

TYMA1-6

TROUBLED ROADS

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

BY MARK PEKEL

REVIEWED BY JEFF HERTEL AND M. SEAN MOLLEY

PLAYTESTED BY MARK DEAVER, MIKE DETHLEFS, SEAN DONNELLY, JOSH DOUCHINSKY, MELISSA HERTEL, CAMEY JOHNSON, TIM KILGUSS, MIKE MCTEE, KEVIN SAMPSON, CHARLES SHEEHAN, JOSHUA SMITH, PAT SMITH, KATE SWEARINGEN, RICHARD SWEARINGEN, AND JAMES THOMPSON

A group of young scholars from Ruinspoke has gone missing in the capital city of Djerad Thymar. Although their academy insists that they are simply on a research trip, their families believe otherwise, and the leader of House Jalt has asked you to help. A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Tymander for characters levels 11-14.

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

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2012.

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PREPARING FOR PLAY

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

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

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

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

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

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

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

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 11-14. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

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

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

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

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

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

CHARACTER DEATH

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

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

MILESTONES

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

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

LASTING EFFECTS

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

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

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

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

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This adventure is based on the hook in the sidebar on page 186 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*. The Cult of the Dragon has established a foothold on the eastern side of the Black Ash Plain. The cultists have been abducting people to serve as slaves for their temple

construction and as sacrifices to a brown dragon that seeks to become a dracolich.

The cult has a front organization called the Abeir Academy that has been helping them recruit young and inexperienced people who are then turned into the slaves or sacrifices. The Academy sends individuals and small groups of people that they feel won't be missed to the Black Ash Plain to "gain valuable skills that will help them in the future." When out on the plains, the groups are attacked by a group of stone giants who are paid (handsomely) to bring prisoners to the cult.

Recently a group of young dragonborn from Ruinspoke traveled to Djerad Thymar to join the Abeir Academy and they have not been heard from since. One of the missing individuals is a nephew of Lord Tuanek of House Jalt. When the dragonborn arrived in the city, they were accepted into the Academy. The leaders of the Academy sent them to the Black Ash Plains to do "research" where they were captured by the giants and are set to be sacrificed by the cult.

Since his nephew left, Lord Tuanek has yet to hear from him and the elder dragonborn is growing suspicious. He tried to make some inquiries but has had no success. This has led him to ask for assistance from the PCs to travel to Djerad Thymar and find out what is going on.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

Before play starts check to see if the players have any of the House Jalt recognition story objects as it will affect which player's handout they receive.

Lord Tuanek is in charge of Ruinspoke and is familiar to PCs that have played in previous Tymander adventures. Tuanek is concerned about what he believes to be the suspicious disappearance of his nephew, who was attending the Abeir Academy, and is seeking the PCs' assistance in resolving the matter. He feels individuals of their stature will be able to deal with the Abeir Academy without being dismissed or diverted by the academy.

The PCs travel to Djerad Thymar and learn of the Academy's "training" site (Encounter 1) which is where the students were sent. Crossing the Black Ash Plain, the party is ambushed by stone giants (Encounter 2). After the ambush, the party must locate the temple site (Encounter 3). Once the party reaches the temple site, they battle members of the Cult of the Dragon led by a brown dragon (Encounter 4). After the battle is concluded outside the temple, the party makes the short trip inside the temple where they encounter a newly created fettered dracolich (Encounter 5).

The characters are not under a time constraint so allow them to take extended rests at any time before reaching the temple. However, once the fight starts outside the temple, the party must act quickly to interrupt the ritual. If the PCs take an extended rest after Encounter 4, the dracolich is gone by the time they reach the temple area. This does not mean that the PCs hurrying or taking their time will not have an effect on the adventure. See each encounter to see how tactics and other elements of the plot are affected by the party's actions.

At the end of the adventure, the PCs may feel the need to try to expose the Abeir Academy and bring those in charge to justice. The PCs' attempts in this direction will be met with resistance and a definite feel that someone higher up, with a lot of influence, is protecting the Academy. Notes left at the scene attempt to throw the characters off of the trail of the academy.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

The adventure starts with the PCs having just arrived in Ruinspoke. Allow the players a moment to introduce their characters.

All of the characters have arrived here because they received Tuanek's request for help.

In particular, characters who have earned at least two of these story objects (or equivalent objects from other Tymanther regional adventures) should be given *Player Handout 1. Recognition of House Jalt* (TYMA01), the *Blue Dragon Charm of House Jalt* (TYMA03) or *Bronze Claw of House Jalt* (TYMA05).

Characters that only have one of the appropriate story objects should be given *Player Handout 2*.

Characters that do not have any House Jalt story objects should be given *Player Handout 3*.

Ruinspoke is a small town and characters who have received Tuanek's recognition from previous adventures are greeted warmly by the townsfolk. The player characters are Paragon tier now, which means that the people of a small village like Ruinspoke rarely see individuals of their power and stature. For those characters who have partially "grown up" here by virtue of their experiences in previous Tymanther regional adventures throughout the Heroic tier, this scene should help drive home the notion that the PCs are now starting to be counted among the movers and shakers of the world, even if they still have a ways to go.

As the PCs first start moving through the village, the villagers will point and wave and saying things like:

"See the heroes, they ..."

"They're the ones who ..."

"I remember when they rescued....."

The closer the PCs get to House Jalt the villagers will make observations like:

"It must be really bad if they're here."

"Should we leave town until the trouble passes?"

"I hope it's not another dragon."

Ad lib anything that will fit the mood. When the PCs first get to town, the villagers are excited to see them but as they move towards the manor house, the villagers become worried about the possible trouble that could be afoot if such powerful heroes are needed by Lord Tuanek. Allow the PCs to shop in Ruinspoke if they wish or talk to other villagers. More information on Ruinspoke can be found in *Player Handout 4*.

Lord Tuanek is an experienced, middle-aged dragonborn that takes his responsibility for protecting Ruinspoke seriously. He conducts his duties in a professional manner and is notably concerned he hasn't heard from Kallish (his nephew) and Torreck (his nephew's best friend) since leaving for the Abeir Academy. The lack of cooperation and response from the Abeir Academy concerning his nephew has caused him to become suspicious of the organization. He wants the characters to find out where his nephew is, why he hasn't contacted Tuanek, and what the academy is trying to hide.

When the PCs arrive at House Jalt, read or paraphrase the following.

Having arrived in Ruinspoke to answer Lord Tuanek's request for assistance, you make your way to House Jalt. As you approach the manor's gates, you see that the guards are at full attention. Before you can even begin to state your business, the guards swing open the gates and smartly salute you. You enter the courtyard, where an elderly dragonborn servant ushers you into the manor house and leads you to the main dining hall.

It appears that you are expected. A long table, laden with enough food and drink for a dozen hearty appetites, awaits you in the center of the room. There are enough seats for each of you. At the head of the table is Lord Tuanek, who stands and beckons you to be seated.

"Please eat while I tell you of my problem," Lord Tuanek says, his eyes serious and his plate empty.

Those PCs who are already acquainted with Tuanek can tell he is in a somber mood. He maintains a professional appearance, but something is obviously troubling him.

“There is a situation that is beyond the scope of my influence, and for this I request your assistance. My nephew, Kallish, and his friend, Torreck, were recruited by the Abeir Academy in Djerad Thymar to learn stonemasonry. They left two weeks ago and haven’t been heard from since they departed. This is exceedingly uncharacteristic of them. Inquiries into the matter with the Abeir Academy have yielded no results.”

He pauses for a moment, and grips his napkin tightly before continuing. “I want you to go to the Abeir Academy and find out what has happened to my nephew and his friend, then report back to me with your findings. You are the most capable adventurers I know, and I feel less capable adventurers would be ignored or diverted by the Abeir Academy. The Academy is very influential in Djerad Thymar.

“I have arranged for Ahtehk Jalt and our Lance Defenders to fly you to Djerad Thymar as soon as you are ready. If there are any minor items or supplies you need for the trip let me know and I will have them procured.”

The PCs are able to ask Tuanek questions and he will answer to the best of his ability.

- Kallish and his friend Torreck, after serving their time in the military, decided they didn’t want to make a career of it. Instead, they went to learn a skill that would be useful and make House Jalt proud.
- Kallish is not a coward, knows how to defend himself, and is quite intelligent.
- Kallish is very close to his family and would never just run off without telling anyone.
- Tuanek does not know Torreck as well as he knows Kallish, but everyone speaks very highly of the boy, and the two young dragonborn have been friends for most of their lives.
- Tuanek is able to give a detailed description of both Kallish and Torreck.
- In Djerad Thymar, the PCs will be able to stay at House Jalt's estate should they require lodgings.

As you prepare to leave, Ahtehk hands each of you a small bag, saying, “As a token of their appreciation, the villagers have packed each of you a small provision bag for the trip.”

Each bag contains the following items:

- Seven sandwiches (inside each PC's third sandwich is a note that says “seek out Tearn.”)
- Two small water flasks
- Various types of fruit
- A rough map of Djerad Thymar

- A handful of candy
- Two packets of tea

If asked about the letter, Ahtehk has no idea where it came from. Lord Tuanek has actually heard of Tearn, because he gained some measure of notoriety when he was expelled from his own clan a while back. Of course, Lord Tuanek did not plant the letters in the PCs' sandwiches and does not know who did. (The identity of this mysterious benefactor is beyond the scope of this adventure.)

PCs who have played TYMA1-4 *Death Before Dishonor* have already met this individual, so they will know the following facts. Otherwise, Lord Tuanek shares what little he knows.

- Tearn is a former member of House Tlassian.
- He was banished from the house for some unknown reason.
- He has been working to try to get back into the good graces of his former clan so he can be accepted back.
- He has been known to deal with the “shadier” sides of Djerad Thymar. He might make a good contact for finding out what happened to Kallish and Torreck, if they are in trouble.

When everyone is ready to depart, Ahtehk Jalt of the Lance Defenders leads them to the stables for House Jalt's flying mounts. These creatures are rarely shown to outsiders; PCs who have been to Ruinspoke before will never have heard that Lord Tuanek has such resources, much less seen them. Each of the PCs is given a seat behind a Lance Defender on a giant bat. The Lance Defenders will not let the PCs control the bats. The flight to Djerad Thymar takes the rest of the day; the PCs arrive around noon on the following day. The Lance Defenders are willing to share some basic information about Djerad Thymar; this information can be found in *Player Handout 5*.

