CONFRONTATION IN SHADOW

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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Shar weaves her final scheme to devour the world in shadow, safe within her Towers of Night. Legendary heroes must stop the goddess, securing their place in pantheon, history, and myth, or be forgotten in the total annihilation that follows. A three-round continuous play *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in the Towers of Night for 30th-level characters. We recommend you allow at least 12-15 hours of game time for this adventure. This is the finale of the Epic Campaign.

WIZARDS PLAY NETWORK

If you want to organize public Living Forgotten Realms games at a retail game store, you need to be associated with a Wizards Play Network (WPN) store. If you want to organize public LFR games outside of a store, you should be associated with a Wizards Play Network store, but you can be an independent organizer too. To learn more about the Wizards Play Network, visit http://www.wizards.com/wpn

If you want to organize LFR games at home, you don't need to be associated with the Wizards Play Network. You don't need to report your event to anyone, and neither the DM nor the players need to have DCI/RPGA membership numbers. Just find the adventure you want to play, download it, and have fun!

Be sure to keep up with the LFR Community at our campaign website: http://community.wizards.com/lfr

PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the D&D 4th Edition core rulebooks. These are the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, or the corresponding D&D Essentials products. 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 about non-player characters (NPCs) and monsters appears in the full stat-block format with each combat encounter. For non-combat encounters, this information appears in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of a WPN event (see above), 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. Auras are designated with the O symbol, as well as the aura keyword.

A lower-case letter (used only for certain melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

All monsters have been updated for the latest monster design standards for damage, defenses, and style. In some cases, abilities have been streamlined to reduce complexity and make the encounters easier to run correctly and on time.

Some monsters do not conform exactly to standard classifications like "Elite" or "Solo". Each monster is customized to provide a better encounter.

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:

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

In support of the golden rule, we offer these guidelines:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and to make decisions about how the group interacts with the world.** This is especially important during non-combat encounters, but you may also need to adjust the combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time with the adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult.** 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 just ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each player the experience they're after. Everyone at the table should get a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game moving to ensure you finish on time.** 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* epic adventures are designed to be played in about 12 - 15 hours; be very aware of running long or short, and adjust the pacing accordingly. If that means you need to "call" a combat encounter when it is obvious that the PCs are going to win, then feel free to do so.
- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with the environment.** Players should always know when enemies are bloodied or affected by conditions. Give them clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting frustrated by a lack of information. Encourage immersion in the adventure and give the players "little victories" for figuring out a good choice from your clues.

In summary, 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 Epic Campaign adventure is designed for **level 30** player characters (PCs). Players may only play this adventure with characters that have reached 21st level through play in the *Living Forgotten Realms* campaign. To be clear, it is okay to use a character that was started above 1st level following the rules in the *LFR Campaign Guide* and subsequently reached 21st level through the play of LFR adventures. However, the campaign rules limit new characters to a starting level of 11. It is not legal to create a brand-new 21st-level character specifically to participate in the Epic Campaign.

If a character has reached 21st level but is not the correct level for this adventure, which can only happen by playing the Epic Campaign adventures out of order, that player may adjust the level of his or her character accordingly for the duration of this adventure.

Adjusting Level Up: If a character is below the designated level for this adventure (but has reached at least 21st level), increase the character's level to the correct level for this adventure, following the core rules (so the character gains powers, feats, ability score increases, and so forth as normal). The player may not change any of the character's existing magic items. See the Catching Up sidebar below for some alterations to help the PC survive a level difference.

Adjusting Level Down: If a character is above the designated level for this adventure, reduce the character's level by removing all benefits gained from higher levels. The character may not use any of the magic items or Story Awards gained from Epic Campaign adventures designated for levels higher than this adventure. For example, if a player had to skip the level 21 adventure but has already played the level 22 and level 23 adventures, that character may not use any of the magic items gained from those adventures during the lower-level adventure. Anything that happened in the higher-level adventures is temporarily "unwound," as if the character had played the adventures in the correct order.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If the group fails to defeat an encounter (for example, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they fail too many checks during a skill challenge) it doesn't have to mean the end of the adventure. In most cases, both success and failure should lead to interesting story outcomes. Whenever possible, give them a chance to work around their failure and still bring the adventure to a successful conclusion.

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 for the Raise Dead ritual.** If the group has access to the body and chooses this option, the component cost is usually divided evenly amongst the group (although this is not required, it is generally considered good form to share the costs). The component cost is 50,000 gp for epic tier. If a PC can cast the ritual, then the component cost is the only cost. If the group must locate an NPC to cast the ritual, that NPC charges a fee equal to 20% of the component cost.

- **Use a power that returns dead characters to life.** Certain characters gain powers that allow them to restore life without using the Raise Dead ritual or paying a component cost. For example, the warpriest (a cleric build from *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*) gains the *resurrection* daily utility power at 8th level. NPCs may not be used for this option unless an adventure specifically says so; a player character with the appropriate power must be at the table (assuming he or she isn't the dead character) and all other conditions for using the power must be met. For example, *resurrection* may only be used at the end of an extended rest, and the character must have died within the last 24 hours.

- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group doesn't have access to the dead character's body, or if they have the body but cannot afford (or are unwilling) to pay for a ritual, the player can choose to return the PC back to life at the end of the adventure, exactly as if the Raise Dead ritual had been used on the dead character. The details of exactly how the character's body made its way back to civilization are up to the player, or this can be left deliberately vague. There is no direct cost for accepting Death Charity, but the character forfeits all non-XP rewards for the adventure (including gold, Story Awards, and the opportunity to select a Treasure). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

Sometimes, invoking the Death Charity clause is the only option to return a dead PC to life. For example, if the group suffers a TPK and no friendly NPCs know where to find them, then it's unlikely that their bodies can be recovered. The DM is the final arbiter of whether or not a dead character's body can be recovered.

Remember, the Death Charity clause is always an option, no matter what happened to the PC. Returning from the dead (by whatever means) is optional and up to the player, but the decision must be made at the table and recorded on the character's Adventure Log. Any character that chooses not to return from the dead is permanently retired from play.

Mounts are not characters. These rules do not apply if a mount is killed during an adventure. To resurrect a dead mount, the owner must pay 20% of the mount's market price at the end of the adventure in which the mount died.

Total Party Kills (TPK)

Although rare, TPKs happen from time to time. In most cases, the party fails the adventure when every PC is killed in an encounter. However, given the length of this adventure, a TPK can spoil everyone's fun, especially when the players set aside fifteen hours to play and are killed after two.

The PCs have a great deal of deific attention, as well as a time-manipulating artifact: you are empowered to recover from TPKs as necessary.

Time and Pacing

Please refer to Appendix 1 for advice on managing time during the adventure. This adventure can easily run long. This may be a feature for some groups who want more sessions of play, but be ready to speed things along in any sort of time-constrained or convention environment.

Difficulty

Epic groups may require more customization of difficulty. Please refer to Appendix 2 for advice on making the adventure easier or harder.

Any statistic modifications listed under scaling suggestions (such as +5 initiative) are intended to be applied to all enemy NPCs and monsters in an encounter.

Forced Attacks

Whenever a PC is forced to make an attack, such as a basic attack for *mass charm* or at-will attack when dominated, or against a random target for *bloodthirsty wrath*, it is assumed that the attack is made in the most effective way possible. For example, a PC may not choose to use an ineffective unarmed or improvised attack, cannot avoid allies by using an enemies only attack, and should use melee basic replacement powers if available like *virtuous strike* or *eldritch strike*. A PC must use at-will benefits like *vanguard* or *horned helm* bonus to charge damage, and at-will striker damage benefits like *sneak attack* or *weapon finesse*.

For purposes of all such powers, assume that the following text was included in the power, just not repeated to preserve ink and page space:

"The DM makes all decisions about the details of the attack, using all at-will bonuses and improvements available."

Removing Harmful Effects

Some monsters have the ability to "remove a harmful effect". Those abilities sometimes have a cost, such as losing a creature's next standard action. This definition is left open ended in order to give you the necessary tools to avoid broken combinations and maintain fun and challenge at the table, as well as avoid an ability arms race where PCs feel compelled to search for powers that aren't defined conditions but act like them. That said, it should not be overused to unduly harm one particular PC's abilities or rager useless every daily power.

As a general rule, avoid using it to remove intrinsic PC abilities like a defender's mark or striker feature (*oath of enmity*, *warlock curse*) or in ways that make the game slower. Consider limiting its use to abilities which are as severe as being stunned, or more serious like dominated or unconscious.

If you know your party, you could also change the monsters to some other form of status protection. Perhaps one monster sheds stunned, while another sheds dominated, and yet another deals 30 damage to all enemies within 10 squares when it ends its turn unable to act.

It's your game. Make it fun.

Catching Up

If a PC has missed one or more of the previous adventures, he or she may have some temporary items to help them survive this adventure:

- The PC has less than three +6 enhancement items (weapons, implements, armor, or neck), the PC may upgrade enough items in their possession to +6, up to a maximum total of three +6 items for the adventure.
- The PC may purchase a *potion of heal* and a *potion of life*. If they lack sufficient funds, they may have the potions but must subtract their cost from the base gold reward at the end of the adventure.

Milestones

Whether the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they generally reach a milestone after every second encounter following the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Some encounters do not count toward a milestone, usually because they are pure roleplaying encounters or do not pose a meaningful challenge to the party. If an encounter is not intended to

count toward a milestone, it will say so. In particular, you should not deny the players a milestone just because they are having an easy time with the combat encounters. After each encounter, inform the players whether that encounter counted toward the next milestone. Reaching a milestone usually gives each PC another action point and affects some magic item powers.

Lasting Effects

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't automatically resolved by the end of the adventure, such as the death penalty or the later stages of a disease.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life, that character usually suffers a death penalty. For example, a character brought back by the Raise Dead ritual or a warpriest's resurrection power suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until he or she has reached three milestones. The player should record the character's death on his or her Adventure Log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, the death penalty ends.

Sometimes the death penalty is paid by a character other than the character that was returned to life. For example, if a sentinel uses the restore life power, there is a cost of four healing surges. These healing surges cannot be regained until the PCs who spent the surges (which cannot include the character who was returned to life) have reached three milestones or taken three extended rests. The character(s) who spent the surges track this on their individual Adventure Logs. As each character crosses the appropriate threshold, the death penalty ends for that character, regardless of whether it is still active on other characters.

Diseases: A disease lasts until it is cured or it reaches its 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 an adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cured or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may 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. Effects that last for a well-defined period of time (those that end after a certain number of days or extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified, such as by a Story Award). Effects that use a benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's Adventure Log and tracked across adventures.

It is always the player's responsibility to inform his or her DM at the beginning of an adventure if the character is suffering from a lasting effect.

