



## XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

### Brave Soldiers

### Covenant of Light Faction Scenario #4

#### An Adventure for 4<sup>th</sup> Level Characters (Scaled for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Levels of Play)

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# Adventure Background

"The best laid plans of mice and men, often come to bitter ends." Even the most well-intentioned actions of good people can easily lead to tragic consequences when darkness gets a chance to twist their results. That is the primary theme behind Brave Soldiers, as is the hopeful truth that no matter how tangled a web evil weaves, the efforts of the Light can ultimately prevail.

The background for this adventure takes place a year before the campaign's current day. A long standing hero of the Covenant of Light, Sir Barrak ir'Talvos, fell to the blades of a group of vile assassins as mysterious as they were deadly. No reasons or perpetrators were ever found for his brutal murder, but the faction was able to recover his body and place it in a special tomb set aside for true paragons of the Light. The great knight, friend to many within the order and a mentor to most of the faction's knights, was laid to rest amid much sorrow and celebration of his long life dedicated to the service of Good.

Unfortunately, not all rests are peaceful. Not all good lives are fated to remain that way in death. The assassins were sent by one of the darkest cells in the Cabal of Shadows, an Obscura called the Defiance. His death ordered by none other than the Defiance's leader, The Voice of the Storm, once the assassins were set on Sir ir'Talvos his death was assured.

However, the fury and viciousness of the Voice of the Storm knows no bounds. It was not enough for the good Sir ir'Talvos to die. He had to suffer, forced to betray and taint all the good works of his life in a way so terrible that the word torment itself would be insufficient to describe his pain. The assassin that finally ended the knight's life did not merely kill him; Barrak ir'Talvos was implanted with a dark necromancy that ensured his death would not be the end of his torment. It would only be the beginning.

The nature of the spell was so insidious that the Covenant of Light was unaware of its presence in their hero. It lingers in the depths of his soul, slowly changing his body into a foul mockery of its former might. Long after he was interred in his crypt, awake and unable to move during the whole ordeal, Sir ir'Talvos was inexorably transformed into a grotesque mockery – a bloodhulk fighter.

Bloated and enraged, the former warrior of the Light raged in his tomb. For months, he tried to overcome the foul darkness growing in what remained of his mind. He focused on what he could remember of his living days, his devotion to the cause of good, and his former friends and allies in the Covenant of Light. He beat on the walls of his crypt/prison, trying desperately to get out and seek help. Unfortunately, the Exalted Barrow was built so well, designed so efficiently to keep tomb robbers out, that for all his unholy strength, he could not find a way out. Eventually, just as the Voice of the Storm desired, he succumbed to despair. Evil claimed what had once been among the best of men.

Unfortunately for the Covenant, no one knew any of this was happening in the Exalted Barrow. The funeral of Sir Barrak ir'Talvos became a memory, eventually fading into a fond footnote in the history of the faction. With the influx of new Scions into the Covenant of Light, accomplished heroes became teachers and mentors. This kept them off the battlefield and out of harm's way. There was, thankfully, no need to inter another champion of the Light and thus no reason to return to the Barrow. Months passed and grass grew over the outer graves of the burial mound, no one the wiser to the tragedy taking place within.

The story of Sir ir'Talvos might have ended with his eternal imprisonment had fate not intervened to bring his resting place back to the attention of the Covenant of Light. A line in one of the Caldyn Fragments, one sage's musings on the Draconic Prophecy, led the faction to believe an item buried with Barrak was needed to unlock a great treasure hidden somewhere in Xen'drik. While the Covenant would never have disturbed one of their heroes for mere treasure, the Caldyn Fragments always referred to turning points in history.

With a heavy heart, the Lord of Radiant Hold ordered the exhumation of Sir ir'Talvos and sent a small group to perform the sacred task. They were given orders to do so as delicately as possible, disrupting the brave knight's eternal rest as little as possible. Among the delegation from the Church of the Sovereign Host was young Lord Kymus ir'Talvos, Barrak's only son and heir.

The delegation had orders to be gentle; the raging undead they found in the Barrow's heart was under no such compulsion. Four good men entered the Exalted Barrow, no one left. The last to die, Kymus himself, managed to shatter the locking mechanism on the Barrow's front gate, sealing the tomb and keeping the monstrosity that had been his father inside. He met his end bravely, an ironic testament to the honorable blood shared by both victim and slayer.

When the adventure opens, the Covenant of Light has grown concerned for the delegation it sent to the Barrow. Though a small amount of time was allotted to account for travel and the inevitable troubles that befall any group venturing into the jungles of Xen'drik, eight days have passed. Xandrin Corvalis, Lord of Radiant Hold, has a bad feeling about what may have happened. Duties keep him near Stormreach but he wants the matter resolved as quickly as possible.

To that end, he has gathered a group of proven heroes to the Light. Their mission is two-fold – find the exhuming team, alive or dead, and finish what they were sent to do. The Wings of Ascent, the medal that was buried with Barrak, is vital to the future of the Covenant. Xandrin just prays it won't cost the lives of any more Brave Soldiers to acquire...

## Adventure Synopsis

The adventure opens with an urgent message coming to the PCs during a faction gathering in Radiant Hold. The center of the faction's military dealings, Radiant Hold is also the stage for festivals, tournaments, and other social aspects held to further the bonds of unity and cooperation among the faction's members. It is during one of these gatherings that the PCs are approached by Korvin, a black plumed raptoran, with an important message.

The Lord of Radiant Hold wishes to see the PCs. Once they arrive, he asks them to bear with him while he explains something in deepest confidence. He tells the PCs about Sir ir'Talvos, his assassination, the subsequent burial with honors, and the ill fated expedition to retrieve one of his many commendations. He speaks brusquely but not rudely; it is obvious he has a lot to cover.

Lord Corvalis confides in the PCs that the medal, the Wings of Ascent, was given to Barrak ir'Talvos by the raptorans after he defeated a ruthless attempt by sky pirates to capture the Aerie, a massive skyship used by the raptorans of the Covenant of Light. In fact, it was his bravery and willingness to die for the winged humanoids that convinced the raptorans to come to Stormreach and join the faction. The Wings of Ascent, a beautiful bronze medallion of ancient workmanship, was gifted to Barrak by the raptoran's dying chieftain in honor of the human knight's courage.

Xandrin Corvalis explains the medallion's significance according to a newly discovered passage of the Caldyn Fragments. He obviously regrets both having to disturb his old friend's rest and the loss of life already incurred doing so, but he is left with no choice. He charges the PCs to succeed where Kymus and his team failed.

Assuming they agree to the task, Xandrin escorts them personally to a hidden basement in the Hold. There, resting in a cut stone chamber, a tumbler awaits to speed them on their journey. The strange spherical vehicle is a recent gift from gnomish allies of the faction back in Khorvaire and while untested, it promises to be able to make travel across the interior of Xen'drik much faster. As the time of prophecy mentioned in the Caldyn Fragment is fast approaching, Lord Corvalis has little choice but use the bizarre vehicle and hope for the best.

The vehicle isn't the only part of this plan Lord Corvalis is unsure about; the tumbler came with a pilot – Glitch. "Glitch" is a gnome from Zilargo and built this particular tumbler himself. As a skilled artificer and a genuinely kind soul, Glitch insisted on coming along with the vehicle as soon as he found out where it would be going. He loves to talk fast, move fast, and live fast. He may come across to the PCs as a bit of a flake but he is truly as dependable as they come and extremely loyal to his friends.

With Glitch at the controls, the tumbler (nicknamed Lady Cannonball by her pilot) submerges and takes the PCs on a rapid ride through the solid earth beneath the jungles of Xen'drik. The journey aboveground to the Exalted Barrow would have taken five or six days on foot; Lady Cannonball can get them there within the day, barring complications.

Of course, there are complications. Approximately a third of the way through the journey, the vehicle suddenly lurches forward, rolls madly, and comes to a complete stop. Looking through the tumbler's windows, the PCs can see that they have emerged into some sort of cyst-like cavern and landed in an underground pool. The tumbler, unable to travel through water, will have to be moved to the pool's shore before it can continue moving. Unfortunately for the PCs, Lady Cannonball's watery landing has also awakened the pool's inhabitant. Long in size and short in temper, the pool's elasmosaurus resident was struck by the falling tumbler and will be very hostile to the PCs when they climb out.

Once the massive dinosaur is dealt with, the PCs can resume their journey. Glitch takes the tumbler a little deeper to avoid similar caverns, though at the cost of a little travel time. This decision seems like a good one until the risk of going too deep into Eberron's rocky mantle makes itself evident. A xorn, attracted to the metal and vibrations of the tumbler, comes through the vehicle's hull and is just as surprised as the PCs are by its arrival. This encounter does not have to turn hostile but if the PCs are initially combative, it will quickly become so.

The PCs will likely be grateful when Glitch turns upwards and comes out "in a safe place", as the gnome likes to say. In this case, "in a safe place" is literally *inside* the Exalted Barrow. Within moments, one of the problems with the ancient burial site becomes apparent as the hull is swarmed by undead. The dark power coursing through the now-bloodhulk Sir ir'Talvos has turned the entombed heroes of this place into mindless zombies, most of which are now literally crawling all over Lady Cannonball.

The PCs have to fight through way through this horde of undeath. Once the room with the Tumbler is clear and secure, Glitch agrees to wait here for 12 hours before heading back. He wishes them luck and tells them he'll surface once every thirty minutes and stay up for a minute before going back down. He's a powerful spellcaster and engineer but undead "give him the shrieking frightberries".

On their own now, the PCs have to make their way through the Exalted Barrow, dealing with its darkly risen inhabitants. This journey eventually takes them into the heart of the tomb where they face a savage, bloated creature that might once have been human – Sir Barrak ir'Talvos himself.

When they find him, he is crouched over the broken body of a human male, weeping bloody tears and sobbing uncontrollably. Killing his own son has returned a brief spark of intelligence and memory to the monstrous creature. He is aware enough of who he was and what the PCs are to parley for a short time if they try. He knows he is beyond help and is acutely aware that within moments he will lose control and become a brutal killer once more.

This short chance at conversation can reveal the nature of Barrak's damnation and his suspicions about its source (the Voice of the Storm, a highly-placed member of the Cabal of Shadows). He can also tell the PCs that the Wings of Ascent is still around his neck, buried in a sea of his blood-bloated flesh. To get it, they will have to cut it free. He blesses them and thanks them for putting him to rest even as his eyes cloud and what was left of his humanity fades away.

What follows is a tragic battle that, with luck and skill, ends with the PCs destroying the abomination Barrak has become and recovering the Wings of Ascent medallion. They can escape the Exalted Barrow using their tumbler and return victoriously to Radiant Hold.

## Troubleshooting

The theme of this adventure is tragic loss. Not only did one of the greatest heroes of the Covenant of Light fall to an assassin's blade, he has been turned into a raving undead beast and slain his own son. There is a great deal of emotion in this adventure if you wish to emphasize it, especially in its final encounter. This can be a challenge for some groups; use the tragic aspect of this adventure carefully and be sure not to overwhelm your players with it.

There is also the matter of the tumbler and its pilot to consider. Quite correctly, some Players may decide that Glitch is more than powerful enough to handle the adventure on his own. This is true; his level and spellcasting power would handle most anything this adventure has to throw at him were it not for three important points. Be sure to mention these things if the Players try to insist on "hiding behind the gnome", so to speak.

First off, Glitch is not an adventurer. By their nature, PCs tend to see things in terms of levels and power. This is understandable but not every spellcaster in Eberron is a tried and true hero ready to face danger in the teeth and come out magic-blazing. Many, like Glitch, are highly educated professionals whose character class levels represent long years of book learning and study.

Second, it is likely unlikely that any of the PCs have the skills needed to pilot the Tumbler themselves. If things do go south for the gnome and he gets hurt or killed, they could be stranded underground or in the heart of a sealed crypt. Simply put, Glitch is too valuable to risk in combat. He is well aware of this and will vociferously protest any attempt to put him in harm's way. While he will fight to save his life, he doesn't really carry combat magic normally and is not very efficient at fighting. If the PCs make him fight, he is likely to lose and drag them into the fight anyway.

And lastly, this adventure is not entitled "Brave Gnome and the Six Gimps". This scenario is about the PCs and their heroics; they need to be the focus of the action. They are going into terrible danger to accomplish a vital mission where others have likely lost their lives in failure. The PCs are the center point of this game, the main characters, and as such should have the chance to make their own mark on the campaign. If the gnome does everything, who will remember them?

One note about surveillance – the psion named Whisper is back from her mission to Riedra. She is actually present at the festival in Radiant Hold, having insinuated her way in through Psionic powers and mundane charms. Currently in disguise as a merchant, she has allowed herself to be romanced by a young, noble, and hopelessly foolish paladin in the Covenant of Light. Of special interest to her are the PCs that have thwarted her plans in the past.

She will **not** make contact with the PCs in this adventure but, at your discretion, she might be seen by PCs as one of the many people present at the Introduction event. They will likely think nothing of her at the time but when she does choose to make herself known to them, they will recognize her from this meeting. She will make it a personal goal to observe each of the PCs during the first part of the introduction if she can. They are an unknown quantity to her and she wishes to know more about them. More to the point, her Inspired masters want to know more about the PCs as well.

If any of the PCs are Psionic, there is a chance that they might somehow detect her psychic nature. If this occurs, let them do so but be sure to have Whisper quietly leave the event once she is detected. The psion is both clever and resourceful; she can find a way to give the PCs the slip and do it in a way that leaves them guessing as to her capabilities or intentions.

Keep in mind that Whisper is not a true participant in this scenario. Use her as background but do not divert the PCs from their goals with sightings or detections. She is here as part of the set dressing only, barely visibly and completely inconsequential.

Her time is coming and when she does move against the PCs, they will wish she'd stayed that way.

## Adventure Start

*With the official coming of the winter season to the jungle continent of Xen'drik comes the Snow Festival, a tournament and faire held in the spacious courtyard and surrounding landscape of Radiant Hold, the Covenant of Light's shining keep and military bastion.*

*Gone for the day are the stern-faced guards that normally keep watch on its walls. The keep's massive portcullis is open and all within have turned their attention to the grand business of revelry and celebration. Called the Snow Festival in honor of the one element to winter utterly missing in Xen'drik – the cold – this faire has become famous throughout Stormreach in the three short years since the Covenant was founded. By opening its doors and offering merriment to any and all, regardless of their membership in the faction, the Covenant of Light has made a name for itself with public events such as these.*

*The sun is shining, colorful jungle birds are flitting between the Hold's parapets, and dozens of events make for a cacophony of laughter and excitement. In the middle of the festival ground, the ring of steel on steel marks heated practicing for the day's most important attraction, this season's Tournament of Light!*

The adventure begins here, with the PCs attending the Snow Festival, an ironically named event given that snow never falls in northern Xen'drik and technically it isn't even the winter season because of Stormreach's location below the planet's equator. Regardless, everything in the festival has a winter theme. Hot drinks and food are served, children can engage in snowball fights (thanks to magic), and there are horse-drawn sleighs that transport visitors around the gala event on enchanted runners.

Take a few minutes to get the theme and pageantry across to the PCs, letting them participate in some of the festival's attractions if they wish. There are some suggestions below of feel free to make up your own. The point of the Festival is to bring the people of Stormreach and members of the Covenant of Light a much needed time of levity and joy.

Keep in mind that the PCs are not limited to being observers and faire-goers only. They can easily contribute in any way they wish, from bards and performers entertaining the crowd to manual labor or spellcasting if they are so inclined. Let them be as involved as they wish.

