

Shadows of the Dusk Queen

By Marc Radle

A Pathfinder RPG adventure
for 8th-level characters

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Throughout the land, legends of the Dusk Queen persist. They speak of a sometimes kind, other times cruel, yet always mysterious fey queen who ruled from her Dusk Tower—a tall spire of smooth, dark stone in the heart of a great, shadowy forest. Perhaps the most gripping legends, however, whisper of the Dusk Queen's sudden and mysterious disappearance.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A mysterious shadow fey known as the Dusk Queen left the Winter Court and came to a forest of shadows where she ruled the land from a great stone tower. Although capable of surprising acts of kindness, the vast majority of her reign was marked by cruelty, violence and death. At some point, the Dusk Queen encountered a powerful wizard from a land of pitiless, burning sun and endless sand traveling in her realm for unknown reasons. Against all logic or reason they fell in love, eventually exchanging dark and secret vows in the Queen's throne room. Because of his homeland, the wizard came to be known as the Sun King.

The two were happy in their own, strange way until the Dusk Queen had a magical mirror created. This powerful item, which was infused with shadowy strands of the Dusk Queen's very life essence, greatly expanded her powers and her ambition. The mirror allowed her to spy on her enemies (both real and imagined), cast powerful spells through it across vast distances, and even magically transport herself or her minions to the farthest locations. The Dusk Queen used her mirror with rapidly growing paranoia and zeal, wreaking havoc and death throughout the land. The Sun King found it more and more difficult to overlook the Queen's escalating acts of evil and violence. When he

learned the Dusk Queen was secretly plotting to invade his home land, the Sun King knew he had to act.

In the deepest part of a cold, moonless night, the Sun King wove his most powerful spells while the Dusk Queen slept, magically banishing her to a hidden and unknown prison. Once the Queen was gone, the wizard smashed the Dusk Queen's Mirror and departed the tower, vowing never to return.

The Sun King's magic did not work as he had planned, however. Due, perhaps, to the lingering spark of love he still harbored within his heart, the Dusk Queen's magical imprisonment was not permanent. Likewise, the destruction of her mirror was also incomplete—five shards of glass exploded from the mirror and, impossibly, came to rest in various locations throughout the surrounding forest, waiting to be found ...

GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins with the characters coming upon a deep and mysterious forest, filled with ever-shifting shadows.

When the PCs first approach the forest, read the following to get the adventure underway:

Before you is a dark forest with trees rising as much as a hundred feet into the air. Foreboding and sorrow seem to emanate from within. Occasionally, shadowy creatures are glimpsed moving among the trees. Slow, plaintive howls echo among the dark branches as a cool wind begins to blow, as if whispering barely discernable words ...

She has returned. She has returned. She has returned.

The trees directly before you slowly part, forming a natural opening which leads into the shadowy woods beyond.

A successful DC 18 Perception check by anyone peering into the dark forest reveals the following:

As your eyes slowly adjust to the dim light, you see the silhouette of a large, tree-like creature emerge from the woods and step onto the path perhaps 30 feet into the forest. The strange creature completely blocks the path and seems to be watching you and waiting.

HOOKS

How and why the PCs have come to the forest of shadow is left to the GM and the needs of the campaign. The party could simply happen upon the forest while traveling through some desolate or otherwise unexplored area and decide to investigate. Alternatively, the forest could be a place well known but avoided by locals which the PCs have specifically come to explore. Local leadership might even hire the PCs to enter the forest, find out if the rumors of the Dusk Queen's return are true and, if so, rid the forest of her foul taint once and for all.

Reluctant PCs can be tempted with legends of specific magical treasures rumored to be within the forest. The party wizard, for example, might hear of a powerful, intelligent spellbook hidden somewhere in the forest and decide to investigate.

A. THE WEeping TREANT (CR 8)

The shadowy silhouette is a weeping treant. It does not respond or react to the PCs in any way unless they enter the forest and approach it. Once the PCs get within 30 feet, read:

A large, living tree with dark, cracked bark blocks the trail in front of you. Black eyes watch you intently. Thick, dark, sap runs unchecked like tears down its gnarled face. The strange creature shows no other sign of emotion.

Suddenly, it speaks in a deep, powerful voice:

“She has returned! The Dusk Queen has returned! Have you come to retrieve the mirror shards for her?”

The weeping treant watches the PCs, silently waiting for an answer. The creature completely blocks the path and lets no one pass until it receives a satisfactory response.

Development

PCs attempting to gain information from the weeping treant, convince it they have indeed come to retrieve the shards for the Dusk Queen or otherwise deceive it in any way, must succeed on a DC 21 Bluff or Diplomacy check.

If the PCs manage to fool the treant, it reveals the locations of the five shards throughout the forest:

- One rests at the bottom of a dark pool*
- One is embedded in the trunk of the Hanging Tree*
- One lies beneath a mound of smooth, black stones*
- One has fallen into a deep pit of shadows*
- One is somewhere within the Putrid Bog*

Once the weeping treant has given this cryptic information, it insists that the PCs leave immediately to retrieve the shards for the Dusk Queen, who resides once again in her tower. The weeping treant might be persuaded to

answer a few additional questions, but very quickly becomes impatient and suspicious.

Should the PCs at any point fail to convince the weeping treant, or if it determines the PCs have been deceiving it, the creature furiously and relentlessly attacks!



Knowledge (arcana, history, local, nobility or planes)

DC Result

- | DC | Result |
|----|--|
| 12 | The Dusk Queen ruled the Shadow Forest and surrounding lands for many years until she vanished mysteriously |
| 16 | The Dusk Queen possessed a powerful magic mirror which she used to control and terrorize her subjects. Someone known as the Sun King smashed the Mirror shortly before the Dusk Queen's sudden and mysterious disappearance. |
| 20 | The Shadow Forest is thought to be inhabited by frightening creatures, many of which come from the Plane of Shadow itself! |
| 24 | The Dusk Queen was protected by a dark paladin. Many whispered that this dread guard was much more to her than simply a royal guard. |
| 28 | The Dusk Queen was a shadow fey who journeyed to the Shadow Forest from the fey realm of the Winter Court. She was also said to be a true theurge, able to wield both arcane and divine magic in powerful and unique ways. |

THE WEeping TREANT

This twisted tree's cracked, black bark is knotted into vaguely humanoid features, with branches for arms and roots for legs. Thick, sap-like black tears run unchecked down its face.

THE WEeping TREANT

(CR 8)

XP 4,800

N Huge plant

Init -1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 7, flat-footed 21 (-1 Dex, +14 natural, -2 size)

hp 114 (12d8+60)

Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +9

Immune plant traits; DR 10/slashing

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +17 (2d6+9/19-20)

Ranged rock +7 (2d6+13)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks rock throwing (180 ft.), trample (2d6+13, DC 25)

STATISTICS

Str 29, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13

Base Atk +9; CMB +20; CMD 29

Feats Alertness, Improved Critical (slam), Improved

Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +12, Sense Motive +21, Stealth -9 (+7 in forests);

Racial Modifiers +16 Stealth in forests, +12 Sense Motive

Languages Common, Sylvan, Treant

SQ acidic tears, double damage against objects, treespeech

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest

Organization solitary or deep grove (2-7)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acidic Tears (Ex) Thick, black tears stream continuously down a weeping treant's face and trunk. These tears are highly acidic—anyone scoring a melee attack on a weeping treant must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save or take 2d4 points of acid damage resulting from splashed tears. Unless neutralized or wiped off (requiring a standard action), the tears linger, dealing 2d4 points of damage for an additional 3 rounds.

Double Damage Against Objects (Ex) A weeping treant that makes a full attack against an object or structure deals double damage.

Treespeech (Ex) A weeping treant has the ability to converse with plants as if subject to a continual *Speak with Plants* spell, and most plants greet them with an attitude of friendly or helpful.

Weeping treants are protectors of dark, shadowy forests. They are as long-lived as the trees themselves and often act as guardians for an entire forest or something specific

within a forest. Weeping treants are terrifying and relentless when forced to fight in defense of their charge. They are inherently distrustful, particularly of anything not of the natural or shadow world, and are notoriously difficult to fool or deceive.

Sages and scholars have long debated why these creatures weep, but the reason or reasons thus far remain a mystery. As for the weeping treants themselves, they refuse to speak of the matter.

The typical weeping treant is 30 feet tall, with a trunk 3 feet in diameter, and weighs 4,500 pounds. Its gnarled trunk is usually twisted and covered in thick, black bark.

