

WHAT STORMS MAY COME

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING
FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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Darkness and light struggle and heroes are once again drawn to unravel the secrets of the radiant vessel. Can the truth be determined and the machinations of Szass Tam put to an end? This adventure is the conclusion of the “Radiance Against Thay” major quest and sequel to CORE1-2 *Radiant Vessel of Thesk* and CORE1-6 *Incident at the Gorge of Gauros*. A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Rashemen and Thay 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

In 1385 DR, at the exact instance when the Spellplague struck, a handful of women were born in the regions of Thesk and Rashemen to mothers of particularly strong faith. These women, vessels for the gift of radiance, served as important protectors to their villages and in

turn passed their gift of radiance to their child, always a girl.

A little over a year ago, in a community near Phsant in Thesk, a young woman with the gift of radiance named Sibbya attracted the attention of an imp named Eyeloe, who served Golra Kuss, a lich in turn serving the undead lich and ruler of Thay, Szass Tam. The vessels posed a genuine threat to the undead nation, so Eyeloe was instructed to seize Sibbya and bring her to Thay. In *CORE1-2 Radiant Vessel of Thesk*, the PCs defeated Eyeloe and his hired orc mercenaries, helping deliver Sibbya's child amid the din of battle. Unlike others before her, Sibbya survived childbirth and birthed a son, both losing their gift of radiance. Sibbya's son remained a capable vessel, however, potentially more powerful than any before.

In *CORE1-6 Incident at the Gorge of Gauros*, Veruud of the Urling, a Rashemi Old One (wise man), took Sibbya's child so as to bring him to Rashemen to restore the child's radiance. Agents of Thay captured Veruud and the child. The PCs, responding to visions provided by Rashemi spirits, followed the trail to a cave hidden within the Gorge of Gauros. There they defeated mercenaries and undead, assisting Veruud with a ritual to restore the radiance to the child. Szass Tam, infinitely patient and confident he had gained the knowledge he needed, allowed them to escape.

As this adventure begins, one year after the events at the Gorge, Rashemi fortunetellers sense a danger involving Thay and the radiant vessels. Their visions show the radiant vessels turning against the very villages they protect, becoming agents of darkness and evil. Veruud visits the PCs, calling for them to help uncover the Thayan threat and finding a method to save Sibbya and the other vessels.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins with the PCs traveling to Rashemen. The PCs flash back to Veruud of the Urling visiting them. Veruud believes the PCs are destined to unravel the mystery of the radiance. He shares one of the visions of the Rashemi fortunetellers with the PCs, explaining that Sibbya and her child are in the care of the witches. Her cousin, Fontin, and Fontin's husband, the orc Bhral, are also with them.

Once in Rashemen, the PCs begin the first of three skill challenges to uncover the capabilities of the vessels and why Thay has such an interest in them. In the first, the PCs must gain the trust of the witches, who are fearful of outsiders. In the second, the PCs trek to the wilds of northern Rashemen, seeking a temple holding an artifact with radiant power.

The frozen lands are dangerous, and combat with ferocious trolls within a frozen forest occurs before the PCs can reach the temple. When the temple is reached, they find they are arriving at the same time as a group of mercenaries from Thay. The artifact awakens, its radiance melting the ice in the temple and creating challenging terrain as both sides struggle for control of the artifact.

One of the mercenaries is Urilyz, an elven broker and recruiter the PCs may have met in a tavern near the Gorge of Gauros in a previous adventure. As the conclusion to the skill challenge, the PCs can interrogate Urilyz or find his journal. They can also study the artifact, discovering it can allow the power of the vessels to be redistributed. The PCs learn that the vessels can store both radiant and necrotic energy. An underling of Szass Tam, the lich Golra Kuss, has created a ritual that can turn the vessels into beings of evil and send Thesk and Rashemen into turmoil, allowing Thay to more easily expand its borders. Sibbya's child would be the strongest and most deadly of his new soldiers.

Now believing Veruud, the witches ask the PCs to choose amongst three options involving the artifact, Sibbya's child, and the other radiant vessels. Power can be concentrated into Sibbya's child, protecting him at the expense of weakening the other vessels. The PCs can strengthen the minor vessels, at the expense of Sibbya's child. Finally, they can focus the radiance into the artifact.

Once the PCs have made their decision, they are teleported to Thay, facing a final challenging combat against the Thayan lich Golra Kuss and her guardians. The choice the PCs make triggers a boon they gain during the battle. With success, they return to the witches for a hero's welcome.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

A cold wind howls through the dry ravine, bringing arms, cloaks, and shields up to ward against the stinging dust. Ahead, the Rashemi Old One, Veruud of the Urling, leads you along the trail toward Rashemen. Minutes later the ravine ends upon a promontory of dusty red rock. A cry calls out, and you follow a companion's pointed hand to the southeast, where you can discern how the land rises to form the plateau of Thay. Thick black clouds ring the evil land. Veruud makes a gesture of warding.

Just two weeks ago Veruud assembled your group in Thesk. His deep voice cracked as he spoke of prophecy,

of impending doom, and of your destiny to brave a storm and protect a child.

Present players with **Handout 1**. You may wish to print several copies or designate one player to read the handout aloud. Allow the players a few moments to discuss the handout, especially if they have played previous modules in the series.

Players may have additional questions for Veruud regarding past events with Sibbya or her son. If some have played either CORE1-2 *The Radiant Vessel of Thesk* or CORE1-6 *Incident at the Gorge of Gauros*, you can provide them with **Handout 2**. Otherwise, you can use the handout to provide the information in response to their questions. Veruud does not speak more of the visions of the witches or of other vessels, saying he is not permitted.

Players may wish to learn more about Rashemen and the Wychlaran witches. Veruud can share the following:

- Sibbya, her unnamed son, the orc mercenary Bhral, and his wife (and Sibbya's cousin) Fontin are all in Rashemen under the care of the witches, so as to protect them from further attacks from Thay.
- "Wychlaran" is a term meaning wise old woman. The witches, always female, rule the country and function as spiritual leaders.
- The Wychlaran base their power in the Urlingwood, but this forest is forbidden to outsiders. Because of this, Veruud is taking them to a village on the outskirts.
- Rashemen has faced conflict with Thay for hundreds of years. As with Thesk, they live under the constant threat of a Thayan invasion.
- The information in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide* can be used to provide further information on the region of Rashemen.

Once the players have had their questions answered, continue to Encounter 1.

ENCOUNTER 1: THE WYCHLARAN

**SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 10/13,
COMPLEXITY 1 (500/800 XP)**

SETUP

This adventure contains three skill challenges, all related to the PCs' overarching goal of uncovering the truth behind the radiant vessels and the machinations of Szass Tam. DMs are encouraged to keep track of significant events and link them together.

Ideally, each scene is also a transition that allows for role-playing and for some PCs to shine. However, it is important to ensure sufficient time to complete all encounters.

Appendix 1 is a tracking sheet DMs can use to track successes and failures for the skill challenges, freeing up the DM to focus on story aspects.

As soon as the PCs arrive in the Rashemi village, they are taken to a large yurt to meet the witches.

Dense gray fog rolls across the ground as you reach the Rashemi village. Spear-wielding warriors in furs stand ready for you and escort you, with little regard for your weariness after such a long journey, to a large multi-sectioned tent. A few minutes later you stand in the center of the tent.

Nearly a dozen witches lounge on pillows or sit on chairs, their male attendants nearby. Green smoke rises from three urns, filling the air with a heady and pungent herbal smell.

Veruud moves off to one side, silent. Near him stands the orc Bhral, Fontin at his side. Sibbya, holding her child, sits in a chair. They nod and smile encouragingly.

An old crone steps forward, leaning on a gnarled cane. "Veruud of the Urling claims the gift of prophetic sight. We have indulged him, though you do not look like much. I am Ioyna. Introduce yourselves, outsiders." A young woman, her face marred by a large scar marking a wound that claimed her left eye, rises. "Veruud is a fool. There is nothing these outsiders can do for us that we cannot do for ourselves."

Despite the uncomfortable welcome, the PCs should introduce themselves. Once they have done so, Ioyna continues.

"What say the Wychlaran gathered here? Do we entrust outsiders with our task?" The majority of the

witches lower their heads. "It seems the time has not come, outsiders. For now."

The witches turn back to other tasks. Veruud, Bhral, Fontin, and Sibbya motion you to their side. Perhaps they can help you uncover the truth behind the radiant vessels and the machinations of Szass Tam.

The PCs may now meet with their friends to learn how they can best prove their worth to the witches so as to progress.

SKILL CHALLENGE: WINNING OVER THE WYCHLARAN

Goal: The PCs try to gain the trust of the Wychlaran so they will share their knowledge.

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Vary by witch.

Other Skills: Vary by witch.

Victory: If the PCs reach 4 successes, the witches trust the PCs and tell them what they know. In addition, they ask the PCs to retrieve an artifact.

Defeat: If the PCs reach 3 failures, the witches treat the PCs as outsiders. Veruud acts independently, but the PCs are less prepared for their journey.

It is recommended that the scene is run as a role-playing encounter, with conversation resulting in opportunities for checks. PCs can visit different witches to win their support. The description of each witch notes the primary skill which can gain success or failure towards the skill challenge. Secondary skills can provide bonuses. Any other skill can be employed, but does not influence the witches. PCs can speak repeatedly to the same witch until they gain a success, at which point they must speak to a different witch.

SPEAKING WITH BHRAL, FONTIN, SIBBYA, AND VERUUD

PCs may wish to start by speaking to their allies. Veruud begs that the PCs not give up and suggests they try to sway one Wychlaran at a time. They can share the following:

- Fontin: *"Kolthra is more open to outsiders than most. In fact, I swear she has an eye for Bhral..."* (PCs learn that Kolthra may be open to outsiders, particularly to romantic overtures)
- Sibbya: *"I heard Aloysha is a recordkeeper for her people. She is a mean one, but perhaps she may be impressed if you show knowledge of history?"*
- Bhral: *"Vilaya is the one with the snakes... she is a druidess. Dashra is a powerful arcanist. Knowledge of those areas may impress them."*

- Veruud: *“Ioyna counsels for patience and wisdom. She is the one that leads the council.”*

The PCs must succeed at converting at least 4 of the witches to believe that the PCs are trustworthy and capable champions. One success with a witch is enough to get her to support the PCs, while one failure means she turns away from them.

If the PCs do not gain four successes or three failures with the first four witches they approach, the final witch requires enough successes or failures to complete the skill challenge.

What follows is a list of the witches willing to speak to the PCs. After the text covering the witches are the skills and DCs for the skill challenge.

KOLTHRA

A young Wychlaran dressed in form-fitting green and gray robes, Kolthra holds a smoking brazier from a chain. She breathes in its fumes as if amidst some ritual. “Ah, exotic outsiders! I know little of your kind. Tell me of your homelands.”

Primary Skills: Bluff (romantic), Diplomacy
Secondary Skills: Bluff, Insight, Intimidate.

Success: Kolthra grants her support (and perhaps asks a PC to visit her when the adventure is concluded).

Failure: Kolthra concludes it is best not to trust the outsiders.

ALOYSHA

The middle-aged Wychlaran bears an unusual scar across her face and is missing one eye. She is surrounded by a circle of men taking notes, but she dismisses them with the wave of a hand. She is brash from the start. “You are outsiders. You do not understand our ways. Nothing but ill comes of trusting other peoples.”

Primary Skills: History
Secondary Skills: Bluff, Insight, Intimidate.

Success: Aloysha reluctantly agrees that the PCs have an understanding of their culture and of previous events. She agrees to support them.

Failure: *“Be gone. We can handle our own problems!”*

DASHRA

Dashra is a striking woman with a sharp nose and dark hair that extends below her waist. Her garments are covered in mystical amulets and she is constantly making warding gestures. “Thay threatens us at every moment! I fear Kolthra is in danger! I am willing to

accept aid from you, but only if you can display your mastery of magic and radiance.”

Primary Skills: Arcana, Religion

Secondary Skills: Bluff, Insight, Intimidate.

Success: Dashra is impressed by their knowledge. She agrees to support them. With a success at Arcana, Dashra will speak to another witch, undoing one failure.

Failure: *“All shall be lost... you are not the answer I seek!”*

VILAYA

This ancient withered elder wears worn robes of leather. Around her neck, in her arms, and coming out of pockets are several snakes. Totems marked with a snake festoon her hair and clothing. “Our lands cry out for help, but they will claim those that are weak. They do not suffer fools. Are you fools?”

Primary Skills: Nature, History

Secondary Skills: Bluff, Insight, Intimidate.

Success: Vilaya agrees that the PCs understand the land or the peoples that have lived upon them.

Failure: *“How will you ever find the temple? No, I cannot trust you!”*

IOYNA

Stooped low upon her cane, this crone is the only one to smile warmly. “You are strong of will,” she says, eyeing the other witches you have spoken with. “Those with destiny are never deterred.”

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, History

Secondary Skills: Bluff, Insight.

Success: Ioyna grants her support.

Failure: *“I want to believe... Veruud shows so much promise. Tsk, tsk.”*

Arcana DC 21/23 (trained only; 1 maximum)

One PC trained in Arcana may attempt to prove their arcane skill and knowledge. Other PCs trained in Arcana may assist.

Bluff DC 18/20 (no success or success with Kolthra)

A PC wishing to bluff will realize there are far too many witches for an outright lie to be likely to pass undetected. Instead, they may use Bluff as a verbal feint to pick up information from the witches. This counts neither as a success nor failure but provides a +2 or -2 (with failure) to the next check made by a PC.

A PC speaking with Kolthra may make romantic overtures, feigning interest. In this case, the skill can instead count as a success. A PC that is genuinely interested automatically succeeds at this check.

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

For each attempt, the PC making the check should plead their case for why they can be trusted. Up to two other PCs that also make a case may assist.

A PC suffers a -2 penalty if from the region of Thay and gains a +1 bonus if from Aglarond (which also faces threats from Thay).

A PC with the favor CORE04 The Fate of the Radiant Vessel or CORE05 Gratitude of Bhral gains a +1 to Diplomacy checks as Bhral and Sibbya have spoken on their behalf.