Adventure Background

Shar has ever warred with her sister Selûne over the fate of creation. While Selûne wishes to nurture and guide to improve the imperfect state of things, Shar wishes for the destruction of everything in order to start anew. Shar has nursed her grudge, working with guile from the shadows, content to pull strings and manipulate events to slowly gain power and achieve her ends.

Shar's greatest success came when she manipulated Cyric into slaying Mystra, allowing Shar to reclaim part of her essence and create the Shadowfell. Unfortunately, she believes her plans are undone, and this knowledge has driven her to reckless confrontation.

Knowing that the other gods and the most powerful mortals will attempt to stop her plans, Shar prepared a myriad of plots which all lead to armageddon, starting with unleashing the Hungering Dark.

The Hungering Dark was an abomination created during the Dawn War that was too powerful for even the gods to deal with. Thus, they locked it in the prison plane of Carceri. The PCs encountered it briefly during *EPIC3-2*, saw its work in the Barrens during *EPIC4-2*, and were attacked by it during Tsien's ritual during *EPIC4-3*. This is a threat that, by definition, the gods themselves cannot stop. In *EPIC5-1*, the PCs attempted to imprison the Hungering Dark in the Calimemnon Crystal, but Shar intervened, shattering the crystal and scattering shards of the Hungering Dark throughout Faerûn.

Before it was scattered, the Hungering Dark was already being used to corrupt and empower dragons throughout Faerûn (as observed during *EPIC5-1*). Shar made a deal with the Cult of the Dragon, offering to restore their fallen patriarch Sammaster and turn him into a threat capable of destroying her mortal enemies and providing a foil against attention from the other gods. However, the PCs thwarted this plan during *EPIC5-2*.

With her involvement revealed, the gods formed a council to decide what to do. Realizing that she is out of time and options and each plan could be easily stopped piecemeal, she put all of her remaining contingency plans into play, but these plans were systematically thwarted by the PCs during *EPIC5-3*. However, Shar had one final plan. She dominated and kidnapped here sister Selûne and, with Mystra's soul, now plans to recreate the Shadow Weave from her home in the Towers of Night.

The Shadow Weave is a creation of Shar's that was destroyed when Mystra died. It was a dark copy of

Mystra's Weave that allowed Shar's followers to use magic that she approved of, even in areas where Mystra's Weave did not work. If she can recreate it, especially with access to Mystra's soul and Selûne, Shar could rewrite all of the rules of magic and perhaps even reality itself.

Appendix 3 contains information on many of the NPCs who are friends or allies of the PCs in this adventure.

Appendix 4 contains information on many of the NPCs and monsters who are enemies of the PCs in this adventure.

DM's Introduction

The events of the previous nine EPIC adventures are described in Player Handout 1. Please review those events and give it to the players before starting the adventure. Please also verify if any PCs have missed previous adventures and need to Catch Up.

The gods have decided that it is time to act against Shar, and a smaller group meets with the PCs. The PCs are given a selection of eight unique items to aid them in their quest. They may each choose one item, and each item has a specific way to interact with one of the first four combat encounters. Additionally, some of the gods agree to accompany the PCs to the Towers of Midnight.

The first challenge is for the PCs to open a hole in the defenses of the Astral Realm to prevent a prolonged siege. They can use a special key once associated with Shar – the *Mistress of the Night.* Once they break through, they need to hold the way open long enough for their god allies to follow them through.

Once past the initial wave, the PCs face a vast horde of shadar-kai, death titans, shadow hounds, hosts of dark angels, huge shadow manta rays with siege weaponry and guards, the spirits of old shades – the secret army Shar has been building to overrun the realms. While the PCs have led armies in past adventures, this time they face an army on their own.

After this battle, the PCs need to scale to the highest point of the tower to confront Shar. Along the way, the PCs are confronted by the goddess Talona. After defeating Talona, the gods Sseth and Zehir confront the PCs but are unwilling to die for Shar.

Once inside the Towers of Midnight, the Hungering Dark, tries to destroy the PCs (and any of their remaining god companions) by using shadow versions of the PCs.

Finally, the PCs confront Shar. She is possessing Selûne and surrounded by the Hungering Dark, with Mystra's divine essence stretched over an area as bits of her are picked away to form a weave at some distant point. Once the PCs save both Mystra's soul and release Shar's hold on Selûne, Shar leaps into the Hungering Dark.

The PCs follow Shar into the belly of the Hungering Dark to save Selûne and destroy both Shar and the Hungering Dark, who are feeding off of each other's power.

If the PCs are victorious, to one degree or another, Ao shows up to sort out the mess. He takes a more direct hand in the clean up, noting that some of the PCs might need to step up to replace fallen gods and clean up the mess in the days to come.

Creation's Hourglass

At the end of *EPIC4-2*, the PCs recovered the artifact Creation's Hourglass. The artifact possesses some ability to manipulate time and claims to have witnessed creation. This claim is technically true since Ao created the artifact and has been using it as a way to keep close attention on how everyone deals with this latest threat to creation. This is a secret only potentially revealed at the end of the adventure.

In any encounter, Creation's Hourglass can stop time whenever it seems like it might be interesting to do so. No creatures may act while this occurs, but it can allow telepathic communication, even across great distances.

Creation's Hourglass uses its power to ensure it knows the full history and import of any events occurring in an area, bringing leaders or even enemies into the conversation as needed.

Use Creation's Hourglass as a tool to both facilitate more roleplaying and allow you to explain any aspects of a combat situation or goals without impeding the flow or verisimilitude of the encounter.

Creation's Hourglass has no wish to be considered overused or intrusive. Note that the power it used to split the PCs in *EPIC5-1* was a consumable power that required the use of special sand. The hourglass is no longer able to use that ability.

Epic Destinies

If you are not playing this adventure in a time-limited environment, consider interweaving the events of *EPIC6-1* together with encounters and adventure ideas of your own. Be sure to highlight each PC's own plans and interests, especially in reaching goals defined by their Epic Destinies.

You should not feel confined by the limitations of the content of this adventure, nor should you need to adhere to standard adventure requirements for flushing out the story for each PC as they near retirement.

PCs might decide to go on a solo adventure, wander off in pairs, engage in great combats, or flush out their stories through extensive roleplaying scenes. Incorporate such events where they make sense during the story arc. These challenges can happen between adventures, or inset as special encounters during the course of this adventure. Now more than ever, you

should customize the content presented in this adventure to be appropriate to the PCs and their Epic Destiny choices.

The Player's Introduction is a good place to include any additional groundwork and story hooks that the PCs should be aware of, as well as a place where you could run a few mini-encounters to advance the personal story of PCs in your group.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins with the PCs having just recovered from their fight in the Ordulin Maelstrom (*EPIC5-3*). Amaunator is prepared to take them to a war council of the gods, intent on rescuing Selûne and meting out justice upon Shar for her crimes.

Shar has abducted her sister Selûne and retreated to her home in the Towers of Night. Now it is time to enact justice and confront her once and for all.

If the players have not played together before, they should all introduce themselves to each other, but it is worth note that all PCs should be very familiar with the exploits and capabilities of each other. They are part of a very exclusive club at this point.

Review story award EPIC35 from *EPIC5-3* to determine how many individual successes each PC earned during the original council. If a PC played *EPIC5-3* but successes were not tracked somehow, it's reasonable to assume 3 successes. Those who did not play should be treated as having 2 successes.

Verify if any PC is vulnerable to disease due to story award SPEC45 from *SPEC3-2*.

If any PCs sold their soul to Asmodeus during *EPIC5-3* or *WATE3-3* that affects the final battle (Encounter 6D).

Review story award EPIC36 from *EPIC5-3* to determine which apocalypse the PCs stopped first: Shar gaining control of Entropy, the Great Nothing, Devourer of Gods; or Shar's creation of an army of near invincible shade warriors that were attacking Cormyr. If there is not a majority, allow the PCs to either choose one or the other, flip a coin, assume both were dealt with quickly (makes the first two combats slightly easier), or neither was (makes the first two combats slightly more difficult).

Review story award EPIC37 from *EPIC5-3* to find out whether the PCs killed Nightsinger or Dark Dancer, Shar's Avatars, or Telamont Tanthul, Most High Prince of Shade. If the PCs did not, then all appear in minor ways during Encounter 3A and 3B. If there are a mixture of results, then total the number killed for each PC and divide it by the number of PCs to obtain an average killed. PCs who did not get a chance to play *EPIC5-3* yet count as killing 1 of 3. Round appropriately, and have the PCs determine which remain alive. For example, if a group of 3 who killed all 3 and a group of 2 who killed 1 play together, they killed (3 x 3 + 2 x 1 = 11 / 5 = 2.2, rounds to 2) 2, so killed the 1 they all have in common and 1 of the other two.

Amaunator can answer any questions the PCs might have, but he does not wish to delay long. As soon as the PCs are ready, continue with Encounter 1.

Encounter 1: Posse

Setup

The gods have gathered again, but this time to support the PCs in going after Shar. There is a smaller subset of gods than were at the original convalcation. Below is a list you can use, though you should add any additional gods who the PCs specifically worship or who have played a major role in their adventures.

Asmodeus, Supreme Master of the Nine Hells
Amaunator, Keeper of the Eternal Sun
Auril, Queen of Air and Darkness
Bahamut, God of Good Dragons
Bane, the Black Hand
Chauntea, the Great Mother
Corellon, First of the Seldarine
Garl Glittergold, the Sparkling Wit
Gond, the Wonderbringer
Ilmater, the Broken God
Kelemvor, Lord of the Dead
Lolth, Queen of the Demonweb
Loviatar, Maiden of Pain
Moradin, All-Father of the Dwarves
Oghma, Lord of Knowledge
Silvanus, the Forest Father
Sune, the Lady Firehair
Tempus, Lord of Battles
Torm, the Loyal Fury
Tymora, Lady Luck
Umberlee, the Bitch Queen
Waukeen, the Merchant's Friend

Notably, the following gods should **not** be present under any circumstances.

Cyric, the Mad God
Gruumsh, the One-Eyed God
Selûne, the Moonmaiden
Shar, the Mistress of the Night
Sseth, the Sibilant Death
Talona, Mother of All Plagues
Tiamat, Nemesis of the Gods
Zehir, the Great Serpent

The gods are not perfect, and as such have their own motivations and personal goals. At this time, they have all agreed to aid the PCs in stopping Shar from destroying creation.

If the PCs are exarchs of any of the gods (*EPIC5-3*), those gods are present. More gods are also present based on the success of the PCs in obtaining votes (*EPIC5-3*). An extremely successful party might have the full council all convinced to join in the war, though some gods might only join because they hope to steal Shar's power once she's defeated.

Ask the PCs which gods should definitely show up to assist them, and fill in the ranks with some additional gods that make sense.

