain and block line of effect, costing 2 squares of movement.

Pits: The pits (once exposed) are 10 feet deep (1d10 falling damage). It is a DC 15 Climb check to escape from a pit.

Tactics

Dark Skull is outnumbered and overmatched. He knows this, so he fights with brutal efficiency to survive. Dark Skull starts by using his *face of fright* ability. If there are no enemies in melee yet, he stands his ground and readies an attack against any approaching PC. He does his best to push PCs into his hunting pits using *furious roar* and attacks with his greatsword. Dark Skull is honorable, so he always chooses to knock a PC unconscious if he lands a killing blow.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove a pit trap.

Six PCs: Add a pit trap.

Ending the Encounter

If the PCs kill Dark Skull, read:

Dark Skull reaches toward the sky and cries, "My King, I have failed you!" Then he dies.

In all cases, read:

A dark circle eclipses the moon, and an ominous red pall fills the sky.

Go to Encounter 4 when (or if) the party returns to town.

Experience Points

The characters receive 70/110 experience points each for defeating Dark Skull and/or winning the support of Sir Severin.

Treasure

Dark Skull has no treasure.

Encounter 3: Dead Man Walking (Low Level)

A humanoid creature clad in black armor stands before you. It glares at you with eyes of fury and lament through a burnt and blackened skull.

Dark Skull	**Level 2 Elite Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 250

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 56; **Bloodied 28**
AC 20; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13
Saving Throws + 2
Action Points 1
Speed 5

m **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage and push 1 square. Dark Skull can then shift into the vacated square.

Through the Shadows (immediate reaction, when an enemy hits Dark Skull with a ranged attack; recharge 4 5 6)
Dark Skull can teleport up to 5 squares towards the attacker.

Furious Roar (minor; encounter)
Close burst 2; +8 vs. Will; targets pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Bloody Roar (immediate reaction; encounter; when first bloodied)
Furious Roar recharges and Dark Skull uses it immediately.

Face of Fright (minor; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 20; +5 vs. Will; target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Fade to Shadow (move; recharge 6)
Teleport 10 squares to an area of shadow or darkness.

Alignment Good **Languages** Common

Str 16 (+3)	**Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 8 (-1)
Con 16 (+3)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 8 (-1)

Equipment plate armor, greatsword

Dark Skull has hunting pits in camp. He does his best to push the PCs into the pits.

False-Floor Pit	**Level 1 Warder Trap**
Hazard	XP 100

Hazard: Covered hunting pits dot the clearing that Dark Skull now calls home. These 10-foot pits are cleverly disguised to look like the pine needle-covered forest floor.

Perception
✦DC 20: The character notices the pit.

Trigger
The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the four squares containing the trap.

Attack
Immediate Reaction Melee
Target The creature that triggered the trap.
Attack + 4 vs. Reflex
Hit Target falls into pit, takes 1d10 damage, and falls prone.
Miss Target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.
Effect The false floor opens and the pit is no longer hidden.

Countermeasures
✦An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 10 Thievery check (standard action). The floor falls into the pit.
✦ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check (standard action). The floor becomes safe.
✦A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the pit.
✦A character can climb out with a DC 15 Athletics check.

Encounter 3: Dead Man Walking (High Level)

A humanoid creature clad in black armor stands before you. It glares at you with eyes of fury and lament through a burnt and blackened skull.

Dark Skull (Level 4)	**Level 4 Elite Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 350

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 72; **Bloodied** 36
AC 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15
Saving Throws + 2
Action Points 1
Speed 5

m **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage and push 1 square. Dark Skull can then shift into the vacated square.

Through the Shadows (immediate reaction, when an enemy hits Dark Skull with a ranged attack; recharge 4 5 6)
Dark Skull can teleport up to 5 squares towards the attacker.

Furious Roar (minor; encounter)
Close burst 2; +10 vs. Will; targets pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Bloody Roar (immediate reaction; encounter; when first bloodied)
Furious Roar recharges and Dark Skull uses it immediately.

Face of Fright (minor; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 20; +7 vs. Will; target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Fade to Shadow (move; recharge 6)
Teleport 10 squares to an area of shadow or darkness.

Alignment Good **Languages** Common

Str 16 (+3)	**Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 8 (-1)
Con 16 (+3)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 8 (-1)

Equipment plate armor, greatsword

Dark Skull has hunting pits in camp. He does his best to push the PCs into the pits.

False-Floor Pit	**Level 1 Warder Trap**
Hazard	XP 100

Hazard: Covered hunting pits dot the clearing that Dark Skull now calls home. These 10-foot pits are cleverly disguised to look like the pine needle-covered forest floor.

Perception
✦DC 20: The character notices the pit.

Trigger
The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the four squares containing the trap.