After flying across the plains of Tymanther, Ahtehk Jalt points to a pyramid shape off in the distance, saying “Djerad Thymar”. As the miles pass it becomes apparent the entire city is the pyramid shaped citadel Ahtehk described to you. Its immense size becomes even more apparent as you approach, soaring at least a quarter of a mile in height. The Lance Defenders fly their giant bats directly into the city and into the House Jalt compound.

After you disembark, Ahtehk addresses you. “You should be able to find the Abeir Academy in the top level of the city. We will stow your gear here. Good luck with your task and I wish you well.”

ENCOUNTER 1: OFF TO SCHOOL

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 11/13, COMPLEXITY 1 (600/800 XP)

SETUP

The city is laid out in a very structured and organized manner. It is zoned into areas such as residential, government, and business - and within the zones each is further subdivided. The residential areas are grouped by how wealthy the residents are as well as their status in Tymantherian society.

The following scenes can be run in any order (and if time is tight, you can skip directly to the "Abeir Academy" section). These options just represent various ways the PCs can learn a few things about the Abeir Academy before they pay a visit to the facility itself.

WORD ON THE STREET

It takes a few hours to learn the information below by talking to various people around town. This is not a skill challenge, but the PCs can learn various pieces of information by using different skills.

Diplomacy (DC 21/23): By talking with various merchants and well-educated people, the PCs find out the location of the Abeir Academy along with some basic information. The Abeir Academy teaches a variety of vocational skills (masonry, carpentry, blacksmith, weaponsmith, leatherworking, pottery, bookkeeping...) as well as some arcane training. Dragonborn make up the majority of the students, but humans, dwarves, elves, eladrins, half-elves, and tieflings attend in smaller numbers. There are several hundred students at any time.

Streetwise (DC 21/23): By visiting the taverns and other establishments frequented by young adults, the PCs get directions to the Abeir Academy along with some basic information. People come from within and outside Tymanther to learn here and it's very competitive to become a member. Lately, it has been rumored that the academy has relaxed the entry process to allow more members to join for some unknown reason. It is said that they are building their membership rolls up to create some grand artifice for Tymanther. The blacksmiths and weaponsmiths are known for throwing the best parties.

History (DC 21/23): Recalling what he or she might have previously heard about the Abeir Academy and talking with scholarly individuals around town, a PC can learn the same information as a Bluff or Diplomacy check with the additional information that

the school has been around for about 50 years and is highly regarded for producing quality students trained in their prospective fields.

SPEAKING WITH TEARN (OPTIONAL)

If the PCs have played TYMA1-4 *Death Before Dishonor*, or if they ate the sandwiches they got from Ruinspoke and discovered the note therein, they have the name of a contact in Djerad Thymar who knows a little something about the seedier parts of town. His name is Tearn and he is an outcast, formerly of House Tlassian.

Locating Tearn requires a Diplomacy or Streetwise check (DC 21/23). PCs who have met him previously (in TYMA1-4) get a +5 bonus on this check because they know his habits. Tearn is found in the Hooked Claw, which is his temporary living establishment. At least, that's what he hopes, since his goal is to move back in to his former House's lodgings.

Tearn is a dragonborn that has an unusual scar upon his left cheek. The actual skin has been removed leaving bare flesh with a strange symbol branded upon his cheek. If PCs inquire about the scar, Tearn will deflect the questions. Even if the PCs haven't met him, they can still surmise a few things about his scar just from general knowledge.

History (DC 20): Dragonborn outcasts have their House identifiers, such as emblems, signets, and house names, stripped from them. So before being named outcast, he would have been Tearn of House Tlassian and now he is just Tearn. This is a symbol of his shame - cast out from his House, he belongs to nothing.

Tearn will impart the same knowledge to the characters that they could have learned from any of the "Word on the Street" skill checks. He will also give the party hints as to how to get information from the Abeir Academy. His only requirement for helping the PCs is that he doesn't wish to be connected to the characters in case they fail or are found out. He has no idea who in Ruinspoke would have wanted the PCs to use him as a contact.

TALKING TO THE CITY WATCH

Since one theory is that the young dragonborn might have gotten into trouble, checking in with the City Watch is a reasonable course of action for the PCs to pursue. The Watch has several substations throughout the city. The duty officer can check the records and inform the PCs that they don't have any record of anyone named Kallish or Torreck being arrested or getting into any kind of trouble. The watch can also inform the PCs that there are minor crimes and problems reported around the Abeir Academy from

time to time, but nothing that isn't normal for any other large school. The City Watch will be as helpful as possible but they don't have any information for the PCs to go on. They are very competent and should be portrayed as such.

Although the PCs are individuals of ever-increasing status and influence, Djerad Thymar is considerably larger and more cosmopolitan than Ruinspoke. Powerful individuals do not stand on every street corner, but the PCs are not quite at the level yet where they can truly command the attention of the powerful in this city. Thus, any requests the PCs might make for an audience with Vanquisher Tarhun or other leaders of the various Houses will be politely, but firmly, declined.

RITUALS

PCs at the Paragon tier have access to a very good selection of information-gathering rituals, and they are starting to make enough gold during their adventures that they might actually be able and willing to cast some. It's possible that a sufficiently powerful ritual with a sufficiently high skill check and sufficiently well-worded questions could lead the PCs directly to the Black Ash Plain, or at least point to the right person inside the Abeir Academy who can tell the PCs where they need to go. If this happens, that's fine. The PCs should be able to make use of their capabilities and should be rewarded for using those capabilities intelligently. The PCs cannot bypass the combat with the stone giants (Encounter 2) in this fashion, but they can bypass some or all of the skill challenge and still earn full XP, as you see fit.

ABEIR ACADEMY

The following takes place at the Abeir Academy as the party tries to locate the missing dragonborn. The folks at the Academy are remarkably unhelpful, and the PCs must engage in a skill challenge to learn anything of value.

Following the directions you were given, you arrive in front of a large and impressive stone building three stories high. The words "Abeir Academy" are carved in the impressive stone lintel above the entryway.

However, arriving here is only half the battle. Now you must navigate the academy's bureaucracy to find out what happened to Kallish and Torreck. You make your way through the school's hallways to the registrar's office, which is staffed by a bored-looking clerk.

The idea of this skill challenge is to give the party a healthy dose of dealing with the school's bureaucracy. The goal is to uncover enough information to lead them

to the "archaeological dig" in the Black Ash Plains. Even if the party fails the skill challenge, they should be successful in learning enough so that it leads them to the Black Ash Plains. The characters may use several different tactics to attempt to elicit information from the staff at the academy.

The clerk behind the desk does not know any useful information concerning Kallish or Torreck and will look at the PCs like they are crazy if they cause a disturbance or act rudely. The clerk is polite but not overly helpful. With a successful Bluff or Diplomacy check (DC 21/23), the clerk will grudgingly look through the rolls and tell the PCs that Kallish and Torreck are enrolled in the School of Construction and Engineering. This department is one floor up, at the other end of the building.

SKILL CHALLENGE: OFF TO SCHOOL

Goal: Find out what happened to Kallish and Torreck.

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Perception, Streetwise

Other Skills: History, Insight

Victory: The PCs find out the Dragonborn were good students and were selected for an archaeological dig and reconstruction project in the Black Ash Plains. The PCs also learn the general location of the dig site.

Defeat: The PCs learn that the dragonborn were students, and that they left Djerad Thymar to go on a field trip to the Black Ash Plains, but not the location of the dig site.

Bluff DC 21/23 (1 success; 2 maximum)

The PC is able to talk a good game and convinces someone on the staff to part with some information.

Diplomacy DC 21/23 (1 success; 2 maximum)

The PC convinces the staff of their good intentions and that they are here on behalf of the students' families.

History or Insight DC 16/18 (not a success or failure)

The PC attempts to draw upon their own knowledge of how schools operate, or tries to intuit their way through the various layers of bureaucracy. A success gives a +2 bonus to the next primary skill check. A failure imparts a -2 penalty to the next primary skill check.

Intimidate DC 21/23 (1 success; 1 maximum)

The PC is able to intimidate someone on the staff into revealing pertinent information. However, a failure here causes the staff member to alert their superiors about

the PCs and all the unfriendly, probing questions they are asking. This increases the DC of all subsequent primary skill checks by +2.

Perception DC 21/23 (1 success; 1 maximum).

The PC notices one of the missing dragonborn's names on a document the clerk is looking through.

Streetwise DC 21/23 (1 success; 2 maximum).

The PCs talk to students around campus. Several of the students here know of Kallish and Torreck and will talk to the PCs about them.

The characters should learn the following information as they progress through the skill challenge. Dole out another tidbit with each success. Do not give it all out with one successful check. The staff at the Academy are highly political, suspicious of outsiders, and anything that even seems like it could result in bad publicity (like, say, missing students) causes people to be very tight-lipped.

- Kallish and Torreck are students at the Academy. They both enrolled about four weeks ago at the start of the current term. So far they have earned good marks from all their teachers and have not gotten in any trouble.
- Both of the dragonborn were selected for a "field trip" to accompany a few other students and several teachers to an archaeological dig in the Black Ash Plains.
- The department sends students to this site once or twice per term. There are a number of examples of ancient stonework techniques at the site which have survived for hundreds or thousands of years. The most recent group of students and teachers left a week ago and aren't expected back for another month.
- (Only when the 4th success is reached) The PCs finally locate someone who can give them reasonably accurate directions to the actual dig site.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the party either succeeds or fails on the skill challenge, or learns the information they need (the fact that the missing dragonborn went to a specific site in the Black Ash Plain) in some other fashion.

Success: By the time the PCs get the necessary information, it will be late afternoon in Djerad Thymar. The PCs can either leave now or in the morning. If the PCs leave now, they will camp out on the plains but will be able to surprise the giants in the next encounter. If

the PCs decide to leave in the morning, they might or might not be surprised by the giants (depending on their Perception scores).