- **Snowballs!** A Zilargo-built snow maker churns out a massive amount of crushed ice, forming a mound of magically-preserved snow. The white stuff only lasts about an hour before evaporating but in that time, it is shoveled into troughs, taken to various points in the festival, and visitors are encouraged to do mock battle anywhere and everywhere! (Posted signs remind visitors not to use their frigid weapons on contestants in the Tournament.)
- **Puppet Shows:** The Covenant counts a number of performers in their ranks and puts them to good use during these festivals. One of the event's most popular attractions, especially for children, is the puppet shows held on four different shadow box stages. While some of these shows are understandably moral-based, others are just rousing tales of heroics and slap-stick antics in true Punch and Judy fashion.
- **Pinwheels and Horse Poles:** There are several booths for gaming during the festival. While outright gambling is prohibited, there are many small prizes to be won. These free games are small, easy to play amusements; winning them gains the victor things like confectionaries, brightly colored pieces of clothing, and monstrous animals made of fluff and linen. Suggested games for PCs to try their hands at are:
  - **Pinwheels:** This game has a 15 foot deep booth with a spinning wooden pinwheel at the back and a small rack of throwing darts up front by the player. The blades of the pinwheel are full of holes, making it tricky to get a dart to actually hit a blade where it can stick and not just pass through. PCs playing Pinwheel get to choose which of the wheel's three blades they want to throw at, as each blade has different sized holes. These blades represent a 25%, 50%, or 75% miss chance and hitting the pinwheel in the first place is a DC 12 target due to size. The 25% blade offers a small cake as a prize. The 50% blade offers a painfully-bright orange headband with a dyed purple pinwheel on the brow. The 75% miss chance blade gets the lucky victor a comical looking plush bulette.

- **Horse Poles:** This past time is exactly like the game of horseshoes with the added twist of being played on horseback! A small riding track is set up outside the courtyard itself and players must make their throw while their mount is in motion. Three horseshoes are thrown by the player at a target Armor Class of 18 for the pole. All mounted penalties (and feats) apply. Only hits count and for one hit, the PC gets a small wooden horse figurine. For two hits, the PC gets a shiny, two-inch steel horseshoe shaped cloak pin. Any PC skilled enough to get all three hits receives a Snow Festival saddle blanker with the symbol of the Covenant of Light embroidered on it and a border of interlocking yellow horseshoes on a grey border.
- **Food, Food, Food!** No carnival of any kind would be complete without confections and treats for faire goers to consume. The Snow Festival is no exception with the faction's best cooks working tirelessly for several days beforehand to turn raw materials into tantalizing feasts for the nostrils and the taste buds. No one goes hungry at a Covenant of Light festival; admission and refreshments are both free. In addition, festival guards are instructed to watch faire goers who go back for multiple passes at the free food as those people might be homeless or in dire need of assistance in other ways. PCs with Profession (Cook) might have been asked to help out with this delicious facet of the festival.
- **Rides:** Horseback rides, the magical sleigh, and other mobile amusements are popular with faire goers in Stormreach. The Covenant of Light caters to this desire as best it can, though its resources in such regards are limited. If PCs are willing to volunteer their mounts for the duration of the festival, this act of charity is greatly appreciated. Particularly generous PCs might even be put to work walking their mounts so that children (and adventurous but unskilled adults) can enjoy the thrills of riding in a controlled environment.

Once the PCs have been allowed to enjoy the faire on their own, move to the main event – the Winter Tournament of Light. This is a martial contest with archery, foot combat, mounted combat, and team battles as its four main phases. The highest of these, in keeping with the faction's emphasis on strong bonds of friendship and unity, is the team contest.

Only experienced members of the Covenant receive an invitation to compete in the faction's four seasonal Tournaments; getting one of those softly glowing golden scrolls is a high honor for any Scion. Their relative youth and short time served in the faction keeps the PCs from actually participating this year but any member of the Covenant of Light is encouraged to watch the event closely in preparation for the day when they are chosen.

While some PCs (and/or Players) may be disgruntled by not being able to compete in the Tournament, their participation is not fated to be for an entirely different reason.

## Tournament, Interrupted

*The gathering has begun at the edge of the fairground's tournament circle. People crowd around on all sides, with the event's limited riser seating completely filled and few spaces remaining at the arena's roped boundaries. All manner of folk are here, from fellow warriors bedecked in metal to unwashed children huddled together with candied plantains and big, bright eyes.*

*A bald-pated marshal clad in green and gold strides to the center of the tournament ring, a shining horn in one hand and a garland of white roses in the other. The slender official raises the horn and blows a single, sweet clarion note to quiet the assembly. All voices hush as the marshal announces in a rich, carrying voice, "It is my great honor to welcome you, one and all, to this ring of honor! May the Winter Tournament of Light commence!"*

*With that, the marshal hurls the garland into the air where it breaks apart into a fluttering shower of snow-colored rose petals. In the midst of the fragrant rain, the man smiles and a pair of beautiful white wings emerge from his back, carrying him into the air on a glorious pillar of light before he fades away amid a thunderous round of applause.*

**Creature:** Mallikos is something of a showman at heart and loves to make flashy exits. He is actually still present, just *invisible* and ever watchful for trouble. He is charged with fair play during the tournament and takes his role in the games very seriously. His attention to detail is such that he often forgets to look outside the arena during matches; this explains how someone like Whisper (detailed below) could be so close to him and go unnoticed.

**Mallikos, Trumpet Archon;** hp 120; *Monster Manual* 18

Let the PCs get settled for the beginning of the Tournament before moving on. The proper order of events is to have Whisper make her appearance and then immediately move on to An Urgent Call. Be sure to keep

the players from investigating Whisper too closely; she is here merely as foreshadowing to the start of her own trilogy of mischief coming up in future modules.

## A Whisper of Malice

*Hundreds are crowding along the ropes of the arena, standing in the shadows of tall risers that offer seating to those who either moved fast enough to take advantage or were given invitations to specific chairs. Many of the latter are wealthy members of Stormreach, each one contributing to the festival for the privilege of being able to watch it on relative comfort. Not every seat is given to the well-off; many faire-goers in obvious physical or financial need have been given a chance to rest their weary bones.*

Take a moment to consider each of the PCs. If anyone has been especially alert in their roleplaying, has a sharp eye (high Spot skill), or just seems openly social, ask him or her to make a Spot check (DC 18). This skill check can be made by as many PCs as you wish, even all of them if you prefer, but at least one should have the chance to notice the following sight. (You may also wish to let any Psionic PCs automatically notice Whisper as follows; do not explain why they notice her without needing a Spot check.)

*Some of the dignitaries here at the festival include other Scions of the Light. One in particular is quite noticeable. Sir Vanthin d'Deneith, the Autumn Champion of last season's tournament, rests in a comfortable booth at the top of one riser. Kept out of this season's games because of a magical injury sustained in the wilds of Xen'drik, he has been given a place of honor to watch the combats unfold.*

*On his arm is a lovely lady of possibly half-elven descent. Slight but not as angular as most elves, the woman has pale skin and bright green eyes that compliment her long, crimson tresses. She seems well attached to the handsome young knight, though her attention looks to be elsewhere.*

*In particular, her attention is turned directly at you.*

As soon as Whisper is spotted, she turns her gaze away. She has not been using any of her psionic abilities here, mostly because of the risk of detection in such mixed company. Silently cursing herself as a fool for getting spotted, she makes her apologies to the innocent Sir Vanthin and excuses herself for a moment. With more than a hundred people between the PCs and her booth, it should be easy enough for her to get out of line of sight long enough to teleport away.

## What is Known About Whisper

DMs that have run the first Covenant of Light Faction Adventure, Divine Inspiration, will recognize Whisper as a psychic agent of the Inspired of Riedra. She gave the PCs a very hard time from a distance, always remaining unseen until they caught a glimpse of her as she sailed away into the night. She was a mystery then and she should remain a mystery now.

That said, her current guise as the Lady Alseira ir'Talsha from Thrane has created just enough gossip that the PCs might know a little about that persona. Her whirlwind romance with handsome Sir Vanthin d'Deneith has been the talk of Stormreach society circles since it began a few months ago and her landed but little-known Khorvaire family is supposedly famous for its crystal and gemstone businesses. Nothing else is really known about her, including where she lives or what she does when she is not being seen socially with Vanthin.

PCs could learn the above information about "Alseira" with a Knowledge (nobility) check (DC 20) or a Bardic Knowledge check (DC 15). Just asking around the crowd, if the PCs have the opportunity, will gain them the same details without the need for a skill check. If the PCs want to collect data on the woman after the faire as something that happens in the background between adventures, it will take a Gather Information check (DC 15) to do so.

If the PCs look like they are going to be able to catch her before she can make her inelegant exit, interrupt them with the following event. In any case, as soon as she is spotted as above, have An Urgent Call happen very shortly thereafter.

## An Urgent Call

*"Lords and ladies, excuse me please!" The voice belongs to a young squire dressed in the livery of the Covenant without any master's markings. The human girl is wiry and thin, likely no more than twelve, and seems very eager to reach you all. "I bear a message! Please let me through!"*

If the PCs come to her, she is very grateful to not have to swim through a sea of people to reach them. Otherwise, persistence and bony elbows accomplish what she lacks in body mass and she gets to the PCs

after a few more moments. Panting and obviously tired from a bit of a run, she quickly recovers and bows deeply once in their presence.

*"Forgive the interruption, please. I have come to ask if you will accompany me to meet with someone of importance. He would prefer you to come immediately, as there is much time to waste and little haste needed."*

*She chews on her lip. "No... that's not it. Ummm, much haste needed and little time to waste? Yes! That was it. So please, will you come? Please?" Her eyes are as eager and bright as any of the sugar-stuffed children nearby. "Please?"*

**Creature:** Brigitte is a "child of the faire", a term used for homeless children noticed by guards at the Covenant's festivals and taken in afterward. A clever, agile girl of fourteen summers (she's a little small for her age due to malnourishment and abuse when she was young), Brigitte is fiercely loyal to the Covenant and to her "Master", Lord Xandrin Corvalis. In truth, he is not her Master in any way, having told her on several occasions that she is a free young woman and beholden to no one. Still, hero worship runs deep and in her eyes, she serves no one else but him.

**Brigitte;** female human rogue 1; hp 6

Lord Corvalis is the one who sent for the PCs, though he actually sent a good friend to find them. That friend, a raptorian named Korvin, made the mistake of mentioning to the strawberry blonde haired moppet that he was looking for people for the Lord of the Hold. She immediately took it as her solemn duty to deliver them to Xandrin herself no matter what it took.

Korvin, knowing it would be impossible to convince the girl otherwise, is happy to let her do all the leg work of finding the PCs for him. Not yet able to truly fly, he finds walking awkward and is somewhat phobic of crowds. The enthusiastic young "squire" is welcome to do all the running he would rather avoid.

Once the PCs agree to come with the girl, who will introduce herself as Brigitte and is not afraid to use everything from tugging on PCs' arms and even wide, pleading eyes if she must, she takes them directly to the inner courtyard cathedral. Members of the Covenant will know that this building is restricted to clergy and upper-ranking members of the Faction only.

*As the energetic youth stomps over the hay-strewn ground with you in tow, she gets a sudden sour look. Directly ahead, an avian-looking humanoid with black plumage and night-colored skin is resting at the cathedral's main entrance. "Well done, Bridge," he says in a warm but slightly croaking voice. "I'll take them from here."*

*"But...!" she protests. "I wanted to take them to the Lord myself!"*

*The raptorian gives her a sympathetic but determined look. "I know, Bridge, but you know the rules. You aren't allowed on the second floor yet. Now go on; don't you want to go enjoy the faire? You really are off-duty, you know."*

*The girl kicks at the straw. "Bah! Ringing bells and bloody puppets! I'm not a kid!" She huffs and storms off towards the nearest refreshment stand, muttering about wanting to be big enough to fight in the tournament herself.*

*The avian chuckles softly and turns to face you all. "I am Korvin, envoy of Lord Xandrin Corvalis," he says with a feathery flourish of a bow. "It would be my pleasure to take you to see milord personally. He has much to ask of you, Scions."*

**Creature:** Korvin is not in the habit of answering many questions; he is a man of action rather than discussion. He will engage in polite conversation if the PCs wish to talk; he is not rude or brusque. He is a very friendly, if usually quiet, bird. If asked, he will gladly confirm that his coloring is very unusual for his people. His typical answer is, *"Some have speculated that one of my ancestors was quite friendly with the dark elven natives of this land. I... prefer not to conjecture."*

**Korvin;** male raptorian scout 9; hp 56

Although he knows the nature of the mission his master is about to request, he will reveal Xandrin's intentions towards the PCs. This is not out of a desire to be secretive; he just doesn't know exactly what will be involved and he would rather not speculate and lead the Scions astray.

It is a long walk through the majestic cathedral and up to its cavernous second floor. Korvin's racial adoration of a good debate could draw him into conversation if the PCs are talking among themselves or ask him anything directly. He is a friendly orator and rarely strays from the point of any lengthy discussion. His



keen wit and unique insight (a “bird’s eye view”, one might say) makes him an excellent commentator on current affairs or humanoid behavior – two of his favorite topics.

Once he reaches the door to Lord Corvalis’ office (a ten minute walk from the front of the cathedral), Korvin knocks once sharply. He is instantly answered by a curt, “Enter.” He bows and takes his leave of the PCs, thanking them for coming so quickly. This may of course have to be modified slightly if the PCs *didn’t* come easily or swiftly, but most heroes will have done so.

## A Reluctant Request

*Inside the spacious office stands a tall man with a noble bearing and the dress of a military leader. A suit of incredibly well crafted half plate hangs on his strong frame and an empty scabbard hangs at his hip. His black velvet tabard billows as he strides in a pace back and forth behind his desk, its breast emblazoned with an ornate version of the Covenant of Light’s symbol – the massive dragonshard that dominates the eastern end of Radiant Hold’s courtyard. Tiny enchanted jewels glimmer in the embroidery just like the glowing star motes that dance within the dragonshard’s gargantuan depths.*

*“Thank you for coming. Be seated if you like.” His tone is firm and resolute, his expression grave.*

Lord Corvalis does not want to have this conversation. He does not want to ask the PCs to go on this mission and possibly lose their lives. He most certainly does not want to send armed men and women into the faction’s sacred burial site where they will most certainly have to desecrate a hero’s grave to complete their task.

Unfortunately, today is not about what Lord Corvalis wants. It’s about what the Covenant of Light needs. He will be very polite during this meeting, no matter how the PCs act. Short of open hostility, the PCs can behave any way they will and the Lord of Radiant Hold will respond with calm manner and a cordial attitude. He knows he may be ordering them all to their deaths; they deserve nothing less than his respect.

Once the PCs are prepared to listen to his plea, he will begin by telling them the following story. As with any piece of long exposition, feel free to paraphrase and break the text down into smaller sections around the PCs’ roleplaying. Nothing makes a Player’s eyes fog over like five minutes of listening to an NPC talk.