Paraphrase and roleplay the below scenes. Any god can be used to convey the information, so gods close to the PCs do so. Adjust the tone and words used for each particular god. Refer to Appendix 3 for more information on roleplaying the gods.

Scene 1: Call to War

Read or paraphrase the following.

Amaunator transports you to a perfect white sphere hanging in the Astral Sea. The inside of the astral dominion is an adamantine round table, around which are seated a great number of gods. Blindingly bright light fills the room, allowing no shadows anywhere within.

He stands by his seat and speaks, "This council is called to war. Shar has taken Selûne into her Towers of Night. We must rescue her and serve justice to Shar."

The gods are unsure what Shar plans to do with Selûne, but it cannot be good. At a minimum, she plans to kill her, but likely in a way that will let Shar steal her power, or feed Selûne to the Hungering Dark. Also, there is another concern: Shar has begun to create the Shadow Weave again, somehow.

The gods verify if the PCs are familiar with the Shadow Weave. Since it likely predates their lifetimes, Corellon or Oghma volunteers to explain:

"The Shadow Weave was an ancient problem, from before the Spellplague. Shar created a dark copy of Mystra's Weave, which allowed her to grant greater magical powers to her followers outside the rules of the rest of creation. With the Weave destroyed, and possessing Selûne, who knows what she could do with it? Rewrite the rules of all magic, almost certainly. Perhaps rewrite all of creation."

Scene 2: Plans of Attack

"Powerful wards surround Shar's realm. They are particularly effective against gods. We can overcome them surely enough, but it would take days or weeks to do so. This gives us two options: lay a siege, safest for us, but giving Shar the most time to act; or mount a daring and extraordinarily risky rescue plan."

If the PCs aren't interested in a daring and risky rescue plan, they have shown up for the wrong adventure.

"There is a way to sneak through her wards. Shar gathers an army of darkness from the Shadowfell. Shadow creatures of all kinds flock to her realm. The

way is still warded, and no god could sneak in that route.

A powerful group of mortals and near-gods might ride through those wards, if they sheltered on the decks of a ship that was once attuned to Shar, dedicated and named after her. There, they could open a portal to allow the rest of us through.

Will you helm your ship, the Mistress of the Night, into the darkest and most dangerous fortress in all the planes? Will you win us this war?"

The *Mistress of the Night* has served the PCs on many previous adventures, and was indeed dedicated to Shar. With careful work, the PCs can use it to pierce Shar's wards, then open a portal on the other side. Shar's forces would attempt to destroy the portal, so the PCs would need to hold off Shar's forces as long as possible to let gods through.

The gods then argue amongst themselves for who should serve in the vanguard of this struggle, coming through the portal first. The gods suggest that the PCs suggest a few gods with whom they can work most easily.

Let the PCs consider this, then move on to describe the threats they can expect to face:

"Once we get past these wards, we have much to overcome. Shar's army, as we mentioned, is legion, though no match for our combined might. I am more concerned by the gods that serve her: Sseth, the World Serpent; Talona, Mother of All Plagues; and Zehir, Master of Poisons and Shadows.

She also has whatever remains of the Hungering Dark. You greatly weakened it, but she protects and nurtures it. It only grows more powerful with time.

Finally, Shar herself. I will say what no one wants to admit. She is the most powerful of us, barring Ao, who has not seen fit to intervene. She has command of the dark and the mind, everything that is secret or feared, and we must assume that she knows everything that we hope and everything that we plan. This room is as warded as we can make it, but we should still attempt to wrap up quickly and attack right away."

The gods are happy to discuss what they know of these threats, though they do not want to take too long to do so. Refer to later encounters to reference capabilities of her army, as well as the fact that all three of her gods wield poison as a primary means of attack.

SCENE 3: WEAPONS OF THE GODS

Refer to Player Handouts 2 and 3 for assistance in this scene:

"We have gathered together what extra resources we might bring to this fight. These artifacts we feel would

be particularly good in overcoming some of the hardships of Shar's realm. Alternatively, we could empower some of you with mantles of the divinity you are already beginning to show."

"Consider also what we might do to Shar. If we hope to defeat her more permanently, we should ensure we can prevent her discorporation. I believe you might have a solution to that."

Each of you choose one thing. Whatever you do not choose, we will put to good use somehow."

If any of the PCs played *EPIC4-3* and negotiated with Sinmaker (story award EPIC26), they can use Sinmaker's concoction to prevent Shar's discorporation, though many of the gods are clearly uneasy at its use.

If the PCs did not (or do not want to use it), then the gods point out that the *Codex of Infinite Planes*, *Arrow of Fate*, or *Gauntlet of Vigilance* can all be used to restrain Shar (or any of the other gods with her) from discorporation, if necessary.

If the PCs do not have Sinmaker's concoction and take none of those artifacts, then they can only force Shar to flee when reduced to 25% hp in Encounter 6D. They cannot obtain concessions, cleanse her, or kill her, so cannot achieve total victory.

Each PC can take either an artifact or a mantle. When a PC takes an artifact, the artifact attunes to that PC, achieving concordance with a mission of defeating Shar. A PC cannot trade artifacts or use multiple of the artifacts on a single PC, even if a PC dies.

When a PC takes a mantle, the entire party gains the benefits of the mantle, including the ability to each use any encounter and daily powers of that mantle.

Each artifact and mantle has a notable special effect (described in a sidebar) on one Encounter in this adventure. The artifacts tend to have a stronger effect than the mantles.

For parties that have less than 6 PCs, the gods also grant the PCs additional mantles to bring the total number of choices up to 6 (so a group of 4 select 2 group mantles, a group of 5 selects 1, and a group of 6 gets only the one choice per PC with no additional mantles).

Each artifact and mantle takes no item slot and works even if the PC uses other items. For example, the Gauntlet of Vigilance can be worn over other hand items, attached to a neck or shield, or in any way displayed prominently.

The gods can provide a number of suggestions to make the decision easier for the PCs. They also make sure the PCs make a decision in a timely fashion, to limit Shar's ability to prevent their plan.

Codex of Infinite Planes: This artifact is best in the hands of a fragile leader or controller, especially one who needs to move into position.

Iron Fortress of Will: This artifact is best used by a striker or controller who might devastate the party if turned against them.

Gauntlet of Vigilance: This artifact is best used by a defender, especially one whose mark is their primary means of punishment, or who has a defender's aura.

Wings of Light: This artifact is best used by any fragile PC or by a defender.

Arrow of Fate: This artifact is perfect for any ranged or area attacker for improving the accuracy of the entire group.

Necklace of Tears: This artifact is best on any PC likely to spend one or more surges per combat.

Fist of the Gods: This mantle can greatly speed up a group that is slow to roll damage and has any minor actions available for extra damage.

Secret of Immortality: This mantle is extremely helpful for any group lacking in leaders or needing added survivability.

Fires of Creation: This mantle is generally useful for any group, especially one with less healing.

Instant Death Technique: This mantle is generally useful for any group, especially one with less damage.

Mastery of Time and Space: This mantle assists any low mobility group, especially one that lacks initiative bonuses (such as from a warlord).

Perfect Memory: This mantle assists most groups, especially ones that require combat advantage or lack accuracy.

If at all possible, the artifact or mantle should be presented by an appropriate god with a connection to the group. For example:

> *Tempus claps you on the shoulder, driving you to your knees as he confers his Instant Death Technique. "It's all about follow through. Swing your blade so that nothing can possibly stop it. Take off a head or split them down the middle, and they tend to die."*

If the party lacks:

- **Healing:** *Necklace of Tears, Secret of Immortality, Fires of Creation.*
- **Damage:** *Fist of the Gods, Instant Death Technique.*
- **Mobility:** *Codex of Infinite Planes, Mastery of Time and Space.*
- **Initiative:** *Mastery of Time and Space.*

Scene 4: Captain, my Captain

The gods transport the PCs to their ship, the Mistress of the Night, and setup the portal within the hold of the ship. While they do so, the skeletal captain, Eluryo Panahq, approaches the PCs.

> *"What dastardly abyss do we hurl into today, my friends? The Imaskari, they have finished the work I*

requested, and the Mistress, she flies now, even without a crew to be getting killed. Prudent, no?"

The PCs can share any information they see fit. If they reveal much at all, Eluryo whistles (despite the lack of lips), and exclaims that's a grand quest, though maybe one to keep on the quiet side. He sets off to prepare the Mistress for a fight.

Once the gods do their work, they urge the PCs into the Shadowfell, some saluting the PCs with respect and solemnity, others giving an impressive battle cry.

Eluryo pilots the the ship into the Shadowfell.

Scene 5: Shadowfelled

The gray plains, dismal swamps, and twisted forests of the Shadowfell spread out far below your ship.

Death titans, shadar-kai, great shadow bats, and all manner of horrors march in their thousands towards Shar's Palace of Loss in the Shadowfell.

The portals near the Palace are guarded, but by creatures that are no true threat to the PCs. Allow the PCs to narrate how they talk, sneak, and/or force their way past and through the portals. Some PCs might have some elaborate plan for destroying the portals on their way through. Let them do so; if they expend notable resources in doing so, consider applying a bonus during Encounter 3B, but there's no need for them to take much time or effort in dealing the forces not yet in the Towers of Night.

Ending the Encounter

When the PCs pass through the Shadowfell into Shar's realm, continue with Encounter 2.

Roleplaying

It is important to remember that the PCs have defeated multiple demigods and destroyed a demon lord and nascent deity, as well as Shar's avatars and one of her chosen in *EPIC5-3*. The gods treat them like peers in this encounter, not lesser beings.

The gods are conflicted about what to do about Shar. Her death could create chaos, but trusting her with terms could be difficult. Throughout the rest of the adventure, the PCs should consider the best result of their mission, so they are not surprised when presented with the choice in Encounter 6D.

Milestone

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

Treasure

The PCs receive 6 (total) artifacts and mantles of divine power.

ENCOUNTER 2: BREACHING THE BORDER

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:
4 astral warwing rager (R)
3 astral warwing bombadier (B)
1 portal-rending claw hazard

Several reinforcements
The goal of the encounter is for the PCs to hold open the portal long enough for the gods to come through.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.
> **Four PCs:** Remove a rager.
> **Six PCs:** Add a rager.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:
> **Faster:** Reduce the hit points of the ragers and bombadiers by 50 each and increase their attack rolls by 2.
> **Easier:** -5 Damage. Reduce the hit points of the hazard by half.
> **Harder:** +2 Attack and +2 Defense. Add an astral warwing bombardier.
> **Glory:** Increase the claw hit points to double their standard amount. Reinforcements arrive at the start of each round, rather than the end of each round.