Treasure

The weeping treant has no treasure

THE SHADOW FOREST

When the PCs enter the forest itself, the feeling of foreboding and sorrow subtly intensifies. The mysterious, plaintive howls continue to echo among the branches and the chilling wind continues to ...

She has returned. She has returned. She has returned.

A powerful abjuration aura permeates the entire forest, limiting magical transportation such as *dimension door* or *teleport* to a maximum of 30 feet at a time, regardless of the spell's normal range.

Swarms of black stirges (see sidebar) dwell in the upper reaches of the tree tops. They viciously attack any who attempt to climb or fly into the forest's thick upper canopy.

THE SEARCH FOR THE SHARDS

Remember to continually reinforce the dark and mysterious atmosphere as the PCs move throughout the forest. Long, thick shadows tend to obscure vision; the sounds of animals and other, even stranger beasts are randomly heard in the distance; the cold wind whistles and howls through the trees. During moments of inactivity, the wind again seems to wail ...

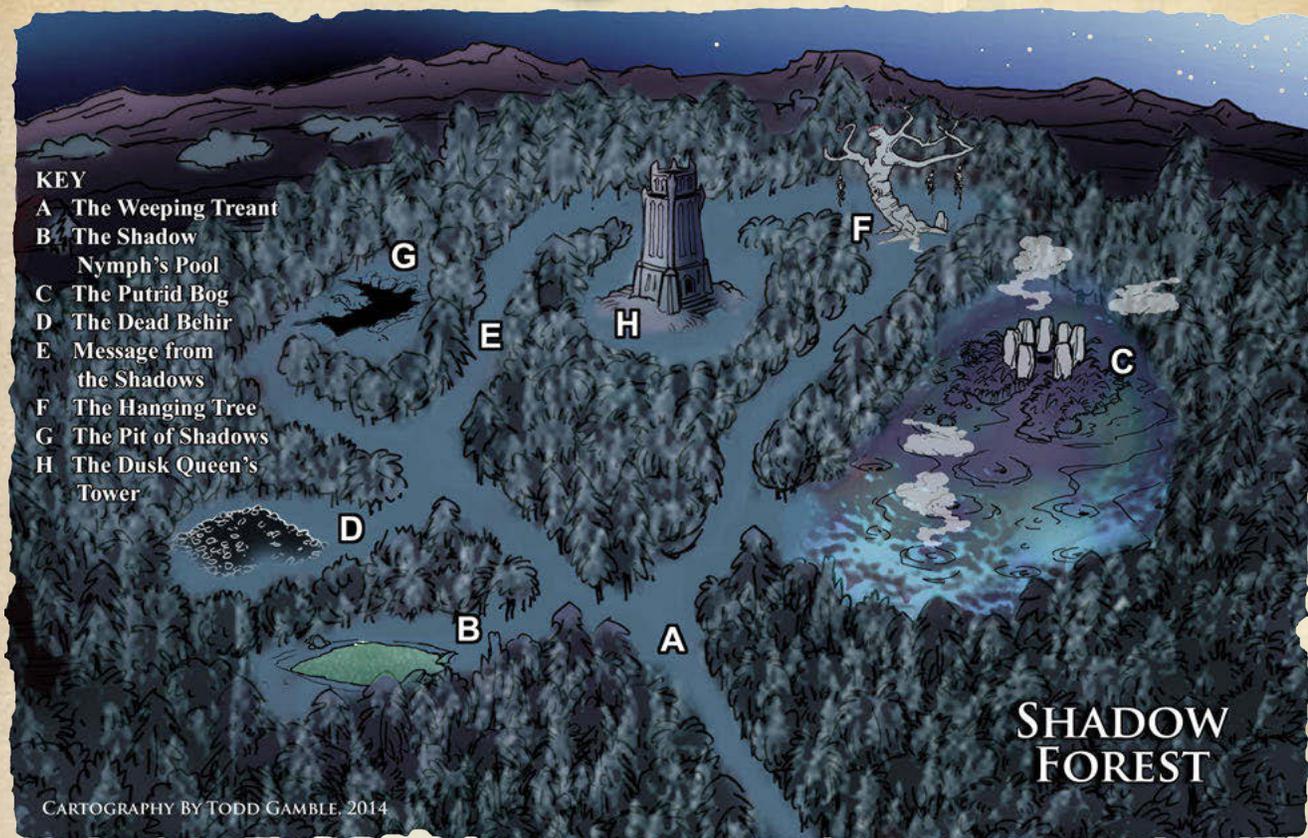
She has returned. She has returned. She has returned.

B. THE SHADOW NYMPHS' POOL (CR 9)

A small pool of calm, dark water lies nestled in a secluded clearing. As you watch, two delicate figures rise gracefully from the still water. The painfully beautiful creatures have long black hair which falls down their bare backs before gathering around their waists on the surface of the dark water.

The two dark beauties stare at you for a moment with calm, suspicious eyes before at last speaking, "Why have you come to our pool? Are you here to harm us?"

Sapphyl and Lasralith, two shadow nymphs, guard one of the shards. They keep it extremely well hidden at the



bottom of their deep, dark pool (DC 30 Perception to find).

The shadow nymphs have no love for the Dusk Queen and are not happy she has escaped from her long imprisonment. A successful DC 20 Diplomacy check convinces the distrustful Shadow Nymphs the PCs are not loyal to the Dusk Queen and mean them no harm. Sapphyl and Lasralith show great relief and beg the PCs to destroy the Dusk Queen once and for all. If the PCs agree, the Shadow Nymphs gladly volunteer to give the PCs the mirror shard they have been hiding since they first found it.

The nymphs are desperate to see the Dusk Queen destroyed. However, Sapphyl and Lasralith also fear for their lives should the Queen learn they've aided the PCs and are unwilling to offer any additional assistance beyond what has been detailed here.

Development

The Shadow Nymphs reveal (or confirm) the locations of the other 4 shards. They stress that the forest is extremely dangerous and that the PCs should remain on the trails at all costs. Additionally, they share a rumor which says if all 5 shards can be found and placed physically together, the combined shards can produce a magic powerful enough to greatly aid in any battle against the Dusk Queen.

Treasure

Sapphyl and Lasralith have 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds* and 1 *scroll of restoration* which they gladly give the PCs to help them in their quest.

BLACK STIRGES

Treat as standard stirges with the following changes:

Shadow Blend (Su) In conditions of illumination other than full daylight, a black stirge disappears into the shadows, giving it concealment (50% miss chance). Artificial illumination, even a *light* or *continual flame* spell, does not negate this ability; a *daylight* spell, however, does. A black stirge can suspend or resume this ability as a free action. This replaces blood drain.

Strength Damage (Su) A black stirge drains 1d4 points of Strength at the end of its turn if it is attached to a living foe. Once a black stirge has drained 4 points of Strength, it detaches and flies off. This is a negative energy effect. A creature dies if this Strength damage equals or exceeds its actual Strength score. If its victim dies before the black stirge has been sated, it detaches and seeks a new target. This replaces diseased.

GM Note

It is important to remember Sapphyl and Lasralith have lived in the forest for a very, very long time and can answer most questions the PCs might have regarding the Dusk Queen and her tower (essentially, the GM should use the Shadow Nymphs to move the story along, clear up any confusion the players might have so far and fill in missing plot points)

THE MIRROR SHARDS

Each of the mirror shards is as wide as a man's fist and just under an inch in thickness. Although apparently made of normal glass, they are extremely difficult to break.

Because the shards have the Shadow Queen's essence within them, they possess a spark of quasi-intelligence. The mirror shards' primary goal is to be rejoined with the Dusk Queen's Mirror. A shard continually urges any PC possessing it to take it to the Queen's Tower. If a PC attempts to damage a mirror shard, remove it from the forest, or do anything else contrary to the shard's goal, it attempts to force the PC into compliance (Will save DC19).

A mirror shard has: **hp** 30; **hardness** 20; **break** DC 30; **Ego** 19 (as long as the Dusk Queen is alive)

Combined Mirror Shards

Aura strong (no school)

Slot none; **Price** -; **Weight** 2 lbs.

If all five mirror shards are held together, so they are stacked on top of each other, front to back, front to back, they have the following powers (CL equal to wielder's character level):

- Wielder can fire an empowered *searing light* spell three times per day. These receive a +4 bonus to overcome SR possessed by creatures vulnerable or sensitive to light
- Instead of the above, the wielder can opt to fire a single maximized *searing light* spell once per day. This automatically overcomes SR possessed by a creature vulnerable or sensitive to light

Anyone can use the five mirror shards in this way, even non-spellcasters.