History DC 17/19 (1 success; 2 maximum)

PCs can show an understanding of the regional implications of a Thayan threat, of the history of the Rashemi, of the importance of prophecy, or of other events the witches consider relevant.

Insight DC 16/18 (1 or no success; 1 maximum)

The Rashemi value those that listen and show awareness. With Insight a PC allows the Wychlaran to reveal more about themselves and can then speak to their concerns.

If listed as a secondary skill, Insight can instead allow a +2 bonus to the primary skill check.

Intimidate DC 18/20 (no success, no maximum)

PCs realize that the witches are firmly in control of the situation and unlikely to be intimidated. However, a PC may use intimidate to jump upon the comments of a witch, forcing her to concede a point rather than suffer ridicule by her peers. Success applies a +2 bonus to the next check the PC or an ally makes, but failure applies a -4 penalty instead.

Nature DC 17/19 (1 success; 1 maximum)

The PCs convey their understanding of the land and of its importance to the Rashemi.

Religion DC 17/19 (1 success; 1 maximum)

The PCs can display knowledge of radiant power, of possible religious reasons for the radiant vessels, and of how radiant energy can be manipulated.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

This skill challenge concludes when the PCs have accumulated four successes or three failures. Ioyna calls for another vote, the witches' minds now resolute.

Success: If the PCs succeed, the witches trust them. Read the following:

The old crone Ioyna steps forth once more, her step firmer. "Despite being utterly lacking in many respects, you have proven your worth, as has Veruud." She grins. "We place our trust in you in this time of need."

"You should know that Sibbya is not the only one with powers. She is a descendant of a line of remarkable women, who were vessels of the radiant power too. But her line is not the only one. A handful of other women are also vessels, acting as guardians to their villages and protecting Thesk and Rashemen from Thay."

"Sibbya's son is different. For some reason—perhaps being born of the seventh Sibbya or perhaps due to other intervention—she bore a son. This boy is a most powerful vessel, capable of holding much radiance."

"Our knowledge is limited and our time short. The incident at Gauros proves Thay's intent. We must learn more and protect the vessels from them."

"There is a temple to the north, somewhere deep in the frozen wastes northwest of the town of Nathoud. The temple held an artifact said to have power over radiant energy. Perhaps with it we may gain a way to protect the vessels. If you collect the artifact and secure the temple, we will join you as soon as we can. Will you brave this temple for us?"

The witches provide a map and horses, promising to meet the PCs as soon as they can (they and Veruud have ongoing research and are busy securing the remaining vessels). Bhral wishes he could accompany the PCs but stays behind to protect Sibbya, her child, and Fontin.

Failure: The PCs do not gain the trust of the witches. Veruud is ordered to cease his work, but he does not listen. Read or paraphrase the following:

The meeting ends abruptly, the witches turning their backs to you, not sparing another word. You are led to a mess tent where you are offered cold gruel before being given a few supplies and horses for your return home.

As you leave the village, Veruud emerges from a copse of trees. "I am sorry that did not go well. I am given no choice. I know the prophecy to be true! Please, I beg you to aid us!"

Once the PCs agree or when they express a willingness to hear more, Veruud continues.

"Sibbya is not the only woman with the gift of radiance. A handful of women have had this gift, scattered across Rashemen and Thesk, serving as protectors of their villages. Sibbya's son is a first. I sense he is special, more potent than the rest."

The Wychlaran have historical records of a temple in the frozen wastes, northwest of our distant town of Nathoud. The temple is said to exist somewhere near a frozen lake. Within is an artifact that may protect the vessels. The witches are calling on the men to form an expedition, but the hunters in this village are unlikely to succeed at such a dangerous quest. I will do what I can to convince them to come to your aid. Please, will you go to the temple and secure the artifact for us?"

Veruud provides rough information on where the temple might be and promises to plead with the witches so they can send aid as soon as possible.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 100/160 experience points each for succeeding at the overall skill challenge, or half XP if they fail. This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

ENCOUNTER 2: EXPEDITION TO THE TEMPLE OF RADIANCE

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 10/13, COMPLEXITY 1 (500/800 XP)

SETUP

This is the second of three skill challenges the PCs face as they seek the truth behind the radiant vessels and the machinations of Szass Tam.

This skill challenge contains three scenes. The goal of these scenes is to traverse some 240 miles (386 km) through the frozen lands and find the temple northwest of Nathoud. This trek takes five days with horses (which the Wychlaran provide), but eight days (and Endurance DCs increase by 2) without mounts.

Each scene involves special group checks using the primary skills. A group check succeeds if at least half the party meets the DC. Prior to making the group checks, each PC should be encouraged to use the secondary skills to increase their chances of success with the group checks. DMs may reward clever PCs for the use of a ritual as an assist or a single group check success.

The DM should use the following process:

- The DM should let the party know they must succeed at special group checks. The group checks are indicative of the difficulty the group faces from the harsh weather and environment. For a successful group check, at least half of the PCs must succeed.
- The DM should inform the party of the goal and the primary and secondary skills for scenes as they occur.
- Prior to the group checks, each PC must select one of the secondary skills (indicating the skills they are using during the trek) and make a check. The skill descriptions below indicate the bonus or penalty that can be applied to the group check. The bonus may be applied to a single group check.

SKILL CHALLENGE

Goal: To traverse some 240 miles through the frozen lands of northern Rashemen and find the temple.

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Endurance, Nature.

Other Skills: Heal, History, Perception, Religion. In addition, action points may be used (see below).

Victory: The PCs start the next combat encounter on even footing with the trolls.

Defeat: Because the PCs are moving slowly and noisily from exhaustion, in the next encounter the trolls gain surprise and the time to apply poison.

SCENE 1: PLOTTING A COURSE

A chilling wind blows steadily toward you as you leave the relative safety of central Rashemen. The only way to save time is to leave the road to Nathoud and cross a wilderness composed of scrub plains, small forests, and frozen lakes. Clouds heavy with snow loom in the distance. Both traversing the wilderness and finding the lost temple are dangerous undertakings. Now comes the time to plot a course to keep you from the storm, keep you clear of hazards, and help you find the temple.

Failure in Encounter 1: If the PCs failed the previous skill challenge, increase the DC of all checks in this scene by 2.

In the first scene, PCs must succeed at two Nature group checks. Prior to each group check, each PC must select and roll a single skill, gaining the indicated effect.

History DC 16/18 (Special)

The PC recalls information regarding nomadic travel routes, helping to guide their safe passage. With success a PC may apply a +2 to one other PC's group Nature check before the check is made.

Nature DC 20/22 (Group Check; Special)

The uncharted wilderness is difficult to navigate and contains many hidden hazards. PCs from the region of Narfell gain a +2 to Nature checks due to familiarity with the terrain.

Prior to the group check, PCs may decide to apply bonuses they have earned with secondary skills.

With success, read the following: *You plot a course to the west, taking to higher ground. This proves wise, as the terrain shelters you from the storm.*

With failure, read the following: *The trackless wastes offer no shelter from the storm. You lose your way before finally emerging from the storm. Tired, but not yet defeated.*

Perception DC 14/16 (Special)

The PC notices an alternate path or a location offering shelter. With success, the PC may grant a +2 bonus to one other PC's group Nature check before it has been rolled.

Religion DC 15/17 (Special)

The PC recalls information regarding areas unlikely to hold the temple or finds a trail marker with religious significance. This helps route the group in the right direction.

With success, a PC can grant a +1 bonus to one PC's group Nature check after the die has been rolled.

SCENE 2: CREVASSE

You have made it through three days in this harrowing land. As you wind your way through a stunning canyon, you come upon a great rift in the ice. A narrow ledge winds to one side of the crevasse and its perilous drop.

This scene involves one group check. For this group check, each PC may choose either Acrobatics or Athletics. At least half the party must succeed at the check to avoid a failure. With success, the party arrives safely at the other side of the chasm. With a failure, the party must double back and take a longer route. The rift is 60-feet-wide. Rituals such as Shadow Bridge (with a DC 20 Arcana check) could grant an automatic success, but rituals covering part of the distance can count as a +1 to +2 bonus to each PC, depending on the circumstances. PCs failing any check may spend an action point to reroll the check, as described below.

Acrobatics DC 18/20 (Group Check; Special)

The PC uses physical skills to balance across the narrow ledge, uses acrobatic stunts to traverse an alternate route, or set up a rope so others can pass.

Action Point (Special)

A PC may spend one Action Point to immediately reroll a check they failed. This represents the PC grabbing a ledge as they fall, recalling important information just as they would step onto thin ice, etc.

Athletics DC 18/20 (Group Check; Special)

The PC takes the lead in climbing an icy incline, jumps across a portion of the chasm, or uses their strength to pull an ally to safety.

SCENE 3: BITTER COLD

You are now far to the North. You scrape the snow from a religious marker, a sun emblazoned upon stone. The temple should be no more than a day's travel. Taking stock, you realize the party is in grave danger. The cold has taken a toll. It will be a test of your mind and body to make it to the temple.

PCs must succeed at a group Endurance check to overcome the effects of the journey on their bodies and minds and to reach the temple. **If the party requires more successes to conclude the encounter, use Scene 1 or 3 for additional Nature or Endurance group checks until four successes or three failures have been accumulated.**

Prior to each Endurance group check, each PC may select and roll a single skill, gaining the indicated effect.

Endurance DC 19/21 (Group Check; Special)

Each PC works to overcome the effects of travel through the harsh weather. PCs from the region of Narfell gain a +2 to Endurance checks due to familiarity with the terrain.

Prior to the group check, PCs may decide to apply bonuses they have earned with secondary skills.

Heal DC 14/16 (Special)

A PC can heal an ally, negating the ravages of cold and injury. With a successful check, the PC grants a +1 to another PC's Endurance check after the die roll.

History DC 16/18 (Special)

The PC recalls tales of how the Rashemi and other northern peoples survived in the harsh cold. With success a PC may apply a +2 to one PC's Endurance check before the check is made.

Nature DC 16/18 (Special)

The PC recalls information regarding nomadic hunting grounds, helping find prey that provides food and skins for warmth. PCs from the region of Narfell gain a +2 to Nature checks due to familiarity with the terrain. With success a PC may apply a +2 to one PC's Endurance check before the check is made.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends once the PCs have succeeded at four group checks or failed three group checks.

Success: The party reaches the next encounter on even footing with the trolls.

Failure: The trolls in the next encounter gain surprise and the use of poison.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 100/160 experience points each for succeeding at the skill challenge, half XP if they fail.

ENCOUNTER 3: TROLL ATTACK!

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 11/13 (3000/4200 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- 1 bladerager troll (E)
- 1 troll timber slinger (S)
- 1 anchor troll (A)
- 1 war troll (W)

As they near the temple, the PCs travel through the hunting terrain of a group of trolls. The battle takes place at a moment when the PCs are walking, having to dismount because of dangerous terrain. As the adventurers approach, read the following:

The frozen tundra crunches underfoot as you finish walking your mounts past yet another patch of ice. A clearing lies ahead, the cold wind rustling the snow-covered trees around the perimeter.

If the PCs succeeded at the skill challenge in **Encounter 2**, there is no surprise and the trolls do not use poison. Read the following:

Branches shift and drop their snow, a pack of blue-skinned trolls stepping forth. They wield a myriad of weapons, from a greatsword to a giant spiked chain to what looks to be a tree trunk. They grin and lick their lips before charging forth with vicious yells.

If the PCs failed at the skill challenge in **Encounter 2**, the PCs are moving slowly and noisily due to exhaustion. The trolls notice the party and gain surprise. In addition, the anchor troll and war troll have each added poison to their weapons. The poison, detailed on the statistics pages, is a secondary attack for their first successful attack in the encounter (DMG 51). Read the following:

Snow explodes off of branches as a pack of blue-skinned trolls charges through the tree line, grunting and yelling. The foul beasts wield a myriad of weapons, from a greatsword and a giant spiked chain, both dripping with dark ichor, to what looks to be a huge tree trunk.

In both cases the PCs start on the bottom of the map. The horses they are leading are assumed to flee and can be tracked down after the encounter.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This is a straightforward combat with only a few important features.

Terrain: All terrain is frozen and snow-covered, but movement is not impeded.

Snow: At the start of the second round, a heavy snow begins to fall. Due to the falling snow, any distance of 5 squares or greater grants concealment (-2 to ranged attack rolls).

Trees and Boulders: Any square containing mostly trees or boulders should be considered covering terrain. A DC 20 Athletics check (or DC 10 Athletics check with a running start) allows a character to jump on top of or over a boulder or tree stump.

Hills: The two small hills can be easily climbed from the top of the map. A creature on the hill has cover from a creature standing below and adjacent to the hill. The 5-foot-tall front of the hill may be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check or a PC may jump up onto it with a DC 50 Athletics check (DC 25 with a running start).

TACTICS

As trolls, all of the monsters are generally fearless, counting on their regeneration to save the day. They make a priority of attacking any PC dealing fire or acid damage but otherwise brutishly attack the closest enemy or the one that has done them recent harm.

The bladerager troll charges and uses *bladerager rend* whenever possible. He is incapable of tactical reasoning but follows the commands of other trolls a round after the command is issued. This troll explodes in shards of blue ice.

The war troll tries to charge into the middle of the PCs, positioning himself to use *sweeping strike* and *threatening reach* to maximum effect. He targets spellcasters or other soft targets preferentially. He uses *blood pursuit* to stay close to his prey.

The anchor troll moves or charges and tries to use *wrapping chain* and *chain slam* as often as possible, especially to move PCs into any damaging zones or into flanks. *Anchor tornado* is used as soon as more than two targets are in range, drawing attacks of opportunity if necessary to reach more targets.

The troll timber slinger stays behind cover, starting on top of a mound and moving as needed while using *timber toss* at a distance (even once it snows). He uses *timber swing* when a PC closes with him, then shifts or moves to continue to use *timber toss* if he has multiple targets.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Reduce the level of all of the enemies by 1 (per DMG 174, -1 to attack rolls, defenses, and AC; reduce HPs by role: 6 for artillery, 8 for soldier/controller, 10 for brute).

Six PCs: For low tier, add one bladerager troll. For high tier, add one war troll (Level 13).