SETUP

Within Shar's realm, the PCs need to open a portal back to the gods to get as many of the gods through as possible. Astral warwings, constructs tasked to guard Shar's realm, detect and attempt to stop the intrusion, and Shar reaches forth a claw to close the portal.

The Mistress of the Night bursts through the wards into Shar's realm. Hundreds of astral constructs, shaped like angels but with black adamantine bones and wings of blue flame, swarm towards your ship as you open the portal.

In your hold, a large claw of shadow begins to form around the portal, holding it closed. You will need to destroy the claw and hold off these constructs long enough for your allies come through.

A claw of shadow attempts to destroy the portal. Meanwhile, a group of powerful guardians move to engage the PCs. The PCs need to destroy the claw while controlling the engaging monsters so that their allies can

join the crusade. Make sure the players are aware the portal will not stay open indefinitely regardless of their work and gods can only come through if they destroy the claw each round.

The claw can only be attacked by PCs on certain squares of the Mistress of the Night (the doors or grate that lead down into the hold), or by area bursts originating in those squares.

Unless the PCs stopped Entropy first (see PC Introduction), the attacks of the astral warwings have been altered by power stolen from Entropy, allowing them to strip away defenses when a PC is first missed and steal temporary hp at the start of each round.

UNIQUE EFFECTS

Fires of Creation
The portal is strengthened by the fires of creation, which burn away the portal-rending claw. The claw takes 50 damage at the start of each round.

Gauntlet of Vigilance
The wielder takes half damage from the astral warwings. Whenever an astral warwing attacks the wielder, the wielder can teleport the warwing into any unoccupied adjacent square as a free action.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Astral Dominion: The PCs can move through the area of Astral Sea on the outskirts of Shar's dominion by sheer willpower: they have a fly speed of their normal speed and can hover. Creatures knocked prone go prone in their space and float there. There is no falling in the Astral Sea.

Mistress of the Night: The pair of doors by the stairs, as well as the 2x2 grate in the middle of the ship, lead to the hold. Only PCs in those squares, or area bursts that originate from those squares, can target the portal-rending claw hazard.

Reinforcements: Additional astral warwings appear at the end of each round. They do not act until their initiatives.
- **4 Players:** Add a rager at the end of round 1, bombardier in round 2, alternating thereafter.
- **5 Players:** Add a rager and bombardier at the end of each round.
- **6 Players:** Add 2 ragers and 1 bombardier at the end of round 1, and 2 bombadiers and 1 rager at the end of round 2, alternating thereafter.

Gods: At the end of each round, immediately after reinforcements appear, each god the PCs have brought through the portal slays one enemy (starting with the enemies the PCs have least affected, such as the reinforcements). The gods are otherwise busy holding off the horde of astral warwings off-map.

Portal

The PCs need to deal enough to the claw to stop it from blocking the portal each round. Consult the chart below to determine how much damage needs to be done to the claw. Note that attacks that include the claw must originate from one of the two entrances to the hold of the *Mistress of the Night.*

At the start of each round, tell the PCs how much damage they need to do in order to keep the portal open that round so a god can come through. Note that the amount of damage increases with each god that gets through because each time the claw reappears it is much larger, until it fills the ship, then finally tears the portal asunder and damages the *Mistress.*

Number of PCs	God 1	God 2	God 3
4	100	200	400
5	125	250	500
6	150	300	600

At the end of the round, if the PCs have done at least the damage indicated in the chart, one of their allies makes it through. Choose an appropriate god (preferably one with close ties to the PCs) to join the fray. A reasonable method is to roll randomly to choose a player each time, and let that player choose which god comes through. Make sure the players realize the portal will not be open indefinitely and as such their options are limited.

Once 3 gods join the encounter, the portal is destroyed. See Ending the Encounter for more details.

Tactics

The warwings are basic constructs, intent on destroying the invading PCs. As such, they tend to attack creatures that have them marked. The ragers wade into melee and prefer to attack prone targets. The bombadiers lead with *astral bombard* and then rely on *astral burst* if *astral ray* would provoke opportunity attacks.

At the end of the 4th round, even if fewer than 3 gods have joined the combat, the claw destroys the portal and the other astral warwings retreat.

Roleplaying

As each god arrives at the end of the round, have them shout out something meaningful as they engage the enemies. They can continue to encourage the PCs as the combat continues, and it should be made obvious that the gods are also destroying many warwings off map.

Ending the Encounter

The combat ends once the PCs have brought 3 gods through the portal or at the end of round 4:

The claw of shadow entirely fills the hold of the Mistress of the Night. The sides of the ship creak and splinter, breaking under the strain.

The gods on the other side of the portal call out words in Supernal, granting you more of their power before the portal is destroyed.

The PCs are empowered by the power flung through by their allies, but must continue on without their army of gods. Refer to Handout 4. Each PC gains a number of blessings equal to the number of successes received in EPIC5-3 (Story Award EPIC35), or 2, whichever is higher. Any remaining warwings are easily destroyed.

The edge of Shar's realm begins with shores of black sand that glitter like chips of obsidian. Farther in, churning hordes of shadow creatures trample black plains lit only by the glowing red and purple eyes of some of its inhabitants. Innumerable dark-winged enemies blanket the sky. Over them, black mountains, unweathered by time or the elements, rise up like giant razor-edged spikes into swirling clouds of darkness from which miles-long dark tentacles sometimes protrude.

An army and many challenges stand between you and Shar's sanctum at the highest point of the Towers of Night. A roar rises from the dread host, echoed by a plane-shaking rumble from the Hungering Dark.

Due to damage from the claw, and its inability to possibly withstand the dangers the PCs must make their way through, the *Mistress of the Night* must either wait for the PCs here or exit Shar's plane. The PCs can take a short rest, then proceed to Encounter 3A.

Refer to Appendix 5 for ways that you can use the gods the PCs brought through during this adventure. The PCs may occasionally ask for assistance from the gods, or may get into dire straits that require rescue. The gods involvement should be felt in encounters 3A – 5B, but should never overshadow the PCs.

Troubleshooting

If the PCs cannot deal enough damage to the claw, the rest of the adventure may be extremely difficult for them, and certainly much less fun without the god allies to interact with. It also likely indicates that one of the scaling options (Faster, Easier, or scaling for one fewer PC) might be appropriate.

Milestone

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

Treasure

There is no treasure in this encounter.

Astral Warwing Rager (R) — Level 30 Brute

Large immortal animate

HP 335; **Bloodied** 167 — **Initiative** +27
AC 42, **Fortitude** 44, **Reflex** 40, **Will** 42 — **Perception** +21
Speed 8, fly 8 (hover)
Immune disease, poison, sleep

TRAITS

Executioner

If the rager hits a prone target, the target takes an additional 20 damage and becomes dazed until the end of the rager's next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m Siege Flail (weapon) • **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +35 vs. AC
Hit: 5d12 + 16 (avg 49, crit 3d12 + 76) damage and the target is knocked prone.

M Raging Assault (weapon) • **At-Will**

Requirement: The rager must be bloodied.
Effect: The rager moves its speed and makes up to 4 *siege flail* attacks at any point in the movement. If it comes within reach of a conjuration or zone, it also makes a free action attack +33 vs. Will and on a hit the conjuration or zone is destroyed and all of its effects end.

C Raging Sweep (weapon) • **Recharge 4-6**

Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in blast); +33 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 5d12 + 16 (avg 49, crit 3d12 + 76) damage and the target is pushed up to 3 squares and knocked prone.
Miss: Half damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

M Final Strike

Trigger: The warwing is reduced to 0 hit points.
Effect (No Action): The rager makes a basic attack.

Str 30 (+25)	Dex 24 (+22)	Wis 22 (+21)
Con 25 (+22)	Int 6 (+13)	Cha 6 (+13)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** telepathy

Unless the PCs stopped Entropy first during *EPIC5-3* (see Player Introduction), the astral warwings gain the following traits:

TRAITS

Entropic Drain

When an astral warwing misses a target with an attack, the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the encounter.

O Consumptive Aura * Aura 20

At the start of each round, all creatures within the aura lose all temporary hit points.

Portal-Rending Claw — Level 30 Hazard

HP special; see table
AC 46, **Fortitude** 42, **Reflex** 42, **Will** 42

TRAITS

Magical Construct

The claw is immune to all effects and conditions, except those used to trigger additional damage effects (such as quarry, mark, oath, curse, vulnerable, etc.) At the end of each round, if the claw has not been reduced to 0 hit points, the claw prevents a god from crossing the portal.

Portal Jammer

The claw fills the inside of the *Mistress of the Night*. The claw can only be targeted from certain sections of the ship.

Astral Warwing Bombadier (B) — Level 30 Artillery

Medium immortal animate

HP 211; **Bloodied** 105 — **Initiative** +25
AC 42, **Fortitude** 40, **Reflex** 44, **Will** 42 — **Perception** +22
Speed 8, fly 8 (hover)
Immune disease, poison, sleep

STANDARD ACTIONS

R Astral Ray (fire, radiant) • **At-Will**

Attack: Range 50 (one creature); +35 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d10 + 16 (avg 38, crit 56) fire and radiant damage.

C Astral Burst (fire, radiant) • **At-Will**

Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in burst); +35 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d6 + 16 (avg 30, crit 60) fire and radiant damage and the target is blinded (save ends) and pushed up to 3 squares.
Miss: Half damage and the target is pushed 1 square.

A Astral Bombard (radiant) • **Recharge 4-6**

Attack: Area burst 3 within 20 (enemies in burst); +35 vs. Will
Hit: 8d6 + 14 (avg 42, crit 62) radiant damage.

Str 25 (+22)	Dex 30 (+25)	Wis 25 (+22)
Con 25 (+22)	Int 6 (+13)	Cha 6 (+13)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** telepathy

Encounter 2: Breaching the Border

Mistress of the Night ship tiles (16 x 4 squares) on an empty map, or any other large ship map.
For other maps, pick 4-8 squares from which the claw can be worked on.

For example, any square adjacent to the grate of the Airyacht from *ADCP5-2*.

The ragers appear adjacent to the ship, each spread out from each other.

The bombardiers start 8-10 squares out from the ship, at the four diagonal corners of the map.

Encounter 3A: Army of Darkness

Setup

The PCs face an army that Shar has gathered to guard her borders. Refer to Appendix 6 for assistance in tracking the results of the PCs in overcoming this army.

A mighty army of darkness, with the darkest creatures of the Shadowfell, and hosts of dark angels bar your way.

Shar lies beyond the army, atop the massive black mountain beyond them. In the past, you might have needed an army of your own to deal with such a threat.

Customize the deity interactions for your group. Some examples:

Moradin grunts, "They could use better fortifications. This won't take long."

Lolth smiles, "Nothing like a massacre to start a party."

Tymora ponders, "Shall we make a game of it? Winner gets a prize."