Although the shards' edges are certainly sharp, reasonably careful PCs should be in no danger of cutting themselves when using the shards in this way. Clever PC might even bind the five shards together with strong cord, wire or rope in order to keep them together and make it easier to use them.

SHADOW NYMPH

Use stats for Nymph but change:

N Medium fey

SQ shadow blend

Shadow Blend (Su) In conditions other than bright light, a shadow nymph can disappear into the shadows

as a move action, becoming invisible. In addition, in conditions other than bright light, a shadow nymph fades in and out of shadows, giving her concealment (50% miss chance). Artificial illumination, even a *light* or *continual flame* spell, does not negate this ability; a *daylight* spell, or another more powerful spell that creates light, however, does. A shadow nymph can suspend or resume this ability as a free action.

WANDERING MONSTERS

Although the paths are relatively safe and easy to travel, the same cannot be said if the PCs attempt to stray from the paths and venture into the dense woods themselves, which is considered difficult terrain. There is a 50% chance of a random encounter for every 2d6 rounds spent in the forest depths instead of on the paths. It's possible PCs might decide to stay and fight the creatures if they have little trouble with some of the fights. It is up to the GM's discretion to increase the difficulty of the random encounters if they wish to emphasize the danger of straying or decrease the likelihood of PCs fighting endless battles.

Wandering Monsters Table

d%	Encounter
1-10	2d4 giant black widow spiders
11-17	1d6 assassin vines
18-25	1d4 dire bats
26-32	1d3 worgs
33-38	1 yellow musk creeper and 1d6 yellow musk zombies
39-50	1d4 shadows
51-56	1d4 dire wolves
57-64	3d6 ettercaps and 2d8 giant black spiders
65-75	2d8 skeletal champions
76-84	2d4 shadow mastiffs
85-90	1 shambling mound
95-100	1 shadow demon

C. THE PUTRID BOG (CR 9)

The forest gives way suddenly to a thick bog of twisted trees and dripping vines. A few small hillocks and other areas of soft, damp ground peek out from the muck and stagnant water.

A strange gray mist hangs in the air, slowly swirling and drifting through the misshapen trees and vines of the bog as if possessing a mysterious sentience. The putrid stench of rot and decay threatens to nauseate even those with the stoutest fortitude.

Environment

The Putrid Bog is covered in brackish water and thick mud ranging from only a few inches deep at most points to as much as a few feet at others and is considered difficult terrain.

Any non-resident of the bog must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be sickened by the bog's putrid stench for as long as they remain within its confines. A successful save renders its maker immune to the effects of the bog's stench for the duration of their visit. *Delay poison* or *neutralize poison* removes the effect from the sickened creature, and renders them immune to the effects for the remainder of their visit. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws.

Despite the overwhelming smell of death and decay, the Putrid Bog is in fact teeming with life, most of it vile.

At the heart of the Putrid Bog lies a ring of ancient standing stones:

An earthen mound rises from the muck. Tall, twisted standing stones form a ring on the center of the mound, like some misshapen stone claw. The mysterious rocks encircle an ancient stone altar of black rock carved with strange, barely discernable symbols. A mirror shard lies on the altar's surface.

A palpable feeling of evil and dark magic radiates from the entire area and the black altar in particular.

The mound is solid enough to walk on unimpeded and is one of the few areas within the bog not considered difficult terrain. The mound is approximately fifty feet across and rises 5 feet above the swampy waters of the bog. The ring of standing stones, each anywhere from 9 to 12 feet tall, is approximately 30 feet in diameter.

The black rock altar radiates a permanent symbol of stunning (CL 14; Will DC 19 negates) which is triggered by anyone not evil passing through the ring of standing stones.

Development

Any spellcaster placing both hands on the black altar causes the symbols to glow faintly. For the next 24 hours, that spellcaster may treat any necromancy spell he casts as if it

were enhanced with the Maximize Spell feat without taking up a higher spell slot or requiring a longer casting time. A spellcaster may only benefit from this effect once per week.

Creature

The spirit naga Vessh Ossk lurks within the ring of standing stones. She was drawn to the stone circle and the dark magic of the black altar and has claimed both as her own. Vessh Ossk found the mirror shard some time ago and has been placing it on the altar each night as an experiment. The naga is aware of the Dusk Queen's return but has yet to decide if she wishes to return the shard or keep it for herself.

The spirit naga is supremely evil, highly intelligent, and extremely manipulative. If she learns the PCs possess any of the other shards, she will use lies, deception and then outright threats to get them for herself. If the PCs refuse, she viciously attacks. Vessh Ossk will not give up her own shard under any circumstance and will fight to protect it. She will not leave the confines of the bog for any reason, however.

Spirit Naga

CRx

hp 95 (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)

Treasure

Vessh Ossk has a collection of gems buried near the altar. The collection consists of 1 small ruby (100 gp), 2 diamonds (150 gp each) and a pyramid carved from deep green jade (260 gp)

D. THE DEAD BEHIR (CR 9)

Countless pebbles and other small stones litter this large clearing. In the center, you see a large mound of smooth, black stones. Lying on the ground in front of the mound is the dead body of a large, black, reptilian creature, its fearsome head crowned with two large, curling horns.

Surrounding the carcass are a number of hulking, dark-furred creatures with tiny, milk-white eyes.

Environment

The large pile of black stones is approximately 30 feet in diameter and 20 feet tall. Each stone is perfectly smooth and about the size of a man's head. Both the mound and clearing are considered difficult terrain.

The strange black behir carcass is approximately 40 feet long and fills much of the area directly in front of the mound of black stones.

Creatures

A band of bugbears has recently ventured into the forest and is hoping to claim it as new hunting grounds. Three bugbears are focused on picking over the recently slain carcass of the black behir while six others are spread out across the clearing, busily repairing weapons and performing other chores. The bugbears are all focused on their tasks and most likely unaware of reasonably cautious PCs.

The bugbears are led by Gothrolg, a powerful half-umbral dragon bugbear, who is currently out of view on the far side of the mound but quickly flies up on top of the black stones at the first sign of trouble.

Gothrolg is a sadistic creature who delights in torture, pain and suffering and has a taste for flesh, both living and undead. The half-umbral dragon bugbear recently recovered the shard, which the slain black behir had been guarding, and is unsure what to do with it. He is more than willing to fight to keep the shard, and will happily sacrifice the bugbears in the process. However, Gothrolg has no particular allegiance to the Dusk Queen and is unwilling to die for her or the shard; if reduced to 5 hp or less, he attempts to flee.

GOTHROLG

This massive bugbear has coarse, black fur, muscular bare arms resembling tree-trunks, and draconic features, including large, bat-like dragon wings. A grisly necklace of ears and fingers hangs loosely around its neck. The hulking creature's beady red eyes glint with sadistic intelligence and a lust for killing.

ADVANCED HALF-UMBRAL DRAGON BUGBEAR CR 5

XP 1,600

CE Medium dragon (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 14, flat-footed 23 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +9 natural, +1 deflection)

hp 48 (3d8+24)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities DR 5/—; **Immune** sleep, paralysis, and damage from negative energy and Strength drain.

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.; fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee bite +12 (1d6+9), 2 claws +11 (1d4+9)

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-foot cone, DC 14, 6d8 negative energy, 3/day)

TACTICS

Gothrolg maintains his position on top of the mound when possible, forcing PCs to climb in order to reach him, and uses Flyby Attack to swoop down and attack PCs with his powerful bite. If necessary, he goes airborne and out of melee range where he can use his breath weapon to greatest effect.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 17, **Con** 26, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24

Feats Flyby Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +3, Fly +6, Intimidate +10, Perception +11, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +14, Survival +8;

Racial Modifiers +4 Intimidate, +4 Stealth

SQ stalker

Languages Common, Goblin

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate mountains and forests

Organization solitary

Treasure +1 leather armor, ring of protection +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Ex) 30-foot cone of negative energy that deals 6d8 points of damage, usable three times per day. A successful DC 14 Reflex save reduces damage by half.

Stalker (Ex) Perception and Stealth are class skills for Gothrolg.

Bugbears (8) CRx

XP 600; hp 26 (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)

Treasure

Searching the mound of black stones requires a successful DC 20 Perception check. Buried within the mound are three broken potion bottles (empty), a *ring of energy resistance*, *minor* (cold) and a *wand of eyes of the void*^{ACG} with 11 charges remaining.