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The trolls do not surrender, though if the adventure is facing time pressures a DM could have one or two flee if faced with overwhelming force. The trolls are native to northern Rashemi but are nomadic, moving when they eat most of the prey in an area. They can reveal the location of the temple, though they fear it and have not been inside.

If the party lacks the capability to inflict fire or acid damage, the PCs should be allowed to ready to use torches on a troll that falls unconscious. A DM can assume this is the case once all trolls have been killed and if the battle is well controlled by the PCs.

Once the combat is complete, the PCs continue their search and soon find the temple. Continue to **Encounter 4: Grasping Radiance**.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 600/840 experience points each for defeating the trolls.

TREASURE

The anchor troll carries a +3 *staggering weapon* strapped to his back. He won it recently in a game of chance from the war troll. The trolls also carry some gold and rare pelts, with a combined value of 400/600 gp per PC.

ENCOUNTER 3: TROLL ATTACK! STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Anchor Troll (Level 13)	Level 13 Controller
Large natural humanoid	XP 800
Initiative +12 Senses Perception +14	
HP 131; Bloodied 65; see also <i>troll healing</i>	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 26, Will 22	
Speed 7	
m Claws (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +15 vs AC; 2d8+5 damage.	
M Wrapping Chain (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 5; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 6 damage, and the target is restrained(save ends). The restrained effect ends if the troll and the target move more than 5 squares apart.	
M Chain Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
This attack can be used only against a creature restrained by <i>wrapping chain</i> . The troll swings the chain that has snared its target, and slams the creature against the ground. Move the target to any square within 5 of the troll and make an attack: +17 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone. <i>Effect</i> : The target is no longer restrained.	
C Anchor Tornado (standard; recharge 5-6) ♦ Weapon	
Close burst 5; +18 vs Armor Class; 3d8+6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Troll Healing ♦ Healing	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 15 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Giant	
Skills Athletics +18, Endurance +16	
Str 23 (+13) Dex 20 (+12) Wis 14 (+9)	
Con 19 (+11) Int 5 (+4) Cha 12 (+8)	

Troll Timber Slinger	Level 12 Artillery
Large natural humanoid	XP 700
Initiative +10 Senses Perception +12	
HP 109; Bloodied 54; see also <i>troll healing</i>	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 24; Fortitude 25, Reflex 23, Will 21	
Speed 8	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.	
A Timber Toss (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Area burst 1 within 15; +16 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 damage. If you hit the creature in the origin square of the burst, that creature takes 1d6 extra damage.	
M Timber Swing (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 3; +16 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 3 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.	
Troll Healing ♦ Healing	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic Evil Languages Giant	
Skills Athletics +15, Endurance +15	
Str 22 (+12) Dex 19 (+10) Wis 13 (+7)	
Con 18 (+10) Int 5 (+3) Cha 11 (+6)	

Bladerager Troll	Level 12 Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 700
Initiative +10 Senses Perception +9	
HP 151; Bloodied 75; see also <i>death burst</i>	
Regeneration 10	
AC 24; Fortitude 26, Reflex 24, Will 23	
Vulnerable acid or fire (if the bladerager troll takes acid or fire damage, its regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
Speed 7	
m Claws (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +15 vs AC; 2d10+6 damage.	
M Bladerager Rend (standard; recharge 5 6)	
Reach 2; +15 vs AC; 3d10+6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
C Death Burst (when the bladerager troll drops to 0 hit points)	
The troll explodes in a burst of shrapnel; close burst 2; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 damage.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Giant	
Skills Athletics +17, Endurance +16	
Str 23 (+12) Dex 18 (+10) Wis 16 (+9)	
Con 21 (+11) Int 3 (+2) Cha 10 (+6)	

War Troll (Level 13)	Level 13 Soldier
Large natural humanoid	XP 800
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +15	
HP 102; Bloodied 51; see also <i>troll healing</i>	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 29; Fortitude 28, Reflex 24, Will 24	
Speed 7	
m Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 1d12 + 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the war troll's next turn.	
m Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage.	
R Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +19 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage.	
C Sweeping Strike (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Requires greatsword; close blast 2; +19 vs. AC; 1d12 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone	
Blood Pursuit (immediate reaction, when a bloodied enemy within 2 squares of the war troll moves or shifts; at-will)	
The war troll shifts 1 square closer to the enemy.	
Threatening Reach	
The war troll can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).	
Troll Healing ♦ Healing	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 15 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Giant	
Skills Athletics +17, Endurance +15	
Str 24 (+14) Dex 16 (+10) Wis 16 (+10)	
Con 20 (+12) Int 10 (+7) Cha 12 (+8)	
Equipment: plate armor, greatsword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows.	

Dark Toxin	Level 10 Poison
<i>This poison, used by dark stalkers, looks like liquid shadow and smells like mushrooms.</i>	

Poison 1,250 gp

Attack: +13 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

ENCOUNTER 3: TROLL ATTACK! STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Anchor Troll (Level 15)	Level 15 Controller
Large natural humanoid	XP 1200
Initiative +13 Senses Perception +15	
HP 147; Bloodied 73; see also <i>troll healing</i>	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 29; Fortitude 28, Reflex 28, Will 24	
Speed 7	
m Claws (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +17 vs AC; 2d8+6 damage.	
M Wrapping Chain (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 5; +19 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 7 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends). The restrained effect ends if the troll and the target move more than 5 squares apart.	
M Chain Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
This attack can be used only against a creature restrained by <i>wrapping chain</i> . The troll swings the chain that has snared its target, and slams the creature against the ground. Move the target to any square within 5 of the troll and make an attack: +19 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone. <i>Effect</i> : The target is no longer restrained.	
C Anchor Tornado (standard; recharge 5-6) ♦ Weapon	
Close burst 5; +20 vs Armor Class; 3d8+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Troll Healing ♦ Healing	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 15 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Giant
Skills Athletics +19, Endurance +17	
Str 23 (+14)	Dex 20 (+13) Wis 14 (+10)
Con 19 (+12)	Int 5 (+5) Cha 12 (+9)

Troll Timber Slinger	Level 14 Artillery
Large natural humanoid	XP 1000
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +13	
HP 121; Bloodied 60; see also <i>troll healing</i>	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 26; Fortitude 27, Reflex 25, Will 23	
Speed 8	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage.	
A Timber Toss (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Area burst 1 within 15; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 6 damage. If you hit the creature in the origin square of the burst, that creature takes 1d6 extra damage.	
M Timber Swing (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 3; +18 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 4 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.	
Troll Healing ♦ Healing	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Giant
Skills Athletics +16, Endurance +16	
Str 22 (+13)	Dex 19 (+11) Wis 13 (+8)
Con 18 (+11)	Int 5 (+4) Cha 11 (+7)

Bladerager Troll	Level 14 Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 1000
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +10	
HP 171; Bloodied 85; see also <i>death burst</i>	
Regeneration 10	
AC 26; Fortitude 28, Reflex 26, Will 25	
Vulnerable acid or fire (if the bladerager troll takes acid or fire damage, its regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
Speed 7	
m Claws (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +17 vs AC; 2d10+7 damage.	
M Bladerager Rend (standard; recharge 5 6)	
Reach 2; +17 vs AC; 3d10+7 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
C Death Burst (when the bladerager troll drops to 0 hit points)	
The troll explodes in a burst of shrapnel; close burst 2; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6+6 damage.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Giant
Skills Athletics +18, Endurance +17	
Str 23 (+13)	Dex 18 (+11) Wis 16 (+10)
Con 21 (+12)	Int 3 (+3) Cha 10 (+7)

War Troll (Level 14)	Level 14 Soldier
Large natural humanoid	XP 1000
Initiative +12 Senses Perception +16	
HP 110; Bloodied 55; see also <i>troll healing</i>	
Regeneration 10 (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 30; Fortitude 29, Reflex 25, Will 25	
Speed 7	
m Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 1d12 + 8 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the war troll's next turn.	
m Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage.	
R Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +20 vs. AC; 1d12 + 4 damage.	
C Sweeping Strike (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Requires greatsword; close blast 2; +20 vs. AC; 1d12 + 8 damage, and the target is knocked prone	
Blood Pursuit (immediate reaction, when a bloodied enemy within 2 squares of the war troll moves or shifts; at-will)	
The war troll shifts 1 square closer to the enemy.	
Threatening Reach	
The war troll can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).	
Troll Healing ♦ Healing	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 15 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Giant
Skills Athletics +17, Endurance +15	
Str 24 (+14)	Dex 16 (+10) Wis 16 (+10)
Con 20 (+12)	Int 10 (+7) Cha 12 (+8)
Equipment: plate armor, greatsword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows.	

Hellstinger Scorpion Venom	Level 15 Poison
<i>A vibrant blue color makes this pasty toxin look harmless.</i>	
Poison 6,250 gp	

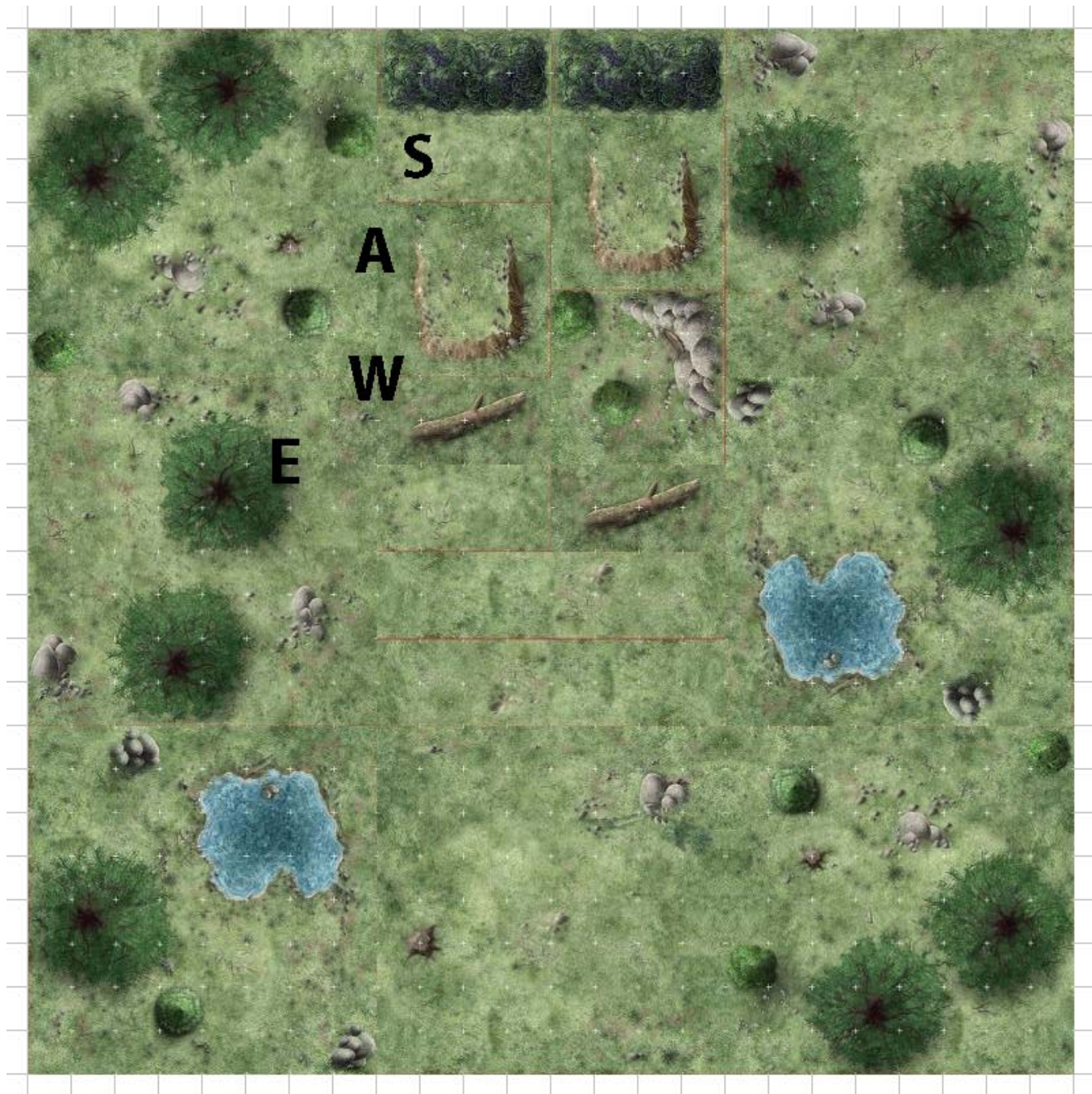
Attack: +18 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 10 poison damage and weakened (save ends both).

Aftereffect: The target is weakened (save ends).

ENCOUNTER 3: TROLL ATTACK! MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Ruins of the Wild x2



ENCOUNTER 4: GRASPING RADIANCE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 11/13 (3000/4000 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

1 ice devil (gelugon) (level 14) (I)

2 Thayan monks (level 11) (M)

Athos, Thayan Preceptor of Bane (A)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

1 ice devil (gelugon) (level 14) (I)

2 Thayan monks (level 13) (M)

Athos, Thayan Preceptor of Bane (Level 12) (A)

(Note: Although the stat block says “Althanis, High Priest of Dagon’s Cult,” he is really Athos, a Preceptor in the service of Bane. Replace all descriptions of Dagon in the stat block with Bane. His *horrid form* transforms him into a grotesque undead with rotting flesh. In addition, the banshrae warriors are actually Thayan monks.)

The PCs arrive at the temple, finding it a desolate ice-covered ruin. When they arrive in the main chamber, they find a group of Banites and a hired devil have just arrived, intent on claiming the artifact for Thay. The artifact interacts with the frozen temple, causing earthquakes and shifting terrain. DMs should aim to create a fun combat where the artifact constantly changes hands and the creatures are slipping and sliding everywhere.

Though the Banites want the artifact, they should not actually escape with it. Instead, they move to the entrance and try to defeat the party from a position of control. Likewise, if the PCs gain the artifact through teleportation or similar powers, they should be encouraged to defeat the foes and secure the temple.

With great care you cross the frozen lake that surrounds the once-beautiful temple, ornate arches and delicate spires destroyed and obscured by countless winters. You explore within, noting walls and floors covered in ice.