Failure: If the party fails the skill challenge, they still find out that the missing dragonborn went to the Black Ash Plain, but their directions are much less precise. The additional travel time caused by this failure means that the PCs will be surprised by the giants in the next encounter.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters earn 120 / 160 XP for successfully completing the skill challenge.

TREASURE

There is no treasure for this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 2: GOODNIGHT, SWEET DREAMS

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 11/13 (3,100/4,400 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 Stone Giant Runecarver (Level 14) (G)
- 3 Stone Giants (Level 12) (S)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 Stone Giant Runecarver (G)
- 3 Stone Giants (S)

The Cult of the Dragon pays these stone giants to ambush any individuals that come out here. The giants have standing orders to take everyone alive. The giants haul their prisoners to the temple area where the cult puts them to use for labor or as sacrifices.

The ambush takes place roughly a day and a half's travel outside of Djerad Thymar just on the outskirts of the Black Ash Plains. The stone giants only know that the cultists pay them to ambush and deliver travelers to the area, and have no knowledge of the Cult of the Dragon or their relation to the Abeir Academy.

The time of day the PCs arrive will determine how they encounter the giants. This text assumes that the PCs leave in the morning and that they do not have flying mounts. Adjust accordingly if this is not the case.

After a day and a half, your pleasant journey south through the grassy plains is coming to an end - in front of you lies the arid and dusty lands of the Black Ash Plain. Large rocks seem to be scattered randomly about with an occasional sad looking tree poking through the flinty soil. A small pond lies up ahead; you must be nearing an oasis.

The giants are hidden among the rocks. If the PCs succeeded on the skill challenge in the previous encounter and left town immediately, then they can attempt to surprise the giants (use opposed Perception for the giants against the PCs' Stealth). If the PCs succeeded at the skill challenge but waited until morning to depart then the giants are ready, but the PCs can avoid being surprised with a high enough passive Perception score (DC 25, or you can roll for each giant

individually and use the lowest result). If the PCs failed the skill challenge in the previous encounter then the giants automatically gain a surprise round.

The calm silence is broken by the whistling sound of giant-sized boulders headed your way.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Large Trees: The large trees are 30 feet tall. They provide cover and the tree trunk is blocking terrain.

Small Trees: The small trees are difficult terrain.

Large Rocks: The large rocks are blocking terrain to anyone not of Large size. For Large creatures a rock is considered difficult terrain.

Pond: The pond is difficult terrain. It is 10 feet deep.

Skeleton: The skeleton is difficult terrain.

TACTICS

The giants start with ranged attacks and engage in melee only if the PCs move up close. The giants preferentially target flying PCs (or their flying mounts).

The stone giants use their *staggering sweep* at the beginning of melee combat. The runecarver attacks from range using its *rune of stony sleep* followed up with a *rune of thundering echo*. It uses its *grasping stone* power against slowed opponents.

The giants do not want to kill the PCs, because they get paid less. If the PCs are defeated they are stripped of weapons, bound and gagged, then immediately taken to the cultists.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one stone giant

Six PCs: Add one stone giant runecarver

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter ends when the fight does.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters earn 620 / 880 XP each for defeating the stone giants.

TREASURE

The monsters carry a total of 100 / 120 gp per PC. One of the stone giants wears *giant gloves*, and the runecarver wears a *ring of giants*.

ENCOUNTER 2: "GOODNIGHT, SWEET DREAMS" STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Stone Giant Runecarver (Level 14)	Level 14 Controller (Leader)
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant)	XP 1,000
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +13; low-light vision	
Hardened Focus aura 5; each petrified enemy within the aura loses all resistances and gains vulnerable 5 to all damage.	
HP 139; Bloodied 69	
AC 28; Fortitude 27, Reflex 25, Will 27	
Immune petrification	
Speed 8 (earth walk)	
m Enruned War Pick (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 (crit 4d8 + 24) damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
A Rune of Stony Sleep (standard; recharge 6)	
Area burst 1 within 10; +19 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). <i>First Failed Saving Throw.</i> The target is petrified instead of slowed (save ends). <i>Effect:</i> The burst creates a zone of magical runes that lasts until the end of the encounter. Each enemy that starts its turn within the zone takes a –2 penalty to saving throws against slowed and immobilized.	
A Rune of Thundering Echo (standard; recharge 5 6)	
Area burst 1 within 10; +20 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 thunder damage. If the target is slowed or immobilized, it takes ongoing 10 thunder damage (save ends).	
Grasping Stone	
When a stone giant runecarver hits a slowed creature with an attack that would cause the creature to become slowed, that creature is immobilized until the end of the runecarver's next turn.	
Stone Bones (immediate interrupt, when the stone giant is hit by an attack; not usable while bloodied; at-will)	
The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Giant, Primordial
Skills Arcana +16, Athletics +17, Stealth +16	
Str 21 (+12)	Dex 12 (+8) Wis 23 (+13)
Con 19 (+11)	Int 18 (+11) Cha 15 (+9)
Equipment warhammer	

Stone Giant (Level 12)	Level 12 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant)	XP 700
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +11; low-light vision	
HP 124; Bloodied 62	
AC 28; Fortitude 25, Reflex 22, Will 24	
Immune petrification	
Speed 8 (earth walk)	
m Stone Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the stone giant's next turn.	
M Hardened Threat (opportunity, when a creature marked by the stone giant and within its reach moves or shifts; at-will)	
The giant makes a stone greatclub attack against the triggering enemy.	
R Hurl Rock (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 20; +19 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.	
C Staggering Sweep (standard; recharges when first bloodied)	
♦ Weapon	
Close blast 2; +17 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and marked until the end of the stone giant's next turn. <i>Effect:</i> The giant shifts 2 squares but must remain within 2 squares of any creatures marked by it.	
Stone Bones (immediate interrupt, when the stone giant is hit by an attack; not usable while bloodied; at-will)	
The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Giant
Skills Athletics +17, Stealth +14	
Str 22 (+12)	Dex 16 (+9) Wis 20 (+11)
Con 20 (+11)	Int 10 (+6) Cha 11 (+6)
Equipment greatclub, 8 stones	

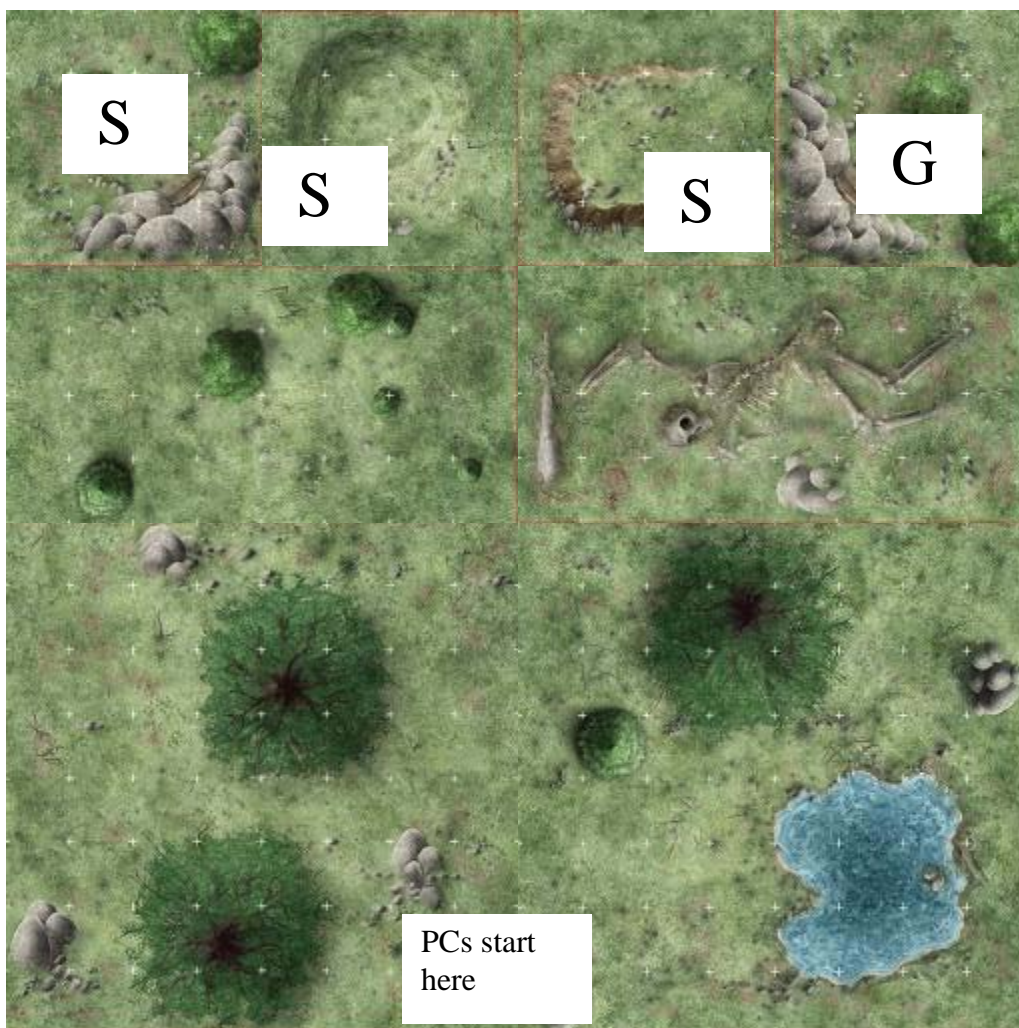
ENCOUNTER 2: "GOODNIGHT, SWEET DREAMS" STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Stone Giant Runecarver		Level 16 Controller (Leader)
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant)		XP 1,400
Initiative +9 Senses Perception +14; low-light vision		
Hardened Focus aura 5; each petrified enemy within the aura loses all resistances and gains vulnerable 5 to all damage.		
HP 155; Bloodied 77		
AC 30; Fortitude 29, Reflex 27, Will 29		
Immune petrification		
Speed 8 (earth walk)		
m Enruned War Pick (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 9 (crit 4d8 + 25) damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
A Rune of Stony Sleep (standard; recharge 6)		
Area burst 1 within 10; +21 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). <i>First Failed Saving Throw:</i> The target is petrified instead of slowed (save ends). <i>Effect:</i> The burst creates a zone of magical runes that lasts until the end of the encounter. Each enemy that starts its turn within the zone takes a –2 penalty to saving throws against slowed and immobilized.		
A Rune of Thundering Echo (standard; recharge 5 6)		
Area burst 1 within 10; +21 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 thunder damage. If the target is slowed or immobilized, it takes ongoing 10 thunder damage (save ends).		
Grasping Stone		
When a stone giant runecarver hits a slowed creature with an attack that would cause the creature to become slowed, that creature is immobilized until the end of the runecarver's next turn.		
Stone Bones (immediate interrupt, when the stone giant is hit by an attack; not usable while bloodied; at-will)		
The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Giant, Primordial
Skills Arcana +17, Athletics +18, Stealth +17		
Str 21 (+13)	Dex 12 (+9)	Wis 23 (+14)
Con 19 (+12)	Int 18 (+12)	Cha 15 (+10)
Equipment warhammer		