E. MESSAGE FROM THE SHADOWS

A hauntingly beautiful woman emerges silently from the shadows and stares at you with cold, dark eyes. The surrounding shadows seem to pool around her and power pours from her body. She smiles, but her dark eyes remain cold as she speaks to you in soft, soothing tones.

“You are gathering my shards for me, and for that I am eternally grateful. Once you have all five, I trust you will bring them to me at once. If you do, I will reward each of you handsomely. I assure you, the rumors about me have been greatly exaggerated; I am not the monster many believe me to be. Bring me the shards and I shall be pleased. Keep them for yourself ...”

The woman's voice trails off and her cold eyes narrow menacingly.

The Dusk Queen is using *major image* in an attempt to manipulate the PCs. Once the message has been delivered, the image continues to regard the PCs quietly for a few moments before slowly fading away.

GM Note

Although keyed to a specific location on the map, this encounter can actually occur at any point along the path, after the PCs have acquired two or three of the shards. Ideally, this should take place during a lull in the action, and should be used for maximum dramatic effect.

F. THE HANGING TREE (CR 9)

A lone, twisted tree rises from a small hill ahead of you. Skeletons, some with their hands still bound behind their backs, hang from strong branches high up in the tree. The branches creak as the skeletons twist and sway in the wind. By all appearances, these gruesome remains have been here for a very long time.

High up on the trunk, a mirror shard is deeply embedded in a thick branch.

This was known as the Hanging Tree. The skeletons belonged to people who displeased the Dusk Queen during her reign. Unless the PCs possess magical means to reach the shard, they will likely need to climb to reach it (DC 20 Climb).

Environment

The shard is embedded in a thick branch 40 feet up the tree. A PC that reaches the shard may attempt to pry it loose (DC 15 Disable Device) or forcibly yank it free (DC 18 Strength check). Failing either of these checks by 5 or more requires a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid being cut by the shard for 1d6 points of damage. Failing either check by 10 or more also requires a successful DC 20 Reflex save to avoid falling from the tree for 4d6 points of damage.

The shard is too firmly embedded in the tree for *mage hand* or similar magic to pull free.

Creatures

A spectre and 2 wraiths guard the shard. They swarm out suddenly from the surrounding shadows and attack as soon as the shard is disturbed.

Spectre CR 7

hp 48 (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)

Wraith (2) CR 5

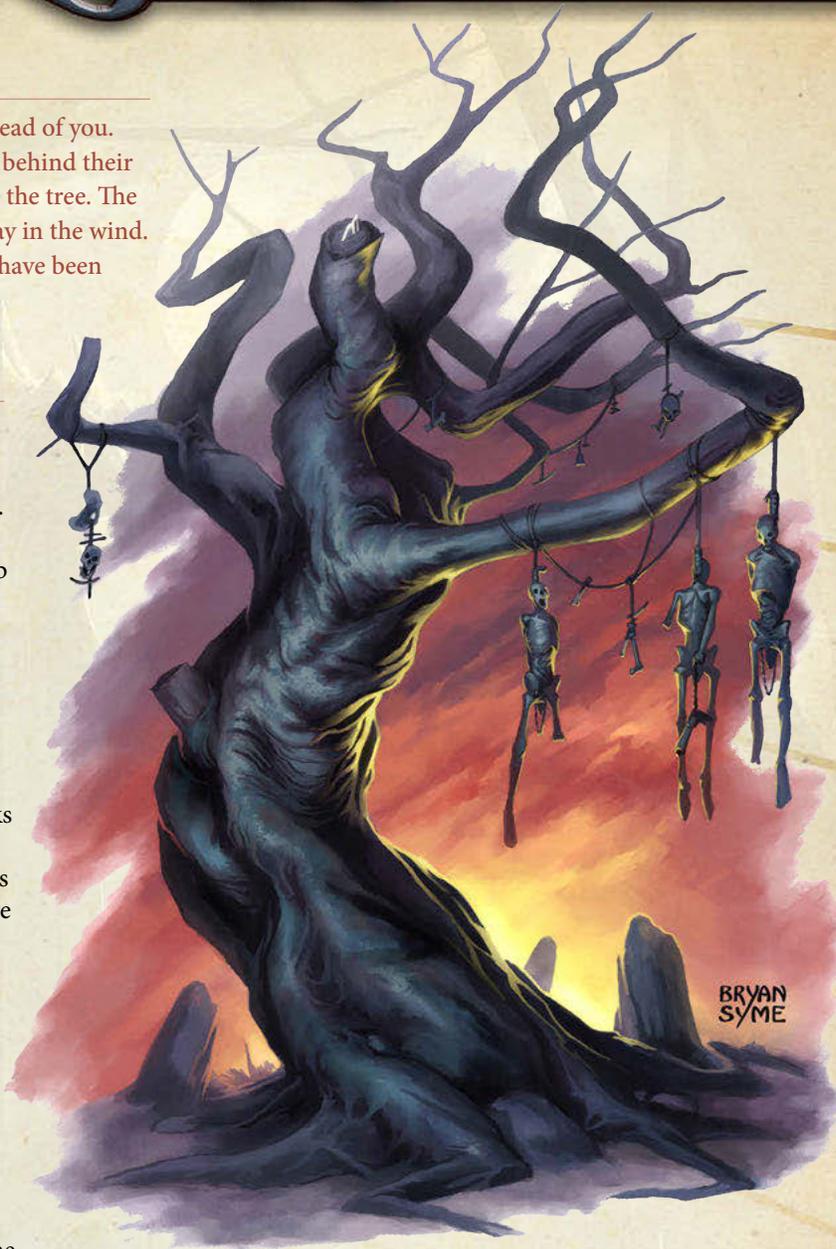
hp 44 (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)

Treasure

A *ring of the ram* with 22 charges left is on one of the skeleton's hands.

G. THE PIT OF SHADOWS (CR 9)

An oblong pit yawns like a jagged wound in the ground in front of you. It is perhaps 20 feet across and at least twice that in length. A dense, almost palpable blackness seems to rise up from the depths of the pit.



Environment

It is particularly difficult to see very far into the pit. PCs without low-light vision or darkvision cannot see more than a few feet. Even PCs who can see in the darkness find they are able to penetrate the thick blackness only half as far as normal.

A DC 15 Perception check reveals a partially worn and eroded set of ancient stone steps cut into the sides of the pit. They wind their way precariously downward into the darkness before eventually ending at a stone ledge which juts out abruptly 60 feet below. The steps are extremely steep and uneven, making them difficult to navigate. PCs failing a DC 15 Acrobatics or Climb check fall from the steps and crash to the stone ledge below, taking 3d6 points of damage.

If the PCs take precautionary measures, such as using rope or other climbing gear, the GM is encouraged to award those PCs a circumstance bonus to their checks.

GM Note

Although characters falling from the steps should normally have a chance of missing the stone ledge and falling downward into the swirling darkness, doing so would certainly take the character out of the adventure! Therefore, be sure to play up the dramatic impact of a falling character barely managing to grab hold of something as he crashes onto the ledge and narrowly avoids falling down into the swirling darkness below!

Once the PCs are close enough to the stone ledge, read:

Peering over the edge of the stone outcrop, you see a swirling miasma of inky blackness some 50 feet farther down. This strange vortex of darkness resembles impossibly dense storm clouds which completely fill the remainder of the deep pit.

This mysterious, swirling cloud of darkness is in fact a portal to the Plane of Shadow. Although specific details regarding what lies beyond are well beyond the scope of this adventure, the GM is free to utilize this gate at a later point in the campaign if he wishes.

Once on the ledge, the PCs discover a cave opening. Like the rest of the shadowy darkness within the pit, visibility is difficult even for those with darkvision.

The cave opening leads directly into a natural cavern 60 feet across and 40 feet high. At the center of the cavern, narrow steps leading up to a stone ring are just barely discernable.

Environment

The stone ring is approximately 2 feet high, 10 feet in diameter and encloses a pool of dark water, 15 ft. deep. A DC 20 Perception check reveals a glint from a mirror shard which lies at the very bottom of the pool.

Creature

Ilmareth, an elder shadow drake dwells here with his two 'pet' shadows. Ilmareth, who had been the Dusk Queen's fiercely devoted mount, was devastated and confused by her sudden disappearance. He retreated here to his lair and sank into a long, deep depression. Ilmareth knew of the shard in his pool, but until the recent whispers of his Queen's return, he was unsure what to do with it.

As soon as anyone touches or otherwise interacts with the water, read:

A large dragon-like creature with black scales and shadowy wings emerges suddenly from the darkness. The creature's red eyes glare at you as it speaks in a deep, monotone voice:

"I know why you have come, but I am a loyal servant of the Queen. You'll not take this shard; the only thing I will give you is DEATH!"