*“Early in the founding of the Covenant, there were not many of us. Mind you, those we had were some of the greatest heroes of their age and I was proud to be in their presence. I’m not sure why I was chosen to be the Lord of this place over those worthies, but I suppose the Lady of Light must have always had a plan. Far be it for me to question her wisdom.*

*“Of all the warriors that flocked to her banner in the faction’s first days, none had the strength of arm or the sheer nobility of Sir Barrak ir’Talvos. A Brelish Knight with more war victories on his belt of honor than I’d ever seen, Barrak was like a father to most of us. I learned much of what I know about swordplay from the man. Of a bright company, he was the brightest of us all. I am not sure any of this would exist today without Sir Barrak’s tireless efforts to carve out a place for the Covenant here in Xen’drik.*

*“When he fell to the blades of assassins in Stormreach, it was a terrible day for us all. The Lady herself tried some of the greatest divine magic known to call him back to this world but to no avail. We buried him with honor in a place called the Exalted Barrow, an old ruin converted into a mausoleum for our faction’s heroes. We thought his story ended, but we were wrong.*

*“A few weeks ago, another of the Caldyn Fragments was discovered in the crystalline shard recovered during that terrible business with Flame Father Garris. This one spoke of a moment of destiny in a distant place, one that will only be revealed by the formation of a Great Key. After painstaking research, we have been able to determine both where this place is and one of the components of the Great Key.*

*“It would seem one of Sir Barrak ir’Talvos’ many marks of honor was more than even he knew it to be. During his time here in Xen’drik, he did many great things. One of these was to rescue the raptorians from a great evil and bring them into the Covenant’s protection. For that brave deed, the birdmen’s chieftain gave him a beautiful piece of bronze jewelry called the Wings of Ascent. Barrak wore it always on a thick chain around his neck and when we laid him to rest, he was wearing it still.*

*“The Great Key is made up in part by that token. The Wings of Ascent form a segment of the key and without it, we will be powerless to take advantage of this upcoming opportunity. Because of that, and **only** because of that, I gave permission to Barrak’s son, Sir Kymus, to take a few young Scions and retrieve the medallion from his father’s tomb.*

*“As you may have surmised, all did not go well. The team should have been back days ago but no one returned. One of our sages is certain the entire group is deceased, though he does not know by what force they met their ends. I know it is a lot to ask, but time grows short and we must have the Wings of Ascent.*

*“Will you go to the Exalted Barrow and do what Kymus and his men could not?”*

Xandrin does not actually expect the PCs to say yes immediately. Were it him, he would not be able to volunteer for such a dangerous mission without considering the consequences. He is quite pleased with the

PCs' bravery if they do instantly volunteer and does not blame them if they instead take a while to discuss the matter. In either case, he will not hurry them.

He is also willing to answer any questions they might ask. He knows virtually everything listed in the Adventure Background with the following exceptions:

- He does **not** know for certain that the Voice of the Storm ordered his mentor's death. He suspects it very strongly and can be convinced with a Diplomacy check (DC 20) to share that belief but he will stress that he has no proof.
- He knows the assassins did something dark and foul to Sir Barrak ir'Talvos' body but he does not know what that might have been. He believes they left a dreadful magic in him that prevented his soul from returning to Eberron; he does not suspect the full, terrible truth of his friend's undead transformation and will be horrified to learn of it later.
- If asked about the assassins, he will explain that their identities were never learned. He suspects the dark killers were a pack of three deadly rogues collectively called the Shadowstorm. These assassins still serve the Cabal of Shadows, specifically answering to the Voice of the Storm itself.

Once the PCs agree to the mission, he looks both relieved and burdened simultaneously. Moving to the door of the room, he asks them to follow him. He does not thank them for their cooperation; gratitude will come later when they return alive.

The journey he takes them on is a winding one that travels the innermost hallways of the Hold's cathedral. The PCs are led down two spiral stairs, through a secret passage blocked by a false wall of stone, and past a second wall that turns out to be illusory. This journey takes place very swiftly, as Xandrin has no desire to let the PCs get their bearing or be confident in their ability to find their way to the secret chamber at the end of their walk without his help. He is grateful to them, of course, but secrets are secrets and he is honor-bound to protect them.

The room at the end of the long walk is detailed below in The Buried Basement. PCs are certainly free to talk during the journey; allow the Players time to roleplay and ask Xandrin more questions if they wish. This introduction scene is important for getting the feel of the scenario across to them. Do not hurry it if you don't have to do so.

## The Buried Basement

*Your long trek through the confusing innards of the Radiant cathedral ends at a tumbled wall of stone blocking the hallway beyond. Your escort, Xandrin Corvalis, raises one hand and asks you to step back. He clenches his upturned fist and points his gauntlet at the rocky obstruction.*

*A pulse of pale light leaps from his metal-clad hand and suffuses the stones. A heartbeat later, the collapsed masonry is reforming into a massive, humanoid creature. Made of broken rock with pits of ghostly, glowing light for eyes, it moves to the side and bows to you all as it makes way for you to pass. The chamber behind it is well lit and appears to be a basement workshop with vaulted ceilings and a chaotic mix of strange smells and sounds.*

*"Right this way," says the Lord of this keep as he steps past the huge stony guardian and walks into the room beyond.*

**Creatures:** The final barrier to anyone finding this hidden room is Cretaceous, an elder earth elemental that normally rests dormant in the passage and blocks it with his seemingly inert body. Xandrin's gauntlet is able to awaken the great creature and command it to a certain extent. Cretaceous has been with the Covenant of Light for so long, it has a good tendency to its Neutral alignment and no longer truly needs magical coercion to serve the keep's master. Still, the gauntlet's enchantment is a welcome nudge to the elemental; it spends so much time asleep that a magical jolt from Xandrin from time to time helps it return to its duties.

**Cretaceous, elder earth elemental:** hp 250; *Monster Manual* 79.

Once the PCs enter the room, read or paraphrase the following description to them:

*The basement room has been completely taken over by shelves and work tables. Supplies of a hundred different varieties cover the walls and much of the large chamber's floor space is occupied with alchemical experiments, engineering gear, an odd blacksmithing forge that does not seem to produce any smoke from its blazing hearth, and other production and experimentation facilities too strange to easily identify.*

*In the middle of the room, surrounded by a circular barrier four feet high, is a gigantic metal sphere with a dozen or more thick spikes protruding from its surface. On one side of the sphere, the seam of what might be some kind of doorway can be spotted and light appears to be emanating from within.*

*On top of the sphere, a small shape is jumping up and down, waving a polishing cloth covered in the dark stains of tarnish. "Hello there!" shouts the figure in an unmistakably gnomish voice.*

The room was, until Glitch showed up a month ago, used purely for emergency stores and as a fall back point for the Hold's personnel. Xandrin made the mistake of agreeing to let the gnome "use a bit of the place for some crafting" and this is the result. As annoyed as Lord Corvalis is with Glitch for turning the whole chamber into a huge crafting nightmare, he appreciates the value of what Glitch has brought to the faction even more. Until something explodes in here (and Xandrin is certain *something* will eventually), the little Zilargo menace gets to keep puttering to his heart's content.

Once Glitch sees that the PCs see him, he leaps off the tumbler (the giant metal sphere) and *feather falls* to the ground thanks to his ring. Toddling up to the PCs as quickly as he can, Glitch extends a grimy hand and smiles up at them.

*"Pleased to meet you! Say, isn't Lady Cannonball a beauty! She sure is, true enough. Are you the people I'll be taking in her to wherever it is you need to go? I assume so since I really don't get many visitors down here. Well, none really except Mister Xandrin here and he only comes down to scowl at me and ask me not to blow up the Keep! As if I'd do that, since the basic laws of compression clearly show that any explosion here so far underground would squash me into a pulp long before the blast could endanger the keep. Still, I just think he likes yelling at me. How about you all? You seem nice, so no yelling at me, okay? Okay!"*

*"So I'm Glitch! Who are you all? Don't say much, do you?"*

If at all possible, try to read that entire passage in as few breaths as possible and with absolutely no chance for the PCs to get a word in edgewise barring physical impairment of the gnome. This is one of the very few times you should purposefully talk over or around the PCs; it's necessary to help establish Glitch's character (which is annoying enough to be infuriating and friendly enough to keep himself alive).

**Creatures:** Glitch is the only living creature down here- a half insane Zilargo elemental binder with a penchant for science and a special ability to weave sentences together into masses of raw confusion. He is actually a kind soul and very generous; his mind is just so active and his intellect so vast that between a low boredom threshold, a constant desire to work, and a total lack of social skills, he comes across as a scatter-brained twit who's almost more annoying than he's worth. Almost.

**Glitch:** male gnome wizard 12/elemental savant 3/elemental scion of Zilargo 1: hp 60: *Player's Handbook, Complete Arcane, Magic of Eberron*

Glitch would be happy to chatter at the PCs for quite some time but Xandrin Corvalis cuts him off quickly. Let the PCs talk to Glitch for no more than a minute or two before Xandrin interrupts.

*"This massive orb of steel before you is called a tumbler. Glitch here brought it to the Covenant a month ago from our friends in Zilargo. He is fully qualified as a pilot for this vehicle, which may not look like much but possesses the ability to travel under the ground.*

*"With time running short, this tumbler may be our only chance of getting you to the Exalted Barrow and back again before our chance at destiny passes us by."*

Glitch moves over to the tumbler and pats "her" nearest spike.

### **The Tumbler: Lady Cannonball**

Lady Cannonball is almost exactly as described in the entry on the tumbler in *Magic of Eberron*, page 121. Her only difference is an enhanced underground speed (5 miles per hour as opposed to 2) at the expense of her surface speed (also 5 miles per hour, a serious reduction from a normal tumbler's 10 mph).

Glitch's expertise with Lady Cannonball comes from his in-depth knowledge of her workings, as he is her creator and constantly tinkers with her design. He has a +2 competence bonus when piloting her and does not suffer the normal DC increase from 20 to 25 when piloting her underground. This *ad hoc* change in the standard operation of a tumbler comes from Glitch's status as an elemental savant of the earth subtype and his improved tremor graft.

*"Yes indeed! Lady Cannonball and I will get you there in a shot! Get it? Shot? Cannonball? It's a pun, you seem, because she's sorta shaped like a cannonball and when those are fired they move really fast! Which is exactly what you all need to..."*

Xandrin turns his back on the babbling gnome and addresses the PCs directly.

*"He seems insane but he's not. In fact, he really is our only hope and I trust him, difficult as he makes that faith sometimes. Now that you know the full extent of the mission, do you still wish to go?"*

Assuming the PCs agree (and in all likelihood they will; heroes are like that), Xandrin salutes them gratefully and continue with the following. He talks right over Glitch who, blithely, is still explaining his cannonball pun in the background.

*"I have been preparing for this trip since our first group did not return on time. There are supply bundles waiting for each of you in the tumbler; consider the contents of them to be gifts with the faction's blessing. Anything you do not use, feel free to keep. With what you are going through for the Covenant of Light, it's the least you deserve."*

With that said, he will leave the PCs in Glitch's surprisingly capable hands. The gnome knows the way to the Exalted Barrow and as soon as the PCs feel ready to travel, he will welcome them aboard Lady Cannonball and begin the journey earthward!

Proceed to Part One: A League Beneath whenever you and the Players are ready.

### **Why is the Exalted Barrow So Far Away?**

This is a fair question the PCs may well ask Xandrin or even Glitch when they get the chance. The short answer is that it wouldn't be much of an adventure if the crypt was right next door. For the purposes of the scenario, the "real" answer is a bit more complicated and involves the early history of the faction itself.

When the Covenant of Light first began, its headquarters were a considerable distance from Stromreach. The Lady of Light, a justice archon and the faction's founder, senses a deep source of celestial energy in a ruined city nearly swallowed up by the jungle. She wanted to reclaim this source, whatever it was, and based the faction's chapterhouse in the ruins accordingly. For nearly a year, most of the members of the faction spent their time digging into the earth and scouting the surrounding trackless wilderness.

During this time, the Exalted Barrow was constructed out of a nearly intact building on the outskirts of the ruin. For months, those lost to the faction's activities were buried there with great reverence and honor. It is well known within the faction that a great evil sprang up out of the ground and destroyed the Covenant's headquarters before it could be put down. The Barrow even served as the faction's rallying point during this epic battle.

What is not well known is that the "great good" the Covenant of Light was excavating turned out to be a barrier spell left by the Couatl. In their haste to unearth this source of power, the faction broke this magical seal and released the demonic creature it contained. The battle that raged afterwards claimed dozens of lives before the Lady of Light and her champions (including Xandrin Corvalis and Barrak ir'Talvos) destroyed its physical form and banished its essence from the world once more.

With no reason to stay in the now devastated ruins, the Lady of Light ordered her faction to move closer to Stormreach. Though he was reluctant to abandon the site, Xandrin did as he was told and the Exalted Barrow was left behind. Since that time, the last official visit to the Barrow was Sir ir'Talvos' funeral a few months later.

# Part One: A League Beneath

This first part of the actual scenario focuses on the PCs during their journey through the earth beneath Xen'drik and the misadventures that befall them along the way. The basic theme of this section is a mix between claustrophobia and wild exploration. The PCs are traveling in a way very few ever have, moving through rock and soil that has not been disturbed since the ancient days of the Giants and the height of their cyclopean civilization.

When you and the PCs are ready to continue, read or paraphrase the following:

*Glitch takes a small crystalline rod out of his tool belt and points it at "Lady Cannonball". The sphere suddenly undergoes a radical transformation, opening both along its equator and at the etching of a doorway on its side. The door slides open and a section of stairs unfold to touch the basement floor below while the upper half of the sphere hinges wide to expose a set of high-backed benches and a second seating compartment below them.*

*"Your stuff's already aboard and I'm all stocked up on food and candy so let's go. Host Above, I sure do love sugar!" With that, the maddened little gnome bounds into the sphere and grabs hold of a complicated steering mechanism on the upper tier of seats. He spins a dial, punches a button and yanks down hard on a big metal level in the middle.*

*A terrifyingly loud alarm claxon rings out through the basement as several gems imbedded in the tumbler's chassis flare angrily. Glitch pushes the level back up, silencing the siren and causing the gems to go dormant again.*

*"Ummm... ooops."*

PCs may be alarmed by this but no damage has been done. In fact, the tumbler will not be able to make that horrible racket again. Glitch has just burned out its early warning system, something that will come back to haunt them when they are attacked by the xorn in Digging in the Dirt, an encounter detailed below.

The PCs will likely be curious as to what gear has been given to them by Lord Corvalis. Each of them will find a full backpack resting on one of the seats in the tumbler. Though Xandrin would not have been offended or surprised had any of the PCs refused to aid him, his faith in them as Scions was strong enough that he knew they would not refuse. As such, each pack has the commonly used name of the PC embroidered on its leather top handle in glimmercord, a silver-gold thread that constantly glows with a soft, pale incandescence.

The contents of the packs are as follows:

- Five days of eternal rations (*Secrets of Xen'drik* 138)
- 50 foot coil of silk rope
- One *cure moderate wounds* potion
- Healer's kit (one use only)
- Waterskin, full
- Two flasks of oil
- Two tindertwigs

Getting underway is fairly easy; all the PCs have to do is climb into the tumbler, pick a set in either the upper six chairs with Glitch or the six seats in the covered lower tier. Glitch would of course prefer to have company but he won't complain too much if the entire group of PCs would prefer to sit below. He is almost as happy to talk to himself (and he will, at great length and volume).

## **But Look at All This Stuff!**

The hidden basement beneath Radiant Hold has, as the description of the area above suggests, been outfitted for emergencies. The PCs might reasonably argue that this qualifies as an emergency and they should be able to commandeer supplies. While Xandrin would not have a problem with the PCs grabbing basic items they think they might need, this room serves a purpose and he cannot allow his innate generosity to jeopardize that.

He will initially refuse any such requests, citing these supplies as having been stored in case Radiant Hold is besieged. If the PCs can successfully make a DC 20 Diplomacy check, he will allow them to take up to 250 GP each of items drawn from the XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS Campaign Standards Unlimited Items section. These must all be returned if unused and will not carry over as event treasure.

When the PCs are ready to go, Lady Cannonball will plunge into the earth at Glitch's behest. Read or paraphrase the following passage:

*With a shudder, the sphere seems to grow slightly smaller. The line around the entry door and the seam where the top of the tumbler opened both fade away, leaving the metal ball an intact, undamaged sphere once more. For a moment, everything is pitch black and completely silent.*

*Then lights glimmer in the backs of every seat, illuminating the tumbler's claustrophobic interior with approximately the same illumination as a dozen small candles. Four large rectangular images appear on the inside of the vehicle's upper half. These are illusionary "windows", showing the basement outside without actually opening up into the room.*

*"Let's go!" shouts Glitch happily as he drives two control robs forward. Lady Cannonball lurches and plummets, falling uncontrolled through solid stone!*

Uncontrolled is a strong word for the tumbler's descent; Glitch may seem foolhardy but he knows what he is doing. The vehicle has to get "negative altitude", as he'd put it, before it can proceed on its course to the Exalted Barrow. With the preponderance of caverns and geological disturbances in the area around Stormreach, he just feels more confident in the tumbler's ability to travel efficiently if it sinks a few hundred feet first. He will happily tell any inquiring PC all of this, though there is no guarantee he'll do so in any way that makes sense.