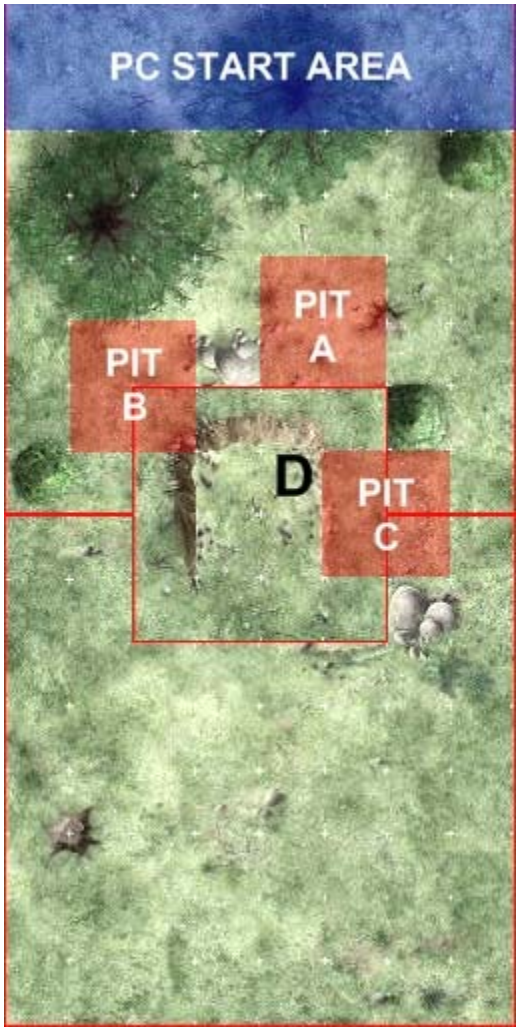
Attack
Immediate Reaction Melee
Target The creature that triggered the trap.
Attack + 4 vs. Reflex
Hit Target falls into pit, takes 1d10 damage, and falls prone.
Miss Target returns to the last square it occupied and its move action ends immediately.
Effect The false floor opens and the pit is no longer hidden.

Countermeasures
✦An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 10 Thievery check (standard action). The floor falls into the pit.
✦ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 25 Thievery check (standard action). The floor becomes safe.
✦A character who makes an Athletics check (DC 11, or DC 21 without a running start) can jump over the pit.
✦A character can climb out with a DC 15 Athletics check.

Encounter 3: Dead Man Walking Map

There can be up to three pits in this encounter, place them in order: A, B, then C. **The pits are not visible unless a PC notices them (Perception) or until triggered.**

Ruins of the Wild		
Camp / Field	8x8	x1
Ruined Tower / Field w/Trees	8x8	x1
Hill / Stairs Down	4x4	x1



Encounter 4: Nightfall

Encounter Level 3/5 (800/1050 XP)

Setup

If the party fights the cultists, this encounter includes the following creatures.
8 petitioners of the dark eclipse (P)
3 initiates of the dark eclipse (I)
1 nightcloak of the dark eclipse (N)

If the party fights the shadow creatures, this encounter includes the following creatures.
7 shadow motes (M)
2 shadow seekers (S)
1 shadow hulk (H)
1 nightcloak of the dark eclipse (N)

The PCs confront the cult of Shar that is operating in the Lower West Quarter of Arabel. The cult is made of townsfolk who have bought into the fear-mongering of the nightcloak cult leader. If they assert their authority, the party may be able to break the cult without drawing a weapon. In that case the nightcloak leader, who appears to be tavernkeep Jarl (but is actually a Shadovar agent who has taken his place), calls the shadows too him. Either way, this encounter is a showdown.

If the adventurers are starting the encounter from outside of the theater, read:

A supernatural darkness covers Arabel as the last sliver of moon disappears behind a black disc. There is no sound but the still-steady drizzle of rain. The drone of chanting can be heard ahead, past The Lower West Square.

The chanting is coming from the Old Theater (no check required). The theater has no windows, and all entrances except for the front entrance and a roof hatch have been sealed. PCs can climb onto the roof (Athletics DC 20) and find a roof hatch (Perception DC 10, automatic success if the roof hatch was noticed in their previous explorations). If the PCs want to sneak in as a group, the PC with the lowest bonus must succeed on a DC 20 Stealth check. Those PCs start in area A, and they get a front-row seat for the nightcloak's entrance. Any PC who misses, or does not roll, starts in area B. PCs may have infiltrated the theater and taken positions in the balcony earlier. If the PCs want to find a secret entrance, but fail, they must go through the front door.

If the PCs enter via the roof or had previously infiltrated the theater, read:

Almost a dozen black-robed cultists congregate below. The whole place is draped in black silks, and the black circle, the symbol of Shar, goddess of darkness, is everywhere. A figure emerges from behind a black velvet curtain on the stage to stand behind a stone altar between two large hanging braziers. It is Jarl, the tavernkeep. He holds a crying baby in his hands.