Ilmareth attacks with reckless abandon to protect his shard, as will the two shadows that share his cave with him. If the battle goes particularly poorly for him, he attempts to escape the cave with the shard and retreat to the Dusk Tower.

ILMARETH, ELDER SHADOW DRAKE CR 7

XP 3,200

CE Large dragon (cold)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size) hp 84 (8d12+32)

Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +5

Immune cold, paralysis, sleep

Weaknesses light sensitivity, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.; fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee bite +13 (2d6+6 plus 1d6 cold), tail slap +8 (1d8+3)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks stygian breath (20-foot-radius spread, DC 18, 7d6 cold)

STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 13

Base Atk +8; CMB +15; CMD 26

Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +17, Fly +10, Intimidate +12, Perception +10, Stealth +8

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ speed surge, shadow blend, shadow jump

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or rampage (3–12)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shadow Blend (Su) In conditions other than bright light, an elder shadow drake can disappear into the shadows as a move action, effectively becoming invisible. An elder shadow drake in combat under these conditions fades in and out of shadows, giving it concealment (50% miss chance). Artificial illumination, even a *light* or *continual flame* spell, does not negate this ability; a *daylight* spell, however, does. An elder shadow drake can suspend or resume this ability as a free action.

Shadow Jump (Su) An elder shadow drake may travel between shadows as if by means of a *dimension door* spell. This magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some dim light. An elder shadow drake can jump up to a total of 160 feet each day in this way; this may be a single jump of 160 feet or multiple jumps of 10 feet or more each. This amount can be split among many jumps, but each one, no matter how small, counts as a 10-foot increment.

Speed Surge (Ex) Three times per day as a swift action, an elder shadow drake may draw on its draconic heritage for



a boost of strength and speed to take an additional move action in that round.

Stygian Breath (Su) As a standard action, an elder shadow drake can exhale a ball of black liquid that explodes into a cloud of frigid black mist. This attack has a range of 60 feet and deals 7d6 points of cold damage (DC 18 Reflex half) to all creatures within a 20-foot-radius spread. The mist snuffs out light sources in the area affected, extinguishing non-magical light sources and dispelling light spells of 1st level or lower. Once an elder shadow drake has used its stygian breath, it cannot do so again for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Elder shadow drakes are mischievous and greedy. They prefer to haunt dark and lonely places, such as dark caves, dense forests and shadowy ruins. Elder shadow drakes are almost pure black with glowing red eyes. They are long-lived, and can reach 200 to 250 years in age.

Shadows (2)

CR 3

hp 18 (*Pathfinder Bestiary*)

Treasure

A *bead of newt prevention*, a slightly rusted +1 *ghost touch short sword* with the word “Nanroc” faintly carved into the blade, and 120 gp can be found at the bottom of the well.

THE QUEEN OF SHADOWS

Once the PCs have all five shards, they must make their way to the clearing near the center of the forest and infiltrate the Dusk Tower itself. When they approach the tower, read:

THE DUSK QUEEN'S TOWER

The tower appears to be made of smooth black stone. There are no windows and only a single door. The tower is clearly in disrepair; bits of the stone have crumbled away and cracks run like spider webs across its surface. Vines snake up the outside, as if trying to choke the life from the tower, or perhaps pull it to the ground.

A single, ornate door, crafted of sturdy darkwood and reinforced with black iron is the tower's only entrance. Although the door is not physically locked, it is warded with an *arcane lock* (CL 10), and protected by a *glyph of warding* (CL 10; 5d8 points of cold blast damage).

The darkwood door is 3” thick, has 30 hit points and hardness 5.

SHADOWY NEGOTIATIONS

Once the PCs enter the tower, read:

A single large chamber opens before you. There is no ceiling overhead; the wooden floors of the upper levels appear to have crumbled away long ago. A massive chandelier lies twisted and broken in the middle of the floor, apparently having crashed to the floor when the ceiling above rotted away. Thick shadows fill the upper reaches of the tower. Directly across from you, on a black marble dais at the far end of the chamber, is an ornate black throne.

To either side of the throne, once-majestic stairs climb the walls, reaching as high as a man's head before crumbling away.

To the right of the throne, a large oval mirror in a thick darkwood frame hangs on the stone wall. The frame is carved with delicate runes, many of which look chipped or defaced. The glass in the mirror has clearly been shattered; thousands of tiny cracks create a chaotic spider web pattern across its surface. In five distinct spots, large pieces of the glass, each about the size of a man's hand, are missing entirely.

Environment

A large tapestry depicts the Dusk Queen riding her shadow drake mount, Ilmareth, against the backdrop of a stormy night sky. Well-worn, the tapestry is of superior workmanship and worth at least 300 gp to the right buyer.

Development

The Dusk Queen is invisible and flying overhead in the shadowy, upper portion of the chamber. Once the PCs enter the throne room, she addresses them in a soothing and friendly voice, using *ventriloquism* so she does not give away her position:

Greetings, my friends. I trust you have retrieved all of my mirror shards for me. Please kindly place them on my throne and then step back. Once you have done so, I will reward you handsomely as promised. I am, after all, a just queen, true to my word.

The Dusk Queen focuses all of her charisma and powers of persuasion to cajole the shards from the PCs. If unsuccessful, the Dusk Queen quickly becomes furious and addresses the PCs in a menacing voice:

“FOOLS! If you will not listen to reason, then I will pluck the shards from your cold, lifeless hands!”

As the Dusk Queen's angry words echo throughout the chamber, an ominous looking warrior clad in black armor and wielding a glowing black glaive appears out of the shadows. Lifeless eyes burn from inside the dread knight's hollow skull.

BATTLE FOR THE SHARDS (CR 11)

The Dusk Queen attacks relentlessly from above, using every means at her disposal to destroy the PCs and take the shards while the Dread Knight pummels them in combat on the ground.

Environment

Because there are no longer any upper floors, the inside of the tower is essentially a shadowy, 80 ft. high shaft.

GM Note

A PC with all 5 shards attempting to use the empowered *searing light* against the Dusk Queen or her Dread Knight must succeed on a DC 19 Will save each time in order to force the shards to comply.

Aazael, the Dread Knight

CR 9

XP 6,400

Human graveknight antipaladin 8

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

Aura sacrilegious aura (30 ft., DC 17); aura of evil; aura of cowardice, aura of despair

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+10 armor, +1 Dex, +1 Deflection, +4 natural)

hp 119 (8d10+48)

Fort +12, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 glaive +16/+11 (1d10+14/19-20x3 plus 2d6 cold)

Special Attacks channel destruction, devastating blast (4d6 cold, DC 17), undead mastery (DC 17)

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 5th)

2nd—*litany of warding* (DC 17), *blindness/deafness* (DC 17)

1st—*bane* x 2 (DC 16)

TACTICS

During Combat Aazael uses his touch of corruption and associated cruelties against any who manage to get past his glaive. He fires his devastating blast at foes he cannot physically reach and channels negative energy when it will affect the maximum number of foes. Aazael quickly attempts to determine which of his good-aligned foes is the most powerful and then uses smite good against them.

At the first hint the battle is going against him, he summons Annominc, his fiendish black panther.

Morale Aazael is fanatically devoted to the Dusk Queen and fights to the death to protect her.

STATISTICS

Str 23 **Dex** 12 **Con** — **Int** 13 **Wis** 14 **Cha** 17

Base Atk +8/+3; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 25

Feats Channel Smite, Improved Critical (glaive), Improved Initiative^B, Mounted Combat^B, Ride-By Attack^B, Selective Channeling, Toughness^B, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (glaive)

Skills Bluff +10, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +16, Ride +13, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +5, and Stealth +6; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, +8 Perception, +8 Ride

Languages Common, Abyssal
SQ phantom mount, ruinous revivification

Combat Gear +1 glaive, +1 full plate, ring of protection +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Cowardice (Su): Azael radiates a daunting aura that causes all enemies within 10 feet to take a -4 penalty on saving throws against fear effects. Creatures that are normally immune to fear lose that immunity while within 10 feet of him. This functions only while the Dread Knight remains conscious, not if he is unconscious or dead.

Aura of Evil (Ex): Azael's aura of evil (see the *detect evil* spell) is equal to his antipaladin level. A paladin who uses smite evil on Azael deals 2 points of damage per paladin level on his first successful attack.