In case it has not been made clear yet, you have a license to have fun with Glitch. He's an intellectual chatterbox on a constant sugar high, sitting behind the wheel of a terrifyingly powerful dirt-shredding machine. He's in his own private nirvana and if the PCs poke him while he's piloting the tumbler, they are liable to get a high-pitched and friendly but basically incomprehensible stream of consciousness.

### **The Journey to the Exalted Barrow**

Passage through the earth under Xen'drik to the PCs destination will take just under a day. During this time, the first eight hours are completely uneventful. After that, the following interruptions occur. Changing course will not avoid these encounters; they are basically free-floating "islands" that will befall the PCs no matter what path they take to get to the Barrow. After all, it's not much of an adventure without memorable stops along the way, right?

Passing time during the trip is the PCs' lookout. This is the perfect time for them to talk, discuss important matters back home, contemplate the universe or feel really cooped up given they are in a metal sphere with no apparent exits hundreds of feet below the surface. Claustrophobia would be a very bad thing right now. If you are feeling particularly vicious, you can even have Glitch point this out to the PCs:

*"Hey! Any of you closet-phobic? Cloistermanic... cozyfamous... Claustrophobic! Yeah, that's the word. Boy, I'd hate to be that right now, what with us like a mile underground with only magical air to keep us from all choking to death! That certainly would be a horrible thing, especially with just Lady Cannonball's burrowing spells between us and being buried alive! Wow, I never thought about that before. Huh.*

*"So, any of you claustrophobic? Are you?"*

It's the little touches to an NPC's personality that make for a memorable scene during play. Just remember, Glitch is an NPC for the Covenant of Light; throttling him because he is unbelievably annoying would be considered an evil (if understandable) act.

## **Fishing for Trouble**

### **(Eight Hours into the Journey)**

Once the PCs have gotten comfortable or at least accepting of their traveling conditions, let them know that roughly eight hours have passed. Give them the option of describing their actions in a general sense during that time; some of them may be asleep while others are nervously watching for the first sign of trouble. Do not make it obvious that you are trying to determine exactly what each PC is doing at the start of this scene, even though that's exactly what you are doing.

Once the PCs have explained their basic behavior during the trip, move into the following description. As always, read or paraphrase it as you prefer.

*With a sudden lurch, the tumbler starts falling again. Hurtling forward as well as down, the vehicle is definitely plummeting somehow. The windows that have for hours shown only rock and soil moving past the vehicle now show a dim purple radiance and distant cavern walls racing upwards. Lady Cannonball, it would seem, has broken into a cavern and is plunging downward at an alarming rate!*

Glitch is all over the controls, his panicked voice giving the lie to his words as he shouts, *"Okay, everybody, no need to worry! I have this totally under....!"*

If players want to do something, they have one round in which to do it. The tumbler won't open and few spells would exit it in any case but do not keep them from acting if there is something they wish to do. As soon as every PC has had a chance to act, continue.

*The tumbler hits the ground with a thunderous SPLASH! Dark waves surge up past the window illusions as your gnomish pilot finishes his sentence, his tone a little calmer and a lot more confused.*  
*"...control?"*

Lady Cannonball has landed in a large underground lake fed by several subterranean fissures. The water outside is warm but not hot and there is a considerable amount of life in it. Fish and lake plants, albeit ones that have adapted to the very dim light conditions, are in abundance outside the tumbler. Unfortunately, while this incident might make for an interesting expedition on any other day, the position of Lady Cannonball presents a very unique problem.

*"Oh, boy... I never really considered this when I was building her. This here?" the gnome says with a sigh.*  
*"This is a major design flaw."*

Unless the PCs ask him directly what he means, Glitch turns back to the ineffectual controls and mutter to himself for several unresponsive minutes. Only after the water level outside the windows makes it obvious the tumbler is floating helplessly will Glitch think to talk to the PCs about Lady Cannonball's predicament. The PCs can preempt this conversation just by asking Glitch what the trouble is; he is a little absent-minded and tends to forget people are around unless they actively get his attention.

One way or another, Glitch says:

*"Oh dear. Well, and this is rather embarrassing, it would seem that my tumbler design has no way to motive in a body of water. This vehicle's stone and iron construction is rather antithetical of buoyancy, you see, and while our magical air supply makes us capable of floating indefinitely, we can't get any momentum and thus we cannot reach a sufficiently tectonic surface with which to regain perambulation."*

In non-gnomish speak, that all means the tumbler is floating aimlessly, isn't moving enough to reach the shore, and can't go anywhere unless it touches solid ground. If the PCs don't think of it first, Glitch eventually suggests:

*"Perhaps it would help if a few of you got out and pushed?"*

As preposterous as that might sound, it is quite possible. The vehicle, while very heavy, is suspended in the water and it would only take a combined strength score of 20 to give it the momentum it needs to drive to shore. PCs being what they are, they might also come up with other ways to generate the force needed to move the big vehicle closer to dry land. In any case, these plans will most likely mean at least two PCs getting out of the tumbler and swimming to get it back on course.

Once the tumbler opens its top hatch to let them out, read the following passage to describe this cavern. The tumbler has to open to give the PCs this description; the windows are not large enough to catch enough light and they are angled forward, making it impossible to see above the tumbler with its hatch closed.

*You are in a massive cave at least 300 feet in every direction. A dense colony of phosphorescent fungus sheds a purple light all over the cavern's stalactite-covered roof, granting dim but usable light. The tumbler is bobbing up and down in the center of a large pond, the width of which takes up most of the cave. Deep enough to appear black, the pond is eerily still. Only the fading ripples of the tumbler's violent landing have created any waves at all.*

Once the tumbler is open, the PCs will soon encounter the pond's most notable inhabitant – an aquatic dinosaur called an elasmosaurus. Nearly struck unconscious when the PCs landed on top of it with their tumbler, the big beast is back and looking to settle the score. It has no idea what the metal orb is or how the painful thing got here but this pond isn't big enough for both of them.

**Foe:** Normally a CR 7 creature, this hostile dinosaur has already been injured and will be an easier creature for the PCs to contend with accordingly. It tries to get a surprise round on the PCs if possible; a successful Spot check (DC 20) will notice the ripples in the water just before it surfaces and prevents there

from being any surprise on either side. Otherwise, the elasmosaurus uses its surprise round to bite the largest visible PC.

**Dinosaur, elasmosaurus;** hp 80; *Monster Manual* 60; the elasmosaurus fights this entire encounter *shaken*, forcing it to suffer a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. This is a special form of *shaken* caused by physical damage that cannot be advanced to more severe conditions through *fear* effects.

**Tactics:** The elasmosaurus is pretty badly banged up from the tumbler's landing and is mostly attacking because of its dizzy rage. It cannot fight with any sort of intelligence and just goes after the most obvious threat each round until it is put down or reaches 10 hit points (or less). At that point, it will flee into the depths of the pond, 70 feet straight down, and does not trouble the PCs again.

It is important to remember that the PCs are not on stable ground. Fighting while in the tumbler constitutes "vigorous motion" and forces PCs to make a DC 10 Concentration check to perform certain actions (spellcasting being the most notable). PCs may however count the sides of the tumbler as cover against the elasmosaurus' melee attacks; this grants them a +4 armor class bonus as if the tumbler's sides were low walls. Because the elasmosaurus will be using its reach (10 ft.), the PCs will likely count as being closer to the tumbler's armored sides and can thus deny the elasmosaurus the same benefit.

This fight will probably be run with primarily ranged attacks unless any of the PCs have reach weapons of their own or wish to enter the water to close with the huge beast. Doing the latter presents its own set of complications; prudent PCs will stay in the tumbler.

**Development:** The elasmosaurus is not an evil creature and is only attacking because it perceives that it was assaulted first by the tumbler. Successful use of Wild Empathy, skills, and/or spells could convince it otherwise and even keep this from being a combat altogether. Nothing short of compulsion magic will make the dinosaur become friendly; the best the PCs can accomplish will be to get the huge creature to swim away and leave them and their vehicle alone.

Note that this counts as defeating the elasmosaurus; the PCs will receive just as large an experience point reward for avoiding this encounter as they would from killing the creature.

## Scaling the Encounter

This encounter can be easily tailored for parties with more or less combat ability due to their experience level. Depending on how capable the PCs are, the elasmosaurus' hit points are adjusted accordingly.

**3rd-level Characters:** The elasmosaurus has had a very bad day; it is at 50 hit points when it attacks the PCs and automatically loses the ability to surprise them, being too addled to sneak effectively.

**5<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** The elasmosaurus has 90 hit points and will only suffer its *shaken* condition for 3 full rounds after the surprise round (if any).

**6<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** The elasmosaurus has 100 hit points and is only shaken for 1 round after the surprise round (if any).

Once the elasmosaurus is dealt with, the PCs are free to proceed with whatever plan they've come up with; the lake holds no other threats to them. They will not immediately know this, of course, and they may spend a considerable amount of time and effort making sure nothing else catches them while they are floating and vulnerable. Let them take all the precautions they want; PCs should never be dissuaded from being careful.

When the tumbler is finally pushed 120 feet to the nearest shore, Glitch can pull her up under her own power onto the pond's beach. There is nothing of value in the cave and the PCs do not really have spare time to search in any event. Thus, as soon as the PCs have gotten back into Lady Cannonball, the adventure continues!

## Out of Fuel, Out of Luck

### (Eleven Hours into the Journey)

Roughly three hours after the PCs' encounter with the elasmosaurus, the following event occurs. By now, they have had the opportunity to rest for a while, heal if they've needed to, and recover from what was likely a dangerous and difficult opponent. None of them are likely to be eager for another complication, but that's unfortunately what they are about to get.

This scene begins with Glitch making an off-handed comment that might get the PCs' attention. By now, they should have learned to listen when the gnome talks, even if he rarely says anything they understand.

*"Hmmm... I've never seen that gem glow before. I wonder what that means?"*



A few seconds later, the windows disappear, the lights in the tumbler got out, and the faint rushing sound of Lady Cannonball's magical air cycling falls silent. As far as the PCs can tell, the tumbler has gone completely dead. Even Glitch's control panel is no longer illuminated; all power in the vehicle seems to have vanished for some reason.

*"Heh heh... You know something? This has never happened before. It would be fascinating if we weren't all about to suffocate, huh?"*

This encounter has no chance of actually hurting any of the PCs. It is only intended to alarm them greatly and get them to think up creative ways to try and get the tumbler moving again. They will have to come up with light sources that don't consume their air (assuming they don't all have nightvision), consider ways to replenish their atmosphere and conserve what's left of it, and generate a new source of power for the tumbler if they can.

This entire scene is a test of creativity. There is no "right" answer and only extreme foolishness could possibly harm the PCs in any way. Let the PCs discuss their options and try anything they wish to get Lady Cannonball operational again. Glitch will gladly help in any way the PCs suggest but he is more of a craftsman than an "ideas man"; he needs direction from others to work to his full potential.

Basically, this section of the adventure gives the PCs a near-archmage and all the spells at his disposal in addition to their own skills, gifts and devices, presents them with a challenge, and lets them make their own solution in their own way. Encourage creativity and reward outlandish sounding ideas if they could feasibly work. Let the PCs feel like they have accomplished something when you finally get to the end text of this encounter.

If the PCs have not come up with any answers on their own, let them sweat it out as their air gets thinner and their fates seem sealed in this iron sphere buried a mile below Xen'drik. Even so, sooner or later the tumbler will start moving again. Whether Glitch has to mysteriously remember an "emergency power crystal" or a frustrated PC just hits the control panel with his fist, *something* will fix the vehicle.

*One by one, the small lights on the tumbler's control panel blaze to life and the thin rush of air from its vents blows sweetly into the stuffy compartment. "All right!" shouts Glitch in amazement. "That did it!"*

From here, it's just another ten or so hours to go before the PCs reach their destination where all the dangerous parts of their mission still await them. If they all fear this vehicle more than the thought of an old crypt filled with unknown dangers, you have run the scene correctly.

### **"That's it! We are surfacing NOW!"**

It's been an eventful ride so far and with the PCs having just (apparently) escaped a rocky, unmarked grave of their own making, it is understandable that some of them may wish to cut the underground journey short and return to the jungle floor above. While they have their orders and those include using this vehicle all the way to the Exalted Barrow, it could be argued that staying alive long enough to reach the burial site is more important than following the exact terms of their mission.

Glitch will protest any thought of surfacing, arguing that there would still be many miles of trackless jungle to cut through if they go up now. An overland journey would still take days, even for the Lady Cannonball since her surface speed is actually quite slow. Those are days the Covenant of Light does not have to spare; if the PCs are to succeed at their mission, they *have* to use the tumbler.

All of that said, he will surface if the PCs still insist. This very likely forfeits the mission and while the PCs can still hack their way to the Exalted Barrow (assuming any of them asked for a map, since Xandrin did not offer one on his own), they will have a very hard time getting in and will almost certainly not make it back in time to Radiant Hold.

If the PCs absolutely will not proceed with underground travel, make the above facts perfectly clear to them. Then abide by their decision and run the rest of the adventure in whatever manner they make necessary. The trip to the Barrow will be uneventful but likely slow and the way back is probably just as time consuming. Regardless, the PCs should never be forced into any course of action, even if exercising their right to choose costs them success.

## Digging in the Dirt

### (Twenty Hours into the Journey)

Nine hours have passed in the tumbler, making life difficult for the PCs and a constant source of amusement for Glitch. The less said about his latest planned invention, "The Personal Can", the better. Suffice to say, any PCs talking with the gnome will have a vastly more detailed accounting of the various ways humanoids excrete waste materials than they likely ever wanted.

Again, let the PCs plan out how they have spent their time since the nearly catastrophic failure of the tumbler. Their actions will allow you to determine how they are behaving when this encounter befalls Lady Cannonball. It should be noted that if Glitch had not ruined the tumbler's early warning spell previously, the PCs would have been alerted to the presence of their soon-to-be new arrival. As it is, the xorn about to attack the tumbler will probably come as a complete surprise.

When the PCs are settled and their routines for the last nine hours have been established, proceed to the following text section.

*A strange THUMP hits the outside of the tumbler above the center of its upper dome. Glitch looks up, mumbles something about hard soil conditions and pays it no attention. A few moments later, another collision echoes from the back of the vehicle.*

*"Heh heh," the gnome says nervously. "Friendly rocks around these parts, yeah?"*

Of course, the sound outside is not a rock at all. It isn't friendly either; it's a bewildered xorn with an appetite for metal and a desire to sate its hunger on Lady Cannonball. PCs can catch a glimpse of the xorn before it enters the tumbler if they can succeed in a Spot check (DC 18) and were in any condition to be looking out the vehicle's windows when the sounds occurred.

### If the PCs Spot the Xorn

*For a moment, a strange humanoid creature can be seen near the top of the tumbler's left side window. With three arms and a bizarre central mouth on the top of its barrel-like body, the figure scrambles out of view, moving through the earth outside with the same ease as Lady Cannonball itself.*

Spotting the xorn grants the possibility of a surprise round against their approaching xorn and gives the PCs one full round to prepare themselves and take forewarned actions before it phases through the hull of the tumbler and attacks. Glitch will not react to the sight exact to mutter something about creatures needing to stay out of the Lady's way. *"You'd think native beings around here would know how to yield right of way. How very rude."*

Whether the PCs see the xorn or not, it will enter the tumbler just behind the back row of seats on the vehicle's upper level. It was not expecting the tumbler to be hollow and this surprise is reflected in the Development section below.

Once the xorn enters the vehicle, have the PCs roll initiative and apply a surprise round against them if called for by the xorn's Tactics entry. At least one full round of combat will occur before the xorn will be willing to listen to diplomacy or react against intimidation. In either case, its alien mindset makes it immune to such forms of parley unless the initiator(s) knows Terran or offers a significant amount of metal in a non-hostile manner.