Stone Giant		Level 14 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant)		XP 1,000
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +12; low-light vision	
HP 140; Bloodied 70		
AC 30; Fortitude 27, Reflex 24, Will 26		
Immune petrification		
Speed 8 (earth walk)		
m Stone Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the stone giant's next turn.		
M Hardened Threat (opportunity, when a creature marked by the stone giant and within its reach moves or shifts; at-will)		
The giant makes a stone greatclub attack against the triggering enemy.		
R Hurl Rock (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 20; +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage.		
C Staggering Sweep (standard; recharges when first bloodied)		
♦ Weapon		
Close blast 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and marked until the end of the stone giant's next turn. <i>Effect:</i> The giant shifts 2 squares but must remain within 2 squares of any creatures marked by it.		
Stone Bones (immediate interrupt, when the stone giant is hit by an attack; not usable while bloodied; at-will)		
The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Giant
Skills Athletics +18, Stealth +15		
Str 22 (+13)	Dex 16 (+10)	Wis 20 (+12)
Con 20 (+12)	Int 10 (+7)	Cha 11 (+7)
Equipment greatclub, 8 stones		

ENCOUNTER 2: "GOODNIGHT, SWEET DREAMS" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED
Ruins of the Wild x 2



ENCOUNTER 3: NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 11/13, COMPLEXITY 1 (600/800 XP)

SETUP

The characters are trying to find the location of the slavers' base of operations. (At this point the PCs still do not know that they are dealing with the Cult of the Dragon.) There are several ways they can do this and the method they choose determines which skill challenge they undertake. If they try to follow the giant's tracks back to the temple, have them do the first skill challenge. If they try to get the information out of the giants, proceed to the second skill challenge.

Some groups of players really enjoy skill challenges while others do not. Gauge the interest level of your players and adjust this encounter to make as interesting as possible. For example, you could blend these two independent challenges into a larger framework, in which the PCs first need to gain two successes by cajoling some basic directions out of the giants and then use their skills and knowledge to traverse the Black Ash Plain, gaining their final two successes as they try to match those crude directions to what few landmarks and other trail signs exist to guide them to the exact location of the temple.

SKILL CHALLENGE OPTION 1: LOOKING FOR THE TEMPLE

Goal: Find the cultists' temple in the Black Ash Plain by following the giants' tracks to determine where they normally take their prisoners.

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: History, Nature, Perception, Religion

Victory: The PCs are able to follow the tracks and find the main temple and base of operations for the cult.

Defeat: It takes several hours longer to find the ruins in the Black Ash Plains. Each character loses two healing surges due to their extended travel through the harsh terrain and the cultists gain surprise in the following encounter.

History or Religion DC 16/18 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC is able to recall an ancient map or religious text that showed an old temple located in this region. The temple has surely fallen into ruins by now, but it might still serve as a useful base of operations.

Nature or Perception DC 21/23 (1 success, 4 maximum)

The PCs are able to follow the giants' tracks and use clues in the natural surroundings to find their way back to the temple. The lack of permanent terrain features and shifting sands make it difficult to pick up clues.

SKILL CHALLENGE OPTION 2: A GIANT CONVERSATION

The giants speak Giant and the runecarver speaks Primordial as well so the PCs will either need to speak one of these languages or use an appropriate ritual or magic item to communicate with them. The Speak with Dead ritual is another way to communicate with them if the PCs have killed them (or are willing to butcher one for the sake of getting directions). If the PCs have only knocked one of them out then reviving them shouldn't be a problem. Presume the characters heard enough giant spoken during the battle for the Comprehend Languages ritual to work.

Goal: Find the cultists' temple in the Black Ash Plain by persuading the giants to give directions to the location where they take their prisoners.

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate

Other Skill: Insight

Victory: The PCs learn the location of the cultists' temple by talking with the giants.

Defeat: The PCs get partial directions and it takes several hours longer to find the ruins in the Black Ash Plain. Each character loses two healing surges due to their extended travel through the harsh terrain and the cultists gain surprise in the following encounter.

Bluff DC 21/23 (1 success, 4 maximum)

The PC attempts to bluff the giants into revealing the location of the cultists' temple. This is difficult because the giants are not stupid enough to fall for obvious trickery and the PCs will probably underestimate their intelligence.

Diplomacy DC 21/23 (1 success, 4 maximum)

The PC draws the giants into conversation, using the social leverage they have gained by defeating the giants to get the location of the ruins. This is difficult because the giants are not inclined to be cooperative.

Insight DC 16/18 (not a success or failure)

The PC has a flash of insight regarding the best way to convince the giants to share the information that they

know. The giants are also quite responsive to certain notions, such as the PCs letting them go instead of killing them, bribing them to be more cooperative (100 gp will loosen a giant's tongue to the tune of an automatic success), or intimidating them (revealing that the DCs for this skill are lower than for other skills). A successful Insight check can reveal any of the above approaches and grant a +2 bonus on the next primary skill check.

Intimidate DC 16/18 (1 success, 4 maximum)

The PCs use their fierce nature or sheer brawn to get directions to the cultist ruins. This is a little easier as they have already defeated the giants once and can use this as leverage.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After either talking with the giants or trying to follow their tracks (or both), the PCs make their way to the cultists' temple deeper in the Black Ash Plain.

Success: If the party succeeds in the skill challenge, they figure out the location of the ruins and arrive at the temple in good shape.

Failure: If the party fails the skill challenge, they arrive at the temple a little beat up from their extended travel through the Black Ash Plains. Each character loses two healing surges and they are surprised in the following encounter.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters earn 120 / 160 XP for successfully completing the skill challenge.

TREASURE

There is no treasure for this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4: SACRED ONE'S HOME

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 13/14 (4,100/5,900 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 Redspawn Firebelcher (Level 9) (B)
- 2 Dragon Cult Warrior (Level 9) (W)
- 1 Dragon Cult Celebrant (Level 9) (C)
- 1 Adult Brown Dragon

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 Redspawn Firebelcher (Level 11) (B)
- 2 Dragon Cult Warrior (Level 11) (W)
- 1 Dragon Cult Celebrant (Level 11) (C)
- 1 Adult Brown Dragon (Level 12)

Being in the Black Ash Plain, there is no cover in the area except for the holding pen. The cultists are guarding the entrance to the temple which is 100 yards past them. The dragon is underground using his tremorsense to detect the party's arrival. The dragon comes and goes at night to minimize the number of people who know of his presence. None of the slaves know about the dragon and only a few of the cultists know of the dragon's presence.

After a half day's journey deeper into the shifting sands of the Black Ash Plain, you pass through a small, rocky ravine. As you emerge on the other side, you see three men and a large red lizard standing near a pool of water. This isn't a welcoming committee - the men are all armed and they turn to charge at you.

The Cult of the Dragon members are not used to seeing individuals who arrive in any fashion other than led by the stone giants as prisoners. They attack the PCs when they see them as they don't want to allow anyone (the PCs) to disrupt their operation.

When the dragon becomes bloodied, one of the cultists shouts the following in draconic:

"Go now to the inner chamber, sacred one! We can hold these defilers off long enough for the ritual to be completed. Your path to glory shall be purchased with our blood!"

If the cultists are defeated before the dragon is bloodied, the dragon looks towards the temple and shouts the following in a loud booming draconic voice before retreating to the temple:

"Prepare the ritual, for my time of glory is at hand."

If the characters free the slaves from the slave pens, the slaves are grateful. The slaves tell the PCs how they were lured out here with promises of training and work only to be knocked unconscious by the giants before ending up in this camp. Their story sounds very similar to the description of what happened to Kallish and Torreck, but none of the prisoners here are dragonborn. If asked, the slaves tell the PCs that all the dragonborn captives are taken into the temple immediately upon their arrival at this location. These slaves do not know what happens to those who are taken inside, but none have ever come out, so they assume the worst.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The map tiles are from the *Ruins of the Wild* set, but the terrain here is not grassy or green at all. The Black Ash Plain is a desert filled with silt and ash. The trees shown on the map are petrified wood or jagged stone columns left from some previous ruin. Adjust your description of other terrain features to fit with the nature of this area.

Illumination: It is presumed to be daytime and the area is brightly lit. The PCs might choose to wait until nightfall before approaching the temple, in which case you should adjust the encounter accordingly.

Water: The water hole is difficult terrain and is 10 feet deep.

Small Trees: The small trees are difficult terrain.

Large Tree: The large tree is blocking terrain.

Tents: The tents are blocking terrain.

Campfire: Anyone entering the square with the campfire takes 10 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Captive Area: This is a crude cage with bars enclosing the walls and curling across the top to prevent anyone from trying to climb out. The bars are Break DC 26, AC/Reflex 3, Fortitude 15, and HP 100. The lock to the fenced area requires a DC 30 Thievery check to open.

TACTICS

All of the cultists will try to stay within the redspawn belcher's aura to gain its benefits.

The warriors focus their attacks on a single target, preferably one the celebrant has restrained or granted them combat advantage against.

The celebrant begins with *coils of despair* and follows up with *serpents lash*. It will try to stay out of melee for as long as possible. If it does enter melee, it will try to team up with the warriors on one PC.

The redspawn belcher is artillery support and makes ranged attacks unless it has absolutely no other choice. It will try to hit groups of PCs with its *fire blast* as much as possible.