Aura of Despair (Su): Enemies within 10 feet of Azael take a -2 penalty on all saving throws. This penalty does not stack with the penalty from aura of cowardice. This ability functions only while Azael is conscious, not if he is unconscious or dead.



Annominc

Advanced, fiendish panther

N Medium animal

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 52 (4d8+8)

Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +4

Resist 5 (cold & fire); SR 8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d8+5 plus grab), 2 claws +8 (1d3+5)

Special Attacks smite good 1/day, pounce, rake (2 claws +8, 1d3+5)

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 23, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 17, Cha 10

Base Atk +4; CMB +7 (+11 grapple); CMD 21 (24 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Natural Attack (bite), Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +12, Climb +13, Perception +9, Stealth +11 (+15 in undergrowth); **Racial Modifiers** +4 on Stealth in undergrowth

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Smite Good 1/day as a swift action, Annominc can add +3 to his damage against a good foe; smite persists until target is dead or Annominc rests.

Annominc is loyal to Azael and will obey his every command.

Channel Destruction (Su): Weapons Azaael wields seethe with energy and deal an additional 2d6 points of cold damage.

Channel Negative Energy (Su): Six times per day, Azaael can release a wave of negative energy which either deals 4d6 points of damage to living creatures or heals undead creatures. This burst affects all creatures of one type (either undead or living) in a 30-foot radius centered on the Dread Knight. Creatures taking damage from channeled energy receive a DC 17 Will save to halve the damage. Undead healed by channeled energy cannot exceed their maximum hit point total—all excess healing is lost. This is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Each use of this ability consumes two uses of Azaael's touch of corruption ability. This is a Charisma-based ability.

Cruelty (Su): Whenever Azaael uses touch of corruption to deal damage to a target, that target also receives one of the following effects. The target receives a DC 17 Fortitude save to avoid the cruelty. If the save is successful, the target takes the touch of corruption damage as normal, but not the effects of the cruelty.

- sickened for 8 rounds.
- staggered for 4 rounds.

Detect Good (Sp): At will, Azaael can use *detect good*, as the spell. As a move action, he can concentrate on a single item or individual within 60 feet and determine if it is good, learning the strength of its aura as if having studied it for 3 rounds. While focusing on one individual or object, Azaael does not *detect good* in any other object or individual within range.

Devastating Blast (Su): Three times per day, Azaael may unleash a 30-foot cone of energy as a standard action. This blast deals 4d6 points of cold damage (DC 17 Reflex for half).

Fiendish Boon (Sp): Once per day, as a full-round action, Azaael may magically call Annominc, his fiendish black panther servant (see sidebar page 13), which immediately appears adjacent to him.

Should his fiendish panther die or be banished, the Dread Knight may not summon it again for 30 days. During this 30-day period, Azaael takes a -1 penalty on attack and weapon damage rolls.

Phantom Mount (Su): Once per hour, Azaael can summon a skeletal horse similar to a *phantom steed*. This mount is more real than a typical phantom steed, and can carry



one additional rider. The mount's powers are based on Azaael's total Hit Dice rather than caster level. If the mount is destroyed, it can be summoned again with full hit points 1 hour later.

Rejuvenation (Su): One day after the Dread Knight is destroyed, his armor begins to rebuild the undead body trapped within. This process takes 1d10 days—if the body is destroyed before that time passes, the armor merely starts the process anew. After this time has elapsed, Azaael awakens fully healed.

Sacrilegious Aura (Su): Azaael constantly exudes an aura of intense evil and negative energy in a 30-foot radius. This aura functions as the spell *desecrate* and uses the Dread Knight's armor as an altar of sorts to double the effects granted. Azaael constantly gains the benefits of this effect (including the bonus hit points, as this aura is part of the Dread Knight's creation). In addition, this miasma of fell energies hinders the channeling of positive energy. Any creature that attempts to summon positive energy in this area—such as through a cleric's channel

energy ability, a paladin's lay on hands, or any spell with the healing subtype—must make a DC 17 concentration check. If the character fails, the effect is expended but does not function.

Smite Good (Su): Three times per day, Aazael can call out to the dark powers to crush the forces of good. As a swift action, he chooses one target within sight to smite. If this target is good, Aazael adds +3 on his attack rolls and +8 on all damage rolls made against the target of his smite. If the target of smite good is an outsider with the good subtype, a good-aligned dragon, or a good creature with levels of cleric or paladin, the bonus to damage on the first successful attack increases to +16 points of damage. Regardless of the target, smite good attacks automatically bypass any DR the creature might possess.

In addition, while smite good is in effect, the Dread Knight gains a +3 deflection bonus to his AC against attacks made by the target of the smite. If Aazael targets a creature that is not good, the smite is wasted with no effect. Smite good remains until the target of the smite is dead or the next time Aazael rests and regains his uses of this ability.

Touch of Corruption (Su): As standard action Aazael can surround his hand with a fiendish flame 7 times per day which causes 4d6 points of damage. Using this ability requires a touch attack which does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Alternatively, Aazael can use this power to heal undead creatures 4d6 hit points.

Undead Mastery (Su): As a standard action, Aazael can attempt to bend any undead creature within 50 feet to its will. The targeted undead must succeed at a DC 17 Will save or fall under the Dread Knight's control. This control is permanent for unintelligent undead; an undead with an Intelligence score is allowed an additional save every day to break free from Aazael's control. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by Aazael's undead mastery for 24 hours. Aazael can control 40 Hit Dice of undead. If he exceeds this number, the excess from earlier uses of the ability becomes uncontrolled, as per *animate dead*.

Unholy Resilience (Su): Aazael receives a +3 bonus on all saving throws.

Aazael's Dread Knight Armor

A grave knight's armor is a fiendish second skin fused over the desiccated flesh and scarred bones locked within; the undead warrior's life force lingers on in his armor, much like a lich's essence is bound within a phylactery. Unless every part of Aazael's armor is ruined along with its body, Aazael will rejuvenate after it is destroyed.

Aazael's suit of deep black full plate armor has hardness 10 and 45 hit points. Merely breaking Aazael's armor does not destroy it; it must be ruined, such as by being disintegrated, exposed to the Positive Energy Plane, or thrown into the heart of a volcano.

THE DUSK QUEEN

A hauntingly beautiful woman stares at you with cold, dark eyes. Shadows pool around her and power can almost be felt emanating from her body.

The Dusk Queen

CR 9

XP 6,400

Shadow fey theurge 10 (New Paths Compendium)

NE Medium fey

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; low-light vision; Perception +16

Weaknesses light sensitivity

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 mage armor, +4 shield, +2 Dex, +1 deflection)

hp 50 (10d6)

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities DR 10/adamantine (100 points);

Immune fire (120 points); 3rd level or lower spells; **Resist** electricity 20; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Ranged Touch Attacks +7

Special Attacks spell synthesis

Caster Check vs SR +14 (Spell Penetration, Greater Spell Penetration)

Shadow Fey Spell-Like Ability (CL 10th)

1/day—*shadow jump*

Theurge Spell-Like Ability (CL 10th)

1/day—*shadow hands*^{DM} (DC 16)

Arcane Spells Prepared (CL 10th)

5th—*chain of bones*^{DM}, *cone of cold* (DC 20)

4th—*lesser globe of invulnerability*, *overwhelming grief*^{UM} (DC 21), *phantasmal killer* (DC 19)

3rd—*deep slumber* (DC 20), *fly*, *shadow snare*^{DM}

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *bone shards*^{DM}, *spectral hand*

1st—*color spray* (DC 16), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shadow hands*^{DM} (DC 16)

0—*deepen shadow*^{DM}, *haunted fey aspect*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15), *shadow bite*^{DM} (DC 15)

Divine Spells Prepared (CL 10th)

5th—*greater command* (DC 22), *unholy ice* (javelins)^{UM} (DC 20)

4th—*river of moonlight*^{DM} (DC 19), *terrible remorse*^{UM} (DC 21)

3rd—*deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*

2nd—*dread bolt*^{DM} (DC 17), *pilfering hand*^{UC}, *silence* (DC 17)

1st—*doom* (DC 16), *forbid action* (x2) (DC 18)

0—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *mending*, *quicken*^{DM}

TACTICS

Before Combat The Dusk Queen has been monitoring the party's progress for some time and has had plenty of time to prepare for their arrival. She uses her large supply of scrolls to cast *fly*, *greater invisibility*, *freedom of movement*,

lesser globe of invulnerability, mage armor, protection from energy (fire), resist energy (electricity), shield, spell resistance, stonewall and true seeing.