**Foe:** The xorn is an unfriendly earth elemental creature that has been stranded in Eberron's mantle for quite some time. It came through a conjunctive gate more than a century ago and has not had any opportunity to return home since that time. It has not suffered much for the isolation; this strange world has many fine minerals to consume and the lack of any significant predators in the region suits it just fine.

**Xorn, average;** hp 48; *Monster Manual* 261

**Tactics:** The xorn only gets a chance for a surprise round if the PCs have an average character level of 6<sup>th</sup>; otherwise it is just as bewildered as the PCs are by its arrival and it rolls initiative normally. The xorn is here for metal and hungry enough to attack as soon as it sees the PCs. It is amenable to diplomacy if the PCs can speak Terran or think to provide it with a meal it doesn't have to fight to obtain. Ten pounds of offered metal will make it retreat; see Development for more details.

The xorn's primary goal is to put the PCs down and get to the rich buffet of metals in the tumbler's control rig. Glitch will stand his ground and fight the xorn if it gets past the PCs but the humanoid will not threaten the gnome or his controls until all of the PCs are down or dead. It will not *coup de grace* fallen foes; unconscious is just as good for ensuring its meal is not interrupted.

The xorn will not fight to the death, using its Earth Glide special power to flee through the stone wall of the tumbler if its hit points are reduced to 5 or less.

**Development:** The xorn is confused when it first falls through the wall of the tumbler and lands on its solid upper deck. If it wins initiative and the PCs have not already acted aggressively (through the use of a readied action, perhaps), it will act as if *dazed* on its turn. After this, it will fight aggressively for at least one round before it can be dissuaded.

Even if diplomacy is offered, its confusion and aggressive nature makes it fight for one full round after it overcomes its *dazed* condition (if any). After this, adjudicate the xorn's behavior from its attitude of unfriendly accordingly. If at least one pound of metal is used as part of any negotiation, grant the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus to their skill checks. Additional pounds of metal can increase this bonus by +1 per pound up to a total of +5 for four or more.

Clever PCs can get the metal they need to feed the xorn from the fixtures of the tumbler. Glitch protests loudly if the PCs suggest tearing metal off Lady Cannonball's seats but will just sulk afterward and won't prevent them from doing so. Also, PCs asking Glitch to speak to the xorn on their behalf will get a +2 circumstance bonus because of the elemental sympathies. This counts as being able to speak Terran for purposes of getting the Siberys dragonshard treasure mentioned below.

The xorn will not normally settle for less than 10 pounds total before it leaves but if diplomatic efforts can get its attitude from unfriendly to indifferent or better, it will stop fighting and allow itself to be bribed. If the xorn's attitude is made friendly, it will settle for five before leaving. If the PCs manage to improve the xorn's attitude to helpful (or to friendly with at least one of the PCs able to converse in Terran), it will only need the original amount of metal offered (at least 2 pounds) and will gift the PCs by spitting up a particularly indigestible bit of crystal it has been chewing on for days. See *Treasure* for more on this.

**Treasure:** The xorn has, in its gullet, a small Siberys dragonshard. This glowing piece of crystal will be shattered by the stress of combat and wasted unless the xorn willingly offers it as part of a remarkably successful Diplomacy check. Obtaining this item is part of the experience and gold summary in the *Adventure Questions* section of this scenario.

## Scaling the Encounter

Fighting the xorn can be a dangerous battle, especially with its resistances, immunities, and damage reduction. The PCs may have a hard time getting the better of this creature; use the scaling information below to better reflect the PCs and their capabilities.

**3rd-level Characters:** The xorn is not as hungry as noted above and will flee if reduced to 10 hit points or less. In addition, Diplomacy involving at least 2 pounds of metal will succeed regardless of the result of the skill check; the xorn will leave as long as this minimum amount of metal is offered.

**5<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** Starving and enraged, the xorn will be in a frenzy when it arrives, gaining a +2 to attack and damage checks for the combat's first three full rounds. After this, the xorn will be *fatigued* for the remainder of the encounter.

**6<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** In addition to the 5<sup>th</sup> level adjustments, the xorn has more hit points to reflect its robust elemental health and unchallenged mastery of the surrounding territory. Increase the xorn's hit point total to 60.

## We Have a Problem!

Once the xorn is dealt with, the PCs can proceed on their way. Glitch has one unfortunate bit of news for them, something he will keep to himself until roughly twenty minutes after the combat ends. He can be coerced into saying something sooner if the PCs succeed in a DC 20 Sense Motive check to determine that he's troubled and pensive.

*"Oh, well, it may be nothing really but the Lady sure seems to have had something go wrong when that xorn phased through her hull. I consider it a design flaw of my own making and I take full responsibility for the result; I really do!"*

*"You see, this vehicle maintains an elemental field of magic that provides its ability to burrow like this through the ground, right? Seems that if another source of similar primal energy comes into contact with it while the field is in operation, there is a catastrophic cascade of competing dweomers resulting in the eventual collapse of one or the other."*

*"I've been trying to control the degradation of Lady Cannonball's terran gliding enchantments but to no avail. Her bound elemental is rapidly losing coherency. I can save the vehicle, maintain its bindings, and even get it operational again but I cannot do so while surrounded in a tectonic environment."*

*"Ummm, that means we have to surface."*

*"Sorry."*

The speech above assumes the PCs let him ramble all the way through it. Be sure to paraphrase if and when they interrupt him. No matter how he has to say it, the point of his lengthy explanation is that the elemental power of the tumbler is failing. In order to fix it, he will have to surface immediately.

He does have one piece of good news, though.

*"For whatever it might be worth, I can find us a good safe spot to come up. I am even sure it's close to our destination so you probably won't have to walk far!"*

Glitch is definitely right about being close to the Exalted Barrow. In fact, he is about to surface the Lady Cannonball into the common crypt area of the burial mound itself.

Close, yes. Safe, not so much.

Once the tumbler surfaces in Room 1: Unhappy Landing, it will not be able to move for quite a while. Glitch has a lot of repair work to do, all of which involves the use of his Bind Elemental feat and specialist Zilargo training. He is perfectly capable of getting the vehicle moving again but if he is going to do so, the PCs will have to get out and clear a place for him to work.

Of course, since their mission requires them to do so anyway this should not be a problem.

## Part Two: A Barrow Betrayed

As soon as Lady Cannonball, an interesting sight (or rather, the lack of anything to see) awaits the PCs:

*With a sudden lurch, the tumbler breaks through the last of the earth surrounding her, coming to rest on the surface. The window illusions appear all around you, allowing you to see the open sky at long last.*

*Or rather, that's what you should be seeing. Instead, outside Lady Cannonball it is pitch black. There is literally no light at all. Beyond the hull of the tumbler, there is nothing but an inky void. The shadows are so thick, it is as if the vehicle were once more underground, entombed in darkness.*

Glitch will offer to "turn on the spikelights" if the PCs wish him to do so. He has made several modifications to Lady Cannonball above and beyond the statistics of a normal tumbler. Not all of these alterations have been good ones, as witnessed by the abortive alarm system and the total loss of power nine hours ago, but the "spikelights" are actually operational and relatively harmless.

Assuming the PCs want him to do so, Glitch touches a control gem on the left side of his panel and the window illusions change dramatically!

*The tumbler rests inside a large stone vault. Bas relief carvings of archons and other celestials can be seen on the far walls, illuminated now by flickering radiance at the tip of each spike on the vehicle's hull. Thick columns support the ceiling overhead, each one engraved with a spiraling series of characters from the common language of Khorvaire.*

Any literate PC asking to read the pillars can do so easily; the spiral text is an old form of the Litany, the code of conduct for the Covenant of Light. It should be fairly easy for the PCs to come to the correct conclusion; the gnome has surfaced directly inside the Exalted Barrow!

Do not give the PCs much time to discuss this or debate what it means to their mission. As soon as they realize where they are (have Glitch smack his head and say, "Wow! We must be in the Barrow! Am I good or what?" if the Players are not quick to figure it out for themselves), move immediately to the next text section. Speak fast and loud, shocking the PCs with what they are about to see,

*Suddenly a figure lurches directly into view. Half rotted and clawing at the hull with bony fingertips, a humanoid creature throws itself into Lady Cannonball's side.*

*And another.*

*And another!*

### The Exalted Barrow

The map for this area shows a number of light sources throughout the crypt. These are all extinguished when the PCs arrive via Lady Cannonball surfacing in the main burial chamber (Unhappy Landing, below). They are marked on the map because they will all flare to life with the same illumination as torches when any living creature comes within 5 feet of the desecrated altar in the Shrine of Blood room once it has been cleansed and recovered.

PCs examining these lights will find bronze rods mounted permanently into the walls (and the floor in the case of the circles in the Memory rooms). These one foot long batons are ruined if removed and bear a striking resemblance to the *everburning torches* given to new Scions when they prove themselves to the Covenant of Light (the PCs were given theirs at the end of CoL1, [Divine Inspiration](#). If the PCs do not have one yet, they will receive one at the end of this mission as noted in the adventure's Conclusion).

### 1: Unhappy Landing

This is the main hall of the Covenant of Light's first burial crypt. It served for quite some time as the repository for all of the faction's low ranking but no less honored dead. Each body was wrapped in linen, blessed by the Lady of the Dawn Lirashana, and placed here on stacking wooden biers.

When Barrak's curse corrupted the Exalted Barrow, these bodies rose as mindless undead. The walking corpses have had no direction save to wander the Barrow and claw ineffectually at its walls. There was a brief diversion for them when Kymus and his men entered the tomb but now that those intruders are dead, there has been little for them to do. They are animated by an evil force but not directly controlled in any way. This makes them all the more dangerous to the PCs now that they have the damned's attention.

**Foes:** The chamber holds eleven zombies, three directly outside the tumbler and eight starting combat 20 feet away in all directions. There were four times this number before but the room is littered with the dust and bones of the ones killed by Kymus' team. Only eleven remain but these should be enough to offer the PCs a challenge.

**Barrow Zombies (12);** hp 16; *Monster Manual* 265-267; Combat Statistics

<b>BARROW ZOMBIE</b>	CR ½
Human fighter 1 NE Medium undead (human) Init: +1 Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot -1 Languages Common, Orc	
AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 hp 16 (2HD) Fort +2; Ref +0, Will +0	
Spd 30 ft. Melee greatclub +4 (1d10+3/X2) Or Melee bastard sword, two handed +4 (1d10+3/19-20) Or Melee slam +4 (1d6+3/X2) (Each zombie rolls a d6 when first attacking; 1-2 armed with greatclub, 3-4 armed with bastard sword, 5-6 unarmed and attacks with slam) Base Atk +1; Grp +3	
Abilities Str 16, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1 SQ single actions only (as per zombie) Feats Toughness Possessions chain shirt, melee weapon (see above)	

**Tactics:** These undead retain just enough of their former lives to remember combat as soldiers. They can and will flank for each other, focus attacks on visibly "weaker" opponents such as spellcasters, and understand their vulnerable new condition well enough to kill divine casters as soon as such targets make themselves known by casting divine magic or using turn abilities.

**Development:** These undead serve no master and would not even be animated were it not for the growing effects of Sir Barrak ir'Talvos' curse. He has no control over them and no desire to have any; they are as free-willed as zombies can get. This unusual amount of "freedom" has given them a sliver of self-awareness – enough so that all they crave is the peace of the grave once more. They will throw themselves

at the PCs, seeking to be destroyed as quickly as possible. The evil influence in them drives them to kill and they will not die without a fight, however.

## Scaling the Encounter

The encounter as presented is an adequate challenge for 4<sup>th</sup> level character, albeit a fairly easy one to win. For less experienced groups or more capable PCs, adjust the encounter's difficulty as follows:

**3rd-level Characters:** The zombies have all seen better days, but literally and figuratively. Many bear wounds from their battle with Kymus and his expedition. Reduce every zombie's hit points to 11 and only one can be armed with a bastard sword. Five of the remaining ten have greatclubs; the rest are unarmed and attack with slams.

**5<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** The power of the Voice of the Storm's curse is starting to enter its next phase, empowering the undead here with greater revenance. The barrow zombies have Turn Resistance 4 and 20 hit points each.

**6<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** In addition to the 5<sup>th</sup> level adjustments, the zombies are beginning to echo the same rage that burns in Barrak's cursed heart. Though undead are normally immune to morale effects, the zombies all have a +1 morale bonus to melee attack and damage rolls.

**Treasure:** There are a total of 43 pendants in this hall, one for each of the bodies once interred reverently here. Eleven of them are hanging around the brittle necks of the zombies themselves; the rest are scattered amid the refuse of the other 31 destroyed undead. Many of the medallions are extremely shiny and polished, surrounded by clean, almost bleached bones (the work of the gelatinous cube in the Empty Crypt).

Each medallion is made of gold and silver, embossed with the shape of a justice archon's sword on the golden side and the fallen soldier's name on the silver reverse. The Covenant of Light will gladly pay the PCs their jewelry value as a reward if these are returned to the faction. That value is covered in the adventure questions at the end of this scenario.

There is one additional item present that should be counted as Event Treasure and recorded separately. The zombies were able to claim one of the excavation team as a victim before Kymus and his surviving men drove them off and fled into the rest of the tomb. If the PCs search the room carefully (Search check, DC 15), they will find:

*Behind one of the sundered piles of wood and bone, there is a far fresher body than what just assailed you. Only a week or two dead at most, the savaged elven corpse is wearing ruined leather armor and holding the hilt of a glowing weapon, its golden blade still buried in the rotting skull of a slain zombie.*

This once-lovely elven woman was Shiirah, a rogue and "espionage specialist" devoted to the Covenant's dream of peace and harmony on Eberron. The PCs will know her by name if they can make an Intelligence check (DC 15), a Knowledge (local) check (DC 12), or a Bardic Knowledge check (DC 10). Well known in the faction for her cheerful, Khyber-may-care attitude, her loss will be keenly felt at Radiant Hold.

The item of treasure here is the glowing weapon, a +1 *drow long knife* with a magically hardened blade of solid gold. This weapon, which she called Glimmerclaw, was found in the ruins of a temple to Vulkoor years before she joined the Covenant of Light and never left her side. Any PC successfully making the check listed above will know her well enough to know she'd rather see the blade in someone else's hands than moldering in her grave.

### Looking for Signs

Any PCs searching the room for tracks or investigating to see what happened here will find the signs of a recent battle. They will also uncover enough tracks to show that booted humanoid entered the room from the west, never made it farther than halfway into the chamber (which is, coincidentally, where Lady Cannonball surfaced), and left the way they came, heading north.

If the PCs can make a DC 15 Track check, there is something else of note. If the Track check result is 25 or more, the PCs will learn that this humanoid has been here many times, moving through the room on multiple occasions. A large humanoid figure walked barefoot through this room and went up the stairs to the east. The Investigate feat will reveal that this passage occurred *after* the battle that destroyed so many of the zombies that were here and cost Shiirah her life.

## **2: Shrine of Blood**

*In the center of this wide gallery, a short dais of stone rises beneath a pale altar against the eastern wall. Once, carvings depicting the gods of the Sovereign Host once covered that wall like a tapestry; now they are barely discernable, having been slashed and shattered in hundreds of places.*

*The altar itself has suffered far worse. Its surface is darkly stained, covered in dried blood from the corpses piled on top of it. Each face is twisted in pain, each body has been brutalized. The gore is horrific, the stench even more so. Three people lie broken and dead in this desecrated shrine, dead for at least two weeks if not longer.*

Though the PCs have no way to know it, these bodies are here because somewhere in Barrak's bloodhulk mind, he still desperately wants to be forgiven for what he has become. He brought the three Covenant of Light Scions he slew from Kymus' team here, laid them on the altar with as much reverence as he could muster, and whispered a half-remembered prayer dredged up from his fevered mind. Then, as the blood of the murdered men dripped down the alabaster stone, he left them here in the hope that their souls might somehow find the peace he has been denied.