The dragon uses its tremorsense to pick the best place to enter the battle, bursting from the earth behind the party. The dragon starts with its *frightful presence*, then uses an action point followed by its *breath weapon*. It attacks those it has combat advantage against first. It will use its *breath weapon* whenever it recharges. The dragon will save its last action point to get away using its *sand cloud*. The brown dragon retreats to its underground room in the temple once it is bloodied, planning to complete the ritual to become a dracolich and then come back to show these foolish intruders what real power looks like.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one dragon cult warrior.

Six PCs: Add another redspawn firebelcher.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter ends when the PCs have defeated the cultists and the dragon or the PCs have been defeated.

The PCs are able to take a short rest here but not an extended rest. If the PCs wish to take an extended rest, they will have to retreat out of the immediate area. The type of rest, the number of consecutive short rests, or the amount of time taken will determine the strength of the fettered dracolich in the next encounter. The PCs watched the bloodied dragon fly into the temple so they should realize that time is of the essence here.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 570 / 830 XP each for defeating the cultists and brown dragon. The dragon is only worth half its standard XP, because the PCs only have to bloody it, they do not have to kill it.

TREASURE

On the cultists, the PCs find a *wyrmtooth dagger* +3, a pair of *sandwalker boots*, and 50 / 80 gp per PC.

ENCOUNTER 4: "SACRED ONE'S HOME" STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Adult Brown Dragon	Level 10 Solo Lurker
Large natural magical beast (dragon)	XP 2,500
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +9; darkvision, tremorsense 10
HP 420; Bloodied 210	
AC 28; Fortitude 28, Reflex 24, Will 26	
Resist 20 fire	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 8, burrow 6, fly 7, overland flight 14	
Action Points 2	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The dragon makes two claw attacks.	
R Sand Spray (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks the dragon with a ranged attack; at-will)	
Ranged 20; +13 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the dragon's next turn.	
C Breath Weapon (standard; recharge 5 6)	
Close blast 10; +13 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 3 damage. The blast creates an area of swirling sand that remains in place until the end of the dragon's next turn. Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the area or that moves through the area takes 5 damage. The area blocks line of sight for all creatures except the dragon.	
C Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter)	
The dragon's breath weapon recharges automatically, and the dragon uses it immediately.	
C Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +13 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. Aftereffect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Sand Cloud (move; recharge 5 6) ♦ Polymorph	
The brown dragon transforms into a cloud of sand and shifts a number of squares up to its speed. It can move through occupied squares but must end in a legal space. Any creature whose space the dragon enters takes 1d8 + 6 damage and is blinded (save ends). The dragon returns to its normal form at the end of this move.	
Combat Advantage	
The brown dragon deals 2d6 extra damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Endurance +13, Stealth +12	
Str 22 (+11)	Dex 15 (+7) Wis 17 (+8)
Con 17 (+8)	Int 15 (+7) Cha 13 (+6)

First published in *Draconomicon*.

Cult of the Dragon Warrior	Level 9 Brute
(Variant Snaketongue Warrior Level 9)	
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 400
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +5
HP 116; Bloodied 58	
AC 21; Fortitude 19, Reflex 18, Will 18	
Resist 10 poison	
Speed 6	
m Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Poison, Weapon	
+14 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage (1d10 + 5 damage while bloodied) and the snaketongue warrior makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +12 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 10 poison and necrotic damage (save ends).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Religion +10	
Str 16 (+7)	Dex 14 (+6) Wis 12 (+5)
Con 16 (+7)	Int 12 (+5) Cha 14 (+6)
Equipment leather armor, cursed and poisoned greatsword	

Cult of the Dragon Celebrant	Level 9 Controller
(Variant Snaketongue Celebrant Level 9)	
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 400
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +13
HP 101; Bloodied 50	
AC 23; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 22	
Resist 10 poison	
Speed 7	
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Poison, Weapon	
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage (crit 2d8 + 10), and the snaketongue celebrant makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +12 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 10 necrotic and poison damage (save ends).	
R Serpent's Lash (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Psychic	
Ranged 5; a whip of amber-colored energy lashes the target; +12 vs. Will; 1d8 + 4 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage to all its enemies until the end of the celebrant's next turn.	
A Coils of Despair (standard; recharge 5 6)	
Area burst 5 within 10; targets enemies; +12 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends) by writhing coils of green energy.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Diplomacy +14, Insight +13, Intimidate +14, Religion +12	
Str 17 (+7)	Dex 19 (+8) Wis 19 (+8)
Con 21 (+9)	Int 16 (+7) Cha 21 (+9)
Equipment hooded robe, cursed and poisoned scimitar	

Redspawn Firebelcher (Level 9)		Level 9 Artillery
Large natural beast (reptile)		XP 400
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +5; low-light vision		
Fire Within (Fire) aura 5; allies in the aura gain resist 10 fire.		
HP 79; Bloodied 39		
AC 21; Fortitude 22, Reflex 19, Will 18		
Resist 20 fire		
Speed 4		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦Fire		
+13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
R Fire Belch (standard; at-will) ♦Fire		
Ranged 12; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
A Fire Blast (standard; at-will) ♦Fire		
Area burst 2 within 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 3d6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). Miss: Half damage and no ongoing fire damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages --
Str 18 (+8)	Dex 13 (+5)	Wis 13 (+5)
Con 19 (+8)	Int 2 (+0)	Cha 8 (+3)

ENCOUNTER 4: "SACRED ONE'S HOME" STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Adult Brown Dragon (Level 12)	Level 12 Solo Lurker
Large natural magical beast (dragon)	XP 3,500
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +10; darkvision, tremorsense 10
HP 484; Bloodied 242	
AC 30; Fortitude 30, Reflex 26, Will 28	
Resist 20 fire	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 8, burrow 6, fly 7, overland flight 14	
Action Points 2	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage.	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The dragon makes two claw attacks.	
R Sand Spray (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks the dragon with a ranged attack; at-will)	
Ranged 20; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the dragon's next turn.	
C Breath Weapon (standard; recharge 5 6)	
Close blast 10; +15 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 4 damage. The blast creates an area of swirling sand that remains in place until the end of the dragon's next turn. Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the area or that moves through the area takes 5 damage. The area blocks line of sight for all creatures except the dragon.	
C Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter)	
The dragon's breath weapon recharges automatically, and the dragon uses it immediately.	
C Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. Aftereffect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Sand Cloud (move; recharge 5 6) ♦ Polymorph	
The brown dragon transforms into a cloud of sand and shifts a number of squares up to its speed. It can move through occupied squares but must end in a legal space. Any creature whose space the dragon enters takes 1d8 + 7 damage and is blinded (save ends). The dragon returns to its normal form at the end of this move.	
Combat Advantage	
The brown dragon deals 2d6 extra damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Endurance +14, Stealth +13	
Str 22 (+12)	Dex 15 (+8) Wis 17 (+9)
Con 17 (+9)	Int 15 (+8) Cha 13 (+7)

First published in *Draconomicon*.

Cult of the Dragon Warrior	Level 11 Brute
(Variant Snaketongue Warrior Level 11)	Medium natural humanoid (human)
	XP 600
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +6
HP 136; Bloodied 68	
AC 23; Fortitude 21, Reflex 20, Will 20	
Resist 10 poison	
Speed 6	
m Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Poison, Weapon	
+16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage (1d10 + 6 damage while bloodied) and the snaketongue warrior makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +14 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 10 poison and necrotic damage (save ends).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Religion +11	
Str 16 (+8)	Dex 14 (+7) Wis 12 (+6)
Con 16 (+8)	Int 12 (+6) Cha 14 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, cursed and poisoned greatsword	

Cult of the Dragon Celebrant	Level 11 Controller
(Variant Snaketongue Celebrant)	Medium natural humanoid (human)
	XP 600
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +14
HP 117; Bloodied 58	
AC 24; Fortitude 22, Reflex 20, Will 24	
Resist 10 poison	
Speed 7	
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Poison, Weapon	
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 2d8 + 11), and the snaketongue celebrant makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +12 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 10 necrotic and poison damage (save ends).	
R Serpent's Lash (standard; recharge 4-6) ♦ Psychic	
Ranged 5; a whip of amber-colored energy lashes the target; +14 vs. Will; 1d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage to all its enemies until the end of the celebrant's next turn.	
B Coils of Despair (standard; recharge 5-6)	
Area burst 5 within 10; targets enemies; +14 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends) by writhing coils of green energy.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Diplomacy +15, Insight +14, Intimidate +15, Religion +13	
Str 17 (+8)	Dex 19 (+9) Wis 19 (+9)
Con 21 (+10)	Int 16 (+8) Cha 21 (+10)
Equipment hooded robe, cursed and poisoned scimitar	