Hopefully the PCs speak up. If they do, any PCs outside can enter through the front doors. If the party continues to listen, read:

Jarl addresses the congregation. "Brethren, we have all made sacrifices to Mother Dark. And in reward she has spared many from her shadows. I now offer this sacrifice to prove my devotion to you, my people, and forever dedicate you and yours as Shar's chosen: my own infant son!" Jarl lays the infant on the altar and raises a wicked ceremonial dagger high above his head. A couple of the cultists raise their hands in protest but are shushed down by their fellows.

If the PCs still don't react, read:

Just as Jarl is about to make his sacrifice, the balcony gives way by chance, sending you sprawling to the ground. (The PCs don't take any damage, but they start combat prone)

If the PCs enter through the front door, read:

Almost a dozen men in black robes are here, and every inch of the walls is covered in black silk draping. On the stage ahead is tavernkeep Jarl, standing behind a black altar between two large hanging braziers. An infant is on the altar, and Jarl stands over it with a wicked ceremonial dagger raised high.

Once the PCs have made an entrance, read:

The cultists turn and stare at you. The congregation is made entirely of townsfolk. Some look away, embarrassed, while others sidle towards the exit. "Stop, friends!" Jarl cries out, desperately. "The moon is black, shadows walk the streets, and the sky is filled with blood! These are the signs. Shar's dark night is come." The people pause, nervous, and Jarl glares. "Who are you, to doom us all?"

The PCs now have the opportunity to sway the townsfolk away from the cult. If the party attacks instead of engaging in parlay, use the stats for the **cultists**.

Jarl's purpose is to maintain his grip on the congregation by discrediting the PCs. He has the following talking points.

- ***"Dark Skull is on the loose,"*** or ***"You are in league with Dark Skull"*** (The PCs can answering by proving they killed him or show that he is a man, not a monster).
- ***"The obelisk of Amaunator is broken. The light has fled this place"*** (The PCs can point out that it is restored).
- ***"What about the reports of Dark Skull's brutal slayings of innocent people?"*** (The PC's can produce the letters exonerating Sir Severin).
- ***"What else do you have to speak? Say your peace before I send you back to the king in pine boxes".***

A Religion (DC 16) reveals that the signs of which Jarl speaks are a result of Shar's growing influence in town, not any coming doomsday. The eclipse and consequent red sky are symbols of Shar's anticipation of the sacrifice, and the shadow creatures only exist where Shar is feared or revered.

Finally, read:

Jarl smirks, "You are weak. Did you really think you could stop Shar? No one, not adventurer, nor king, nor god can stop the Cult of the Dark Eclipse on her Lady's night! Do you hear me my disciples? Kill them, kill them all!"

The PCs need to make a final appeal to the townsfolk to prevent them from attacking. They must succeed on a Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 20) to sway the townsfolk. This is a group check; only one roll need be made, but any PC speaking to sway the townsfolk can attempt to aid the roll. The PCs may receive some bonuses to their roll:

- **Skill Challenge success** (in Encounter 2a) +5
- **Dark Skull is with the party** +5
- **The obelisk is restored** +3
- **The unsent letters are presented** +3

Award an additional bonus (up to +5) if any player makes a compelling (or entertaining) presentation.

If the party succeeds on the Diplomacy/Intimidate check, read:

Your testimony was compelling. You've managed to break Jarl's grip of fear on the townsfolk. One by one they abandon their dark robes and walk out, shamefaced. Jarl, however, stands defiant as shadow creatures race across the square toward the theater.

Use the stats for the **shadow creatures**.

If the party fails, the Shadovar's bond of fear is stronger than the authority of the PCs. Read:

The cultists are unmoved by your testimony. They attack, their eyes wide with fear.

Use the stats for the **cultists** instead.

In all cases, if the party repaired the obelisk, Amaunator responds. At the end of the first round, read:

A beam of light pierces the darkness and breaks upon the obelisk, lighting the entire Lower West Square. Rolling thunder shakes the ground, and the braziers on the theater stage break loose, dousing the curtained walls with flaming oil.

The theater is soon engulfed in flames. To keep the encounter from growing complicated, the fire is there for effect. Allow the players to make assumptions though, and remind them that a baby is still lying on the altar.

Features of the Area

This area has a few important features:

Illumination: It is completely dark outside, but the theater is filled with dim light from the braziers. Amaunator's light fills the square with bright light if the obelisk has been repaired.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 25 feet high.

Stage: The stage is 10 feet above the floor. A DC 15 Athletics check allows a character to climb onto the stage. If any creature falls from the stage, it takes 1d10 damage and is prone.

Balcony: The balcony is 15 feet above the floor. A DC 15 Acrobatics check allows a character to swing onto the stage or down to the floor riding a torn drape. If any creature falls from the balcony, it takes 1d10 damage and is prone.

Stairs (large): These stairs rise 15 feet to reach the doors of the old theater. Moving up stairs counts as difficult terrain. If any creature falls from the stairs (past the first step), it takes 1d10 damage and is prone.

Stairs (small): These stairs rise 10 feet to reach the stage. Moving up stairs counts as difficult terrain.