Unfortunately, the one-holy shrine to the Sovereign Host has been fouled by this act of carnage. Despite Barrak's intentions, he has only brought the Exalted Barrow one step closer to being eternally damned.

PCs with Knowledge (religion) can attempt a DC 15 check to see that the altar has been nearly ruined by the blood and bodies atop it. If they wish to save this shrine, they will have to clean the altar and consecrate it once more using either a flask of holy water or a *bless* spell. This act is one of great good and if the PCs think to try it, they will be well-rewarded for their faith.

The first benefit to recovering this shrine is made immediately apparent as all the *everburning torches* in the Exalted Barrow ignite and provide much-needed illumination throughout the tomb. The second reward is a blessing from the powers of the Sovereign Host; PCs that clean and rededicate this shrine receive the First Blessing of the Host story object. Note that this blessing can be gained even if the PC(s) in question do not venerate the Sovereign Host directly.

To the north, a cave-in blocks passage further into the tomb. This rubble can be cleared, but without serious magical effort such clearing could take quite some time. PCs cannot go to Glitch for help with this; all of his magic is being dedicated to fixing Lady Cannonball. If the PCs can clear the ten feet of rubble themselves, they can proceed north. Otherwise, they will have to get to Barrak's tomb another way.

## **3: The Sacrifice Gate**

*A heavy stone gate bars passage to the west from here. There is a huge ruined mechanism of broken stone and twisted metal in the wall to the right of the gate. Without this complex set of winches and gears, the featureless door is both locked in place and several tons worth of immovable basalt.*

The ruined winch was Kymus' last act; he shattered his warhammer breaking it to seal the tomb and prevent the monster that was his father from escaping this place. PCs searching the area will find his broken weapon, including the name *Kymus ir'Talvos* engraved on its once-magical handle. There is nothing else of interest here save for signs of a battle that can be discovered by a PC with the Investigate feat.

Moving the gate is a virtually impossible task for the PCs. Even if they could burrow through the ancient Xen'drik basalt (enchanted hardness of 10, 30 hit points per inch, 36 inches thick), it would take a very long time, the noise would summon every creature in the tomb, and getting out does not actually solve their mission. If the PCs want to succeed in their original purpose, they will have to press on through the disquieted crypt.

## **4: In Memory of Dol Arrah**

*In the center of the corner room, a beautiful statue of a woman in ornate plate mail, bearing aloft a halberd rests atop a two foot high pillar of white stone. The woman's eyes are glowing faintly and her weapon's sweeping blade bears the symbol of the Sovereign Host on one side and a brilliant sunburst on the other. Two half-circle stone benches form a ring surrounding the statue, each roughly fifteen feet long.*

This room was meant for quiet reflection and prayer to Dol Arrah, the patron goddess of this crypt. Even in his darkest moods, Barrak cannot bring himself to damage this holy statue, though it is protected by nothing more than symbolism and its innate beauty. There is no magic present other than the *everburning torches* that circle the benches; remember that these are only lit if the Shrine of Blood has been re-consecrated.

## **5: In Memory of the Flame**

*In this northwest corner room, a wide pillar bears a carved crystal statue of a towering flame. The top of the raging column reaches the ceiling, forming a decorative pillar. A soft radiance flickers inside the column, like*

*a single candle flame trapped in its heart. Two half-circle stone benches form a ring surrounding the pillar, each roughly fifteen feet long. Dozens of broken stones litter the floor throughout this room.*

When the Exalted Barrow was first designed, this room was supposed to have been a place for the tomb's caretakers to stay. Members of the Covenant of Light who were dedicated to the Silver Flame protested the inclusion of a statue to Dol Arrah, threatening to withdraw their support in the crypt's construction unless they were given a place inside its walls for their own faith to worship. The caretakers were moved outside the Barrow to a small, private home and the space given over to the Silver Flame instead.

Unlike the statue of Dol Arrah, the only thing that has protected this pillar from Barrak's undead wrath is its considerable magical enchantments. The circle surrounding the crystal pillar has the following qualities:

- The circle acts as a *magic circle against evil* with a 25 foot diameter (the size of the ring of torches on the room's map).
- The five feet around the pillar itself acts as an *antipathy* spell specifically set to drive away undead. At one time, this spell was capable of warding the entire tomb; the power of Barrak's bloodhulk curse has reduced its power considerably and now only this tiny radius remains. Unlike normal *antipathy* spells, this special version of the magic can affect both intelligent and mindless undead (the latter do not even receive a Will saving throw to avoid it).
- Natural healing is doubled for any creature resting in the confines of this 35' x 55' room.
- The pillar is immune to non-magical ranged attacks of any kind. (The rubble all over the room's floor is from Barrak's attempts to shatter the pillar with thrown rocks.)

## **6: Heroes' Crypt**

*A long corridor lined in stone alcoves, this chamber is unnaturally cold and quiet. There is no sign of dust anywhere to be seen or tracks of any kind on the smooth, grey flagstones of the hallway's spotless floor.*

These rooms are the resting places of the Covenant of Light's more powerful heroes, influential men, women, and warforged who gave their lives in the early days of the faction. Each one a lost light, extinguished in some battle with the forces of darkness that lurk in Xen'drik's countless shadows, they rest here now in either linen-swaddled solitude or the dark silence of full carved sarcophagi.

The north Crypt was never finished, which is why the bodies here are still wrapped and not interred like the ones in the southern chamber. The Covenant had plans to fully develop both of these crypts but the faction's forced abandonment of the site cut that lofty goal short.

Fortunately for the PCs, the halls are both still warded with *gentle repose* spells set into runes engraved all over the walls in spiral patterns and attractive, abstract designs. The curse on Barrak ir'Talvos is getting stronger but it has not yet overcome the magic of eternal rest that permeates this place. These bodies will *not* be getting up to attack the PCs. Of course, they do not know they are safe here so any precautions the PCs wish to take are completely understandable and should be encouraged. (A Knowledge (arcana) skill check (DC 12) will identify the intent of the runic carvings.)

**Treasure:** Like the zombies in the Unhappy Landing room, these bodies all have a marker that reveals their name. These are small discs of Platinum twice the size of a coin with the sword emblem on the front and the deceased's name on the reverse side. If returned, the Covenant of Light will insist on a reward for the PCs doing so.

Nothing else of any real value is buried with the bodies. The faction was too young and ill-funded in its earliest days to "waste" usable equipment; everyone in the faction understood that if they fell, their items would be given to others in the Covenant. This was the Lady of the Dawn's command and none in her service openly objected to it. (This information can be gained by a PC with a Knowledge (history) or similar skill check; the DC is 15. Paladin and Knight PCs know this automatically; it is part of their vows when they swear their allegiance to the faction.)

## **7: An Empty Rest**

*An ornate tomb with an open, empty crypt, this chamber is spotless. No dust touches the walls or floor at all. There are two statues in the room, one to either side of the vacant sarcophagus. They are carved from pale white stone and resemble stoic knights, faces covered by full helms, with spears held high behind coffin-shaped tower shields.*

This room holds only one surprise for the PCs, something that only occurs if they enter the room to investigate. The southeast corner of the chamber is the "lair" of a gelatinous cube, an ooze sometimes found in old underground complexes because of its attraction to organic materials and its ability to go dormant for years at a time.

This one has recently gorged on the desiccated flesh of several zombies and retreated back to this room to rest and digest. It usually wanders the crypt from here all the way to the sealed tomb of Barrak ir'Talvos,



sweeping up dust and debris as it travels. This bizarre creature is the reason why everything in the Exalted Barrow is so clean and why Barrak's tracks can only be seen in the central tomb. Because the cube ate its fill of fallen undead earlier, it has not moved farther into the tomb chamber. In another month or two, it will return for a second meal and leave the room a spotless arrangement of scattered, white bones and gleaming metal medallions.

**Foe:** The gelatinous cube is only a threat if the PCs make physical contact or attack it at range. Otherwise, the big cubic ooze is too sated and quiescent to investigate motion. If the PCs stray too close, they may actually walk directly into the creature and be engulfed. It takes a Spot check (DC 15) to notice a gelatinous cube; this skill check is made when a moving PC gets within 10 feet of the ooze.

**Gelatinous Cube;** hp 59; *Monster Manual* 201-220; the cube will not use its engulf ability.

**Treasure:** There is nothing of value in the cube; just a few stray bits of bone and metal it has yet to expel from its recent meal.

### Scaling the Encounter

This battle doesn't scale; it is not a necessary combat and can be easily avoided or run from. The cube will not chase the PCs if they retreat. In fact, a Knowledge (nature) check at a DC 20 will reveal to the PCs that the cube is likely about to split and multiply. Such a process could take months; they are in no immediate danger of attack from this creature right now.

### 8: The Final Battle

The door to this chamber is a featureless, counterweighted slab of basalt that swings freely from either side. It used to have a heavy metal lock built into the stone that kept it closed; the deadbolt has long since been snapped off and now sits in pieces inside the door and its frame. A Search check (DC 12) reveals this fact if the PCs stop to examine the door before opening it.

Regardless of stealth, the scene awaiting the PCs past the door (either the west door or the east one if the PCs have cleared the landslide north of the Shrine of Blood) is the same. Barrak is completely lost in his grief. The PCs could enter his room playing bardic instruments and screaming; the reluctant bloodhulk still would not notice them.

*This private tomb is in wild disarray. The sarcophagus is in several stained pieces, its lid shattered and strewn all around. Every corner of the room has been stained in dried blood and every piece of religion iconography is broken and defaced. Two statues that used to flank the crypt itself have been broken and crushed, some of their pieces literally hammered into powder in the midst of stained craters in the floor.*

*Kneeling near the middle of the room is a monstrosity. Bloated and hulking, it is humanoid and covered in distended, pulsing veins. What little clothing remains in the form is stuck to its body by dried blood, patches of which are caked all over its teeming, tumescent flesh.*

*Its swollen fists clutch ragged strips of cloth, likely torn from the ruined tapestries that once covered parts of this blasphemous chamber. Rocking back and forth on its bent, ponderous legs, the figure seems to be wrapping something sprawled across its massive lap. A strange sound echoes through the room, something halfway between a predatory growl and a mournful wail. Whatever this creature is up to, it is apparently doing it as it weeps.*

The PCs have finally reached the tomb of Barrak ir'Talvos. The once-proud knight is kneeling in the center of the room, wrapping his son's broken body with pieces of his own funeral tapestries. The bloodhulk is doing this because while he could not prevent himself from killing Kymus, doing so has shocked him into a brief period of lucidity. Unable to escape this place and seek the destruction he craves, Barrak has settled for preparing his son's body for interment in the sarcophagus in room 7, An Empty Rest. He vainly hopes that through half-hearted prayer and his own sorrow, the fate that befell him will not bring his son back to face similar torment.

Unfortunately for the PCs, Barrak's cleared mind will not last long and he knows it. The former knight is so focused on his task that he will not initially sense the PCs when they arrive. This is all the opportunity the PCs need for a surprise round if they choose to attack him as soon as they see him. Doing so would be totally understandable; he looks and has obviously acted like a true monster.

If the PCs move immediately into combat, run the battle normally using the information below. Fighting and killing Barrak will technically achieve the PCs' goal here and brings the undead hero peace at last. If they instead choose to speak with him or even just hold back from drawing attention to themselves for a minute, proceed to the text below.

*There is a pause, a stillness in the creature before its bloated neck shifts with the turning of its head towards you. Flesh-rimmed eyes squint and for a moment, there is a look of unadulterated rage in its corpulent expression. One hand squeezes into a shudderingly tight fist and it rises to its thick feet.*

*As it does, a battered corpse falls out of its lap. Half the body is wrapped in crudely formed, knotted bandages; the rest is a map of pain and brutality. From the mat of blood-soaked blonde hair still visible above the cloth concealing the dead man's face and the family crest tattooed on his still-bare shoulder, this corpse could be none other than Kymus ir'Talvos, the son of the man you've come here for and the fallen leader of the Covenant's first ill-fated expedition.*

If any of the PCs attack Barrak when he responds like this, combat will occur as noted below. If they stay calm and hold back hostilities, the attitude of the bloodhulk immediately changes.

*Cragged teeth line the massive figure's maw as it tries to speak. Its voice is a rasping echo obviously forced past a throat no longer suited to speech. Its fists are still trembling but it seems to be holding back, keeping itself from attacking through every blood-sodden muscle in its large frame is clenched and ready to unleash in mindless rage.*

*"I... you... Hold..."*

It is a poor start to diplomacy but it does show that Barrak is willing to talk. This scene does not actually require the Diplomacy skill to be used, just a willingness to converse on the part of the PCs. Let the PCs roll their skill checks if they wish; they just cannot fail as long as they are amenable to trying. Barrak will not attack them unless attacked first. He has enough control to hold himself back but not enough to resist slaughtering something threatening him.

A Sense Motive (DC 15) will determine that the bloodhulk fighter's intentions are genuinely peaceful for now. If the skill check results in a 20 or more, the PCs can tell that he is obviously fighting some kind of dark influence. He is not killing them but some part of him is desperate to do so.

*"I will... not kill you. You listen... please. I am Barrak. Was once knight but now... just a monster. Cursed... cursed by my killers. They... did this to me. Voice. Voice of the Storm. I hear him laugh... in my mind... when I kill. When I dream."*

The PCs can interrupt at any time, of course, but Barrak is eager to use this one chance at sanity to urge the PCs to take his son's body out of here and to do an old hero one last kindness. If the PCs mention the Wings of Ascent, he nods slowly and points to his neck. He no longer cares what happens to his body or his possessions. He just wants free before what little Light is left in him fades forever.

*"Please. Darkness comes. Blood is boiling. I can... not... resist it any more. Please. My son must not... suffer... like me. Take him with you... please. Take him and give him... peace."*

*"Please... peace. Give me peace. Free me. Kill... kill me..."*

*The huge man's bloodshot eyes glaze over with a burning red light. He shudders again and both fists come crashing down into the floor as he roars, "KILL!"*

*And he charges!*

One way or another, this scene comes down to a battle. If the PCs have talked with Barrak, they have bought themselves three minutes to do anything they like, including move into the room to more advantageous positions. In any case, once battle starts, the man they were speaking with is gone. All that remains now is the blood-bloated undead shell he desperately hopes they will destroy.

**Foes:** Barrak ir'Talvos was, in life, a powerful knight of great martial skill and endless courage. Not afraid to put his life on the line for his beliefs, it was a great blow to the fledgling Covenant of Light when he was murdered in a Stormreach alley. Now, in death, he is a brutish abomination with very little tactical skill and only one real desire – carnage.

**Barrak ir'Talvos, bloodhulk fighter;** hp 140; *Monster Manual IV* 20.

**Tactics:** Barrak is purposefully fighting blindly. Normally as raging and vicious as a "normal" bloodhulk fighter, he fights this combat as if he wants to get hit and wants to be killed again (because he does). He will not retreat, will not seek any form of cover, and does not take any kind of combat option that would raise his Armor Class such as fighting defensively. This is a fight to the death, a demise he prays will be his.

## Scaling the Encounter

Some groups will have problems with Barrak simply due to his undead traits and massive hit point total. If a group is having real trouble with this combat, allow one or more of the PCs to make an Intelligence check to remember the statue-pillar in the Memory of the Flame room. Its magical properties, especially the *magic circle against evil* it radiates, could be of great help. Of course, this assumes the PCs saw the statue and did not enter the room from the eastern side past the landslide.

**3rd-level Characters:** Barrak has not yet recovered from injuries sustained from his battle with Kymus and the excavation team. He is at 90 hit points instead of 140. Also, he has retained enough intelligence to hold back in combat; for the first three rounds, he will not apply his strength bonus to his slam attack. This reduces him to a melee attack of +5, 1d8 bludgeoning damage. After three rounds, rage overcomes him and he fights normally.