There are six objectives below, which the PCs should tackle on their path to victory. The PCs should each choose a different objective. If there are less than 6 PCs, treat any objective not chosen as successful (but not a total success) due to the intervention of one or more gods, or the Mistress of the Night, or even sheer distraction as the PCs smash their way through the rest of the army.

Each objective modifies Encounter 3B in some notable fashion, removing an enemy or hazard. Resolve each objective with the following process:

- Ask the PC to commit to a level of risk, and thusly reward, they are willing to take.
- Ask the PC what resources (powers, items) and actions they take to solve the objective.
- Have the PC make a skill check appropriate to the objective and/or the PC's actions.

Emphasize the flavor and story of the encounter, rather than spending too much time going over the math with each player. If a player is failing or close to total success, it is reasonable to describe how the use of more powers or some other contribution would make a real difference.

The PCs earn points towards solving each objective. If a PC is too cautious or unsuccessful, the PC might fail to overcome the objective and Encounter 3B becomes more difficult. If a PC invests heavily, the PC can secure a total success and Encounter 3B becomes easier. For each objective, consider the points obtained by the single PC assigned to that objective:

- **0-5 points:** The PC fails to deal with the objective, which causes a Failure penalty to Encounter 3B.
- **6-9 points:** The PC is basically successful at overcoming the objective. Do not modify Encounter 3B for that objective.
- **10+ points:** The PC is totally successful at overcoming the objective, securing a Total Success benefit for Encounter 3B.

Each PC should first choose a level of risk, and thusly reward, they are willing to take.

- **Negligible Risk:** 50 damage 0 points
- **Moderate Risk:** 80 damage 1 point
- **Extreme Risk:** 120 damage 3 points

The PCs subtract their AC from the damage taken. Each PC chooses their own level of risk and takes the appropriate damage. PCs can use powers or resistance to all damage to mitigate the damage taken.

The PC can also choose to use any items, powers, or resources they feel would be helpful against the objective. Reward creativity and extreme specialization, but also factor in the resources used by the PCs. Using notable encounter resources which could have been useful in the next encounter or daily powers should be rewarded. Each objective has some guidance for making it more of a riddle, but it's more important to let the PCs shine than it is to restrict their options, so be flexible.

It is not intended that the PCs should get credit for using random daily item powers, but actually useful powers that might be relevant to the objective. Consider that the difference between a success and a total success in a particular objective is approximately 200 damage dealt to the group in the next encounter by the relevant hazard.

- **Creative / Awesome:** 1 point
- **1 encounter:** 1 point
- **2+ encounters:** 2 points
- **Any useful daily:** 3 points
- **Any very useful/powerful daily:** 5 points

PCs should be discouraged from using too many powers: there is plenty of adventure to go!

Each objective has certain key skills, though it's possible for a PC's actions to justify a different skill. A PC makes a skill check using an appropriate skill. The PC earns points for the objective based on the check result:

- **DC 32-41:** 1 point
- **DC 42-51:** 2 points
- **DC 52-61:** 3 points
- **DC 62+:** 4 points

If the PCs did not kill Dark Dancer and/or Nightsinger during *EPIC5-3* (see the PC Introduction), Shar's avatar(s) appear(s) to harass the PCs. Each removes 2 points from a different PC before being routed by the PC or one of the gods. If at all possible, have the avatars only harass PCs who did not kill them, in the case of a group with mixed results.

If a PC is very close to crossing a threshold, give that PC a chance to use additional appropriate powers to make up the difference, or consider having a god assist that PC.

The gods split off from the PCs to deal with their own sections of the battle, assuming the PCs can take care of themselves. They rejoin the PCs from time to time as needed, but the focus remains on the PCs.

If Shar's avatars are present, the gods chase down and destroy both avatars by the time the PCs deal with the other objectives. PCs who have not played *EPIC5-3* may be surprised they do not get to engage the avatars directly: let them know they can see more than enough of the avatars in *EPIC5-3*.

OBJECTIVE 1: SHADAR~KAI ARMY

A massive army swarms before you. Thousands of shadar-kai await in phalanxes led by death titans. The army chants, rattling a million links of spiked chain, "Glory to Shar! Death to the Light!"

The shadar-kai are individually no threat to the PCs, a mixture of high heroic and low paragon enemies, only notable in the thousands. The PCs need to punch as big a hole as possible through their massed ranks, so they can reach more vital objectives.

Skills: Endurance or Intimidate
Intimidate is useful to rout the gathered enemies, while Endurance helps a PC shrug off their massed attacks to convince the army that battle is impossible.

Actions: Attacks which target as many creatures as possible are most useful. The PC should use a multitarget attack that deals any damage (the amount does not matter, they fight all minions). No attack rolls are necessary and the more targets the better.

Powers which assist in causing fear or stopping the attacks of groups would also be helpful.

Total Success: Remove Reinforcements from 3B.
Failure: Add additional shade channelers equal to twice the number of PCs to Encounter 3B.

OBJECTIVE 2: SHADE CASTERS

Powerful shade wizards launch volley after volley of magical energy. They teleport constantly to evade counterattack.

The shade casters are difficult to pin down due to their constant teleportation. They rely on immediate defenses to protect them, while they hurl blasts that knockback anyone who approaches.

Skills: Acrobatics or Arcana
Acrobatics is useful for avoiding the caster's attacks and slipping through the ranks to get to them. Arcana helps to counter their magic and identify the locations and actions of the casters.

Actions: Teleportation to match the caster's movements, as well as the ability to prevent them from teleporting are both extremely useful, as is the ability to use effects or conditions (such as daze) to limit the caster's ability to react.

Total Success: Remove the magic missiles from Encounter 3B.
Failure: Increase the magic missile damage to 40 in Encounter 3B.

OBJECTIVE 3: DARK HOST

All gods may call on the service of angels, and Shar is no exception. A host of dark angels blankets the sky. They wield swords of darkness and hurl blasts of power as they swoop to attack.

The angels get more dangerous when bloodied and make powerful attacks when slain, so simply killing them – though still effective – is not the best route. Keeping them away, depriving Shar of their service, and channeling divine power at them is most effective.

Skills: Insight or Religion
The PC can use Insight to invoke words of creation, dispersing the angels or forcing them to retreat. Religion allows the PC to identify and pick out key angels and command them back with divine knowledge.

Actions: The angels get more dangerous when bloodied, and attack when they die. Divine PCs are more effective against them, especially using channel divinity. The ability to protect others against their attacks (bonuses to defenses, resistance to cold, necrotic, psychic, or radiant), any abilities effective against immortals, large amounts of forced movement, and conditions which slow, immobilize, or restrain the angels are all particularly effective.

Total Success: The dark angels in Encounter 3B all take 50 damage.
Failure: Add an additional dark angel to Encounter 3B.

Objective 4: Shadowmanta Siegers

Massive shadow creatures, like manta rays hundreds of feet across, float over the battlefield. Siege engines and platoons of archers fire from their backs.

Each of these gigantic flying shadow creatures holds siege engines and archers on its back, making for a potent flying weapons platform. If a PC can strike one hard enough, it crashes or outright slays the creature, destroying hundreds of soldiers in one blow.

Skills: Athletics or Perception
Athletics helps the PC to smash a more powerful blow that forces the creature to crash, while Perception is useful for finding a weak point to make a devastating strike on the strange and massive body.

Actions: A single devastating strike can bring the manta ray down. Many smaller attacks just won't have as much of an effect. The biggest (especially if it would critical) single target single damage hit the PC can do is the best. Forced movement, knocking prone, and anything that specifically stops flying is also very effective.

Total Success: Remove the artillery from Encounter 3B.
Failure: Choose four artillery targets instead of two.

Objective 5: Eye of Darkness

Miles-long tentacles of darkness swing out and smash down towards you, guided by a huge floating eye of Hungering Darkness.

The Hungering Dark rages over the battlefield. An eye of darkness looks out, identifying targets for the battle, then lashing out with tentacles to rend the targets it sees.

Skills: Bluff or Stealth
Bluff and Stealth both help a PC to get safely up to the eye of darkness without being pulverized.

Actions: Invisibility, flight, and any ability that would blind the eye are all particularly effective. Attacks which deal lots of damage are also effective. Unlike the shadowmantas, powers which strike multiple times work well in gouging out the eye of darkness.

Total Success: Remove the tentacle from Encounter 3B.
Failure: The tentacle also lashes out at a second target of your choice each round in Encounter 3B.

Objective 6: Leadership

Shar's defense is being coordinated by hidden leadership. Find and take it down, and you'll win this battle.

Shar has invested power into protecting her most cunning and powerful shade to command the defense of her realm. Until the PCs find and slay that general, her forces can regroup and strike back at them. Most of the orders are carried by invisible messengers, who use telepathy or Supernal to order the battle groups.

Skills: History or Streetwise
A knowledge of tactical history allows a PC to make sense of the movement of troops, while Streetwise allows a PC to make sense of the lines of communication used and eavesdrop or gather information quickly from the enemies.

Actions: The PC is greatly aided by the ability to magically coerce, understand troop communications, or find invisible and hidden troops. The ability to use magical disguises or divinations can also be quite helpful.

Total Success: The monsters in Encounter 3B take a -2 penalty to all defenses and PCs may shift their speed from the starting area at the start of the combat.
Failure: The monsters in Encounter 3B gain a +10 bonus to initiative and +2 bonus to attack rolls.

Ending the Encounter

When both scenes have been resolved, proceed to Encounter 3B.

Roleplaying

This is an opportunity for the PCs to play up how epically powerful they are. The PCs are on even footing with the few gods that accompany them, shattering Shar's host of shadow without even stopping to rest.

The gods should encourage the PCs, and might provide additional information, but do not make any decisions for the PCs.

Using the Gods

The PCs may attempt to directly use the gods, conspiring with Lolth to sneak up and blind the eye, or using *death from two sides* with Tempus against the shadowmanta. Reward this use though do not let the PCs overdo it.

If no obvious use presents itself, one of the gods should appear to assist a PC that is about to fail or close to total success, taking some appropriate action that grants the PC an extra 2 points to move the PC into the next category.

Feel free to describe the gods also destroying shadowmantas, scattering hundreds of angels, or thousands of shadar-kai, but be careful not to distract from the actions of the PCs.

MILESTONE

Encounters 3A–3B collectively count as one encounter towards a milestone.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If two PCs want to work on the same objective, they should choose some other objective they are ignoring as a result. The two PCs total up their score on one objective (very likely securing a total success, or only using a minimal amount of resources to avoid failure), but the abandoned objective is a total failure; even if a god might assist with the objective, the PCs ignoring it must have some cost to ensure their choices are meaningful.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

Encounter 3B: The Fastest War

Creatures

This encounter includes the following creatures:
5+ **shade channelers (C)**
4 **dark angel screamers (A)**
1 **shade general (G)**

This encounter is modified by the results of Encounter 3A.