Finally you step out onto the edge of the temple’s central chamber. The floor has sunk, cracked and broken by the melting and freezing of ice from the lake.

The ice-covered walls contain art and statues. A translucent golden sphere sits in the open upon a tall column.

From another entrance at the far end of the chamber approaches another party. The symbol of Bane is prominently displayed on their tabards and shields, and with them is a large creature that appears to be an insect from some horrible nightmare.

As if detecting the presence of life, the artifact suddenly glows a bright and warm golden-orange. The pedestal shakes, as does the room itself, quickly becoming an earthquake that threatens to knock you to the ground or bring the ceiling down upon you. Rivulets of water run down the warming walls, and huge cracks appear in the icy floor.

One of the Banites cries, “The artifact! Take it before they do!” Several hirelings in their employ, their packs heavy with supplies, take cover while the rest move forward. The room shakes once more.

If any PC has played CORE1-6 *Incident at the Gorge of Gauros*, they recognize one of the hirelings as the mercenary Urilyz the elf. He and the hirelings are clearly noncombatants, though they can be killed if the party so chooses (treat as minions with 15 for all defenses).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Artifact: When a living creature is adjacent to the artifact, the artifact is attracted by the creature’s life energy and enters their square. The creature can grab the artifact as a free action and is considered to control the artifact. The artifact is slippery, but can be held without requiring a free hand. The artifact cannot be moved by powers or other means.

A PC loses control of the artifact any time the PC is affected by a forced movement effect they or an ally did not cause, or when affected by the conditions dazed, helpless, immobilized, petrified, prone, or stunned. When a PC loses control, the artifact falls, floats, and rolls, coming to rest 1d4+3 squares away in a random direction.

While controlling the artifact, a creature gains regeneration 2.

Earthquakes: Once per round, on an initiative count of 10, the unstable temple shakes from the awakening of the radiant artifact. Describe the shaking walls, chunks of ice falling, clouds of snow, etc. This impacts the ice floes.

Ice Floes: The ice floor in the temple has begun to crack and melt. Each of the disconnected dungeon tiles is an ice floe. PCs may use the Athletics skill to attempt

to jump from one floe to another (divide check by 10, 5 with a running start, to determine squares jumped as per PH 182).

When the earthquake strikes, roll 1d6 to determine how each ice floe behaves (using dice color-coded to each ice floe can speed these rolls).

- On a 1, the ice floe remains stationary.
- On a 2-4, the ice floe moves 1 square.
- On a 5-6, the ice floe moves 2 squares.
- Roll 1d4 to determine direction of movement (no diagonals).
- If an ice floe hits another, it stops, and every creature on both floes must save or be pushed 1 square away from the impact.
- If an ice floe hits an area of connected ground, the impact only affects creatures within 2 of the impact point.
- If an ice floe should move into a square that is occupied by a creature in the water, the creature is pushed along and must make a saving throw. With a failure, they are knocked prone.

Icy Areas: Areas of the tiles that show water are patches of melting ice. When a movement effect causes a creature to pass over an area of melting ice, the creature that caused the movement may slide the creature one extra square in any direction. A creature running or charging over an icy area must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

Slides: Each starting area has a long trail of melting ice that functions as a slide. A PC may choose to enter the slide and move immediately to the end of the slide, ending their turn. The PC must make an Acrobatics check DC 20 or fall prone at the end of the slide. With a Acrobatics check DC 26, the PC's turn does not end.

Steps: The party begins on an elevated area and must either take the steps (difficult terrain) or the slide to approach the artifact.

Water: The area between the tiles is shallow ice water (hindering and difficult terrain). A creature entering or beginning its turn in the ice water takes ongoing 5 cold damage and is slowed (save ends both).

Illumination: Because the walls reflect the light from the artifact and the light sources brought by the Banites, this room is considered to be in bright light.

TACTICS

Athos orders the Thayan Monks to seize the artifact for him, using *Bane's maw* to either blind intercepting PCs with *Bane's flame* or damage them with *Bane's fang*. Athos saves *command* for when a PC is getting away with the artifact or to knock a troublesome PC away and into the

water. He is not afraid to get close to the action, using his aura, *winding serpents*, and *ring of terror* to hurt and keep multiple enemies away.

The Thayan Monks try to seize the artifact, one moving down the slide. They should have an easy time of jumping between floes that are two or fewer squares apart, using their movement to also gain *skirmish* damage. They use *staggering palm* and move away from a stunned PC. They employ *mantid dance* to limit ranged attacks and to recharge *staggering palm*. They use *blowgun dart* if a PC with the artifact is getting away.

The ice devil wades into battle, trying to get many PCs within its aura. Being immune to cold, it is unaffected by the water and can wade between floes. The ice devil uses *chilling command* and *freezing breath* to immobilize opponents and keep them from pursuing after the artifact. It uses *icy longspear* when it needs the reach or while powers recharge.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Reduce the level of all of the enemies by 1 (per DMG 174, -1 to attack rolls, defenses, and AC; reduce HPs by 8).

Six PCs: Add one Thayan monk.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends once the PCs have defeated the Banites, either through force or by retreating with the artifact. They may then decide what to do with the hirelings that carry the supplies. If no PC recognized Urilyz the Elf, a passive insight of 13 detects that he seems to be more cunning and worldly than the others. Proceed to Encounter 5: Thayan Machinations.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 600/800 experience points each for defeating the encounter.

TREASURE

Athos carries a *chameleon ring* that he was planning to offer the Gelugon as payment. Embedded in the ice within the temple is a suit of +3 *legendmaker armor*, easily found by the PCs. Both Athos and the monks carry rare prayer books worth a total of 500/900 gp.

ENCOUNTER 4: GRASPING RADIANCE STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Althanis, High Priest of Dagon's Cult	Level 9 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium elemental humanoid	XP 800
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +8; low-light vision Dagon's Blessing aura 2; allies that begin their turns in this area gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls until the start of their next turn HP 194; Bloodied 97 AC 25; Fortitude 20, Reflex 23, Will 24 Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison Saving Throws +2 Speed 6 Action Points 1	
m Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +14 vs Armor Class; 1d8+4 damage.	
r Dagon's Fang (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic Ranged 10; +13 vs Fortitude; 2d6+6 psychic damage.	
r Dagon's Flame (standard; at-will) ♦ Radiant Ranged 10; +13 vs Fortitude; the target is pushed 1 and blinded until the end of Althanis's next turn.	
R Dagon's Maw (standard; at-will) Make two Dagon's fang attacks, two Dagon's flame attacks, or one of each.	
C Winding Serpents (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Necrotic Close blast 5; +13 vs Reflex; 2d8+6 necrotic damage, and phantom serpents wind about the target, restraining the target until the end of its next turn.	
R Command (standard; encounter) ♦ Charm Ranged 10; +13 vs Will; the target is dazed until the end of Althanis's next turn, and the target slides 4 or is knocked prone.	
C Ring of Terror (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves adjacent, encounter) ♦ Fear Close burst 1, triggering enemy only; +13 vs Will; target is pushed 4.	
Horrific Repulsion (immediate reaction, when first bloodied, encounter) ♦ Fear Althanis recharges and immediately uses his ring of terror.	
Horrid Form (immediate reaction, when first injured in combat, encounter) ♦ Polymorph Althanis takes on the form of a grotesque mass of rubbery, squidlike flesh with numerous writhing tendrils. All enemies take a -1 penalty to melee and ranged attacks against Althanis in this form until he is bloodied. Despite the alien appearance, his other abilities remain unchanged.	
Alignment Chaotic Evil Languages Abyssal, Common Skills Religion +9 Str 10 (+4) Dex 14 (+6) Wis 18 (+8) Con 17 (+7) Int 10 (+4) Cha 22 (+10)	

Ice Devil (Gelugon) (Level 14)	Level 14 Soldier
Large immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 1,000
Initiative +15 Senses Perception +13; darkvision Cold Aura (Cold) aura 5; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all attack rolls. HP 147; Bloodied 73 AC 30; Fortitude 27, Reflex 25, Will 23 Immune cold; Resist 20 fire Speed 8	
m Icy Longspear (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon Reach 3; +21 vs Armor Class; 1d12+4 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
M Claw (standard; at-will) Reach 2; +19 vs Armor Class; 1d6+4 damage.	
C Freezing Breath (standard; recharge 4-6) ♦ Cold Close blast 5; +17 vs Fortitude; 2d6+4 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
C Chilling Command (minor; recharge 5-6) ♦ Cold Close burst 5; +17 vs Will; the target takes ongoing 5 cold damage and is immobilized (save ends both).	
Alignment Evil Languages Supernal Skills Endurance +23 Str 25 (+17) Dex 22 (+16) Wis 17 (+13) Con 27 (+18) Int 15 (+12) Cha 19 (+14)	
Equipment longspear	

Banshrae Warrior (Level 11)	Level 11 Skirmisher
Medium humanoid	XP 600
Initiative +13 Senses Perception +7; low-light vision HP 113; Bloodied 56 AC 25; Fortitude 21, Reflex 23, Will 21 Speed 8	
m Slam (standard; at-will) +16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.	
m Staggering Palm (standard; encounter; recharges after the use of mantid dance) +16 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 damage, plus the target is stunned until the end of the banshrae warrior's next turn.	
R Blowgun Dart (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Ranged 10; +12 vs Fortitude; the target is pushed 1 and blinded until the end of the banshrae warrior's next turn.	
Melee Agility (minor, usable immediately after hitting with a melee attack; at-will) The banshrae warrior shifts 1 square.	
Mantid Dance (move; recharge 4 5 6) Until the end of its next turn, the banshrae warrior gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and all noncritical ranged attacks automatically miss it.	
Skirmish +2d8 If, on its turn, the banshrae warrior ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals an extra 2d8 damage on its melee attacks until the start of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Telepathy 20 Str 18 (+9) Dex 23 (+11) Wis 15 (+7) Con 17 (+8) Int 14 (+7) Cha 20 (+10)	
Equipment blowgun, darts	

ENCOUNTER 4: GRASPING RADIANCE STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Althanis, High Priest of Dagon's Cult (level 12)	Level 12 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium elemental humanoid	XP 1400
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +9; low-light vision	
Dagon's Blessing aura 2; allies that begin their turns in this area gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls until the start of their next turn	
HP 242; Bloodied 121	
AC 28; Fortitude 23, Reflex 26, Will 27	
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+17 vs Armor Class; 1d8+6 damage.	
r Dagon's Fang (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	
Ranged 10; +16 vs Fortitude; 2d6+7 psychic damage.	
r Dagon's Flame (standard; at-will) ♦ Radiant	
Ranged 10; +16 vs Fortitude; the target is pushed 1 and blinded until the end of Althanis's next turn.	
R Dagon's Maw (standard; at-will)	
Make two Dagon's fang attacks, two Dagon's flame attacks, or one of each.	
C Winding Serpents (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Necrotic	
Close blast 5; +16 vs Reflex; 2d8+8 necrotic damage, and phantom serpents wind about the target, restraining the target until the end of its next turn.	
R Command (standard; encounter) ♦ Charm	
Ranged 10; +16 vs Will; the target is dazed until the end of Althanis's next turn, and the target slides 4 or is knocked prone.	
C Ring of Terror (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves adjacent, encounter) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 1, triggering enemy only; +16 vs Will; target is pushed 4.	
Horrific Repulsion (immediate reaction, when first bloodied, encounter) ♦ Fear	
Althanis recharges and immediately uses his ring of terror.	
Horrid Form (immediate reaction, when first injured in combat, encounter) ♦ Polymorph	
Althanis takes on the form of a grotesque mass of rubbery, squidlike flesh with numerous writhing tendrils. All enemies take a -1 penalty to melee and ranged attacks against Althanis in this form until he is bloodied. Despite the alien appearance, his other abilities remain unchanged.	
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Religion +11	
Str 10 (+6)	Dex 14 (+8) Wis 18 (+10)
Con 17 (+9)	Int 10 (+6) Cha 22 (+12)