Ladder: The ladder rises 10 feet to reach the balcony. Moving up the ladder requires a DC 5 Athletics check and costs 4 squares of movement total.

Trees: Any square that contains mostly foliage in it counts as covering terrain. The center square of the big trees (where the trunk is located) counts as blocking terrain.

Statue/Altar/Obelisk: Squares with the obelisk, statues, or an altar in them count as blocking terrain. A DC 20 Athletics check (or DC 10 Athletics check with a running start) allows a character to jump on top of the statue/altar/obelisk and occupy that square.

Boulders: Squares with large boulders are difficult terrain and block line of effect, costing 2 squares of movement.

Tactics (Cultists)

The nightcloak backs up on the stage to break line of effect and reduce his exposure to ranged attacks when possible. He uses his *cloud of fear* ability whenever PCs are bunched-up, and he uses his *fear bolt* to send PCs screaming off the stage, balcony or stairs.

The petitioners attack the closest PC without any real strategy. The initiates focus on one lightly armored PC, but they switch targets to any PC that gets into melee range. The nightcloak uses his *fear bolt* on defenders, and cloud of fear whenever PCs are in a convenient grouping.

The initiates begin a fighting retreat once the nightcloak drops, and they surrender if they are at less than one-quarter hit points. The petitioners surrender once all the initiates are dropped or have surrendered.

If the party has convinced Dark Skull to join them, remove 1 petitioner and 1 servant from the combat. This is representative of the minor quest XP. Dark Skull's battle happens "off-screen." He is assumed to be holding off more cultists at the party's flank.

Tactics (Shadows)

The nightcloak backs up on the stage to break line of effect and reduce his exposure to ranged attacks when possible. He uses his *cloud of fear* ability whenever PCs are bunched up, and he uses his *fear bolt* to send PCs screaming off the stage, balcony or stairs.

The shadow creatures follow the nightcloak's direction, concentrating their attacks on a single PC if possible. They attack controllers, leaders, strikers, and defenders, in that order. The shadow creatures all fly inches off the ground and fight to the death. When the shadow creatures are slain, they dissipate into thin air.

If the party has convinced Dark Skull to join them, remove 1 mote and 1 seeker from the combat. This is representative of the minor quest XP. Dark Skull's battle happens "off-screen". He is assumed to be holding off more shadow creatures at the party's flank.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove one initiate/shadow seeker.

Six PCs: Add one initiate/shadow seeker.

Ending the Encounter

The silver disk of the moon widens in the sky as the eclipse passes, and the night is normal once more.

Once Jarl is either unconscious or dead, and the last of the shadows/cultists are slain or run off, a startling transformation takes place. What once appeared to be tavernkeep Jarl morphs into a grey-skinned Shadovar agent (as the blessing of disguise from Shar fades). The real Jarl, along with his wife, is later found locked in the cellar of The Goblin's Grotto. If the PCs ask about the real Jarl, have him appear unharmed with his wife in the cellar of The Goblin's Grotto. Jarl and his wife (Dreda) are overcome with joy that their child was rescued. They are even more thankful to be reunited with their son, Severin.

Also in the basement of The Goblin's Grotto is the nightcloak's logbook with the names of all the cultists. The PCs may use this to determine the fate of the cultists.

A magic ceremonial weapon lies on the black altar. In the room behind the stage curtain is a ritual scroll. If the theater is burning, allow the PCs time to recover the baby and any other unconscious bodies before the theater is destroyed. The items can be found at the time or recovered afterwards by the grateful townsfolk.

If the PCs have not yet visited Dark Skull (Encounter 3), and there is time, they may do so now.

Experience Points

The characters receive 160/210 experience points each for defeating the shadow creatures/cultists.

Treasure

A magical ceremonial weapon lay on the black altar. In the back room (behind the curtain) is a collection of gold and a ritual scroll.

+1 vicious weapon (low-level version only)

Ritual scroll with Enchant Magic Item (low-level version only)

+2 *vicious weapon* (high-level version only)

Ritual scroll with Brew Potion (high-level version only)

75/100 gold

Conclusion

At the showdown, the party could have subdued/killed the cultists, or arrested them/convinced them to disband.

The party may or may not have killed/arrested/joined forces with Dark Skull.

The party meets with Lord Prio for a short debriefing following the adventure. The PCs are asked to account for their actions.

Should the PCs seek an appeal of Sir Severin's case, this is place to do it.

In all cases, read:

Eventually you make it back to King Foril's Court. Lord Prio, Knight Exalted, King Foril's Regent of Special Affairs, thanks you for your service to the king.

In the likely event that the party has unmasked the Shadovar agent, read:

You have unmasked a nightcloak, an insidious Shadovar agent of Netheril. You've saved The Lower West Quarter, and possibly all of Arabel, from the infiltration of a cult of Shar. Be proud, for you've done Cormyr a great service.