**5<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** The power of the Voice of the Storm's curse has started to change Barrak, making him more than just a bloodhulk fighter. He gains 5 hit points every round after the first one; these are temporary hit points that can take him over his total and last for one round after combat stops. If his hit point total ever reaches or passes 196, he transforms into a bloodhulk giant (*Monster Manual IV*, page 20). After this metamorphosis, he loses his 10 hit point per round generation and remains in this new, terrible form until destroyed.

**6<sup>th</sup>-level Characters:** The final form of the Cabal's dark curse reveals itself in barrack during this combat. He gains 10 hit points per round as listed above, continues to gain 5 per round after transforming into a bloodhulk giant and can become a bloodhulk crusher (*Monster Manual IV*, page 21) if his hit point total reaches 280 or more.

### The Aftermath

Once the battle with Barrak is done, the chamber (and likely the PCs) are covered in blood – the essence of an innocent man corrupted by evil. Any PC within 5 feet of Barrak when he is hit for damage with a slashing or piercing weapon has been soaked in the vital fluids that were coursing through the cursed knight.

They will have to search the corpse to find what they came here for, the Wings of Ascent, but as long as Barrak showed them where it was, no skill check will be needed. If he did not (perhaps because the PCs did not give him the chance), they will have to succeed at a Search check (DC 15) to find it. This check can be retried until the PCs find the ornate bronze trophy.

Once the PCs are content that they have done all they can here, proceed to the Conclusion and let them go home as exhausted but victorious heroes.

Victorious heroes desperately in need of a bath...

## Ending the Adventure

Returning to Stormreach will be a long but uneventful trip. Glitch gets the tumbler operational shortly after the PCs have finished their mission (or have had to flee from the bloodhulk and cannot complete their task) and the ride back home goes smoothly. There are no mysterious power failures, no elemental encounters, and no uncharted caverns waiting to intercept Lady Cannonball and endanger them all.

Lord Xandrin Corvalis expects a full report when the PCs arrive; as long as they are honest and fairly inclusive of their adventures on this mission, he will be satisfied and thank them for a job well-done. Even if the PCs were unable to retrieve the Wings of Ascent, he appreciates their efforts and considers their report almost as valuable as their success would have been. He does not chide them as long as they gave the mission their best effort.

Their reward for succeeding in what they were sent to do is covered in the Adventure Questions and in the story object Gratitude of Radiant Hold. Win or lose, the PCs are welcomed back into the fold and encouraged to take some time to rest, recover and rejoin the festival for its last days. There is still much celebration to be had.

After all, the PCs have certainly earned it.

# Adventure Questions

1. Did the PCs deal politely with Brigitte, Korvin, and Lord Corvalis?
  - a) Yes; they set a good, cordial example for members of the Covenant of Light.
  - b) Somewhat; they were either flippant or abrasive in places but were not actively rude.
  - c) No; they were short or rude to at least one person and did not comport themselves like heroes should.
2. Which best describes the apparent attitude of the PCs toward their mission during the scenario?
  - a) Very professional and diplomatic.
  - b) Mixed reactions; some PCs were focused and controlled while others were less so.
  - c) Poor reactions; the PCs did not really seem to care about the tragic conditions of the mission or the seriousness of their objective.
  - d) Appalling. There was no apparent personal motivation aside from their membership in the Covenant of Light for them to even go on this mission.
3. Did the PCs constantly search their surrounds during the mission for clues, tracks, treasure, or goods?
  - a) Yes, if there was a coin under a rock, they would have found it.
  - b) Yes, they didn't always search but more often than not they made sure to leave nothing of value behind.
  - c) No, they did not seem interested to looking for valuables.
4. Did the PCs defeat the elasmosaurus in some way?
  - a) Completely, the creature was put down or convinced to go away on its own.
  - b) Partially, the dinosaur was defeated but not before knocking unconscious or killing one of the PCs.
  - c) The PCs were defeated or had to flee in some way from the rampaging aquatic terror.
5. How did the PCs fare against the xorn?
  - a) They were able to bribe it to leave through diplomacy so well, it left them its Siberys dragonshard as a parting gift.
  - b) The party convinced it to go away or took it down through skill and good sense. They did not get the Siberys shard for their troubles.
  - c) Only luck and sheer force of arms saved them; there were no tactics.
  - d) The xorn did unfortunate things to the PCs; they were all defeated.
6. Did the PCs work to get Lady Cannonball functional again when she lost all power?
  - a) Yes, they were clever and motivated, doing everything in their power to get the big stone ball rolling again.
  - b) Yes, they managed to save themselves but they relied heavily on Glitch to do it or did not try very hard to come up with ideas on their own.
  - c) No, if the encounter hadn't been written to eventually save them automatically, there would be a spherical crypt under Xen'drik right now.
7. What best describes the PCs and their efforts in the Exalted Barrow? Be generous when answering this question; if the PCs gave an honest effort in the crypt, feel free to answer accordingly.
  - a) They explored everything they could find, were motivated to try and clean/save/recover what they could, and were as diplomatic with Barrak as his condition allowed.
  - b) They had a rough time of things but managed to put Barrak and the zombies down. They cleaned the altar or got the Wings of Ascent but not both.
  - c) The PCs were Barrak's personal punching bags. If they succeeded in their mission, it was only because the bloodhulk was pulling punches or sheer luck. They did not clean the altar and they barely explored the tomb at all.
8. How would you rate the group's roleplaying?
  - a) Fantastic. Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
  - b) Good. Most everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
  - c) Okay. There was some roleplaying.
  - d) None. They treated the adventure as a set of objectives. There was no roleplaying.

### Story Objects:

Gratitude of Radiant Hold

Code: EXCL11

*You have served the Covenant of Light very well and the Lord of Radiant Hold is pleased with your efforts. For saving a nearly missed opportunity to take advantage of the Caldryn Fragments, you have earned Xandrin Corvalis' gratitude and respect.*

*The following rules items are now unlocked for PCs with this story object.*

**Armor and Shield Special Abilities:** *angelic, exalted, sacred (Book of Exalted Deeds, page 112).*

**Weapon Special Abilities:** *blessed, righteous (Book of Exalted Deeds, page 114)*

**Prestige Class:** *Shining Blade of Heironeous (Dol Arrah, Complete Divine, page 63), Fist of Raziel (Book of Exalted Deeds, 62)*

First Blessing of the Host

Code: EXCL12

*The Powers that Be bless the members of the Covenant of Light according to their worth and you have done a great deed for the Light. Having drawn divine attention to yourself, the forces of Good will start watching you more closely.*

*You have received an invisible mark on your bow shaped like the right side of the Sovereign Host's symbol. This sigil, only visible to fully celestial beings, brands you as a champion of the Light on a hero's path. For now, it has no other effect.*

## Appendix: The Tumbler (*Magic of Eberron*, page 121)

This unique vessel can travel through the ground as easily as the Huge earth elemental bound within it, carrying its passengers to hidden caverns or remote veins of precious metals. Large enough to hold a dozen humanoids, it can easily reach places few other vessels can. A second bound elemental (this one a Small air elemental) keeps the air within the tumbler refreshed.

**Lore:** The tumbler was initially developed by the gnomes of Zilargo to aid in mining expeditions (Knowledge [arcana] or Gather Information DC 15). Rumor has it that the gnomes have since begun selling the vessel in limited numbers to various governments across Khorvaire for use in espionage, because its burrowing power makes it easy for spies or squads of elite troops to sneak into places they shouldn't (Knowledge [local] or Gather Information DC 25).

**Description:** A tumbler is an odd vehicle. It looks like a large sphere of rough-hewn rock, with a seam that breaks a surface covered in dull stony spines. When a tumbler is open to accept or debark passengers, one can see seats within for up to twelve human-sized or smaller creatures.

The tumbler rolls when in motion across the ground, but a magic stabilization device built into the vessel keeps its occupants level as it goes. In addition, a ring of clear crystal windows are set into the sides of the sphere, fixed according to the perspective of the passengers. These windows prevent disorientation, allow the pilot of the vessel to see out, and let passengers know where they are during transport.

**Activation:** A pilot can operate a tumbler aboveground with a successful DC 20 Profession (pilot) check, but piloting the vessel beneath the surface requires even greater expertise. A pilot must make a DC 25 Profession (pilot) check to activate the vessel's earth glide mode. The pilot navigates by means of instruments inside the vessel, and knowing how to decipher these devices is quite difficult.

**Effect:** A tumbler can move at a constant speed of 10 miles per hour across level ground, even that considered difficult terrain. However, the vessel's most unique power is its ability to move through the earth like the earth elemental bound into it. The tumbler in this mode can glide through stone or dirt (though not metal) as easily as a fish swims through water, at a speed of 2 miles per hour.

The vessel's burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence. A tumbler can carry twelve Medium or smaller creatures, including the pilot. The passengers sit in a stacked row of seats, six on the bottom and six on the top (the pilot sits in the upper row).

The tumbler magically refreshes the air supply within it, allowing twelve Medium creatures to breathe comfortably for ten days (see Suffocation, page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). If the tumbler spends at least 1 hour in the open air (whether aboveground or in a large cavern), this time limit is reset.

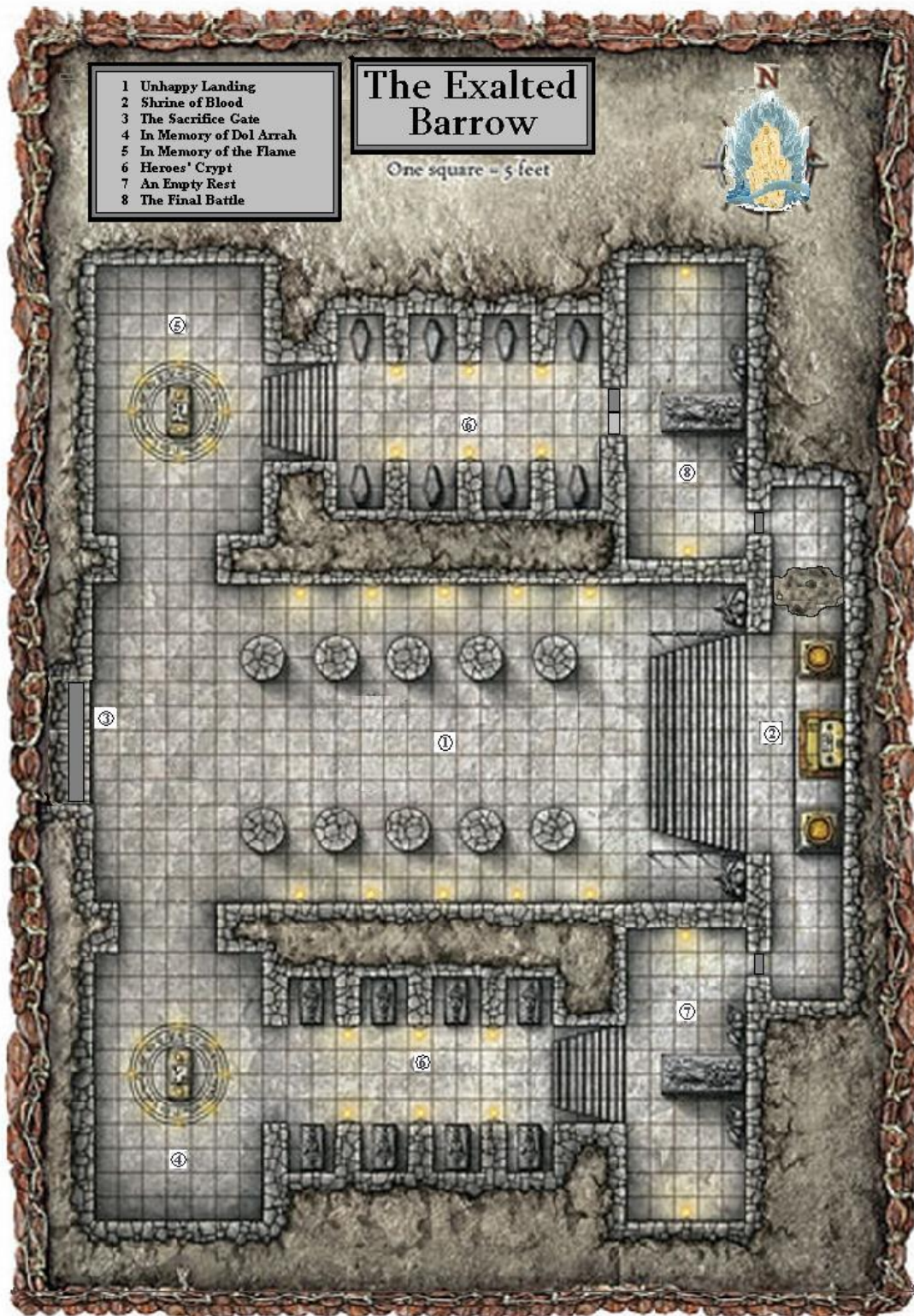
A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a tumbler flings it back 30 feet, deals 4d6 points of damage to those inside (no save), and renders the craft powerless for 1 minute.

**Aura/Caster Level:** Moderate transmutation. CL 17th.

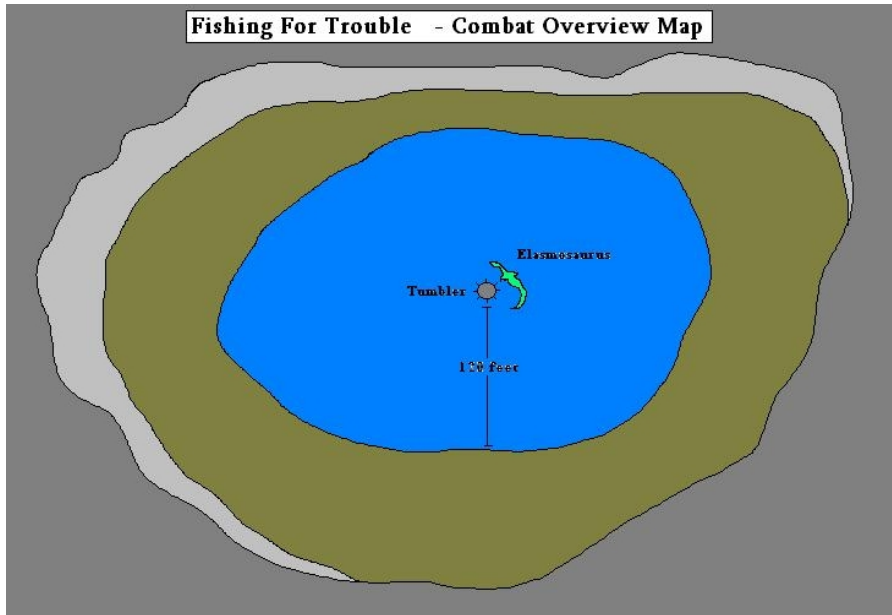
**Construction:** Requires Bind Elemental, *greater planar binding* spell, 100,000 gp, 8,000 XP, 200 days.