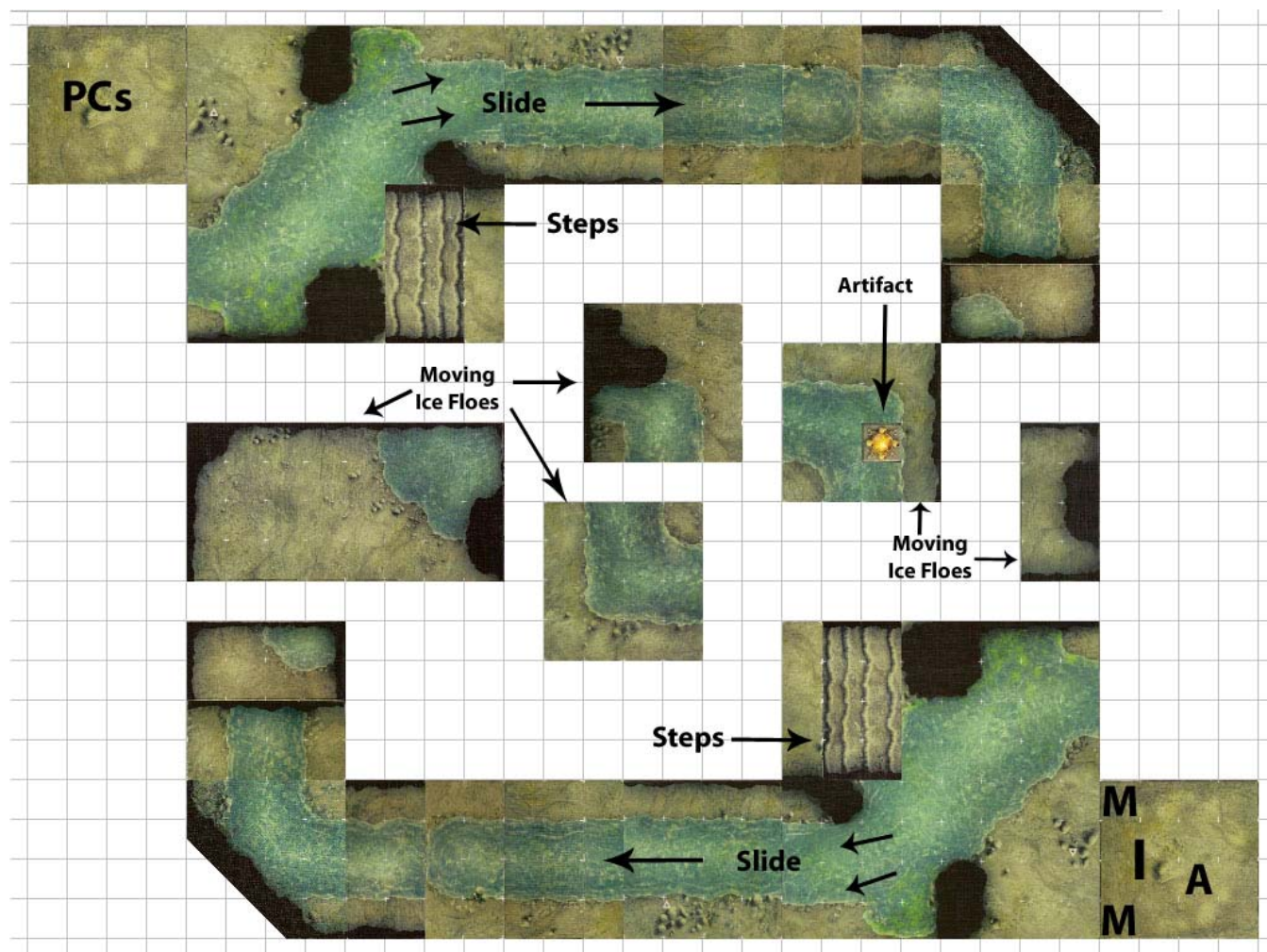
Ice Devil (Gelugon) (Level 14)	Level 14 Soldier
Large immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 1,000
Initiative +15 Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
Cold Aura (Cold) aura 5; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all attack rolls.	
HP 147; Bloodied 73	
AC 30; Fortitude 27, Reflex 25, Will 23	
Immune cold; Resist 20 fire	
Speed 8	
m Icy Longspear (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon	
Reach 3; +21 vs Armor Class; 1d12+4 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
M Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +19 vs Armor Class; 1d6+4 damage.	
C Freezing Breath (standard; recharge 4-6) ♦ Cold	
Close blast 5; +17 vs Fort; 2d6+4 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
C Chilling Command (minor; recharge 5-6) ♦ Cold	
Close burst 5; +17 vs Will; the target takes ongoing 5 cold damage and is immobilized (save ends both).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Supernal
Skills Endurance +23	
Str 25 (+17)	Dex 22 (+16) Wis 17 (+13)
Con 27 (+18)	Int 15 (+12) Cha 19 (+14)
Equipment longspear	

Banshrae Warrior (Level 13)	Level 13 Skirmisher
Medium humanoid	XP 800
Initiative +14 Senses Perception +8; low-light vision	
HP 129; Bloodied 64	
AC 27; Fortitude 23, Reflex 25, Will 23	
Speed 8	
m Slam (standard; at-will)	
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.	
m Staggering Palm (standard; encounter; recharges after the use of mantid dance)	
+18 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage, plus the target is stunned until the end of the banshrae warrior's next turn.	
R Blowgun Dart (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 10; +14 vs Fortitude; the target is pushed 1 and blinded until the end of the banshrae warrior's next turn.	
Melee Agility (minor, usable immediately after hitting with a melee attack; at-will)	
The banshrae warrior shifts 1 square.	
Mantid Dance (move; recharge 4 5 6)	
Until the end of its next turn, the banshrae warrior gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and all noncritical ranged attacks automatically miss it.	
Skirmish +2d8	
If, on its turn, the banshrae warrior ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals an extra 2d8 damage on its melee attacks until the start of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Telepathy 20
Str 18 (+10)	Dex 23 (+12) Wis 15 (+8)
Con 17 (+9)	Int 14 (+8) Cha 20 (+11)
Equipment blowgun, darts	

ENCOUNTER 4: GRASPING RADIANCE MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Caves of Carnage x2



ENCOUNTER 5: THAYAN MACHINATIONS

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 10/13, COMPLEXITY 1 (500/800 XP)

SETUP

Important NPCs: Urilyz the elf (Bluff +12, Insight +19)

In this final skill challenge, the PCs can discover Szass Tam's plans and learn the power of the radiant artifact.

This skill challenge contains three scenes, two of which are likely to be mutually exclusive. The PCs can either interrogate Urilyz the elf or read his journal, learning the Thayan plans. In addition, the radiant artifact can be studied. PCs may choose to do both activities simultaneously or at different times.

DMs should encourage PCs to engage in both activities, urging them onto the other scene once two successes have been scored in one scene. Depending on time, DMs may allow further checks after the skill challenge has succeeded or provide several pieces of information if the PCs roll well.

This encounter helps players and their PCs understand and care about the Thayan machinations. However, if the adventure is running long, the DM may run this as a short role-playing encounter, summarizing what the PCs discover. PCs can still reach the maximum XP amount without gaining XP from this encounter.

SKILL CHALLENGE

Goal: The PCs must determine the Thayan plot and learn how the artifact can aid them in foiling the plans of Szass Tam's lieutenant.

Primary Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Perception, Religion, Thievery

Other Skills: Athletics, History, Insight, Streetwise

Victory: The PCs gain the information they need, and the Wychlaran are impressed.

Defeat: The PCs do not gain enough information and have to be assisted by the Wychlaran.

SCENE 1: INTERROGATING URILYZ

The following may be read if the party has decided to spare Urilyz and interrogate him.

Urilyz the elf looks up at you with disgust. "I have failed my Master. When you destroy the artifact and ruin her plans—" He shakes his head. "Do your worst; there is no

pain you can inflict that would match what my Master would give me."

Urilyz is bluffing. Any PC with a passive Insight of 12 or better know the artifact should not be destroyed. PCs may also learn this with active Insight checks as described below. Additionally, PCs may use several skills in interrogating Urilyz.

With each failure, Urilyz mocks the PCs. With successes, Urilyz shares several pieces of information he has. DMs should role-play the transfer of information depending on the skills used (as a conspirator in response to Bluff, with fear in response to Intimidate, etc.). Continue to Scene 3 once two successes have been earned.

- Urilyz the elf helps recruit mercenaries for Thay. Thay employs Zhents, Banites, and others to do their work. After the incident at the Gorge of Gauros, Urilyz was asked by his master, the lich Golra Kuss, to seek the radiant artifact.
- Although Urilyz was not told Golra's plans, he overheard the lich telling others of her plans. Golra foresaw that the artifact could disrupt a ritual she is conducting and asked that he retrieve it. He hired the Banites, but went along so as to impress Golra.
- Golra has learned from her master, Szass Tam, that the radiant vessels can be imbued with power, both radiant and dark.
- The ritual Golra is conducting can convert the vessels, channeling negative energy into them. She lusts for power and hopes a successful ritual grants her Tam's favor.
- Golra Kuss described the ritual site as an altar joined by bridges over a dusty gorge near Gauros. She is protected by powerful undead, though Urilyz does not know what kind.
- If altered by the ritual, the vessels can sow chaos in Thesk and Rashemen, assisting Thay in their drive to expand its borders into those countries.
- Urilyz does not think anyone can stop her, for the ritual is being held somewhere in Thay today!

Athletics DC 17/19 (no success, 1 maximum)

A PC can display their strength in front of Urilyz, granting a +2 to a PC's next Intimidate check.

Bluff DC 20/22 (2 maximum)

A PC may lie to Urilyz, perhaps posing as Banites or Zhents with similar interests or simply suggesting false reasons for why Urilyz should cooperate, tricking him into sharing information with the party.

Diplomacy DC 21/23 (2 maximum)

The PCs convince Urilyz that it is in his interest to cooperate, perhaps to avoid pain or incarceration, even (with high checks) to repent and seek a new life.

Insight DC 16/18 (no success, 2 maximum)

The PC can attempt to determine a weakness in Urilyz that can be exploited by those speaking with him. A PC can also determine that the initial statement by Urilyz (see Setup) was untrue and that the artifact can be used against his master. With success, a PC can grant a +2 to a PC's next Intimidate, Diplomacy, or Bluff check.

Intimidate DC 17/19 (2 maximum)

PCs can attempt to frighten Urilyz, making him worry that he will suffer more under the party than under his Master.

SCENE 2: URILYZ'S JOURNAL

If Urilyz is dead, the PCs instead discover a journal in his pack. The journal is encoded, containing strange words resembling several languages and some symbols. PCs may use History, Perception, Streetwise, or Thievery to analyze the journal.

A small book bound in reptile skin can be found within Urilyz's pack. Opening it, you see each page is filled with some sort of unknown language or code.

With each failure the PCs find a portion of the code indecipherable. With success, PCs uncover several pieces of information. DMs may wish to role-play the information as Urilyz has scribed it (with delusions of future boons from his master, hoping to gain new powers, fear of what Golra Kuss might do to him, etc.). Use Scene 1 for the information that can be learned. Continue to Scene 3 once 2 successes have been earned.

History DC 16/18 (no success)

A PC can use historical knowledge of languages and codes to guess at how the code is made. With success, a PC grants a +2 bonus to a PC's next Perception or Thievery check.

Perception DC 18/20 (2 maximum)

A PC can study the journal to find patterns and translate the code. A PC speaking Abyssal, Elven, or Thayan gains a +2 bonus on the check.

Rituals (1 maximum)

A PC can employ a ritual such as *Comprehend Language*. Because the code is based on a mixture of languages, each ritual cast counts as a single success.

Streetwise DC 18/20 (no success)

A PC can attempt to compare the code to other languages and to shorthand used by merchants and guilds. With success, the PC grants a +2 bonus to a PC's next Perception or Thievery check.

Thievery DC 16/18 (2 maximum)

A PC can use thievery to decipher the journal. A PC speaking Abyssal, Elven, or Thayan gains a +1 bonus on the check for each language spoken.

SCENE 3: THE RADIANT ARTIFACT

PCs should also study the artifact to learn its capabilities. Read the following when they examine the artifact:

The spherical artifact is a semi-transparent globe with an oily surface and a golden hue. It hovers near you when you concentrate. When touched, the artifact responds with a warm glow and a pleasing ringing noise, as if a chime has been struck. The tone changes with each touch.

With each failure, PCs fail to learn anything about the enigmatic artifact. With successes, PCs discern something of its nature and power. DMs may role-play the information as coming from different research angles, depending on the skills used (using a tome in the PC's possession, the results of lessons learned at a wizard academy, based on discussions with a spirit a PC conjures, etc.)

- This item is not meant to be worn or wielded. However, its energies do seem to interact with people.
- It seems to react to life energy and would likely have an effect on the vessels due to their radiant energy.
- The artifact can be used to transfer radiant power.
- The strange energies of the artifact seem to interact with radiant powers and items. The artifact might be able to allow the transfer of power from the radiant vessels, either into itself or from one vessel to others.

If neither of the previous scenes (1 or 2) has been run, run one of those scenes once two successes have been accumulated in this scene.

PCs can investigate the artifact using the following skills:

Arcana DC 20/22 (trained only; 2 maximum)

A PC studies the magical energies making up the artifact or tests the artifact for interactions with other arcane energies.

History DC 16/18 (no success)

A PC can attempt to benefit from knowledge of other similar items of power and how they were used. The PC might recall a helm that transferred radiant power from one being to another.

With success a PC can grant a +2 to a PC's next Arcana or Religion check.

Religion DC 20/22 (trained only; 2 maximum)

A PC can sense the radiant power within the artifact or compare the artifact to other holy items. The PC conducts divinations and tests the radiant qualities of the item.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the PCs have examined the artifact and either interrogated Urilyz or decoded his journal so as to accumulate four successes or three failures.

The air shimmers as a group of Rashemi appear before you. As witches and their guards fan out to investigate the temple, you spot Veruud, accompanied by Bhral, Fontin, Sibbya, and her child, amidst the group.

As the group rejoices to see you well, Veruud addresses your group. "Our fortunetellers divined you held the artifact and agreed we must come to your aid. Do not doubt us, for great resources were expended to get us here. Dark storms build within Thay, and we fear our time grows short! What news, friends?"

Allow the players the opportunity to share what has transpired and communicate the knowledge they have gained to Veruud, Ionya, and the other witches.

Once finished, read the appropriate text depending on the success or failure of this skill challenge.

Success:

Veruud nods grimly. Ionya issues several commands to the other Wychlaran, then turns to you. "What terrible truths you help us see! You are indeed empowered by destiny. We shall craft a ritual to find the foul site and take you there to stop it." She looks to you for consent before continuing.

"While this is taking place, however, an important choice must be made." Ionya looks at the artifact, at Sibbya and her child, and back to you.

Go to **Encounter 6: Heroes' Choice** for the decision that must be made.

Skill Challenge Failure:

Veruud shakes his head grimly. "We still need more knowledge." He excuses himself to discuss this with the Wychlaran. Sibbya, Fontin, and Bhral are dismayed to hear what you have encountered. An hour passes in which you are often asked to repeat what has happened. The witches conduct rituals, commune with spirits, and investigate the artifact. During one ritual, the witch Kolthra collapses from too much strain. She does not rise again. Finally, the elder crone known as Ionya addresses you.

"I do not know if Veruud was right about you, but we have little recourse. Combining what you learned with our sacrifices and rituals, we have learned the horrible truth. These radiant vessels, kind protectors and healers on which their villages depend, can be corrupted by the lichs to turn against us." She shakes her head. "Our nation is stretched too thin. We cannot respond to this threat with sufficient speed. We have determined where the ritual is taking place. We can send you there. Before that, however, an important choice must be made." Ionya looks at the artifact, at Sibbya and her child, and back to you.

The Wychlaran are unimpressed by PCs but have no other recourse. Go to **Encounter 6: Heroes' Choice**.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 100/160 experience points each for succeeding at the overall skill challenge, half XP if they fail.

TREASURE

If the PCs succeeded in the skill challenge, the Wychlaran make available to the PCs at this time one each of *bracers of archery* and *caustic gauntlets*. If the PCs fail, these are only offered after the final encounter.