If the PCs did not slay Telamont Tanthul during *EPIC5-3* (see the PC Introduction), then the shade general is Telamont Tanthul and he gains additional benefits in his stat block.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove a dark angel screamer and a shade channeler. Remove the shade general's action point and 100 hp.

Six PCs: Add a dark angel screamer and a shade channeler. Add an action point to the shade general and increase his hp by 100.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: Reduce non-minion hp by 50 and increase damage rolls by 5.

Easier: -5 damage. Remove one dark angel screamer.

Harder: +5 initiative. Add an additional dark angel screamer at the end of the first round.

Glory: +2 attack. Add additional shade channelers equal to the number of PCs and a dark angel screamer at the start of each round. The shade general is insubstantial whenever any shade channelers are present.

Setup

A field of dead and dying creatures lies behind you. The shade general that commands Shar's resistance is entrenched upon a great wall of adamantine that overlooks the battle.

Great sweeping tentacles of the Hungering Dark swing overhead and dark angels swoop down to protect the shade, even as the shattered remnants of the army attempt to regroup.

Customize the deity interactions for your group. Some examples include:

Corellon yells, "Take him out. I'll hold off the army on the left while you do."

Tempus scoffs. "Hold off? I'll bloody well kill the army on the right."

Ilmater sighs, "Let's just finish this fight quickly, please."

The shade channelers do not roll initiative, acting at the end of the round.

The shade general is protected by powerful wards. Unless the PCs stopped the shade invincibles first during *EPIC5-3* (see the PC Introduction), the general is protected by a ward that prevents him from taking more than 100 damage per turn. Once the shade has taken 100 damage in a turn, any further damage is reduced to 0.

UNIQUE BENEFITS

Fist of the Gods
When a PC ends its turn, that PC may destroy one shade channeler within 3 squares as a free action. Shade channelers destroyed in this way cannot use *death channel*.

Iron Fortress of Intellect
The wearer, and all allies within 3 squares of the wearer, are immune to the *death channel* of the shade channelers, cannot gain ongoing psychic, and cannot be immobilized by the encounter's psychic effects.

Features of the Area

Magic Circle: As long as the general is in the magic circle, all damage he takes is reduced to 0. The circle is dispelled by the gods at the end of the 1st round.

Reinforcements: At the end of each round, a number of shade channelers equal to the number of PCs join the battle and act immediately.

Magic Missiles: The Netherese casters hurl a continual barrage of unerring magic missiles at the PCs. At the start of each round, all PCs take 20 force damage.

Shadowmanta Siegers: At the start of each round, place 2 markers. At the end of each round, huge necrotic explosions erupt from those locations dealing 50 necrotic to any creatures within 3 squares of the markers.

Hungering Tentacles: At the end of each round, a tentacle lashes out and deals 100 damage to whichever PC dealt the most damage this round.

Tactics

The dark angel screamers attempt to keep all PCs in their aura. They lay down *motes of dread* to cover the battle in dangerous zones.

The shade channelers spread their attacks amongst the PCs, hoping to immobilize PCs.

The shade general does not redirect all damage to his screamers, since he relies on them to fight effectively. He instead initially relies on his magic circle and wards, transferring damage only as necessary to stay alive.

The shade general knows almost everything there is to know about the PCs, so carefully plans how to best use *counter magic*. He knows he must prevent powers which would remove his allies from the field, prevent free actions (such as with dominate or stun), or cause an extreme amount of damage or defensive bonus. A few likely examples include *valorous charge*, *hurricane of blades*, *compel action*, and *mantle of unity*.

Roleplaying

The shade general realizes that he is likely doomed, but that his only chance to succeed is to delay the PCs long enough for his army to regroup and counterattack, or at least be in a strong enough position that deities arrive to reinforce his side.

If the encounter continues for more than a couple of rounds, he begins to resent that Shar has not arrived to smite the PCs. He does not betray her, because doing so might cause her to retaliate against Netheril, but he'll at least begin to consider surrender.

Ending the Encounter

The combat ends once the shade general is dead. The armies of darkness fall into disarray and flee before the might of the PCs and their allies.

At the end of round 3, if the shade general still lives, he offers to leave the Towers of Night and allow the PCs to pass. If the PCs do not accept, at the end of round 5, the gods appears to finish off the general or allies of the shade general spirit him away with a teleportation effect that removes him from the battle, whichever feels most fitting.

The PCs and gods can take a short rest, while Shar's army falls apart and quits the field. The PCs' next goal is to scale the Towers of Night: proceed to Encounter 4A.

Troubleshooting

Make it clear to the players that the general is heavily protected: it is still useful to include the general in attacks, but the PCs should not unknowingly waste a number of powers against the general.

It is possible that some PCs might kill a large number of shade channelers simultaneously while there are are many PCs within range of *death channel*. This could potentially outright kill one or more PCs, especially with the auras. Warn the PCs that the shade general appears to have wrought some connection between the souls of his minions and orders them willfully into danger, as if hoping they are killed.

Using the Gods

One of the gods dispels the magic circle at the end of the first round. Otherwise, use a deft touch with the gods to provide a heal to a downed PC about to act, intercept a hungering tentacle, slide a PC out of an aura or zone, or grant a reroll to a missed attack or save.

The gods can also be used to speed along the end of the combat, if the PCs have solved it but are having difficulty grinding out remaining hp.

Milestone

Encounter 3A and 3B count collectively toward a milestone.

Treasure

None.

ENCOUNTER 3B: THE FASTEST WAR

Shade Channelers (C) — Level 28 Minion Skirmisher

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	**Initiative** Special
AC 44, **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 40	**Perception** +23
Immune necrotic, disease, poison	
Speed fly 8 (hover), teleport 5	

STANDARD ACTIONS

m **Chains of Lamentation** (psychic) • **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +33 vs. AC

Hit: 18 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Death Channel (psychic) • **Encounter**

Trigger: An enemy reduces the shade to 0 hit points.

Effect (No Action): All enemies within 3 squares of a shade channeler take 10 psychic damage.

Str 18 (+19)	**Dex** 23 (+21)	**Wis** 27 (+23)
Con 23 (+21)	**Int** 15 (+17)	**Cha** 23 (+21)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Supernal

Note: Simplified Sorrowsoul Courtier ($$).

Dark Angel Screamers (S) — Level 29 Controller

Large immortal humanoid

HP 268; **Bloodied** 134	**Initiative** +27
AC 43, **Fortitude** 41, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 41	**Perception** +21
Speed 8	**Blindsight** 5
Immune fear; **Resist** 20 psychic, 20 radiant, 20 necrotic	

TRAITS

O **Darkest Memory** • **Aura** 10

Enemies in the aura gain vulnerable 20 psychic.

Angel of Darkness

While bloodied, the angel gains a +10 bonus to damage rolls and scores critical hits on 18-20.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m **Dreadful Touch** (psychic) • **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +32 vs. AC or Will (whichever is lower)

Hit: 3d10 + 20 (avg 36, crit 50) damage and ongoing 20 psychic damage (save ends).

R **Nightmare Scream** (fear, psychic) • **At-Will**

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +32 vs. Will

Hit: 3d10 + 20 (avg 36, crit 50) psychic damage and the target is slid up to 3 squares.

A **Mote of Dread** (fear, psychic, zone) • **Encounter**

Attack: Area burst 3 within 20 (enemies in burst); +32 vs. Will

Hit: 3d10 + 20 (avg 36, crit 50) psychic damage and the target is blinded (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. Any enemy that enters or ends its turn in the zone takes 20 psychic damage. This damage can only be taken once per round.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

C **Nightmare Dredge** (charm, psychic) • **Encounter**

Trigger: This creature is reduced to 0 hp.

Attack (No Action): Close burst 10 (enemies in burst); +32 vs. Will

Hit: 3d10 + 20 (avg 36, crit 50) psychic damage and the target slides 3 squares and takes ongoing 20 psychic damage (save ends) and immobilized (save ends).

Str 29 (+23)	**Dex** 26 (+22)	**Wis** 21 (+19)
Con 24 (+21)	**Int** 23 (+20)	**Cha** 26 (+22)

Alignment evil **Languages** Supernal

Note: Fathomal Scream (*E3 Prince of Undeath*) reflavored as a dark angel of Shar.

Shade General (G) — Level 30 Elite Controller (Leader)

Medium shadow humanoid (shade)

HP 548; **Bloodied** 274   **Initiative** +19
AC 44, **Fortitude** 42, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 43   **Perception** +25
Speed 8. fly 6 (hover), teleport 6   darkvision, blindsight 2
Resist 30 necrotic, 30 psychic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Saving Throws +2, **Action Points** 1

TRAITS

Pledged Companion
     Half of all damage dealt to the shade can be redirected to any dark angel within 10 squares.

O Prince's Concord • Aura 20
     Allies within the aura gain a +2 power bonus to attack rolls.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m / r Overwhelming Shadows (necrotic, psychic) **• At-Will**
     Attack: Melee or Ranged 20 (one creature); +34 vs. Will
     Hit: 4d8 + 30 (avg 48, crit 6d12 + 62) necrotic and psychic damage, and the target is slid up to 3 squares.

A Dark Vortex (cold, necrotic) **• Recharge** when bloodied
     Attack: Area burst 2 in 20 (enemies in burst); +34 vs. Fortitude
     Hit: 4d8 + 10 (avg 38, crit 6d12 + 52) cold and necrotic damage, and the target is knocked prone.

M / R Aggression Pact • At-Will
     Effect: The shade general uses *overwhelming shadows* then one ally within 10 squares can make an at-will attack as a free action.

MOVE ACTIONS

Transposition (teleportation) **• At-Will**
     Effect: The shade teleports, swapping positions with an ally within 10 squares of him.

MINOR ACTIONS

Zone of Shadows (zone) **• Recharge** when this power's zone ends,
     Effect: The shade creates a zone in a close burst 2 that lasts until the end of his next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the shade. Enemies are blinded while within the zone.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Counter Magic • At-Will
     Trigger: An enemy within sight uses a power that is not at-will.
     Effect (Free Action): The enemy cannot use that power until the start of its next turn. Its action is not wasted and it may choose to use a different power instead.
     Special: This power cannot be used again on the triggering enemy until the end of the encounter.

Dispersion • Encounter
     Trigger: The shade general is first bloodied.
     Effect (No Action): The shade general becomes invisible and insubstantial until the end of its next turn, then teleports up to 10 squares.

Manipulate Shadows • At-Will 1/turn
     Trigger: The shade general is subject to a harmful effect.
     Effect (No Action): The harmful effect is redirected to a dark angel within 10 squares.