**Price:** 200,000 gp.

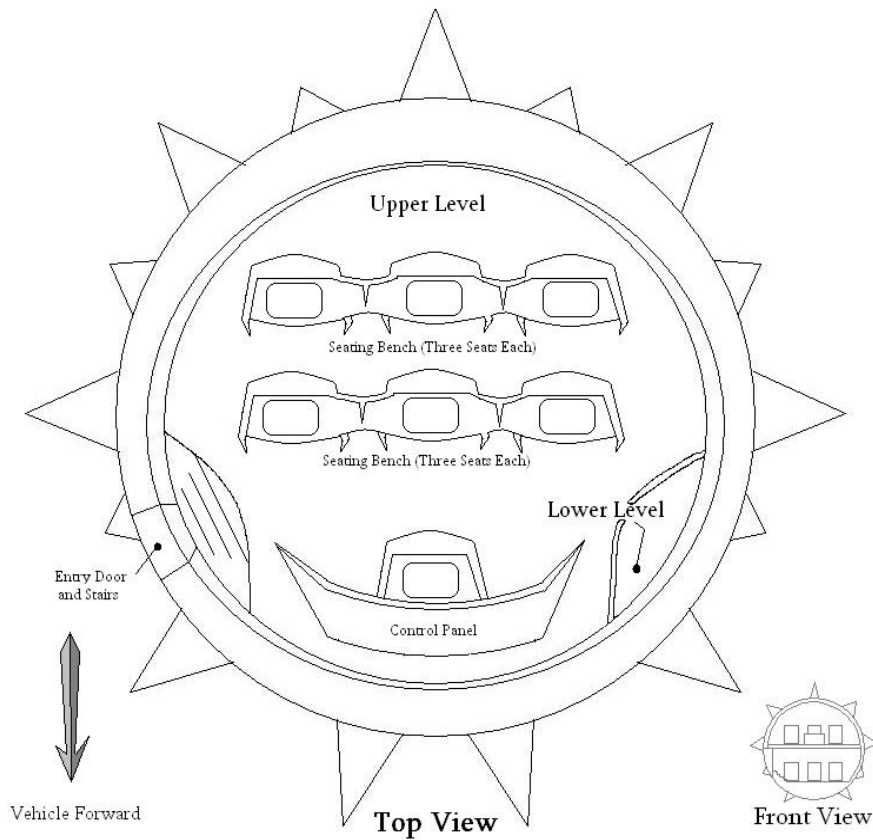
## Appendix: Maps



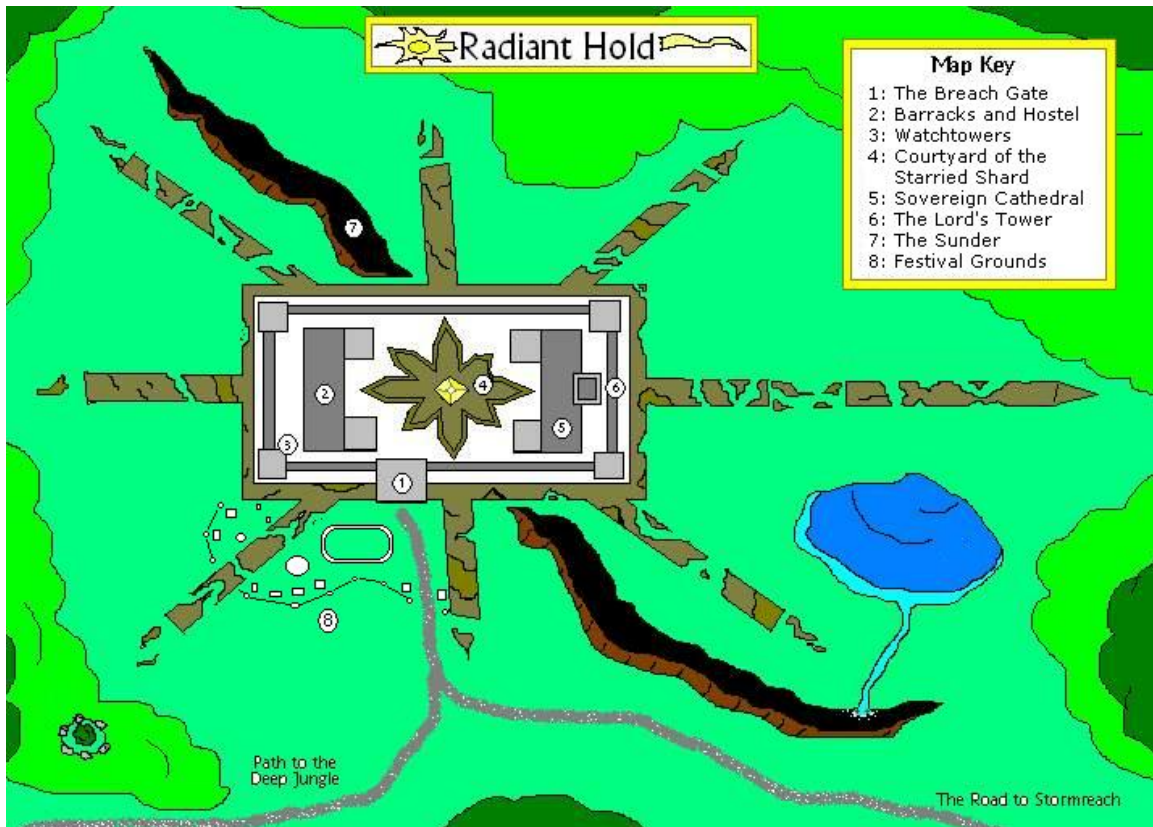




## Glitch's Tumbler: Lady Cannonball







## Appendix: NPCs

### Combat Statistics

Glitch, Good-Hearted Gnome Craftsman and Binder

CR 16

Gnome Wizard 12/Elemental Savant 3/Elemental Scion of Zilago 1

CG Small humanoid (gnome)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Listen +1, Search +5, Spot +1; tremorsense 60' (from improved graft)

**Languages** Common, Dragon, Giant, Orc, Terran, Gnome

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**AC** 19, touch 16, flat-footed 24; Damage Reduction 5/- (from *heart of stone*, already cast)

**hp** 60 (16 HD)

**Resist** Resist cold/fire/electricity 5 (from *heart of stone*, already cast), resist acid 5, immune sleep

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

**Action Points:** 12 (d6)

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**Speed** 15 ft. (3 squares)

**Melee** +7/+2 unarmed (1d2 nonlethal) or

**Melee** +9/+4 adamantite dagger (1d3+1, 17-20 x2) or

**Ranged** +13 adamantite dagger (1d3+1, 17-20 x2, *returning*)

**Base Atk** +7; **Grp** +7

**Special Actions** blessing of the light,

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 15<sup>th</sup>):

8<sup>th</sup> (1): *discern location*

7<sup>th</sup> (2): *energy immunity, sequester*

6<sup>th</sup> (3): *analyze dweomer, disintegrate, move earth*

5<sup>th</sup> (5): *baleful polymorph, major creation, sending, telekinesis, transmute rock to mud*

4<sup>th</sup> (5): *minor creation, orb of acid, Rary's mnemonic enhancer x 2, stone shape*

3<sup>rd</sup> (5): *arcane sight, bands of steel, dispel magic x 2, repair serious damage*

2<sup>nd</sup> (5): *fox's cunning x 2, Melf's acid arrow, scorching ray, web*

1<sup>st</sup> (6): *color spray, erase, expedition retreat, fist of stone x 2, shield*

0<sup>th</sup> (4): *acid splash, detect magic, mending, prestidigitation*

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**Abilities** Str 8, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 21, Wis 12, Cha 11

**SQ:** energy penetration (+2 to caster level checks to beat spell resistance with acid spells), elemental graft affinity (earth), elemental spellcasting (earth, acid)

**Feats** Brew Potion, Energy Admixture (acid), Energy Substitution (acid), Bind Elemental, Exceptional Artisan, Extraordinary Artisan, Legendary Artisan, Elemental Grafter, Scribe Scroll

**Skills** Climb +6, Concentration +3, Craft (alchemy) +20, Craft (armorsmithing) +5, Craft (blacksmithing) +15, Craft (carpentry) +5, Craft (gemcutting) +10, Craft (leatherworking) +5, Craft (locksmithing) +4, Craft (painting) +4, Craft (pottery) +4, Craft (sculpting) +4, Craft (shipmaking) +5, Craft (stonemasonry) +10, Craft (trapmaking) +5, Craft (weaponsmithing) +5, Decipher Script +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (architecture/engineering) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +3, Profession (pilot) +8, Spellcraft +22, Use Magic Device +5

**Gear:** improved tremor graft, Aureon's spellshard, bag of tricks, belt of many pockets, bracers of armor +5, dust of Illusion, elemental gems (fire, air), eternal wand: *gust of wind*, eternal wand: *make whole*, goggles of minute seeing, masterwork engineering tools, ring of feather falling

Glitch is a Zilargo gnome through and through, with a mind that races at lightning speed and a mouth that comes very close to matching it. He is constantly being distracted and might possibly be the least "grounded" earth elemental savant in existence. His affinity for earth comes in his love for metal, stone, and all manner of creation; he is not a very stolid individual nor is he particularly contemplative.

All that aside, he is a true friend and a steady companion. Despite his social failings and borderline annoying personality, he is very dedicated to the Covenant of Light and has brought both his expertise and his greatest creation – Lady Cannonball, an earth traveling vehicle – to Xen'drik at great risk to himself in the process. Those that can stand to be in the same room with him for more than a few minutes will quickly find that he is an abundantly cheerful, energetic soul with a keen eye and a keener wit. He is also as willing to listen as he is to talk; the problem lies in getting him to shut up long enough to do so.

## Combat Statistics

Xandrin Corvalis, Lord of Radiant Hold

CR 15

Human Paladin 9/Fighter 6

LG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Listen +4, Search +2, Spot +4

**Languages** Common, Celestial, Gnoll

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**AC** 27, touch 11, flat-footed 26

**hp** 181 (15 HD)

**Resist** Immune to disease.

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14

**Action Points:** 12 (d6)

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**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Melee** +17/+12/+7 unarmed (1d3 nonlethal or lethal) or

**Melee** +20/+15/+5 sun blade (1d10+6)

**Base Atk** +17; **Grp** +17

**Special Actions** *Detect evil* (at will), lay on hands (27 hp/day), *remove disease* (2/day), smite evil (2/day), turn undead (6/day), blessing of the light

**Paladin Spells Prepared** (CL 6<sup>th</sup>):

2<sup>nd</sup> (1): *shield other*

1<sup>st</sup> (2): *bless weapon*, *protection from evil*

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**Abilities** Str 15, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 16

**SQ:** aura of courage, aura of good, divine grace, divine health, the Celestial Kiss (Dol Arrah)\*

**Feats** Action Surge, Cleave, Improved Turning, Iron Will, Knight Training (fighter), Leadership, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

**Skills** Climb +2, Concentration +10, Craft (calligraphy) +1, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +5, Heal +10, Intimidate +20, Jump +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +3, Knowledge (religion) +5, Profession (scribe) +5, Profession (siege engineer) +5, Ride +15, Sense Motive +20, Survival +5, Swim -1

**Gear:** *mithril full plate of speed*, *boots of striding and springing*, *ring of shooting stars*, *gauntlet of the Stoneguard* (acts as a *ring of elemental command (earth)* and grants a +3 natural armor bonus), *robe of stars* (in the form of an ornate tabard), +2 *mithril large shield* (intelligent; Lawful Good, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14, *status* at will, constant *detect scrying*, *zone of truth* 3/day, *invisibility purge* 1/day)

The Lord of Radiant Hold is something of an enigma, even to those of his own Faction. It is well known that of the original founders of the Covenant of Light, only he and Lady Lirashana have survived to the present day. As much a symbol of the faction as the justice archon herself, his power within the Covenant is made all the greater by the Lady of the Dawn's constant absences and off-putting celestial demeanor.

Known to be generous, understanding, and compassionate, Lord Corvalis is also the center of some controversy regarding the disappearance of his wife shortly after the construction of Radiant Hold. Rumors abound as to what may have occurred during the dark, storming night in question but the only details that anyone can prove involve a dead housemaid, an unearthly chill that settled over the entire keep, and the sudden departure of both Xandrin's son and the circle of Eldeen druids that had been serving the faction a few days later. Lord Corvalis refuses to speak of the night, warning anyone that inquires too closely that some secrets should be left buried.

Regardless of past events, Lord Corvalis still rules Radiant Hold unchallenged and is considered the mortal master of the Covenant of Light. He personally never uses any such title and seems content to make requests of the faction's Scions rather than giving direct orders.

It is also interesting to note that while he had not used his title of paladin since the disappearance of his shifter wife, he does not seem to have lost the powers and abilities associated with the class. No one in the faction has seen him use any of his paladin abilities since that night but when the Lady addresses him, she still uses the word paladin, much to his apparent dismay. Again, Xandrin does not answer questions about this and does everything short of having inquisitive people arrested if they dig too closely. A persistent rumor states that while Lord Corvalis does nothing to directly stop people from digging into his past, those who do so disappear in the night from their beds and are never seen again.

Xandrin Corvalis bears three gifts from Lady Lirashana. The first is Dawnstar, his *sun blade* fashioned as an exact replica of her own. The second is Revelation, his +2 *mithril large steel shield*. The last is a spiritual boon called the Lady's Kiss. Given to him during the Spring celebration of life held at the Radiant Hold, this mark was imbued with a real kiss between the Lord and the Lady of the Dawn. While Xandrin protests any suggestion that the gesture was more than a show of friendship between the two, gossip within the faction suggests otherwise.

## Appendix: New Special Quality

### The Celestial Kiss

This magical imbue can be granted by archons in the service of the Sovereign Host and marks the recipient as a champion of one of the deities in that pantheon. Even if the recipient is devoted to the Host as a whole rather than any one god, he or she must choose which of the following forms of the Celestial Kiss to take as a permanent boon. When received, the recipient's eyes and lips glow softly for 24 hours.

Thereafter, whenever the recipient is actively benefiting from the Celestial Kiss, his or eyes glow with a soft golden light and gains the Aura of Good feature during the benefit's duration.

For a being to receive the Celestial Kiss, it must be sentient, fully willing to accept the mark, may not be under any magical or Psionic compulsion to do so, and must be aware of the drawback inherent in the gift. If any of these conditions is not met, the Kiss fails and the archon attempting to grant it cannot do so again on anyone's behalf for a period of one year.

The forms of the Celestial Kiss are as follows:

**Arawai:** The bearer of the Kiss can cast *purify food and drink* as a full round action 3 times a day. In addition, he or she can never be poisoned or diseased by anything ingested.

**Aureon:** As a champion of law, any weapon or unarmed strike made by the bearer of this Kiss counts as lawfully-aligned for purposes of damage reduction. The bearer also gains a +1 to Armor Class against physical attacks made by chaotic creatures.

**Balinor:** A champion of the Hunt gains the ability to track as a ranger and receives the Woodland Stride ranger class feature. If the champion already has these abilities or later gains them in some other fashion, the Kiss instead imparts the *bane* (animals) property to any melee or ranged weapon held.

**Boldrei:** By touching an ally and swearing an oath to protect (a standard action with a touch range), this champion can invoke a *bless* and *shield other* effect twice per day. The durations of these effects are 10 rounds and they only affect the champion and the one touched.

**Dol Arrah:** The bearer of this Kiss gains an intuitive understanding of honorable combat. While fighting an opponent of equal or greater hit dice that is not flat-footed and has already successfully damaged him or her in the current combat, the champion gains a +1 sacred bonus to all physical attack, damage, and saving throw rolls regarding that chosen target.

**Dol Dorn:** A champion of the power of strength and physical perfection gains the ability to use *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, **or** *bear's endurance* for 5 total rounds per day as a swift action.

**Kol Korran:** Appraise becomes a class skill for this champion regardless of current class, he or she gains a +5 sacred bonus to Appraise skill checks, and all Charisma-based checks the champion makes when dealing with a merchant or noble gain a +1 sacred bonus.

**Olladra:** Magical items the bearer of this Kiss has to eat or drink to use (such as potions) always have their maximum effect. This champion also gains a +1 luck bonus to saving throws against poison and disease.

**Onatar:** Champions of Artifice gain a special ability to combat created things. The bearer of this Kiss receives a +2 sacred bonus to rolls when attempting to sunder or break objects. He or she also gains a +1 bonus to all weapons and spell attack and damage checks when fighting warforged and constructs.

**Drawback:** Accepting the Celestial Kiss binds a champion's fealty to the Sovereign Host and creates a spiritual link between the bearer and the pantheon. This results in a -2 sacred penalty to any saving throw the bearer makes against divine magic originating from a cleric of the Sovereign Host or any of its member deities. This link unfortunately opens the bearer to divine magic of any sort; he or she also suffers a -1 sacred penalty to saving throws against any other source of divine magic.