During Combat The Dusk Queen attacks with spells while remaining well hidden and protected in the shadows high overhead for as long as possible. She first casts *unholy ice* (javelins) and *cone of cold* simultaneously, using her spell synthesis ability to catch the PCs off guard. She then continues to cast her most powerful spells early in hopes of ending the battle quickly. The Dusk Queen is a cunning, cold and relentless foe who delights in the pain she causes her opponents.

Morale The Dusk Queen is supremely confident in her abilities and cannot fathom the idea that she might be defeated. If reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, she flies into an uncontrollable rage and fights to the death.

Base Statistics Without the spells listed under Before Combat, the Dusk Queen's statistics are AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; **Immune** none
Resist none **SR** none.

STATISTICS

Str 9 **Dex** 15 **Con** 10, **Int** 21
Wis 20 **Cha** 21

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4;
CMD +16

Feats Alertness, Greater Spell Focus (Enchantment), Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll^B, Spell Focus^B (Enchantment), Spell Penetration

Skills Appraise +9, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +13, Fly +10, Heal +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +16, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +7 **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception, +2 Sense Motive

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Goblin, Sylvan, Umbral

SQ focused caster, innate spells, swift as shadows

Combat Gear scrolls of *dominate person, freedom of movement, invisibility purge, mage armor, protection from energy, resist energy, shield, slay living, slow, spell resistance, stone skin, true seeing*; **Other Gear** cloak of resistance +2, handy haversack, ring of feather falling, ring of protection +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Focused Caster (Ex): The Dusk Queen may roll twice on any concentration check and take the higher result.

Spell Synthesis (Su): Once per day, the Dusk Queen may



cast two spells she has prepared (one arcane and one divine), using one action. Both of the spells must have the same casting time. The Dusk Queen can make any decisions concerning these spells independently of each other. Anyone targeted by both of the spells takes a -4 penalty on saves made against each spell. The Dusk Queen receives a +4 bonus on caster level checks made to overcome spell resistance with these two spells.

Swift as Shadows: Like most shadow fey, the Dusk Queen can remain stealthy even when moving. She reduces the penalty for using Stealth while moving by 5 and reduces the Stealth check penalty for sniping by 10.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

Replacing the 5 shards into the empty spots on the broken mirror is simple enough, assuming the PCs still wish to. When the first shard is replaced, the mirror's frame begins to glow slightly but the thousands of spidery cracks remain. Once the final is placed into the mirror, all 5 shards immediately fuse into the rest of the glass and the cracks magically repair themselves, leaving a perfectly smooth and whole mirror once again! The mirror is firmly attached to the wall with powerful magic and cannot be removed by anything short of a *wish* or similar magic.

If repaired, the mirror will allow the PCs to step into the glass and magically transport themselves away from the tower, as *teleport*. Without the various command words and intimate knowledge of how the mirror works, however, the PCs will be unable to use any of the mirror's other powers.

Clever PCs may realize there is little compelling reason to repair the mirror at all, now that the Queen has been destroyed, and might instead decide to keep the 5 mirror shards. If so, the shards keep their magical qualities. What's more, if the Dusk Queen is dead, the shards no longer possess the Queen's life essence and therefore no longer require an Ego check when using their empowered *searing light*. The PCs will have acquired a unique and powerful treasure indeed!

Treasure

In addition to the shards and the considerable magic possessed by the Dusk Queen and her Dread Knight, a successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a compartment concealed in the base of the throne. Hidden inside are the Dusk Queen's remaining scrolls (*lesser globe of invulnerability*, *mage armor*) and the Shadow Grimoire (see Appendix)

THE TOWER'S FATE

Once the PCs have had time to catch their breath and search the throne room, read the following:

A tremor ripples across the floor of the throne room. Moments later, an even stronger tremor rocks the entire tower. Dust and bits of stone begin to fall as large cracks appear on the stone walls! The shaking quickly grows more and more violent, making it abundantly clear the tower is in danger of collapse!

If the PCs move quickly, they are able to get out in time and move to a safe distance just as the entire tower crashes to the ground in a cacophonous and deafening roar, leaving nothing but a massive pile a stone, rubble and absolute destruction!

If, for some reason, the PCs choose to remain inside the tower, they most certainly meet with the same grim fate.

GM Note:

The tower's collapse utterly destroys the Dusk Queen's mirror. The force of the collapse is not powerful enough



to ruin Azael's armor, however, which means the dread knight will begin to rejuvenate 1d10 days later, while still buried under the rubble. This is important to keep in mind if the GM wants to run the sequel to *Shadows of the Dusk Queen*, *Ghosts of Shadows Past*.

APPENDIX: THE SHADOW GRIMOIRE

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 12th;

Price 32,700 gp; **Weight** 2 lb.

Alignment neutral; **Senses** 30 ft.; darkvision

Intelligence 16; **Wisdom** 14; **Charisma** 14; **Ego** 20

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +7, Sense Motive +9, and Spellcraft +13

Communication: Speech (Common, elven, sylvan, umbral), telepathy, empathy

Armor Class 7; **Hardness** 10; **Hit Points** 20 (*make whole* needed to restore hit point damage)

Protection *Greater glyph of warding* (blast 10d8 cold, Reflex DC 16)

DESCRIPTION

This thick tome is covered in inky black nightmare hide leather and bound with iron overlaid with silver. Delicate silver runes are inlaid in a circular pattern across the cover. The pages within are written in silver ink on jet-black paper. The book is extremely well-crafted, durable and waterproof, and measures just over 12 inches tall, 9 inches wide and 1 inch thick

The Shadow Grimoire is an intelligent spellbook (see *Deep Magic* for full details on intelligent spellbooks). It has the powers of a blessed book and currently contains the following spells:

SPELLS

5th—*chain of bones*^{DM}, *cone of cold*, *shadow plane adaptation*^{DM}, *shadow slaves*^{DM}, *shadow self*^{DM}, *wall of darkness*^{DM}

4th—*black hand*^{DM}, *black tentacles*, *devouring shadow*^{DM}, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *overwhelming grief*^{UM}, *phantasmal killer*, *shadow attack*^{DM}, *shadow projection*^{APG}

3rd—*deep slumber*, *fly*, *shadow snare*^{DM}

2nd—*blindness/deafness*, *bone shards*^{DM}, *darkness*, *darkvision*, *shadow jump*^{DM}, *slither*^{DM}, *spectral hand*, *spy my shadow*^{DM}

1st—*color spray*, *consume light*^{DM}, *light blindness*^{DM}, *misleading shadows*^{DM}, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shadow hands*^{DM}, *shadow shape*^{DM}, *shadow blessing*^{DM}, *shadow weapon*^{UM}

Cantrips—*deepen shadow*^{DM}, *douse*^{DM}, *haunted fey aspect*, *resize shadow*^{DM}, *shadow bite*^{DM}, *shadow blindness*^{DM}, *silhouette*^{DM}, *touch of fatigue*

PERSONALITY

The Dusk Queen received the Shadow Grimoire as a gift while she still dwelt in the fey realm of the Winter Court. The book is intelligent, haughty and extremely proud of its abilities and its unique nature. Once it decides to reveal its sentience and awareness, it expects to be treated in every possible way like a highly regarded equal. As long as the Grimoire is confident its owner shares its outlook and goals, it reveals its abilities and complies with most requests.

The Shadow Grimoire is often mysterious, cryptic, and prone to falling silent for long periods of time, without cause or explanation. If it feels it is being mistreated or not shown the proper level of respect, the Grimoire will snap itself shut and refuse to open or use any of its abilities. If such behaviors persist, it might attempt to hide itself or escape from its owner using *shadow jump*. It might even shout for help when the party encounters someone the Grimoire feels would be a more suitable owner.

In worst cases, a battle of wills could result. See *Intelligent Items: Items against Characters* in the *Pathfinder RPG* for full details on Ego contests)

GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS

The Grimoire has little interest in good or evil, law or chaos. Its primary interests lie in magic, specifically shadow and darkness magic or anything pertaining to the Shadow Plane. The Grimoire is single-minded in its desire to learn all it can about shadow magic and it expects its owner to share this desire. It insists that its owner prepare a minimum of three shadow or darkness spells from among the highest level spells the owner can cast each day. If the owner refuses, see *Personality* above.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bookish: The Shadow Grimoire can open and close itself and flip instantly to any page it desires, including the current scroll page (see below) as an immediate action. A DC 34 Strength check is required to close it or pry it open against its will (or attempt to tear out a page).