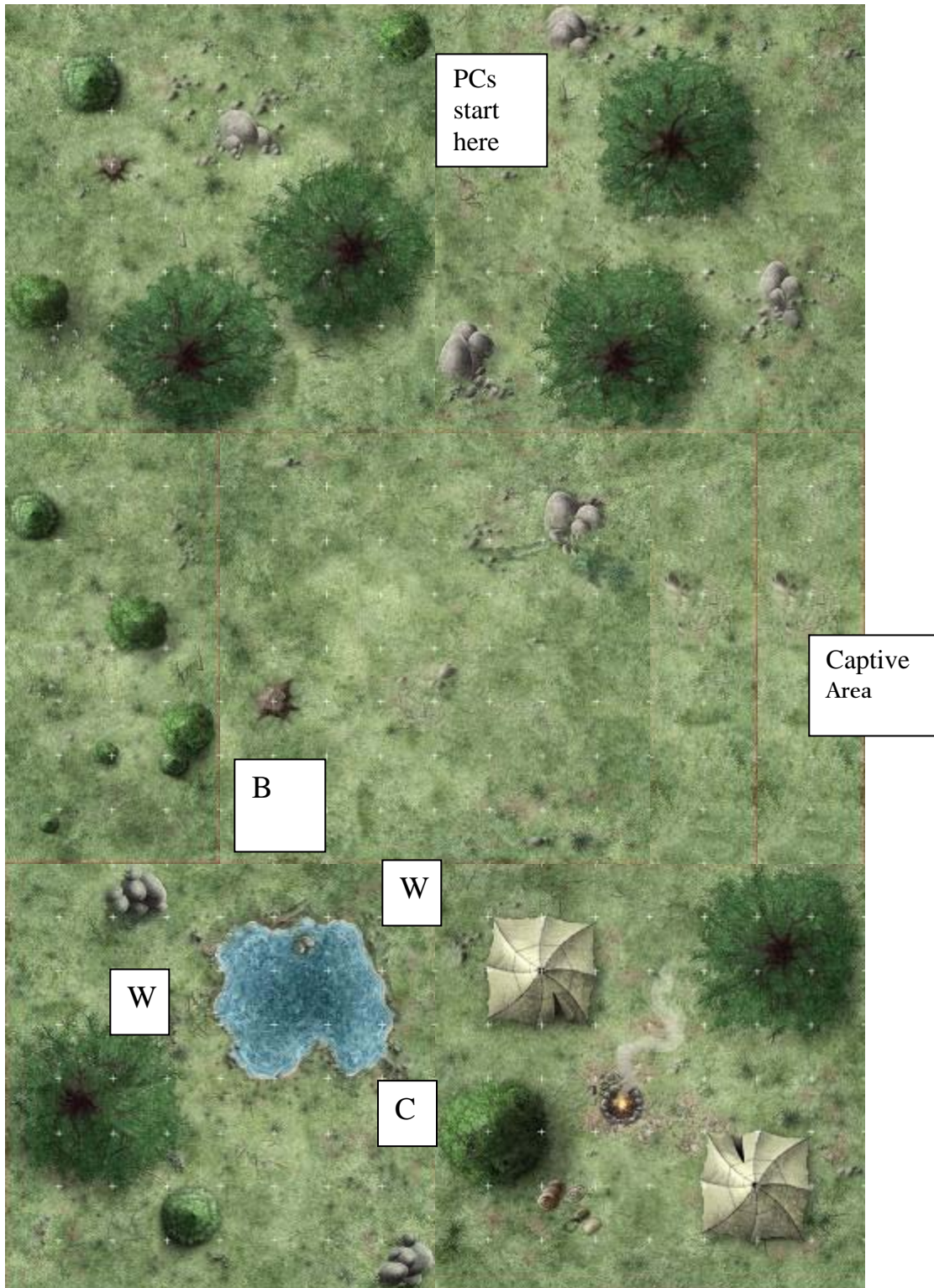
Redspawn Firebelcher (Level 11)		Level 11 Artillery
Large natural beast (reptile)		XP 600
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +6; low-light vision		
Fire Within (Fire) aura 5; allies in the aura gain resist 10 fire.		
HP 91; Bloodied 45		
AC 23; Fortitude 24, Reflex 21, Will 20		
Resist 20 fire		
Speed 4		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦Fire		
+15 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
R Fire Belch (standard; at-will) ♦Fire		
Ranged 12; +14 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 1 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
A Fire Blast (standard; at-will) ♦Fire		
Area burst 2 within 10; +14 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 1 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). Miss: Half damage and no ongoing fire damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages --
Str 18 (+9)	Dex 13 (+6)	Wis 13 (+6)
Con 19 (+9)	Int 2 (+1)	Cha 8 (+4)

ENCOUNTER 4: "SACRED ONE'S HOME" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Ruins of the Wild x 1

Note: the Brown Dragon comes up from the sand behind the PCs after combat starts.



ENCOUNTER 5: TRANSFORMATION

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 13/14 (4,000/5,700 XP)

SETUP

If the characters took an extended rest after fighting the cultists, the dracolich has already left the temple. The PCs could probably use rituals or other means to track it down, but pursuing it once it escapes is beyond the scope of this adventure. The dragon is furious at being transformed into a fettered dracolich (it was promised much more freedom and power, but the Cult of the Dragon betrayed it). The dracolich is flying towards the Cult's stronghold in the ruins of Unthalass (see page 246 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*). Tracking down and destroying an escaped dracolich could form the subject of an entire My Realms adventure.

This encounter includes the following creature at low tier:

Fettered Dracolich (Level 12) (D)
5 Dragonscale Sloughs (Level 10)

This encounter includes the following creature at high tier:

Fettered Dracolich (Level 14) (D)
5 Dragonscale Sloughs (Level 12)

The map is only to the temple area where the ritual to turn the brown dragon into a fettered dracolich is cast. The trap door leads to an escape tunnel. More information on the tunnel is below. The cultists stay in a separate area.

As you travel the 100 yards to the temple entrance, you begin to hear loud drumming and chanting taking place inside. As you near a set of double doors, the chanting and drumming abruptly stops. You hear a number of loud screams that are quickly silenced.

Bursting through the doors, you see that the ritual seems to have succeeded in turning the dragon into a dracolich. A closer look tells you that something is not right. It appears that the ritual was not totally successful and the dracolich seems more animalistic than it should.

Taking your eyes briefly off of the feral dracolich, you notice that the floor is littered with dead Cult of the Dragon members. They seem to have been killed by some sort of necrotic spell as well as by tooth and claw.

The dracolich looks at you with a glint of recognition as it roars a challenge.

From the quivering pile of flesh and scales that once made up the living body of the now-undead dragon, you can see movement.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: There are sconces on each corner of the room as well as every four squares around the room. The symbol in the middle of the room provides bright light for 10 squares in each direction.

Lever: The lever opens and closes the door in the floor. It is in the closed position.

Tunnel: The tunnel goes down 20 feet before going horizontal and it is 30 feet high and 30 feet wide. It goes west for two miles before emerging on the surface. There is a lever in the tunnel to close the trap door.

TACTICS

The dracolich is very upset that it is fettered and immediately attacks. It uses *frightful presence* followed by its *breath weapon* against the PCs. The dracolich uses the best tactics it knows against the party. Against a party with good ranged attacks and weak melee attacks, it will stay on the ground, because it is a clumsy flier and takes penalties to attacks and defenses while flying. Against a strong melee party with weak ranged attacks it may start flying to avoid some of the melee attacks and use its reach and *breath weapon* to attack the party. The dracolich targets the greatest threat at the time. It uses tactics to keep melee characters off him as much as possible. It uses its second action point to move to the lever to open the trap door and flee the area if it is reduced to below one-quarter of its hit points.

The dragonscale sloughs were created by the necrotic energy that was unleashed when the living dragon turned into an undead dracolich and shed its flesh and scales. They attempt to grapple unsuspecting PCs (climbing up the walls if necessary). Should the fight start to drag between the PCs and the dracolich, and you think the PCs can handle a bit of extra challenge, have an additional set of 5 dragonscale sloughs drop on the party's back rank from the ceiling. Make sure your descriptions of this disgusting experience are sufficiently entertaining!

If you are running short on time you can have the dracolich flee down the tunnel when it becomes bloodied.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Subtract 64 hit points from the fettered dracolich and reduce all its defenses by 2. Do not change its attacks, damage, or other characteristics.

Six PCs: Give the dracolich a special ability to deal extra damage while bloodied, as follows:

Fury of the Fettered Dracolich (while bloodied)

While it is bloodied, all of the fettered dracolich's attacks deal extra damage equal to its level.

If the PCs were able to kill the brown dragon outside, instead of just bloodying it, reduce all the fettered dracolich's defenses by 2. This represents the cultists using a different dragon carcass that was in “less than perfect” condition.

If the PCs came directly down here after combating the brown dragon and the cultists in Encounter 4 (without even taking a short rest), then they arrive just as the ritual is completed. A burst of energy erupts through the entire temple as the dragon's transformation into a dracolich unleashes tremendous power. All of the PCs' expended encounter powers (but not daily powers) are recharged, exactly as if they had taken a short rest. The PCs do not regain any magic item uses or other benefits that they would normally receive from a short rest, however.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter ends when either the PCs have defeated or driven off the dracolich or the dracolich has defeated the PCs.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 800 / 1,140 XP for defeating the fettered dracolich and the dragonscale sloughs.

TREASURE

The PCs discover a chest that was supposed to be for the dracolich (some baubles to soothe it for the cult's trickery). The chest contains a *mantle of faith* +3 and a *war ring* (high-level version only) along with 200 / 300 gp per PC worth of gems and jewelry.

ENCOUNTER 5: "TRANSFORMATION" STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Fettered Dracolich	Level 12 Solo Controller
Large natural magical beast (dragon, undead)	XP 3,500
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +5; darkvision
HP 496; Bloodied 248	
AC 30; Fortitude 31, Reflex 27, Will 27	
Immune disease, fear, poison	
Resist 20 Necrotic; Vulnerable 10 radiant	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 8, fly 10 (clumsy)	
Action Points 2	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage. Against a stunned target, this attack deals an extra 2d8 necrotic damage.	
C Breath Weapon (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ Necrotic	
Close blast 10; +16 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the fettered dracolich's next turn. Miss: Half damage, and the target is not stunned. Hit or Miss: The target loses any necrotic resistance it has (save ends).	
C Bloodied Breath (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)	
The fettered dracolich's breath weapon recharges automatically, and the dracolich uses it immediately.	
M Crazy Lashing (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves into a position that flanks the fettered dracolich; at-will)	
Reach 2; the fettered dracolich makes a tail slap attack against the enemy; +18 vs. AC; 2d4 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
C Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +15 vs Will; the target is stunned until the end of the fettered dracolich's next turn. Aftereffect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the encounter.	
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Endurance +16	
Str 22 (+12)	Dex 18 (+10) Wis 9 (+5)
Con 20 (+11)	Int 9 (+5) Cha 16 (+9)

First published in *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

Dragonscale Slough (Level 10)	Level 10 Minion
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 125
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +7; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 24; Fortitude 20, Reflex 22, Will 23	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic	
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)	
m Grabbing Slam (standard; at-will)	
+17 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the target is grabbed; see also <i>squeezing scales</i> .	
M Squeezing Scales (standard; at-will)	
Targets a creature grabbed by the dragonscale slough; 9 damage (no attack roll required)	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages --
Skills Stealth +14	
Str 20 (+10)	Dex 22 (+11) Wis 14 (+7)
Con 22 (+11)	Int 1 (+0) Cha 8 (+4)

First published in *Open Grave*.