If the party has not killed any folk of Arabel (including Dark Skull, but not including the Shadovar agent), and they have not seriously abused the power of the King's Writ (unjust assault, torture, etc.), read:

For your display of wisdom and chivalry, you are awarded the Badge of Temperance. This mark identifies you as someone who can be trusted with power and responsibility. Bearers of such awards often go on to become knights and members of the King's Court.

Award of the Badge of Temperance begins a major quest to investigate and expose Netheril operations in Cormyr.

If the party had the cultists arrested, read:

Worship of Shar carries a severe penalty in Cormyr. The cultists you've uncovered are put over the wall in the prison-city of Wheloon, where they'll live out the rest of their lives. It was your testimony that sent them to this justice.

If the party requests an appeal for Sir Severin (Dark Skull), read:

On your honor and witness, the King's Court grants your request of appeal for Sir Severin, for the crime of treason in the assault of a greater lord. Sir Severin will remain under house arrest in Suzail while an investigation is arranged.

For good or ill, your deeds are the talk of the Court, and your future actions will be watched closely.

Encounter 4: Nightfall (Cultists) (Low Level)

A Fear-driven cult members grab whatever they can find and come at you in a wild frenzy.

Petitioner of the Dark Eclipse	**Level 1 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 25
Initiative +0 **Senses** Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 14; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 11	
Speed 6	
m **Club** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.	
Mob Rule	
A petitioner gains a + 2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other petitioners are within 5 squares of it.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common
Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1) **Int** 9 (-1)	**Cha** 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, club	

The cultist before you bears the solemn expression of a man with no hope. He moves forward wielding a razor-sharp chakram in each hand, driven by fear do fulfill the commands of his master.

Initiate of the Dark Eclipse	**Level 1 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 100
Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6	
HP 20; **Bloodied** 10	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12	
Speed 5	
m **Chakram** (standard; at-will)	
+8 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.	
r **Chakram Thrown** (standard; at-will)	
Ranged 5/10; +7 vs. AC; 1d6+2 damage.	
The Dark Eclipse (standard; recharge 5 6)	
An initiate can make two melee chakram attacks.	
Returning Chakram (minor; at-will)	
An Initiate can throw a chakram in a sweeping arc so that it will return to him.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2)	**Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 12 (+1)
Equipment chainmail, 2 chakrams	

This man looks like a demon from the pit as his face twists into a mocking smile. His hands beckon to the darkness, and the shadows swirl around him, ready to do his bidding.

Nightcloak of the Dark Eclipse (Leader)	**Level 3 Elite Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 300
Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision	
The Fear aura 10; human allies gain + 2 to Will defense until the Master is bloodied.	
HP 84; **Bloodied** 42	
AC 20; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 19	
Saving Throws + 2	
Action Points 1	
Speed 6	
m **Chakram** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 damage.	
Fear Bolt (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fear**	
Ranged 10/20; +9 vs. Will; 1d6 damage and push target 2 squares.	
Cloud of Fear (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Fear**	
Area burst 1 within 10; +9 vs. Will; enemies within burst are dazed until end of their next turn. *Aftereffect*: -2 penalty to attacks (save ends).	
Quell the Flame (immediate reaction; after a radiant power targets Nightcloak; encounter)	
The Nightcloak makes a Fear Bolt attack on creature that used radiant power against Nightcloak.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common
Str 8 (-1) **Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 12(+1)	**Cha** 14 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, chakram	

Encounter 4: Nightfall (Cultists) (High Level)

A Fear-driven cult members grab whatever they can find and come at you in a wild frenzy.

Petitioner of the Dark Eclipse	**Level 1 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 25
Initiative +0 **Senses** Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 14; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 11	
Speed 6	
m **Club** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage.	
Mob Rule	
A petitioner gains a + 2 power bonus to defenses while at least two other petitioners are within 5 squares of it.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common
Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1) **Int** 9 (-1)	**Cha** 11 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, club	

The cultist before you bears the solemn expression of a man with no hope. He moves forward wielding a razor-sharp chakram in each hand, driven by fear do fulfill the commands of his master.

Initiate of the Dark Eclipse (Level 3)	**Level 3 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 150
Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6	
HP 36; **Bloodied** 18	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12	
Speed 5	
m **Chakram** (standard; at-will)	
+10 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage.	
r **Chakram Thrown** (standard; at-will)	
Ranged 5/10; +9 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.	
The Dark Eclipse (standard; recharge 5 6)	
An initiate can make two melee chakram attacks.	
Returning Chakram (minor; at-will)	
An Initiate can throw a chakram in a sweeping arc so that it will return to him.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2)	**Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 12 (+1)
Equipment chainmail, 2 chakrams	

This man looks like a demon from the pit as his face twists into a mocking smile. His hands beckon to the darkness, and the shadows swirl around him, ready to do his bidding.