Scroll Page: The Shadow Grimoire always contains one spell, from among all the spells transcribed within it, that the owner may cast directly from the book as if it were a scroll. Once the spell is cast, another spell randomly (other than the one just cast) becomes the next spell that can be cast directly from the book. The owner must spend a standard action to flip pages and find the new scroll-page spell. Once found, the scroll page can be marked for future reference. The owner does not need to provide a material component if it costs under 100 gp, and casting the spell does not remove it from the spellbook. The Grimoire does not have the ability to cast this spell itself.

Shadow Jump (Sp): The Shadow Grimoire can cast *shadow jump* 3/day

Shadow Knowledge The Shadow Grimoire's secrets cling to its owner's mind like the Shadow Plane itself. As long as the owner is in possession of the Grimoire, he is considered trained in all Knowledge skills as long as the check pertains to shadow or darkness magic, or the geography, history and denizens of the Shadow Plane. If the owner is already trained in the appropriate Knowledge skill, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus on these checks instead.

Sunlight Vulnerability (Ex) The Shadow Grimoire must remain cloaked in shadow or the darkness of night at all times. The spellbook is immediately damaged if exposed to direct sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) for even an instant. For every minute the Shadow Grimoire is exposed to sunlight, it takes 1d8 points of damage. If this damage exceeds the book's total hit points, the Shadow Grimoire bursts into grey flame and is forever destroyed.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *secret page*, *shadow jump*; **Cost** 16,350 gp

GM NOTE

The price of the Shadow Grimoire may seem high for characters at this level. However, it is important to understand that a living spellbook is much easier to manage than other magical items of a similar price. For example, PCs cannot memorize spells beyond what their caster level allows. Also, the Shadow Grimoire is the final authority of if and when its powers are used. The book typically acquiesces to the owner's wishes, but that is hardly absolute—the Grimoire always retains full control of its abilities.

Essentially, the GM should treat the Shadow Grimoire as an NPC as well a magic item, which makes it an excellent tool for dispensing special clues and other campaign information that might not be easy to convey otherwise. The Grimoire can be a teacher and mentor, as well as a mysterious source of secrets and knowledge.

It is recommended that the GM set aside traditional wealth and reward levels when introducing a living book such as the Shadow Grimoire into the campaign.

If a PC decides to keep the Grimoire, the GM should observe and cultivate the symbiotic relationship between them carefully. While a living book retains control over its special abilities, it still relies on its owner to carry it around so it can learn and influence events.



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SYME

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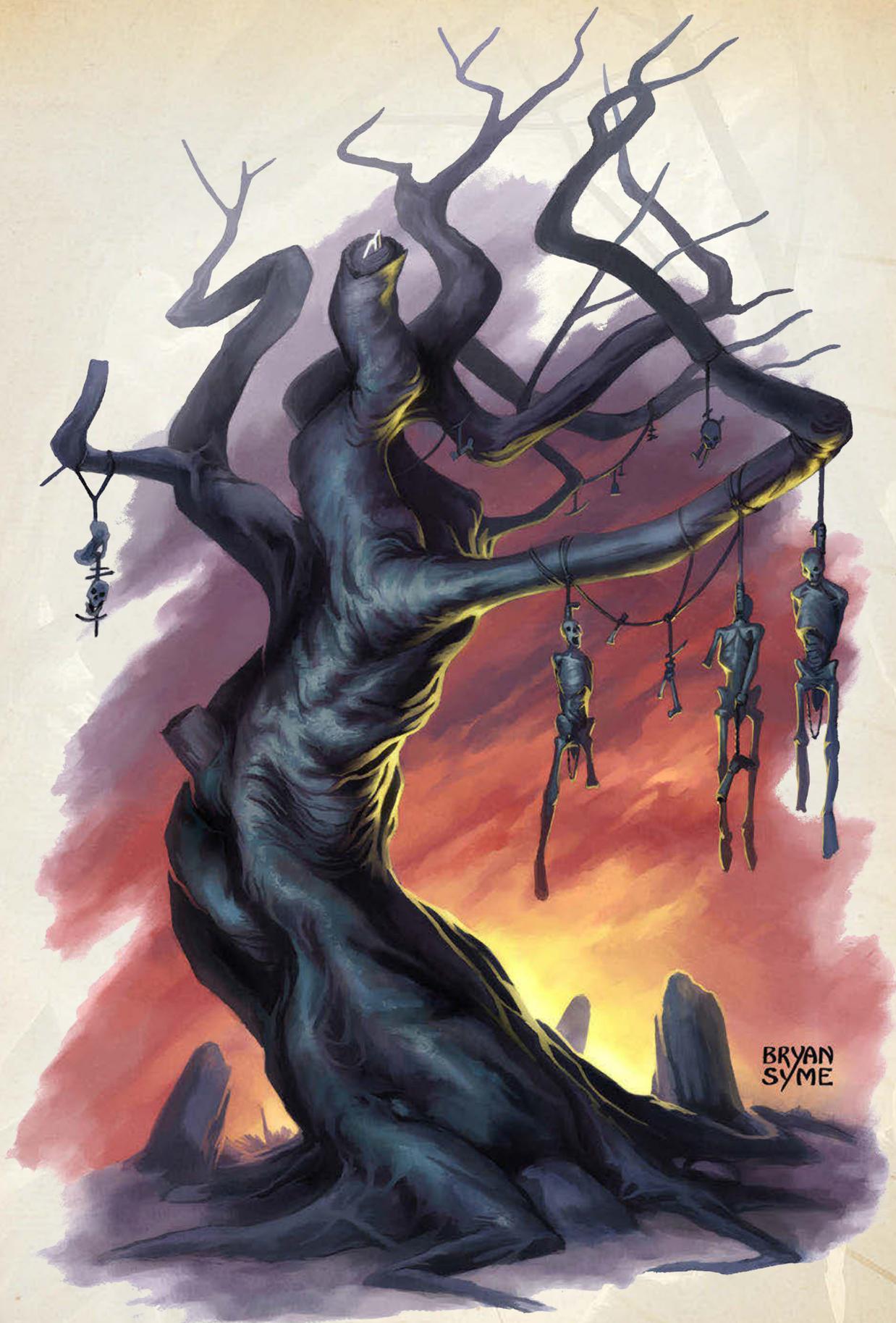
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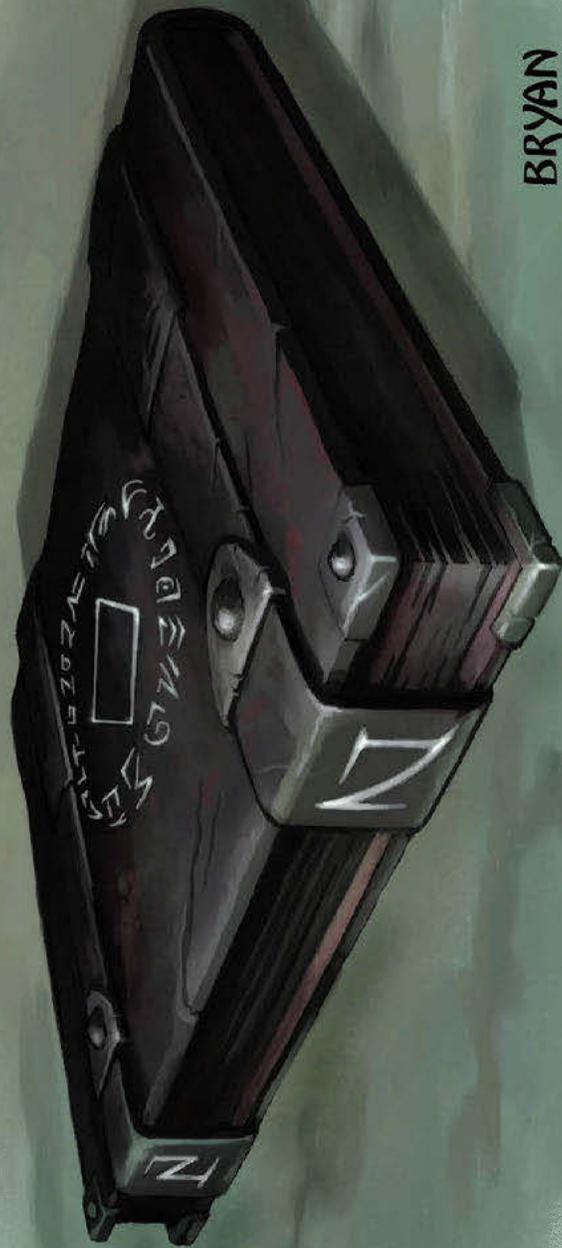
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