Description: This slithering pile of molted scales often forms where a dragon has died or has spent a considerable amount of time. The sloughs have many of the same attitudes and instincts of their progenitors, and they are quite hostile.

ENCOUNTER 5: "TRANSFORMATION" STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Fettered Dracolich Level 14	Level 14 Solo Controller
Large natural magical beast (dragon, undead)	XP 5,000
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +6; darkvision
HP 560; Bloodied 280	
AC 32; Fortitude 33, Reflex 29, Will 29	
Immune disease, fear, poison	
Resist 20 Necrotic; Vulnerable 10 radiant	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 8, fly 10 (clumsy)	
Action Points 2	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage. Against a stunned target, this attack deals an extra 2d8 necrotic damage.	
C Breath Weapon (standard; recharge 5,6) ♦ Necrotic	
Close blast 10; +18 vs Reflex; 2d8 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the fettered dracolich's next turn. Miss: Half damage, and the target is not stunned. Hit or Miss: The target loses any necrotic resistance it has (save ends).	
C Bloodied Breath (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)	
The fettered dracolich's breath weapon recharges automatically, and the dracolich uses it immediately.	
M Crazy Lashing (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves into a position that flanks the fettered dracolich; at-will)	
Reach 2; the fettered dracolich makes a tail slap attack against the enemy; +20 vs AC; 2d4 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
C Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +17 vs Will; the target is stunned until the end of the fettered dracolich's next turn. Aftereffect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the encounter.	
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Endurance +17	
Str 22 (+13)	Dex 18 (+11) Wis 9 (+6)
Con 20 (+12)	Int 9 (+6) Cha 16 (+10)

First published in *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

Dragonscale Slough (Level 12)	Level 12 Minion
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 175
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +8; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 26; Fortitude 22, Reflex 24, Will 25	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic	
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)	
m Grabbing Slam (standard; at-will)	
+19 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the target is grabbed; see also <i>squeezing scales</i> .	
M Squeezing Scales (standard; at-will)	
Targets a creature grabbed by the dragonscale slough; 9 damage (no attack roll required)	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages --
Skills Stealth +15	
Str 20 (+11)	Dex 22 (+12) Wis 14 (+8)
Con 22 (+12)	Int 1 (+1) Cha 8 (+5)

First published in *Open Grave*.

Description: This slithering pile of molted scales often forms where a dragon has died or has spent a considerable amount of time. The sloughs have many of the same attitudes and instincts of their progenitors, and they are quite hostile.

ENCOUNTER 5: "TRANSFORMATION" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Dire Tombs x 1



ENCOUNTER 6: RETURNING HOME

SETUP

If the PCs defeat or drive off the dracolich, and they did not take an extended rest before entering the main temple after the initial brown dragon fight, continue with the following:

After battling giants, cultists, a brown dragon, and finally a dracolich, you are at last able to catch your breath. Searching the remains of the cultists you are able to find a set of keys and some letters.

The PCs are able to search the rest of the complex which is empty except for one room which contains the missing dragonborn from Ruinspoke. However, if the PCs took an extended rest before entering the temple after fighting the cultists and the brown dragon, then the prisoners here were sacrificed to fuel the dracolich's transformation. Assuming that did not happen, continue with the following when the PCs reach this area.

This room appears to be a holding pen for those who the cultists are preparing for sacrifice. Six jail cells surround various torture devices in the center of the chamber.

(If the prisoners are still here) The prison cells are filled with dragonborn who seem to have been tortured and beaten into unconsciousness. Two of them match the description of Kallish and Torreck from Ruinspoke.

The dragonborn were given special prisoner status because of their resemblance to (and known hatred of) dragons. They have suffered terrible things at the hands of the cultists, but they are still alive.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs are able to travel back to Djerad Thymar and then to Ruinspoke to report to Lord Tuanek what has happened.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

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

TREASURE

Tuanek pays each PC 850 / 1,700 gold pieces for finding out and reporting what happened to his nephew and friend and gives them a *cincture of vivacity* (low-level only) or *baldric of time* (high-level only).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs return from their adventure to report their findings. If they rescued the dragonborn, they are hailed as heroes in Ruinspoke. Tuanek throws a celebratory feast in their honor. Later, he invites them back to his office and listens intently to what they have to say, asking any appropriate questions of the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following:

Lord Tuanek is elated upon hearing of the rescue of his nephew and the other slaves. As you tell him of your adventures, Tuanek listens intently, a look of concern crossing his face upon as you relate what you have discovered. "I thank you for your efforts in this matter." He shakes his head. "It is as I feared; the disappearances seem to be part of a larger operation."

Tuanek pauses as if contemplating what he has just learned as it relates to other recent events. "It is beginning to make sense now. This is very troubling news for our area. I can scarcely believe that the Cult of the Dragon is operating even within Djerad Thymar itself, and yet you have proven that this is so. I must cut our meeting short, as I would like to pass along the information you have provided so this matter is handled appropriately."

He nods, and several young dragonborn enter the room carrying small chests. Tuanek continues, "However, before I go, I would like to formally state that Ruinspoke, House Jalt, and I thank you deeply for your assistance in this matter. Your skill and dedication do you much credit. I hope I may call upon you in the future. When next I find myself in the august presence of Vanquisher Tarhun, I shall endeavor to mention your names."

If they rescued the missing dragonborn from Ruinspoke, then each PC receives a personal medal presented by Lord Tuanek himself (TYMA12 *Silver Maw of House Jalt*).

If they killed the dracolich, each PC receives TYMA13 *Enmity of the Cult of the Dragon*.

REWARDS SUMMARY

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

EXPERIENCE POINTS

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

Encounter 1: Off to School

120 / 160 XP

Encounter 2: Goodnight Sweet Dreams

620 / 880 XP

Encounter 3: Needle in a Haystack

120 / 160 XP

Encounter 4: Sacred One's Home

570 / 830 XP

Encounter 5: Transformation

800 / 1,140 XP

Minor Quest: Rescue the Slaves

10 / 30 XP

Total Possible Experience

2,240 / 3,200 XP

Gold per PC

1,200 / 2,200 gp

(Encounter 2: 100 / 120 gp, Encounter 4: 50 / 80 gp, Encounter 5: 200 / 300 gp, Encounter 6: 850 / 1700 gp)

TREASURE

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

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

he or she earns to have a negative total for the adventure. PCs receive 20% of the item's market price when they sell any magic item or consumable. They receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

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

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

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BUNDLES:

Bundle A: *wyrmtooth dagger** (level 12; PH2)

Found in Encounter 4

Bundle B: *giant gloves** (level 13; AV)

Found in Encounter 3

Bundle C: *sandwalker boots** (level 14; AV2)

Found in Encounter 4

Bundle D: *ring of giants** (level 13; Dragon Magazine 378)

Found in Encounter 3

Bundle E: *mantle of faith* +3* (level 14; Manual of the Planes)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle F: *war ring** (level 16; AV) (high-level version only)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle G: *cincture of vivacity** (level 14; AV) (low-level version only)

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle H: *baldric of time** (level 16; AV2) (high-level version only)

Found in Encounter 6

Potion Plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *potion of vitality* (PH) plus 300/1,100 gp to their total gold per PC. The player should write the potion gained on their adventure log.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 1,300/ 2,100 gp to their total gold per PC.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards.

TYMA12 Silver Maw of House Jalt

For your efforts in finding out what happened to Lord Tuanek's nephew, you have gained great favor and respect with House Jalt and the people of Ruinspoke. As a token of his appreciation, the dragonborn lord has given you a finely worked silver charm, resembling a dragon head, engraved with "Jalt" on its outer surface and set with small diamonds for eyes. This charm can be worn on a necklace or a bracelet if you so choose.

This favor grants you a significant measure of notoriety in Ruinspoke. You are regarded as a staunch ally by Lord Tuanek, and any dragonborn of House Jalt who sees the necklace will regard you in a more positive light. If you garner additional Recognitions of House Jalt, then the amount of influence you receive will increase.

If you are a native of Tymanther, or a dragonborn who is willing to relocate, and you have received other recognitions of House Jalt, then you now find yourself on the right track to receive an introduction to the Lance Defenders or the Platinum Cadre in a future adventure. Perhaps your name will someday even reach the ears of Vanquisher Tarhun himself.

TYMA13 Enmity of the Cult of the Dragon

Your investigation into the disappearance of a group of students from the Abeir Academy in Djerad Thymar led you to the Black Ash Plain, where you discovered a great threat to all of Tymanther. Your actions and revelations have drawn the notice of many powerful factions within Tymanther. Some of the attention is good and some isn't; which side will prevail remains to be seen. By exposing the Cult of the Dragon's activities, you have certainly drawn their attention and ire. They will seek retribution for their losses.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

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

1. Did the PCs defeat the stone giants?

- a. Yes, the PCs killed the giants.
- b. Yes, the PCs defeated the giants, but did not kill them.
- c. No, the PCs were forced to flee or were taken prisoner by the giants.

2. Did the PCs defeat the brown dragon?

- a. Yes, the PCs bloodied the brown dragon and it fled.
- b. Yes, the PCs killed the brown dragon outright before it could get away.
- c. No, the PCs were defeated by the brown dragon or never encountered it.

3. Did the PCs defeat the fettered dracolich?

- a. Yes, the PCs destroyed the dracolich outright.
- b. Yes, the PCs were able to force the dracolich to flee.
- c. The PCs were on track to defeat the dracolich, when I called the combat on account of time.
- d. The PCs were not on track to defeat the dracolich, when I called the combat on account of time.
- e. No, the PCs were outright defeated by the dracolich or never encountered it.

4. How long (real-world time) did it take you to finish this adventure?

- a. Less than four hours
- b. Between four and five hours
- c. Between five and six hours
- d. More than six hours

NEW RULES

Cincture of Vivacity

Level 14

Wearing this heavy damask wrap, you can exceed your body's normal recuperative ability.

Item Slot: Waist 21,000 gp

Property: When you spend a healing surge and regain hit points above your maximum hit points, you can keep the extra hit points as temporary hit points until the end of the encounter.

Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page 165.

Baldric of Time

Level 16

This rough-textured belt seems to be coated in the sands of time.

Item Slot: Waist 45,000 gp

Property: When you roll a 20 on your initiative check, you gain an extra standard action during the first turn of the encounter.