ENCOUNTER 6: HEROES' CHOICE

SETUP

The radiant artifact the PCs have recovered can be used to transfer the radiance among Sibbya's child (the strongest vessel), the artifact, and the other vessels. In the current situation, the vessels are vulnerable to the machinations of Golra Kuss and Thay. The witches ask the PCs to choose how best they can use the artifact, balancing the need to protect the vessels against the opportunity to prevail in the final combat.

Ioyna leans wearily on her cane and continues. "The vessels are vulnerable to the plans of Thay and this Golra Kuss. The artifact can transfer power among itself, the vessels, and Sibbya's special child. Concentrating power into the child would protect and strengthen him. Though we know not his capabilities, it is certain he would be a potent aid in your coming battle. This would require drawing power from the other vessels permanently."

Bhral steps forward. "If you choose this, I will bear the child. Someone must carry him." Sibbya and Fontin approach to stand by his side, fearful but showing support should you choose this path.

Ioyna nods and continues. "The radiant power could be shared equally across all vessels. This energy should be sufficient to strengthen all vessels against corruption. However, it would mean that Sibbya's child would no longer be special. Whatever role the gods see for him, it would be no more." Sibbya is clearly conflicted. You know that she knows the emptiness that comes with losing the gift of radiance.

"Finally, you could focus the radiant power into the artifact, ensuring that Golra Kuss's plan will fail. The vessels and the boy would no longer be what they once were, but neither could they be twisted by any Thayan corruption. The artifact's power would aid you in the coming battle, and perhaps would aid us in future conflicts. We ask you to choose how to distribute the power."

There is no right or wrong choice. Each choice has serious ramifications for the vessels. The PCs can easily learn that a vessel defines their existence through the gift of radiance. The emptiness that comes with losing the gift is extremely difficult to bear. Each choice is likely to have differing impacts on the coming battle. Finally, some PCs may worry about bringing Sibbya's child into battle. The Rashemi do not expect the child to

be a target, for if their ritual succeeds he would become their strongest tool in war against the forces of good.

The PCs must select one of three options:

CONCENTRATE POWER INTO THE CHILD

With this choice, the Wychlaran enact a ritual to manipulate the artifact and focus the radiant power from all vessels into Sibbya's child.

The Rashemi ritual is finally complete. The artifact has been used to permanently drain radiance from the other vessels, concentrating power into Sibbya's child. The child now rests in a sling on Bhral's back. The child smiles at Bhral and the orc nods. "Let us go." The Rashemi begin one last ritual to transport you to Thay. You pray the ritual will work and also bring you back.

See Handout 3: Sibbya's Child.

PROTECT ALL VESSELS EQUALLY

With this choice, the Wychlaran enact a ritual to manipulate the artifact and distribute the radiant power equally across all vessels, pulling much of the power from Sibbya's child.

The Rashemi ritual is finally complete. The artifact has been used to permanently distribute radiance equally across the vessels. Sibbya looks up and says, "Something has changed; his powers are fading." The child, a smile upon his little face, reaches toward your group with his right hand, and you feel some connection to his radiance, as if he has gifted you with the last of his power. Sibbya begins to cry, and Fontin rushes to comfort her. Bhral turns to you. "I am sure this was the best way. May you prevail in the coming battle." In the distance, the witches begin their chant. You hope their ritual of teleportation will also bring you back.

Provide players with Handout 4: A Final Gift.

FOCUS POWER IN THE ARTIFACT

With this choice, the Wychlaran enact a ritual to manipulate the artifact and focus the radiant power from all vessels into the artifact.

The Rashemi ritual is finally complete. The artifact has been infused with the radiance once held by the vessels. Though they will no longer be as strong, they are now protected from the ritual of Golra Kuss. Still, with her location known, you are still asked to take the battle to her and strike a blow against Thay.

Sibbya's child begins to wail and Sibbya comforts him. Their lives will not be the same with most of the

gift of radiance gone. Fontin tends to them as Bhral turns to you. The orc grins. “Make them pay, will you?” In the distance, the witches begin their chant. You hope their ritual of teleportation will also bring you back.

Provide players with **Handout 5: Artifact**. The artifact does not need to be held, as the Rashemi have built a harness that can be strapped to a PC’s backpack.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Depending on the choice they have made, provide the appropriate handout and allow them some time to review the powers they have gained. The boons are critical to the balance of the next encounter.

Once they are ready, proceed to **Encounter 7**.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters do not receive experience for this encounter. This encounter does not count toward a milestone.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER 7: DARKNESS AND LIGHT

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 14/16 (1000/1400 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 lich (Thayan) (L)
- 2 oblivion wraiths (W)
- 1 boneclaw (B)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 lich (Thayan) (level 15) (L)
- 2 oblivion wraiths (level 15) (W)
- 1 boneclaw (B)
- 1 demonic flameskull (F)

The PCs are teleported to the ritual site, a rocky section of the cold dry Thayan plains southwest of the Gorge of Gauros. A rope bridge offers the obvious approach between their arrival site and the ritual area, but PCs may also swing on the ropes that dangle from the bridge, or they may climb down to the gorge and take a longer path.

As the adventurers arrive, read:

In an instant you stand upon a promontory made of dry cracked red dirt. A cold wind howls, and unnatural storm clouds billow overhead. Gray and black ash slowly descends upon the land like a nightmarish rain.

Two bridges made of ancient bones lashed with weathered rope lead from your location across a dry gorge to another promontory, where you can see an altar. A skeletal figure is chanting, scores of priests chanting upon a rocky shelf far above her. Between them is a field of dark purple energy which rises to the storm clouds above, no doubt a physical manifestation of the dark ritual.

As you eye the swinging bone bridges, a horrid creature of bone and sinew crawls up from the ground near the lich. The skeleton cackles in delight. "Come to see the show?"

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Due to the storm of ash, the entire area is bathed only in a dim gray light. PCs without low-

light or darkvision will need a light source or suffer a -2 to attacks.

Bridge: The bridge is difficult terrain, as it sways and the bones used as planks sometimes crack and splinter. With a Passive Perception check of 19 or higher, a PC on the bridge notes that long ropes trailing from the bridge supports seem to be strong enough for a PC to swing upon. If a critical hit is scored upon a creature on the bridge, it must save or be thrown from the bridge.

Ropes: A DC 18 Acrobatics check allows a PC to swing on a rope, allowing up to 2 squares of movement (sufficient to get a PC near the end of the bridge onto the promontory with the ritual, thus offering a way around the blocking wraiths/boneclaw).

Gorge/Cliff: The gorge is 30 feet deep. PCs falling into the gorge from the rope bridge will take 3d10 falling damage. There is a cliff near where the PCs arrive that can be ascended or descended with a DC 16 Athletics check. All other edges and all areas that are black or empty are too sheer to climb.

Stairs: The ramp leading up to the lich's promontory is difficult terrain.

Altar: The 4-foot-tall altar provides cover to the lich and can provide superior cover to the tiny flameskull. A DC 40 Athletics check (or DC 20 Athletics check with a running start) allows a character to jump on top of or over the altar.

Chanting Priests / Ritual: The chanting priests and blue storm are merely for color, and PCs should realize they do not need to attack them. The ritual seems well underway and can only be stopped by defeating the monsters.

TACTICS

Golra Kuss is cautious, despite knowing she cannot truly die. She remains behind the altar, using *frostburn* as often as she can and reserving her action point for a round when melee opponents are drawing near (preferably using *frostburn*, *lich step* to escape, recharging *frostburn*, and using it a second time on other opponents.

The boneclaw moves to block the exit from one of the bridges, using its *threatening reach* and *relentless opportunist* to take multiple opportunity attacks against approaching melee opponents.

The oblivion wraiths hide below the bridge, using their phasing capability to move through the bridge once the PCs near the end of the bridge. They either fly up to flank opponents that are on the bridge or move to block the rope bridges as necessary. They try to catch as many foes as possible in their aura and to use *obliterate* or *nil strike* against difficult opponents.

The demonic flameskull hides behind the superior cover of the altar, rising to attack with vile consecration and then using *unholy fire* on whatever the lich targets.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one oblivion wraith.

Six PCs: Add one boneclaw.

This encounter is designed to be a challenging conclusion to the *Radiance Against Thay* major quest. Some parties may have difficulty with this encounter. If the party has struggled with previous combats, you may wish to consider one or more of the following options:

- Delay Golra Kuss by one round as she finishes her ritual.
- Change the bridge to not count as difficult terrain.
- Start with the oblivion wraiths out in the open instead of hidden.
- Have the boneclaw venture onto a bridge (where he can be thrown off).
- Reduce the level of the oblivion wraiths by one.
- Increase the lower range of recharge powers by one.

In addition, PCs should be encouraged to use their boon (Sibbya's Child, A Final Gift, or the Artifact) as the encounter expects PCs to utilize these powers.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat the lich, read the following:

The lich's skin and bones rapidly turn to dust, swirling upward into the sky. With her departure, the rain of ash stops and the field of dark energy dissipates. The remaining cultists run for their lives.

You feel something tugging at you... the Wychlaran ritual pulls you back to the temple of ice, amongst the Rashemi. The crone Ioyna, the Rashemi Old One Veruud, Fontin, and most of all Sibbya, look to you expectantly. The room explodes in cheers and joy when you share the news.

If the PCs are defeated, the ritual brings back their bodies (and any still living, depending on time constraints).

If the PCs chose to focus the power in the artifact but were defeated, read the following:

You stand amongst the Wychlaran in the temple of ice. The crone Ioyna, the Rashemi Old One Veruud, Fontin, and most of all Sibbya, look to you sadly. It is Veruud that finally speaks. "The ritual pulled you and the artifact back. There will be other battles, and we still have the vessels, if weaker than they once were. I believe in you. It is your destiny to defeat Thay!"

If the PCs chose to focus power in Sibbya's child and were defeated, read the following:

You stand amongst the Wychlaran in the temple of ice. The crone Ioyna, the Rashemi Old One Veruud, Fontin, and most of all Sibbya, look to you sadly. It is Sibbya that finally speaks. "My child... he is... no more. The witches had to... had to in order to stop Thay. I know you tried." Fontin and Bhral help comfort her as Veruud comes closer. "The ritual pulled you back. The Wychlaran did what they had to do. I am sorry. There will be other battles. I believe in you. It is your destiny to defeat Thay!"

If the PCs chose to distribute power across the vessels, read the following:

You stand amongst the Wychlaran in the temple of ice. The crone Ioyna, the Rashemi Old One Veruud, Fontin, and most of all Sibbya, look to you sadly. It is Sibbya that finally speaks. "The vessels... they are... no more. Only my child remains... and without the gift." Fontin and Bhral help comfort her as Veruud comes closer. "The ritual pulled you back. The Wychlaran did what they had to do to prevent Thay's plan. I am sorry. There will be other battles. I believe in you. It is your destiny to defeat Thay!"

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 1,000/1,400 experience points each for defeating the encounter.

PCs receive 700/1,000 experience points as a Major Quest reward if they have previously earned the story awards CORE04 The Fate of the Radiant Vessel and CORE11 Radiance Spreads.

TREASURE

The Wychlaran, impressed by their dedication, offer PCs completing the Major Quest a *solitaire (aquamarine)* and +3 *staff of the sunburst*.

As noted in **Encounter 5**, PCs are offered *bracers of archery* and *caustic gauntlets*.

All PCs are given a case of a special reserve batch of the potent and admired Rashemi firewine, worth a total of 300/700 gp.

The Wychlaran offer additional gold and/or consumables for PCs that have not gained an item in the adventure.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If there is time and the PCs succeeded, you can read the following conclusion to the players:

Veruud of the Urling makes gestures of peace and fortune. "Friends, you have prevailed. You are heroes to my people and to those of Thesk as well. Thank you."

Bhral and Fontin approach. "I have learned so much since I met you two years ago," Fontin says. "You have helped me change. May you do that for others." Bhral grins. "I've got a feeling it will be many moons before you retire. Knock some skulls for me, will ye?"

Finally, Sibbya approaches, tears streaming down her face. "I know your decisions were not easy. I thank you for preserving the radiance and saving us from Thay. We owe you our lives."

The witches open bottles of Rashemi firewine and Fontin begins playing a fiddle. With song and wine, friends celebrate you as heroes. Rashemen and Thesk are safe from Thay...for now.

PCs that successfully completed the skill challenges and defeated the final encounter gain the story award **CORE26 Entrusted of the Wychlaran**.

A second story award depends on the choice made by the PCs. PCs that chose to focus the power into Sibbya's child or to distribute it equally into the vessels gain the story award **CORE27 Touched by Radiance**.

PCs that chose to focus the power into the artifact gain the story award **CORE28 Power of the Artifact**.