Skills Arcana +27, Endurance +29, History +27, Insight +25, Intimidate +29, Religion +27

Str 16 (+18)	**Dex** 19 (+19)	**Wis** 20 (+20)
Con 26 (+23)	**Int** 24 (+22)	**Cha** 28 (+24)

Alignment evil   **Languages** All, telepathy 10

Unless the PCs stopped the invincible shades first in EPIC5-3 (see Player Introduction) then he gains the following trait:

TRAITS

Shade Shielding
     The shade general cannot take more than 100 damage per turn. After taking 100 damage in a turn, all damage is reduced to 0. This trait triggers before pledged companion.

If Telamont Tanthul still lives, he is the general and gains +2 to attack and all defenses, as well as the following powers:

STANDARD ACTIONS

A Defiling Burst (necrotic, psychic) **• Recharge** 5-6
     Effect: Each enemy adjacent to Telamont Tanthul takes 20 necrotic and psychic damage and is pushed 2 squares. Telamont gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls for each enemy damaged by this attack. The bonus lasts until the end of his next turn.
     Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in burst); +32 vs. Fortitude.
     Hit: 4d10 + 16 (avg 38, crit 6d12 + 55) necrotic and psychic damage.

MINOR ACTIONS

Highest Authority • Recharge when first bloodied
     Effect: One ally within 10 squares of Telamont immediately uses a free action to take a standard action.

Encounter 3B: The Fastest War

P3 Nightwyrm poster map. Hailstorm tower poster map also works well.
G = General; A = Dark Angel Screamers; C = Shade Channelers
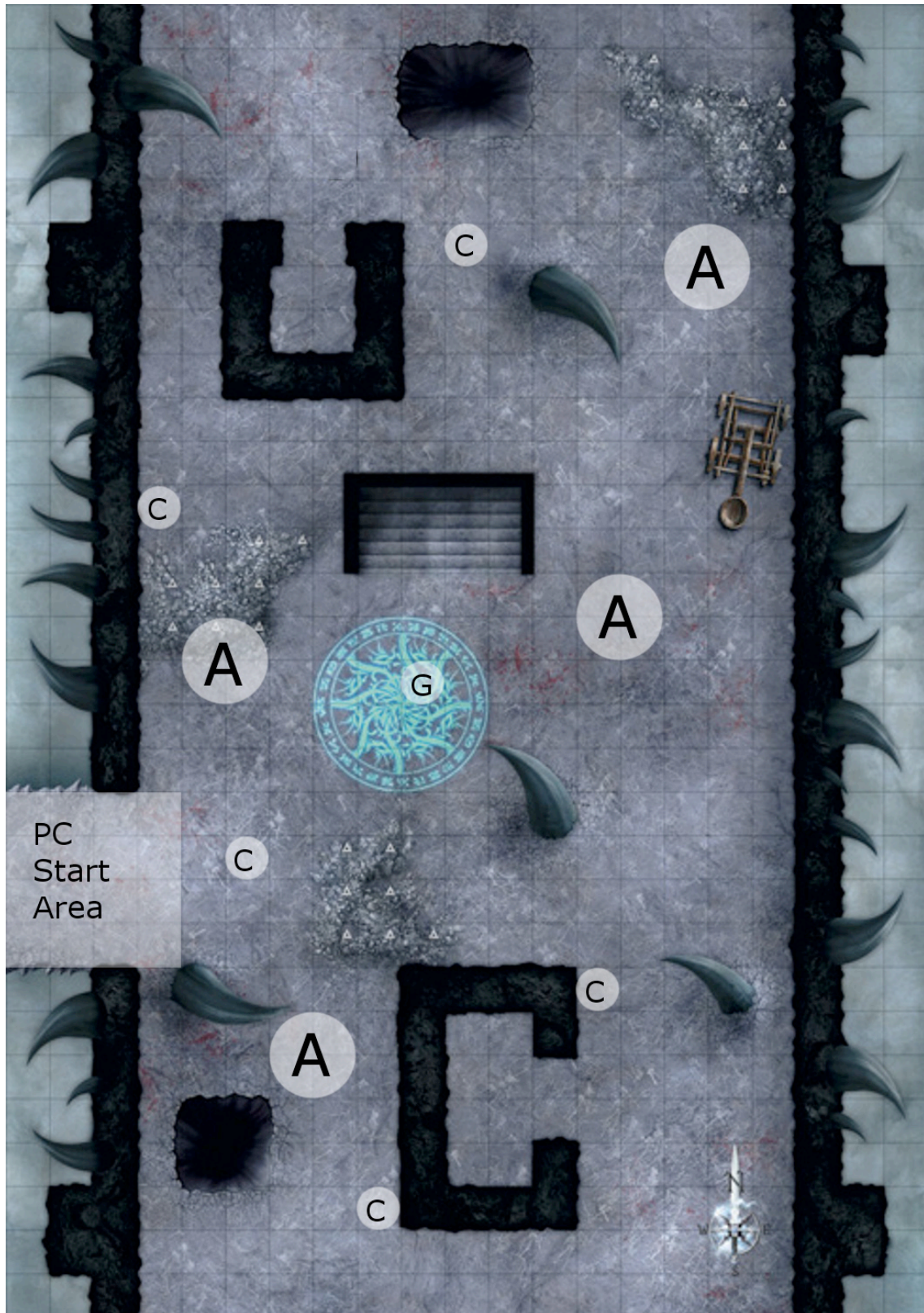
Encounter 4A: Because It's There

Setup

The realm created by Shar is the largest plane of existence in the Astral Sea. Among the black sand and shadowy features is the Towers of Night, Shar's home, built atop the highest mountain. The greater goddess Shar rules the Towers of Night, and Talona, Sseth, and Zehir also reside there.

The PCs and their allies have battled past the border guardians and carved their way through Shar's army. The party begins to scale the mountains to reach the pinnacles of the Towers of Night where they will confront Shar. Each scene below represents a section of mountain that the PCs must traverse on their way to the top. Remember that the PCs are high-epic level, so the challenges and solutions should reflect epic challenges, not simply scaling a mountain. Be sure to impress upon the PCs how no ordinary mortals could survive such a trip.

Shar has fortified herself well in the Towers of Night, so the PCs should not be able to trivially bypass these obstacles. Wards of forbiddance prevent any easy means of flight or travel ritual directly to her fortress, though the use of rituals should still be rewarded, even if they require invention or modification.

As a general rule of thumb, an appropriate epic encounter power can result in a success (a 42+ result) for one PC in one scene, while a daily power could get up to three PCs past a challenge. Describe countermeasures as needed. For example, if PCs use *arcane gate* (a heroic-level utility power) to bypass a scene, you can describe how magical forces assault the gate, making it possible for one creature to entirely bypass a scene or grant an entire group a +5 bonus to the check for one scene.

Note: It is intended that the PCs are able to use creative solutions, powers, and abilities to deal with these hazards. Provide bonuses, including automatic success, for such ideas. The countermeasures noted in the previous paragraph are intended to minimize trivializing challenges for the entire party, and not to discourage using resources to deal with the hazards.

If the PCs have any gods (or other allies) with them, those allies automatically make the checks. For animal companions, mounts, familiars, and so on, assume the epic PC is able to prevent any harm from coming to those companions.

Finally, feel free to replace any of these scenes with your own, or add your own additional scenes to the ones listed.

The PCs do not get a chance to rest during Encounter 4A, so any encounter powers used are not available during Encounter 4B.

Scene 1: Tower of Night

A massive obsidian spike rises from glittering shards of black sand up to the firmament, impossibly tall. Hosts of Shar's angels swirl around its jagged face, alert for intruders.

The top, where Shar and the Hungering Dark wait, cannot be seen past clouds of roiling living darkness.

The PCs have a choice: they can either charge up and through the ranks of the angels, favoring speed to take them through a withering barrage of attacks, or they can use stealth and their knowledge of mountains to avoid the patrols as they make their way up.

Charge Recklessly!
Each PC should make an Acrobatics or Athletics check to get past the angels safely.

Carefully Approach
Each PC should make a Dungeoneering or Stealth check to avoid the attention of the angels.

If any PCs have EPIC08 Can I Keep Him from *EPIC3-2*, their familiar, Gero the quasit says,
"Okay, boss, this looks nasty. You think maybe we should turn back? No. Right, right. Umm, see, back in the cage, I heard 'bout a secret route."

The imp seems confident in his information, but is not the most reliable source of information. If the PCs follow the imp's advice, the imp gives them some imperfect guidance on how to carefully approach. One PC who has Gero should roll a d20.

1 – 5: The imp's advice is incorrect, and all carefully approaching PCs take a -5 penalty.

6 – 20: The imp's advice leads to a secret pass, and all carefully approaching PCs gain a +5 bonus.

For each PC that charges recklessly, all charging PCs (including that PC) take a cumulative -2 penalty to their check result, but all PCs carefully approaching gain a +2 bonus per charging PC to their check, as they take advantage of the distraction.

It's worth note that using Endurance here would not be helpful, since stolidly taking the attacks just gives the angels more time to make additional attacks, at no gain to the PC.

Some methods which might assist the PCs include long distance teleportation, mass invisibility and group magical disguises.

- **DC 42:** no effect.
- **DC 32:** the PC loses a healing surge.
- **DC 24:** the PC loses two healing surges.
- **Below DC 24:** the PC loses three healing surges.

If any PC has resist necrotic 10+, that PC loses 1 fewer surge.

Scene 2: Rain of Death
Dark clouds overhead rumble ominously, then red and yellow droplets, sizzling in the air, rain down from above. Blood and bile, reeking of sickness and decay pelt against you.

With a horrible noise like the keening death rattle of an entire nation, the sky tears open and rotting viscera and pox-ridden corpses begin to tumble from the heaven.

Talona has hurled down on the PCs all of the fruits of her labors, every disease and poison she has crafted, every life she has withered and slain. It is impossible to fly in these conditions and the storm cannot be avoided.

Each PC can either make an Endurance check for their PC, or make a Heal check on any one ally, to overcome the vile nastiness of this assault. PCs may spend an action point to make both checks.

PCs who make Heal checks and don't spend an action point are treated as having rolled a 0 on the d20 for an Endurance check.

PCs may choose whether to use their Endurance check, or the Heal check received from an ally, whichever is better.

PCs who are immune to poison or disease (such as the Master Hierophant Epic Destiny) ignore this challenge and should make a Heal check to assist an ally.

Any PC with story award SPEC45 Tainted by the Citadel (from *SPEC3-2)* takes a -5 penalty to checks for this scene.

Some methods which might assist the PCs include protections and bonuses against disease and poison, ability to grant heals and saves. PCs with a bonus to saves against disease or poison should add that bonus to their Endurance check.