Reference: Adventurer's Vault 2

Giant Gloves

Level 13

Though they make your hands appear larger, these thick leather wraps fit comfortably and give you an impressive grip.

Item Slot: Hands 17,000 gp

Property: Gain a +3 item bonus to grab attack rolls.

Power (Daily): Standard Action. While you have a creature of your size category or smaller grabbed, you can end the grab by throwing the creature, causing it to slide 6 squares. You can throw the creature at a target provided the thrown creature ends its forced movement in a space adjacent to the target. In this case, make an attack against the target: Dexterity + 4 vs. Reflex; on a hit, the thrown creature and the target each take 2d8 + Strength modifier damage and are knocked prone.

Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page 133 (includes errata).

Mantle of Faith +3

Level 14

Woven of celestial thread, these vestments carry the boon of divine protection.

Lvl 14 (+3) 21,000 gp

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Immediate Reaction. Use this power when you take damage from an attack. Regain hit points equal to the damage taken up to twice your healing surge value.

Reference: Manual of the Planes, page 157.

Sandwalker Boots

Level 14

These supple buckskin boots let you glide through the desert sand like a dolphin through water.

Item Slot: Feet 21,000 gp

Property: You gain a burrow speed of 6 in sand. You can breathe sand as if it were air.

Reference: Adventurer's Vault 2.

Ring of Glants

Level 13

Your limbs are infused with the strength of a creature much larger than yourself.

Item Slot: Ring 17,000 gp

Property: Gain a +2 bonus to critical hit damage per enhancement bonus of the weapon you wield.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with a primal attack power. In addition to the power's normal effect, you also push the target 2 squares and knock it prone.

Reference: Dragon Magazine, Issue 378

War Ring

Level 16

This steel band, emblazoned with a stylized sword, makes your attacks even more lethal.

Item Slot: Ring 45,000 gp

Property: When you score a critical hit, deal 1 extra die of critical hit damage, based on the weapon or implement you wield. If your weapon or implement deals no extra damage when you score a critical hit, deal an extra 1d6 damage when you score a critical hit.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you score a critical hit with a weapon or implement. Add 2 extra dice of critical hit damage based on the weapon or implement. If your weapon or implement deals no extra damage when you score a critical hit, deal an extra 2d6 damage when you score a critical hit.

If you've reached at least one milestone today, instead of rolling the extra dice of critical hit damage, deal extra damage equal to the maximum value of those dice.

Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page 163.

Wyrmtooth Dagger +3

Level 12

Carved from a dragon's tooth, this dagger can strip away a creature's elemental defenses.

Lvl 12 (+3) 13,000 gp

Weapon: Dagger

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, and the target loses its resistances (save ends).

Power (Daily): Free Action. Until the end of the encounter, sorcerer attack powers you use through this dagger ignore the resistances of any enemy within 10 squares of you.

Reference: Player's Handbook 2, page 204.

PLAYER HANDOUTS

PLAYER HANDOUT 1

A great deal of thought and care clearly went into this letter. The parchment is of the finest quality, and the ink is flecked with tiny bits of gold. The calligraphy is impeccable, with a formal style and precision that almost certainly indicates that it was penned by someone with a great respect for tradition.

Honorable One,

You have my gratitude and the gratitude of Ruinspoke's citizens for your previous deeds on behalf of our people and House Jalt. You have responded with valor to my requests for assistance several times now, and I write to you now with a heavy heart in hope that you will render your assistance once again. I would consider it an honor if you come to Ruinspoke and hear my request. I know that you are quite busy these days, with many demands upon your time and your considerable abilities. I can only hope that my humble entreaty and your fond memories of Ruinspoke and its people will move you enough to visit us once more, however briefly.

In Service, I remain,

Tuanek of House Jalt, Lord of Ruinspoke

PLAYER HANDOUT 2

This letter is written on sturdy parchment, with fine ink. The handwriting of the letter itself does not match the signature, but the penmanship is excellent. Someone clearly valued your time and attention enough to pay for the services of a professional calligrapher.

Salutations,

In recognition of your previous service to Ruinspoke, I write to you now in hope that you are willing to aid the good people of Ruinspoke a second time. I ask that you meet me in Ruinspoke and hear what I have to say. I know that you are someone whose influence is rapidly growing and I assure you that I would not ask you to journey to our remote outpost for a matter that was not worthy of your time and attention.

In Service, I remain,

Tuanek of House Jalt, Lord of Ruinspoke

PLAYER HANDOUT 3

This letter is written on clean but otherwise unremarkable parchment. The penmanship is blocky, but highly readable, in the style of a clerk or other functionary who probably fills out a great deal of paperwork.

Honorable Adventurer:

Lord Tuanek of House Jalt is seeking individuals to assist him with a matter of great importance to the people of Ruinspoke. In making some inquiries, your name has come to my attention as an individual of rapidly growing prestige and influence. Lord Tuanek requests that you travel to Ruinspoke with all haste. We understand that your time is quite valuable, and hope that you will find the offered compensation worthy of consideration.

Eshuna Jalt, Quartermaster, Platinum Cadre of House Jalt

PLAYER HANDOUT 4: RUINSPOKE

Ruinspoke is a frontier village located near the border of Tymanther and the former Mulhorand. Ruinspoke was settled by House Jalt a few years after the dragonborn came to Faerûn. The House decided to charter a settlement here to serve as a border outpost for dragonborn travelers, allowing them to rest and resupply before heading out of Tymanther. The village has grown ever since then.

Population: 758; Dragonborn make up roughly 60% of the population. Tieflings are few and far between; the rest is pretty evenly divided among dwarves, humans, halflings, eladrins, elves, and half-elves.

Government: House Jalt is in charge of Ruinspoke and Lord Tuanek is in charge of House Jalt so in turn Lord Tuanek is in charge of Ruinspoke. Tuanek is an older dragonborn. He came here to “retire” and help train the young ones. He is kind but firm. He doesn’t especially like mercenaries (he worries about their changing loyalties) but does understand that they are needed especially out here on the frontier.

Defense: The town boasts a small number of defenses but they are formidable. House Jalt has a small garrison stationed here and they serve as the city guard. The town has two Lance Defenders assigned to it and a few Platinum Cadre members. (See the Tymanther entry in the Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide for more information about these military organizations.)

Inns: Several inns cater to travelers.

Hammerfell - the proprietor of this clean, but barebones, inn is Olket, a no-nonsense, male dragonborn.

Home Cookin’ - the proprietor is Imiere, a gregarious female half-elf. She is very talkative, loves a good story and treats customers more like family. The furniture has seen better days, but the food is the best in Ruinspoke.

Taverns: The best tavern in Ruinspoke is the Full Mugs. Its proprietor is Temget, a male dwarf whose pride in his homebrewed beer is justifiable. Bring your own mug and the first one’s free. Just don’t cause any trouble.

Supplies: There are a number of places where supplies and essential items can be purchased.

General Store - Hikath’s General Provisions. The proprietor is Almer Hikath, a male human and the second generation of Hikaths to operate this family business. Heavier weapons and armor, as well as foodstuffs and building supplies, are the focus of this store. Almer is professional and helpful, but does not haggle.

Traveling Gear - Spoke in ‘Spoke. The shop is owned and operated by a quiet elderly halfling couple, Jiran and Kelsa Wheelfixer. They used to be wilderness guides, but a bad wagon accident left this couple sidelined a few years back. They loved helping people travel and decided to open a store. Traveling supplies, light weapons, and armor are their specialties. Their son, Wielfan, operates the adjoining stables.

Stables - Trusty’s Stables. The proprietor, Wielfan Wheelfixer, has only been in business a few years. Originally named Trusty’s Rest, after his beloved dappled pony, he changed the name after too many visitors entered the stable and asked for a drink and a bed.

Temples: The Temple of Bahamut is the most prominent, of course. The High Priest is Dauret, a male dragonborn. He has a reputation of being firm yet helpful. There is also a small temple to Ilmater. The High Priestess is Tihaket, an elderly human woman, whose family moved to Tymanther from Mulhorand. She is a skilled midwife and an excellent healer.

Outlying Areas: Most of the outlying areas are not heavily patrolled. The people that live out in the outlying areas tend to be farmers, ranchers, woodsmen, hunters, or trappers. Adventurers often go out to explore the many ruins that dot the area. About as many of them return as don’t.

PLAYER HANDOUT 5: DJERAD THYMAR

This is the information Ahtehk Jalt might have mentioned during your trip from Ruinspoke to Djerad Thymar. Additional information about the city can be found on pages 186-187 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

- Tuanek is very concerned about his missing nephew Kallish, and Kallish's friend Torreck. He wants this matter settled quickly. Tuanek would also like you to find out what you can about the Abeir Academy, which is where the young dragonborn were enrolled.
- Djerad Thymar is the capital of Tymather. It has a population of about 30,000.
- The city is a gigantic pyramidal tower, rising over 1,500 feet tall and is visible for miles.
- The capital is built in three huge stone layers. The bottom layer is 200 feet high and numerous blocks long with countless huge stone pillars on top creating an open air middle layer that supports a huge enclosed stone top layer called the city-bastion.
- The bottom layer is called the catacombs because of all the alleyways that wind through it. It houses crypts for the dead, forges and is used for storage of various food stuffs and large army equipment. There is a large ramp roadway leading to the second layer which is called the Market Place.
- The Market Place as its name indicates is where all the outdoor markets, bazaars, entertainment and a few taverns are located. Staircases wind up the numerous stone pillars to the City-Bastion.
- The City-Bastion is where almost all the people live as well as home to many schools and businesses. The city-bastion is numerous levels high. Schools teaching various aspects of military skills are the most common type of school.
- The very top of the citadel is the Lance Barracks and is reserved for the Tymatheran army.
- The Lance Defenders are part of Tymather's military and they have a post on the top level of Djerad Thymar. Lance Scouts are elite career military personnel trained to conduct long range patrols.
- Tymather (and Djerad Thymar) is ruled by Vanquisher Tarhun. A vanquisher (a cross between monarch and general) shows fitness to rule by rising through the military ranks over a period of at least twenty years, and is finally promoted by general acclaim of military peers. A new vanquisher, always a dragonborn, is chosen every ten years.