Nightcloak of the Dark Eclipse (Level 5)	**Level 5 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 400
Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision	
The Fear aura 10; human allies gain + 2 to Will defense until the Master is bloodied.	
HP 116; **Bloodied** 58	
AC 22; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will 21**	
Saving Throws + 2	
Action Points 1	
Speed 6	
m **Chakram** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.	
Fear Bolt (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fear**	
Ranged 10/20; +11 vs. Will; 1d6 damage and push target 2 squares.	
Cloud of Fear (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Fear**	
Area burst 1 within 10; +11 vs. Will; enemies within burst are dazed until end of their next turn. *Aftereffect*: -2 penalty to attacks (save ends).	
Quell the Flame (immediate reaction; after a radiant power targets Nightcloak; encounter)	
The Nightcloak makes a Fear Bolt attack on creature that used radiant power against Nightcloak.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common	
Str 8 (-1) **Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 12(+1)	**Cha** 14 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, chakram	

Encounter 4: Nightfall (Shadows) (Low Level)

Wisps of swirling blackness surround you, confounding your attacks.

Shadow Mote **Level 1 Minion**
Small elemental magical beast (shadow) XP 25

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 1 damage.

Shadowplay Distraction
Opponents adjacent to a shadow mote take a -1 penalty to melee or ranged attacks per mote (up to -5).

Alignment Evil **Languages** -
Skills Stealth +8
Str 10 (+0) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Ghostlike shadows move around you whispering terrible portents and clutching at your heart as they drift by.

Shadow Seeker **Level 1 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (shadow) XP 100

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 16; **Bloodied** 8
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.

M **Flitting Shadows** (standard; at-will)
+5 vs. AC; 1d8 damage; a shadow seeker can move its speed and make this attack, gaining a +5 bonus to AC vs. opportunity attacks incurred by the movement.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +9
Str 10 (+0) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 12 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+1)

A massive cloud of shadow rolls towards you like a wave of darkness.

Shadow Juggernaut **Level 2 Brute**
Large elemental magical beast (shadow) XP 125

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 14; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 11
Speed 5; fly 5 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+5 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage.

C **Wave of Shadows** (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 1; +3 vs. Will; 1d6+1 damage and enemies fall prone.
Miss: Enemies fall prone.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Skills Intimidate +6
Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 12 (+1)

This man looks like a demon from the pit as his face twists into a mocking smile. His hands beckon to the darkness, and the shadows swirl around him, ready to do his bidding.

Nightcloak of the Dark Eclipse (Leader) **Level 3 Elite Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (human) XP 300

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
The Fear aura 4; human allies gain + 2 to Will until the Master is bloodied.
HP 50; **Bloodied** 25
AC 20; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 19
Saving Throws + 2
Action Points 1
Speed 6

m **Chakram** (standard; at-will)
+7 vs. AC; 1d6-1 damage.

Fear Bolt (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fear**
Ranged 10/20; +9 vs. Will; 1d6 damage and push target 2 squares.

Cloud of Fear (standard (minor to maintain); at-will) ✦ **Fear**
Area Burst 1 within 10; +9 vs. Will; enemies are dazed for one round and take a -2 penalty to attacks.

Bloody Scream (immediate reaction; the first time the Nightcloak is bloodied) ✦ **Fear**
As Cloud of Fear, but centered on the Nightcloak.

Quell the Flame (imm. reaction, after a light spell is cast)
The Nightcloak immediately makes a Fear Bolt attack on any creature that casts a spell with the radiant keyword within 10 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 8 (-1) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 12(+1) **Cha** 14 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, chakram

Encounter 4: Nightfall (shadows) (High Level)

Wisps of swirling blackness surround you, confounding your attacks.

Shadow Mote **Level 1 Minion**
Small elemental magical beast (shadow) XP 25

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 1 damage.

Shadowplay Distraction
Opponents adjacent to a shadow mote take a -1 penalty to melee or ranged attacks per mote (up to -5).

Alignment Evil **Languages** -
Skills Stealth +8
Str 10 (+0) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Ghostlike shadows move around you, whispering terrible portents and clutching at your heart as they drift by.

Shadow Seeker (Level 3) **Level 3 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (shadow) XP 150

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13
Speed 6; fly 6 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+8 vs. AC; 1d8+1 damage.

M **Flitting Shadows** (standard; at-will)
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage; a shadow seeker can move its speed and make this attack, gaining a +5 bonus to AC vs. opportunity attacks incurred by the movement.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +10
Str 10 (+0) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 12 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+1)

A massive cloud of shadow rolls towards you like a wave of darkness.

Shadow Juggernaut (Level 4) **Level 4 Brute**
Large elemental magical beast (shadow) XP 175

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 48; **Bloodied** 24
AC 16; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Speed 5; fly 5 (hover; limit 1) *no more than 1 square high*

m **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.

C **Wave of Shadows** (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 1; +5 vs. Will; 1d6+1 damage and enemies fall prone. Miss: Enemies fall prone.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Skills Intimidate +7
Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 8 (-2)
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 12 (+1)

This man looks like a demon from the pit as his face twists into a mocking smile. His hands beckon to the darkness, and the shadows swirl around him, ready to do his bidding.