ENCOUNTER 7: DARKNESS AND LIGHT STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Lich (Thayan)	Level 14 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 2,000
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +8; darkvision	
Necrotic Aura (Necrotic) aura 5; any living creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 5 necrotic damage.	
HP 218; Bloodied 109	
Regeneration 10 (if the lich takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)	
AC 28; Fortitude 24, Reflex 28, Will 26	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
r Shadow Ray (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
Ranged 20; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 necrotic damage.	
C Frostburn (standard; sustain minor; recharge 5 6) ♦ Cold, Necrotic, Zone	
Area burst 2 within 20; +18 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 6 cold and necrotic damage. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the lich's next turn. The zone is considered difficult terrain. Any creature that starts its turn within the zone takes 10 cold and necrotic damage. The lich can sustain or dismiss the zone as a minor action.	
Indestructible	
When a lich is reduced to 0 hit points, its body and possessions crumble into dust, but it is not destroyed. It reappears (along with its possessions) in 1d10 days within 1 square of its phylactery, unless the phylactery is also found and destroyed.	
Lich Step (move; recharge 5 6) ♦ Teleportation	
The lich teleports up to 8 squares and recharges one encounter or recharge power (including <i>lich step</i>).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Arcana +18, History +18, Insight +13	
Str 11 (+7)	Dex 12 (+8) Wis 13 (+8)
Con 14 (+9)	Int 22 (+13) Cha 18 (+11)

Boneclaw	Level 14 Soldier
Large shadow animate (undead)	XP 1,000
Initiative +15 Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 136; Bloodied 68; see also <i>necrotic pulse</i>	
AC 30; Fortitude 24, Reflex 27, Will 25	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 8	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 3; +20 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage.	
C Necrotic Pulse (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Healing, Necrotic	
Close burst 10; undead allies in the burst regain 10 hit points, and enemies in the burst take 10 necrotic damage.	
Relentless Opportunist	
If the boneclaw hits with an opportunity attack, it can make another opportunity attack against the same target during the current turn.	
Threatening Reach	
The boneclaw can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common
Skills Intimidate +16, Stealth +18	
Str 17 (+10)	Dex 23 (+13) Wis 12 (+8)
Con 16 (+10)	Int 10 (+7) Cha 18 (+11)

Oblivion Wraith	Level 14 Brute
Large shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 1,000
Initiative +13 Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
Nihil (Necrotic) aura 2; any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 necrotic damage and cannot spend a healing surge until the start of its next turn.	
HP 116; Bloodied 58	
Regeneration 10 (if an oblivion wraith takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 26; Fortitude 25, Reflex 27, Will 24	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic, insubstantial	
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing	
m Nihil Strike (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
+15 vs Reflex; 2d8+7 necrotic damage, and the oblivion wraith is invisible to the target until the end of the oblivion wraith's next turn.	
M Obliviate (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Necrotic	
+15 vs Reflex; 2d8+4 necrotic damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage and a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends both).	
C Death Blast (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Necrotic	
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +15 vs Fortitude; 2d8+7 necrotic damage, and the target loses two healing surges. Miss: Half damage, and the target loses a healing surge.	
Shadow Glide (move; encounter)	
The oblivion wraith shifts up to 6 squares.	
Spawn Wraith	
Any humanoid killed by an oblivion wraith rises as a free-willed oblivion wraith at the start of its creator's next turn, appearing in the space where it died (or in the nearest unoccupied space). Raising the slain creature (using the Raise Dead ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.	
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Common
Skills Stealth +18	
Str 20 (+12)	Dex 23 (+13) Wis 10 (+7)
Con 16 (+10)	Int 10 (+7) Cha 18 (+11)

ENCOUNTER 7: DARKNESS AND LIGHT STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Lich (Thayan) (Level 15)	Level 15 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 2,400
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +8; darkvision	
Necrotic Aura (Necrotic) aura 5; any living creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 5 necrotic damage.	
HP 234; Bloodied 117	
Regeneration 10 (if the lich takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)	
AC 29; Fortitude 25, Reflex 29, Will 27	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
r Shadow Ray (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
Ranged 20; +19 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 necrotic damage.	
C Frostburn (standard; sustain minor; recharge 5 6) ♦ Cold, Necrotic, Zone	
Area burst 2 within 20; +19 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 6 cold and necrotic damage. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the lich's next turn. The zone is considered difficult terrain. Any creature that starts its turn within the zone takes 10 cold and necrotic damage. The lich can sustain or dismiss the zone as a minor action.	
Indestructible	
When a lich is reduced to 0 hit points, its body and possessions crumble into dust, but it is not destroyed. It reappears (along with its possessions) in 1d10 days within 1 square of its phylactery, unless the phylactery is also found and destroyed.	
Lich Step (move; recharge 5 6) ♦ Teleportation	
The lich teleports up to 8 squares and recharges one encounter or recharge power (including <i>lich step</i>).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Arcana +18, History +18, Insight +13	
Str 11 (+7)	Dex 12 (+8) Wis 13 (+8)
Con 14 (+9)	Int 22 (+13) Cha 18 (+11)

Boneclaw	Level 14 Soldier
Large shadow animate (undead)	XP 1,000
Initiative +15 Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 136; Bloodied 68; see also <i>necrotic pulse</i>	
AC 30; Fortitude 24, Reflex 27, Will 25	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 8	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 3; +20 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage.	
C Necrotic Pulse (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Healing, Necrotic	
Close burst 10; undead allies in the burst regain 10 hit points, and enemies in the burst take 10 necrotic damage.	
Relentless Opportunist	
If the boneclaw hits with an opportunity attack, it can make another opportunity attack against the same target during the current turn.	
Threatening Reach	
The boneclaw can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common
Skills Intimidate +16, Stealth +18	
Str 17 (+10)	Dex 23 (+13) Wis 12 (+8)
Con 16 (+10)	Int 10 (+7) Cha 18 (+11)

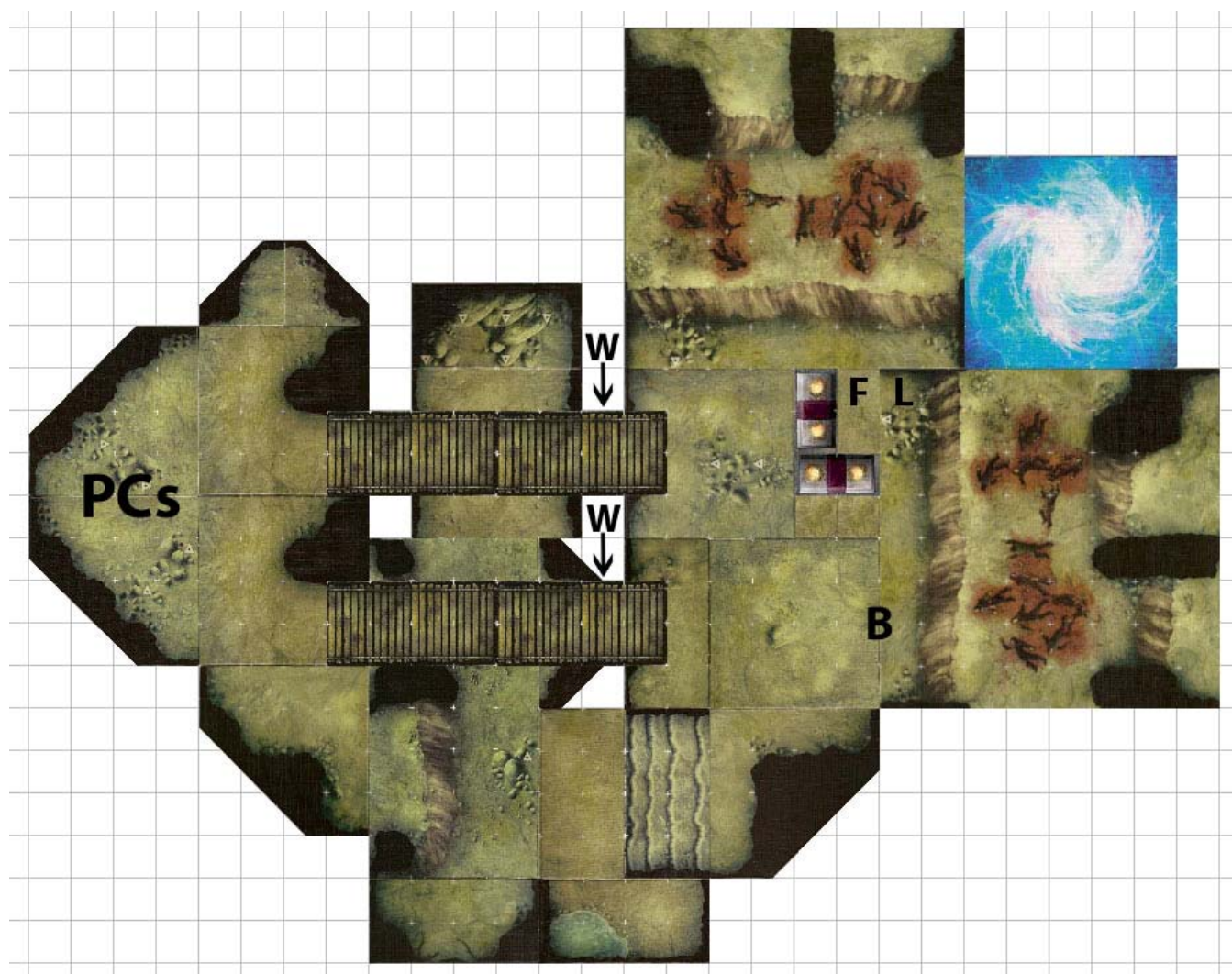
Oblivion Wraith (Level 15)	Level 15 Brute
Large shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 1,200
Initiative +13 Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
Nihil (Necrotic) aura 2; any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 necrotic damage and cannot spend a healing surge until the start of its next turn.	
HP 126; Bloodied 63	
Regeneration 10 (if an oblivion wraith takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function until the end of its next turn)	
AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 28, Will 25	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic, insubstantial	
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing	
m Nihil Strike (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
+16 vs Reflex; 2d8+7 necrotic damage, and the oblivion wraith is invisible to the target until the end of the oblivion wraith's next turn.	
M Obliviate (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Necrotic	
+16 vs Reflex; 2d8+4 necrotic damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage and a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends both).	
C Death Blast (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Necrotic	
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +16 vs Fortitude; 2d8+7 necrotic damage, and the target loses two healing surges. Miss: Half damage, and the target loses a healing surge.	
Shadow Glide (move; encounter)	
The oblivion wraith shifts up to 6 squares.	
Spawn Wraith	
Any humanoid killed by an oblivion wraith rises as a free-willed oblivion wraith at the start of its creator's next turn, appearing in the space where it died (or in the nearest unoccupied space). Raising the slain creature (using the Raise Dead ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.	
Alignment Chaotic Evil	Languages Common
Skills Stealth +18	
Str 20 (+12)	Dex 23 (+13) Wis 10 (+7)
Con 16 (+10)	Int 10 (+7) Cha 18 (+11)

Demonic Flameskull		Level 15 Artillery
Tiny natural animate (demon, undead)		XP 1,200
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +14	
HP 114; Bloodied 57		
Regeneration 5		
AC 27; Fortitude 25, Reflex 27, Will 26		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 fire, 10 necrotic;		
Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed fly 10 (hover)		
m Fiery Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire		
Reach 0; +22 vs Armor Class; 1d8 damage plus 1d8 fire damage.		
R Unholy Fire (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic		
Ranged 10; +20 vs Reflex; 2d8+8 fire damage, plus ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
C Vile Consecration (standard; encounter) ♦ Fire, Necrotic		
Area burst 3 within 20; +20 vs Reflex; 3d8+8 fire and necrotic damage. Miss: Half damage. The flameskull can exclude two allies from the effect..		
Demonic Fury		
While the demonic flameskull is bloodied, it deals an extra 1d8 damage with its attacks.		
Mage Hand (minor; at-will) ♦ Conjuration		
As the wizard power mage hand.		
Illumination		
The flameskull sheds bright light out to 5 squares, but it can reduce its brightness to dim light out to 2 squares as a free action.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Thayan
Skills Stealth +12		
Str 6 (+5)	Dex 18 (+11)	Wis 15 (+9)
Con 18 (+11)	Int 23 (+13)	Cha 21 (+12)

ENCOUNTER 7: DARKNESS AND LIGHT MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Arcane Corridors x2, Streets of Shadow x1, Caves of Carnage x2



REWARDS SUMMARY

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

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

It is critical that you enter the PC rewards accurately on the tracking form, and ensure that the information is reported and entered online in a timely manner. While players can and should track their character's information on paper, the online information serves as an important backup and verification of play. Ask the players for their RPGA numbers and character numbers (usually a single digit) when you begin to fill out the tracking form.

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: The Wychlaran

100/160 XP

Encounter 2: Expedition to the Temple of Radiance

100/160 XP

Encounter 3: Trolls Attack!

600/840 XP

Encounter 4: Grasping Radiance

600/800 XP

Encounter 5: Thayan Machinations

100/160 XP

Encounter 7: Darkness and Light

1,000/1,400 XP

Major Quest: Radiance Against Thay

700/1,000 XP

Total Possible Experience

2,800/4,000 XP

Gold per PC

1200 / 2200 gp

(Encounter 3: 400/600 gp, Encounter 4: 500/900 gp, Encounter 7: 300/700 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. Mark the one-letter bundle ID on the tracking form next to any character that selects a 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, and ensure you enter the total amount of gold gained (minus any expenditures) online. 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: +3 *staggering weapon* (level 12; AV)*

Found in Encounter 3

Bundle B: *chameleon ring* (level 16; AV)*

Found in Encounter 4

Bundle C: +3 *legendmaker armor* (level 14; PH2)*

Found in Encounter 4

Bundle D: *solitaire (aquamarine)* (Major Quest only) (level 16; AV)*

Found in Encounter 7

Bundle E: +3 *staff of the sunburst* (Major Quest Only) (level 14; PH2)*
Found in Encounter 7

Bundle F: *bracers of archery* (level 16; AV)*
Found in Encounter 5

Bundle G: *caustic gauntlets* (level 16; AV)*
Found in Encounter 5

Consumable 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 *black cave pearl* (level 14)* plus 500/1,300 gp or a *cryptspawn potion* (level 15)* plus 300/1,100 gp or a *potion of vitality* (level 15) plus 300/1,100 gp to their rewards from this adventure. The player should write the consumable gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the consumable plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle. Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 1,300/2,100 gp to their rewards from this adventure. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards. Normally, if a PC earns three awards, they may only have 2 of them and must pick which two they want before ending the session (exceptions to this will be noted in the story award text). Make sure to mark the story award codes next to each character that earned them on the tracking form.

CORE26 Entrusted of the Wychlaran

You are a hero of Thesk and Rashemen and trusted by the people of these lands. DMs and future adventures may provide bonuses to social skills in these regions. In contrast, you are a hated enemy of Thay, being attacked preferentially by allies of Szass Tam unless you are successfully disguised.

CORE27 Touched by the Radiance

You chose to focus the radiant energy into Sibbya's child or to distribute his power to the other vessels. Exposure to the radiant energy has changed you. Either your skin, hair, eyes, or another noticeable feature now has a

golden hue. Clerics hold you in high regard and often claim you have been touched by a deity, though they cannot agree on which one.

CORE28 Power of the Artifact

You chose to focus the power into the artifact. The power of radiance lingers in you. By using a minor action, you may cause your hands to give off a soft golden glow, equal to candlelight. Unless specified in an adventure, any additional effect of this is up to your DM.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

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

1. Did the PCs succeed at the skill challenges?

- a. Yes, easily
- b. Yes, but with some difficulty
- c. No, failing one or more

2. Did the PCs kill Urilyz the Elf?

- a. Yes, during combat
- b. Yes, after interrogation
- c. No

3. Which option did the PCs choose?

- a. Concentrate power in the child
- b. Protect all vessels equally
- c. Focus power in the artifact
- d. Never got this far.

4. Did the PCs seem interested in the story and plot of the adventure?

- a. Very interested
- b. Moderately interested
- c. Minor interest
- d. Not interested

5. Which was the favorite encounter for the majority of the players?

- a. One or more skill challenges
- b. The trolls
- c. The ice temple
- d. The final combat / lich

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

- a. Five stars (best possible rating)
- b. Four stars (very good)
- c. Three stars (average)
- d. Two stars (below average)
- e. One star (worst possible rating)

NEW RULES

Black Cave Pearl

Level 14+

This rare black pearl is found in subterranean lakes and favored by mesmerists and hypnotists.

Lvl 14 800 gp Lvl 24 21,000 gp
Reagent

Power (Consumable): Free Action. Expend this reagent when you use of a power with the charm keyword of up to 7th level. Roll twice for the power's attack roll and take the better of the two results.

Level 24: Power up to 17th level.

Bracers of Archery

Level 6+

These leather armbands enhance your potency with bows and crossbows.

Lvl 6 1,800 gp Lvl 26 1,125,000 gp
Lvl 16 45,000 gp

Item Slot: Arms

Property: Gain a +2 item bonus to damage rolls when attacking with a bow or crossbow.

Level 16: +4 item bonus.

Level 26: +6 item bonus.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. Ignore cover on your next attack this turn when using a bow or crossbow.

Caustic Gauntlets

Level 6+

These rough leather coverings drip with acid as you attack.

Lvl 6 1,800 gp Lvl 26 1,125,000 gp
Lvl 16 45,000 gp

Item Slot: Hands

Power (Daily ♦ Acid): Free Action. Use this power when you make a ranged attack. Change the damage type dealt by that attack to acid. Hit or miss, creatures adjacent to the target of the attack take 1d6 acid damage. Also, you deal an extra 1 acid damage on successful ranged attacks until the end of the encounter.

If you've reached at least one milestone today, instead deal an extra 2 acid damage on successful ranged attacks with the acid keyword until the end of the encounter.

Level 16: 2d6 acid damage, extra 3 acid damage (4 after milestone).

Level 26: 3d6 acid damage, extra 5 acid damage (6 after milestone).

Solitaire (Aquamarine)

Level 16

This jagged blue-green crystal lets you intensify your attacks against your foes.

Wondrous Item 45,000 gp

Power (Encounter): Free Action. Use this power when you score a critical hit on your turn. Make a basic attack against the same target struck by your critical hit.

Special: You cannot use more than one *solitaire* in an encounter.

Chameleon Ring

Level 16

This lizard skin band is barely visible against your skin and makes you equally hard to discern.

Item Slot: Ring 45,000 gp

Property: Gain a +2 item bonus to Stealth checks. Gain a +4 item bonus instead if you have not moved since the start of your last turn.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. You do not require cover or concealment to make Stealth checks until the end of your next turn.

If you've reached at least one milestone today, this power lasts until the end of the encounter.

Cryptspawn Potion

Level 15

This viscous liquid smells faintly of death, yet it invigorates you against diseases and poisons.

Potion 1,000 gp

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Consume this potion and spend a healing surge. You do not regain hit points as normal. Instead, gain resist 10 necrotic and resist 10 poison until the end of the encounter. You also gain a +5 power bonus to your next Endurance check against any disease of level 15 or lower.

Legendmaker Armor

Level 14+

Wearing this impressive armor, you can inspire your allies to help create the stuff of legends.

Lvl 14 +3 21,000 gp Lvl 24 +5 525,000 gp
Lvl 19 +4 105,000 gp Lvl 29 +6 2,625,000 gp

Armor: Leather, chain

Enhancement: AC

Property: If you have the majestic word power, you are not restricted to using it only once per round.

Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. **Trigger:** An ally within 5 squares of you reduces an enemy to 0 hit points. **Effect:** The triggering ally can take an extra standard action before the end of his or her turn.

Staff of the Sunburst

Level 14+

Adorned with a gleaming solar disk, this staff can erupt with radiant power when you are hit.

Lvl 14 +3 21,000 gp Lvl 24 +5 525,000 gp
Lvl 19 +4 105,000 gp Lvl 29 +6 2,625,000 gp

Implement (Staff)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Power (Daily ♦ Radiant): Immediate Reaction. **Trigger:** An enemy damages you with an attack. **Effect:** Each enemy within 5 squares of you takes 5 radiant damage and is knocked prone.

Level 24 or 29: 10 radiant damage.

Staggering Weapon +3

Level 12

When you hit with this weapon, you send your foes lurching headlong whichever way you wish.

Weapon: Axe, Flail, Hammer, Heavy Blade, Mace

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage roll

Critical: +3d6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Property: When you use a power with the weapon keyword that slides a target, you can add 3 to the number of squares the target slides

Price: 13,000 gp.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with the weapon. Slide the target 3 squares.

HANDOUT 1: VERUUD'S VISIT

You recall Veruud of the Urling pacing back and forth. The Rashemi Old One speaks, his deep voice urgent.

"It is a grave time. Or, it will be. Some of the Wychlaran, our Rashemi witches, have the gift of foretelling. Of late, their visions have become a single cryptic vision. They see the... no, I am not allowed to tell you all that I know. But... I can share one of their visions."

Veruud reaches for you, his weathered palm grasping your hand.

A young woman dressed in worn and patched clothing pulls on a frayed rope, silently drawing a bucket from an old well. She turns her head suddenly, as if responding to a noise. This woman is not someone you have met before. She says something, but there is no sound. She begins to run, passing villagers who run in the opposite direction.

She reaches the outskirts of the village and stops, facing a line of zombies that stagger in her direction. She closes her eyes and lifts her right arm, palm outwards. A wave of light emanates from her, obliterating the undead. She opens her eyes, begins to turn back to the village, then turns back to see another line of undead. She closes her eyes. The skies darken. A rain begins to fall, but instead of water, what falls is grey ash. She opens her eyes and she is changed. Her eyes are black, without pupils. She turns towards the village, moving quickly. The villagers are confused, their mouths trembling, their faces panic-stricken. She lifts her left hand and a wave of darkness creeps forward; the villagers sicken and wither before her.

Veruud steadies you as you recover from the vision. "I have had visions of my own. Visions of you and other adventurers like you. I see another woman, Sibbya, and I see her son. Her son is... special." He shakes his head. "They say the visions that concern the boy are the worst of all. Please, accompany me to see them and the Wychlaran. Together we can convince them that you are the ones to save the vessels. To save us."

Your memory complete, you return to the dusty trail, making your way from Thesk to Rashemen and your meeting with the Wychlaran.

HANDOUT 2: WHAT HAS COME TO PASS

(This handout describes the background story of what the PCs learned about Sibbya and her strange powers in CORE1-2 *The Radiant Vessel of Thesk* and CORE1-6, *Incident at the Gorge of Gauros*. It can be provided to players who played either adventure, as well as those who take the time to speak with Veruud in the Introduction of this adventure.)

The Dermarks were as normal a family as you would expect to find in Thesk. Cobbling shoes had been their family business for as far back as anyone could remember, and Andret Dermark was respected in Phsant as an honest and reliable tradesman, as had been his father before him. He looked forward to passing on the trade to his children.

On an otherwise normal day in 1385 DR, the Year of Blue Fire, Andret's wife Sibbya gave birth to the couple's seventh child, a daughter. At that exact moment, the Spellplague ripped through Phsant. Sibbya died in childbirth, but the daughter was healthy and strong, and was given her mother's name.

From the first, it was apparent that the girl was special. She never caught any of the childhood illnesses most infants must endure and some succumb to. Some who were deemed fatally ill of terrible diseases were healed in her presence. One evening, a wraith from Thay came to the area to wreak havoc ahead of yet another undead incursion. The creature terrorized the residents of the outskirts of Phsant, where Sibbya lived, until it came into her presence, when it exploded in a flash of white light.

For the first 22 years of the girl's life, the villagers treated her with great respect and awe, along with the understandable feeling of fear at her strange powers. Then Sibbya became pregnant, although no one ever knew who the father was, and Sibbya never told.

Like her own mother, Sibbya gave birth to a healthy baby girl, but she too died in childbirth. The baby, named Sibbya and taken in by relatives, showed the same powers exhibited by her mother—and the people adopted her as their guardian and good-luck charm. After protecting the town and occasionally healing the sick as her mother had on several occasions, this Sibbya too became unexpectedly pregnant by an unknown partner, but then died giving birth to a daughter who herself possessed the radiant power.

And so the cycle continued, one generation after another of Sibbya Dermarks being born fatherless, raised by relatives, and accepted as a force of good and light by the families of her neighborhood outside of Phsant. The current Sibbya is different, however. Not long ago she gave birth to a baby boy who was supposed to be the recipient of this radiant gift, although the boy showed no sign of his mother's gift and Sibbya herself lost the gift as well. The adventurers who helped her also battled orc mercenaries, where they encountered Bhral. A male orc, Bhral retired as an adventurer to start a new life with his human wife Fontin. Bhral and Fontin, who is a relative of Sibbya, both lived near Sibbya in an area south of the city of Phsant.

Veruud of the Urling, a Rashemi Old One, learned of Sibbya and her boy. Understanding that the boy was still a capable vessel, and fearing his mother would not understand, Veruud kidnapped the boy to take him to Rashemen where a ritual could restore his radiance. Thayan agents and undead forces intercepted them, taking them to a cave in the Gorge of Gauros to await transfer to Thayan laboratories for further study. Adventurers reached them and assisted with a ritual that restored the boy's radiance. Mysteriously, they were all freed, presumably by Szass Tam, who claimed to have learned enough.

HANDOUT 3: SIBBYA'S CHILD

This handout provides players with a description of the powers available to the child, who is carried by Bhral. Players should use a miniature for Bhral and roll initiative for him and the child, controlling their actions. On his initiative, Bhral may take two move actions. The child may take a move, minor, and standard action each round, chosen from the powers available below.

Bhral / Sibbya's Child		Special (Leader)
Natural humanoid (orc) / Tiny natural humanoid		
Initiative +5		
Speed 6		
C Radiant Pulse (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ Radiant		
Close burst 15; All enemies take 1 radiant damage.		
C Shielding Aura (standard; encounter)		
Close Burst 15; each ally within burst gains a +1 bonus to saving throws until the end of Sibbya's Child's next turn.		
Holy Presence (immediate reaction; when a bloodied ally within 15 is hit by an attack; encounter)		
The ally gains resist 10 until the start of their next turn.		
Alignment Good/Lawful Good		Languages Common, Orc/-
Skills Athletics +12, Acrobatics + 9		

HANDOUT 4: A FINAL GIFT

This handout provides players with a description of the powers available to them, a final gift from Sibbya's child. Players each gain one use of each of the powers below. These powers are lost at the conclusion of the encounter.

Gift of Radiance	Utility Power
<i>Sibbya's child bestowed his last radiance upon you.</i>	
Power (Daily ♦ Radiant)	
Minor Action	Personal
Effect: Until the start of your next turn, your attack powers gain the radiant keyword.	

Gift of Friendship	Utility Power
<i>Sibbya's child protects you.</i>	
Power (Daily ♦ Radiant)	
Immediate Reaction	Ranged 10
Target: One creature making a death saving throw	
Effect: Lose a healing surge (this does not count as spending a healing surge). The target gains a +4 bonus to their death saving throw.	

HANDOUT 5: ARTIFACT

This handout provides players with a description of the powers available through the radiant artifact. One player should carry the artifact to determine the radius of the property, but any player attuned to the artifact may tap into the artifact to activate a power. The artifact is returned to the Wychlaran at the conclusion of the encounter.

Radiant Artifact

Enhanced with the power of the radiant vessels, this translucent golden globe glows with power.

Artifact (Unique)

Property: Aura 10, all undead within the burst may not benefit from regeneration.

Power (Encounter): Minor action. A PC attuned to the artifact may recover a previously used Encounter Power.

Power (Encounter): Minor action. Choose a PC attuned to the artifact. The next power used by that PC gains the Radiant keyword.

Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when an ally has been struck by a power with the necrotic keyword. That ally gains resist 5 necrotic against the attack.

APPENDIX 1: SKILL CHALLENGE TRACKER

DMs may wish to use this page to track the progress and some options for the skill challenge.

Encounter 1, Scene 1: Winning Over the Wychlaran (4 successes before 2 failures)

Goal: gain the trust of the Wychlaran

- Kolthra: Successes: __ Failures: __ __
- Aloysha: Successes: __ Failures: __ __
- Dashra: Successes: __ Failures: __ __
- Vilaya: Successes: __ Failures: __ __
- Ioyna: Successes: __ Failures: __ __

Total: Successes: ____ Failures: ____

Encounter 2, Scenes 1-3: Expedition to the Temple of Radiance (4 successful group checks before 3 failures. A group check requires half the party to succeed.)

Goal: Brave the wilds and find the temple.

- Scene 1, First Nature group check: Success: Y / N
- Scene 1, Second Nature group check: Success: Y / N
- Scene 2, Acrobatics/Athletics group check: Success: Y / N
- Scene 3, Endurance group check: Success: Y / N
- Additional Endurance group check, if needed: Success: Y / N
- Add. Nature/Endurance group check, if needed: Success: Y / N

Total: Successes: ____ Failures: ____

Encounter 5, Scenes 1-3: Thayan Machinations (4 successes before 3 failures)

Goal: Interrogate Urilyz or decipher his journal to learn Thay's plans; study the radiant artifact.

Scene 1: Interrogating Urilyz (usually mutually exclusive with Scene 2)

Total for Scene 1: Successes: __ __ Failures: __ __ __

Scene 2: Urilyz's Journal (usually mutually exclusive with Scene 3)

Total for Scene 2: Successes: __ __ Failures: __ __ __

Scene 3: The Radiant Artifact

Total for Scene 3: Successes: __ __ Failures: __ __ __

Total for Scenes 1-3: Successes: ____ Failures: ____