Nightcloak of the Dark Eclipse (Level 5) **Level 5 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (human) XP 400

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
The Fear aura 10; human allies gain + 2 to Will defense until the Master is bloodied.
HP 116; **Bloodied** 58
AC 22; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will 21**
Saving Throws + 2
Action Points 1
Speed 6

m **Chakram** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.

Fear Bolt (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fear**
Ranged 10/20; +11 vs. Will; 1d6 damage and push target the target's movement + 2.

Cloud of Fear (standard; recharge 5 6) ✦ **Fear**
Area burst 1 within 10; +11 vs. Will; enemies within burst are dazed until end of their next turn. *Aftereffect*: -2 penalty to attacks (save ends).

Quell the Flame (immediate reaction; after a radiant power targets Nightcloak; encounter)
The Nightcloak makes a Fear Bolt attack on creature that used radiant power against Nightcloak.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 8 (-1) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 12(+1) **Cha** 14 (+2)

Equipment leather armor, chakram

Encounter 4: Nightfall Map

N = Nightcloak
If the PCs snuck into theatre, they are staked out in the balcony (start area A).

If the PCs came through the front door they are on the stairs (start area B).

The party fights cultists *or* shadow creatures. Not both.

The party must fight the nightcloak.

If the party did no recover the obelisk, flip the obelisk tile to represent the empty stone base.

Dungeon Tiles

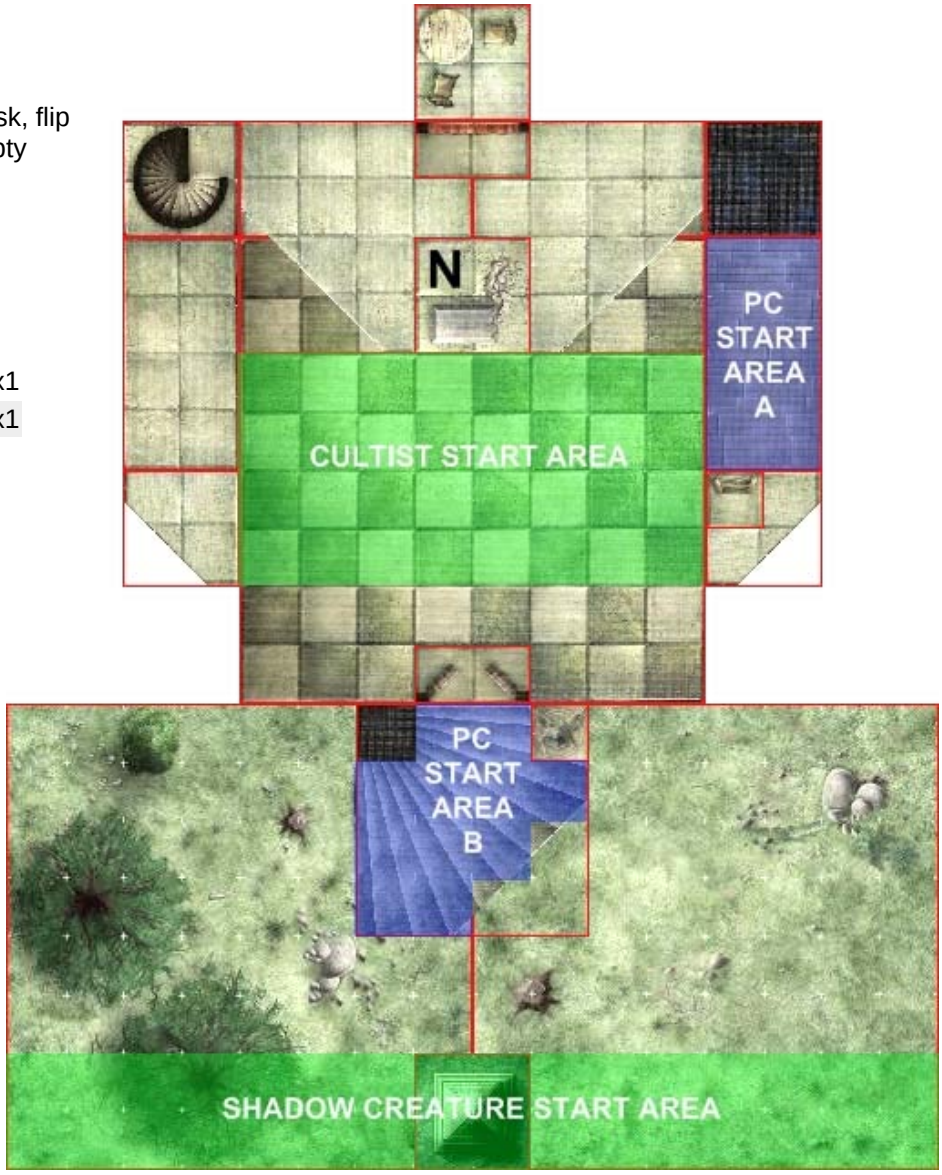
Obelisk / Floor 2x2 x1

Ruins of the Wild

Camp / Field	8x8	x1
Ruined Tower / Field w/Trees	8x8	x1

Fane of the Forgotten Gods

Checkerboard floor / Outdoor Shrine	8x8	x1
Table & Chairs / Alcove	2x2	x1
Darkness / Alcove	2x2	x1
Broken Altar / Alcove	2x2	x1
Floor w/Runes / Spiral Staircase	4x4d	x1
Statue / Red Cistern	1x1	x1
Floor / Statue Alcoves	4x4d	x1
Floor / Hidden Shrine	4x4d	x1
Floor / Semi-circle	2x2d	x1
Floor / Darkness	2x2d	x1
Curtain Doorway / Floor	2x1	x1
Portcullis / Floor	4x2	x1
Stairs w/Landing / Floor	8x2	x1
Plank Floor / Floor	4x2	x1
Spiral Stairs Down / Spiral Stairs Up	2x2	x1
Ladder / Flaming Cauldron	1x1	x1
Closed Wood Doors / Open Wood Doors	2x1	x1



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.

Important DM Information

It is critical that you enter the PC rewards accurately on the tracking form, and ensure that the information is reported and entered online in a timely manner. While players will be able to track their character's information on paper, the online information serves as an important backup and verification of play.

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 1: Shades of Black
110 / 150 XP
Encounter 2: Casting Shadows
60 / 90 XP
Encounter 3: Dead Man Walking
70 / 110 XP
Encounter 4: Nightfall
160 / 210 XP
Minor Quest: Find the cult/redeem Dark Skull
(Included in Encounter 4)

Total Possible Experience
400 / 560 XP

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 some other item of value. Each player makes one selection for their character; players may choose the same treasure bundle.

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 to the gold all characters receive, and ensure you enter the total amount of gold gained (minus any expenditures) online. You can have a negative number and enter that negative online. PCs receive 20% of a magic item's purchase price for any item they sell. 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.

Gold Per PC
75 / 100 gp
(Encounter 4: 75 / 100 gp)

Each PC Selects One of the Following

Bundle A: *+1 vicious weapon* (low-level version only)
Found in Encounter 4

Bundle B: ritual scroll with Enchant Magic Item (low-level version only)
Found in Encounter 4

Bundle C: *flaming weapon +1*
Found in Encounter 2b

Bundle D: *+1 symbol of battle*
Found in Encounter 2b

Bundle E: *bag of holding*
Found in Encounter 2b

Bundle F: *+2 vicious weapon* (high-level version only)
Found in Encounter 4

Bundle G: ritual scroll with Brew Potion (high-level version only)
Found in Encounter 4

Potion 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 *potion of healing* plus 0 / 25 gp to their total gold per PC. The player should write the potion gained on their adventure log.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 50/75 gp to their total gold per PC.

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. If a PC earns three awards, they may only have 2 of them and must pick which two they want before ending the session.

CORM01 Badge of Temperance

Agents of the Court of King Foril who display wisdom and chivalry are awarded the Badge of Temperance. This mark identifies the bearer as someone who can be trusted with power and responsibility. Award of the Badge of Temperance begins a major quest to investigate and expose Netheril operations in Cormyr.

Adventure Questions

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

1. How did the party deal with the cult?

a. They killed the cult members.
b. They arrested the cult members.
c. They disbanded the cult peaceably.

2. How did the party deal with Dark Skull?

a. They killed him.
b. They arrested him.
c. They let him go.
d. They petitioned his appeal.
e. They never met him.

Appendix

Handout 1: The King's Writ

The King's Writ

The Court of King Foril grants this noble being (heretofore referred to as "The Privileged") the privileges of a Court investigator under the supervision of Lord Prio, Knight Exalted and Regent of Special Affairs in the investigation and resolution of a report of possible Netherese activity in the vicinity of the city of Arabel (heretofore referred to as "The Mission").

The Privileged is hereby granted authority in the vicinity of the city of Arabel as is pursuant to The Mission. This authority includes the right to arrest, detain, and levy judgment up to and including summary execution where it benefits the resolution of The Mission.

Where disagreements arise, the authority of the Court of King Foril supersedes the authority of any local jurisdiction.

If The Privileged bears The King's Writ aloft and declares, "I am The Privileged, and I go by the authority of The Court of King Foril", so shall the King's glowing sigil magically appear on this page, and so shall the bearer be wreathed in a nimbus of light and appear to gain in stature. By this all will know the bearer and The Privileged to be one-in-the-same.

Handout 2: Map of Arabel featuring The Lower West Quarter

4	The Brewery
5	The Pretentious Pot
7	The Lower West Square
8	The Old Theater
11	The Burgomaster's House
12	Goblin's Grotto
16	Brainard's Books and Birds Emporium