- **DC 42:** no effect
- **DC 32:** The PC loses a healing surge to the harsh environment.
- **DC 24:** The PC loses a healing surge to the harsh environment, and takes a -1 penalty to Fortitude until the end of the adventure.
- **Below DC 24:** The PC loses a healing surge to the harsh environment, and takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude until the end of the adventure.

If any PC has resist poison 10+, that PC does not lose a healing surge. The penalty to Fortitude is a disease effect.

After resolving the storm, continue to Encounter 4B.

Roleplaying

The gods can register their own commentary on the PCs performance during the ascent or offer assistance during particular scenes.

At least one god should react with disgust to Talona's attack, confirming her involvement.

Ending the Encounter

When the PCs complete the second scene, continue with Encounter 4B.

Using the Gods

During one of the two scenes, a god might take a helpful action to prevent a PC from losing a healing surge, allow the group to roll twice and take the better result for a skill check, or give a +10 bonus after the fact to a particular PC in dire need. The gods are more likely to assist with Scene 2, protecting against Talona. This is a good opportunity to foreshadow the loss of a god at the end of Encounter 4B.

Milestone

Encounters 4A and 4B collectively count as one encounter towards a milestone.

Treasure

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4B: TALONA

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 **Talona (T),** Lady of Poison, Mistress of Disease, Mother of All Plagues
5 **corrupted Talontar (C)**

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove a corrupted Talontar. Reduce Talona's hp by 200 and Talona only acts once per round on initiative 45.

Six PCs: Add a corrupted Talontar. Increase Talona's hp by 200 and Talona acts three times per round on initiatives 50, 40, and 30.

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the difficulty level.

Faster: Reduce each creature's hit points by 50. The monsters all gain +2 to attack rolls.

Easier: -2 Attack and -5 Damage (including to the various auras, ongoings, and vulnerable effects).

Harder: Each Talontar gains 100 hit points and an action point.

Glory: Add a number of Talontar equal to the number of PCs once the last Talontar dies, each making a free action at-will attack as they appear.

SETUP

Talona and her storm block the PCs from progressing. At first, Talona appears as a beautiful and innocent woman, but at the start of combat, she transforms into her true form, a large, scarred old crone falling apart from disease.

A beautiful woman blocks the path upwards, surrounded by a number of pocked and mushroom-covered humanoids. The diseased rain lands all around her, but does not affect her.

"Shar is not to be disturbed. Turn back now, or waste away and die," she says.

Customize the deity interactions for your group. Some examples include:

Torm steps forward, "Talona, Shar must answer for her crimes."

Oghma shakes his head, "Aye, you'd give us the sniffles sure enough, but you cannot hope to stop us."

Waukeen raises her hand, creating a canopy that keeps away the vile rain of death. "What's Shar done

for you lately? You only need to look away for a minute."

Talona informs the PCs that they can go no further. She is polite, but firm, and the PCs cannot convince her to let them pass. She simply states that Shar is not to be disturbed, and offers to spare them from a slow, horrible, wasting death by divine disease.

When the PCs initiate combat, Talona cackles that they are no match for her on her home plane and triggers *mother of all plagues, lady of poison,* and *mistress of disease.* Any PC with story award SPEC4-5 (from *SPEC3-2*) starts at stage 2 of Talona's disease.

If there are any gods or allies with the PCs, Talona's attack is focused on them, weakening them severely in the combat. The gods in turn focus on holding off the rain of death (from Encounter 4A) while the PCs fight her, only assisting the PCs occasionally.

The PCs should choose if they wish to stop Talona from discorporating. Doing so takes no special action, simply a declaration of the use of Sinmaker's concoction or one of the relevant artifacts (see Encounter 1). If they do not stop Talona's discorporation, then she has no fear of combat (does not consider flight or surrender) and disappears at 0 hp.

UNIQUE BENEFITS

Secret of Immortality
All PCs gain resist 10 poison. If the PC already has resistance to poison at the start of the encounter (such as from a feat or item), increase that resistance by 10. PCs also cannot die instantly from a failed save against a disease effect in this encounter (stage 3 of Talona's Plague or second failed saving throw effect of Talona's *wasting sickness).*

Necklace of Tears
The wearer of this artifact may roll twice and take the better for all saving throws in this encounter. At the start and end of each of the wearer's turns, the wearer may remove one poison effect from an ally within 5 squares.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Poisonous Water: Any creature in the water gains ongoing 30 poison (save ends) and cannot remove the ongoing poison while in the water.

Ceiling (poisonous clouds): Any creature that flies more than 5 squares above the ground is subject to poisonous water as above, and is also blinded by the rain.

Mushrooms: The mushrooms do not impede the combat in any way, though they quickly grow to cover any dead or dying creature. If allowed five minutes or more, they devour a corpse entirely.

TACTICS

Talona is a deity, and engaging her in combat on her own turf should not be easy. She uses *virulent infection* on any PC marking her, or resisting poison damage. She then uses *amber pestilence* to keep PCs poisoned and *wasting death* on melee-based PCs.

Talona knows the PCs by reputation, and from warnings from Shar. She specifically targets her attacks against PCs with low defenses to each attack, directing the Talontar appropriately.

Talona orders the Talontar to sacrifice themselves whenever she would be bloodied at an inopportune time (such as right before her turn), would be reduced to 0 hp, or whenever she would much rather be away from her current position.

The Talontar use *corruption bolt* at range, then move in close to be in position to use *death burst* and use *nauseous form* if they can catch one or more undazed PCs. If the PCs seem to ignore daze, then the Talontar focus all attacks on one PC at a time or ready attacks to use *corruption bolt* on PCs during their turns, to daze them once they start taking an action.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Talona fears Shar more than the PCs and knows that she only needs to buy time for her attacks to wear down the PCs. Still, she is not willing to die for Shar. After all of the Talontar are dead and Talona is bloodied, she puts distance between herself and the PCs. When she has less than 200 hp, if the PCs have taken any steps to prevent her discorporation, she tries to flee or bargains with the PCs to let her surrender if she cannot. Ultimately, her fate is determined by the PCs. If the PCs do not wish to prevent her discorporation, she fights to 0 hp with no fear or hesitation.

If the PCs have a god (or other ally) with them, one of them insists on cleansing the disease from the PCs and other gods so that they can continue on their vital mission. The god transfers any ongoing poison damage and the *wasting plague* from the PCs to itself. The PCs are all cured, but the god is too weak to continue on. If the PCs do not have any gods with them, then they stay at their current level of the disease until the end of the adventure.

The PCs may take a short rest then continue to the mountain's summit. Proceed to Encounter 5A.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Talona has a number of resistances and immunities to reflect her divine nature. The PCs should be made aware of them before attempting powers she is immune to, through their own knowledge skills, facing Shar's avatars in *EPIC5-3*, or the council for war at the start of this adventure. Such powers are fully effective on the Talontar, of course.

USING THE GODS

The gods are somewhat crippled by Talona's disease. Use them sparingly to assist PCs who might die or to deal damage to Talona. Make it clear to the PCs that they should not waste time trying to help the gods, but should instead stop Talona.

MILESTONE

Collectively, Encounters 4A and 4B count as one encounter towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter, but if the PCs have a god ally, they gain the benefits as if that god sacrificed itself (see Appendix 5).

Each PC selects one of the following:

- **Regain a daily power** (can't regain a particular daily power more than once, nor regain a power that has already been recovered through some other means)
- **Resurrect a PC** from dead (no death penalty) and/or heal to full hp
- **Gain a blessing** (see Player Handout 4)

ENCOUNTER 4B: TALONA

Talona	Level 32 Solo Skirmisher
Large immortal humanoid (deity)	

HP 1000; **Bloodied** 500 — **Initiative** special
AC 47, **Fortitude** 46, **Reflex** 42, **Will** 45 — **Perception** +25
Speed 6, fly 12 (hover), teleport 6 — Blindsight 20
Resist 20 necrotic, 20 radiant
Immune disease, dominated, fear, petrification, poison, polymorph, removed from play, stunned, unconscious
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

TRAITS

Mother of All Plagues
At the start of combat, all enemies contract the disease *Talona's Plague* at Stage 1.

Mistress of Disease
At the end of each round, each creature within 100 squares suffering from *Talona's Plague* must make a saving throw. On a failure, the disease increases to the next stage.

Lady of Poison
At the start of each round, all creatures within 100 squares take 60 poison damage. Each creature can make an Endurance check and subtract the result from the damage. Resistances also apply to this damage.

Divine Fortune
Talona scores critical hits on a natural roll of 17-20. Once per turn, when Talona misses with an attack or fails a saving throw or skill check, she instead automatically succeeds.

Lesser Deity
Talona acts twice per round, on initiative 50 and 40, taking a full complement of actions on each of those initiatves. She can only spend one action point per round. When Talona ends her turn, she can choose to remove one harmful effect or condition. Talona does not provoke opportunity attacks for making ranged or area attacks.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m Talons • At-Will
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +37 vs. AC
Hit: 4d10 + 17 (avg 39, crit 6d10 + 57) damage and the target slides up to 2 squares.

A Amber Pestilence (poison) **• At-Will 1/turn**
Attack: Area wall 15 within 20 squares (creatures in area); +35 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 4d10 + 17 (avg 39, crit 6d10 + 57) poison damage.
Effect: The target gains ongoing 30 poison (save ends). If the target does not end its next turn in a different square than its current square, it takes 30 poison damage.

MINOR ACTIONS

Virulent Infection (poison) **• At-will**
Effect: One enemy within 10 squares gains vulnerable 30 poison (save ends) and ongoing 30 poison (save ends).

R Wasting Death (disease, necrotic) **• At-will 1/turn**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +35 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 5d12 + 7 (avg 40, crit 6d10 + 67) necrotic damage and the target is slowed (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead unconscious (save ends).
Second Failed Saving Throw: The target dies.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Bloodied Vengeance • Encounter
Trigger: Talona is first bloodied.
Effect (No Action): Until the end of her next turn, whenever any enemy hits or damages Talona, that enemy takes 50 poison damage. All Talontar in the combat gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and +10 bonus to damage rolls until the end of the encounter. Talona may transfer any or all harmful effects on her to a Talontar within 10 squares.

Str 32 (+27)	Dex 46 (+34)	Wis 29 (+25)
Con 41 (+31)	Int 31 (+26)	Cha 48 (+35)

Alignment chaotic evil   **Languages** Common, Supernal, telepathy 10
Note: Based loosely on Pazuzu.

Talona's Plague	Disease

Stage 0: The target is cured.
Stage 1: The target takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude. When the target reaches this stage, it gains ongoing 30 poison damage (save ends).
Stage 2: The target dies when it drops to 0 hit points or fewer. When the target reaches this stage, it gains ongoing 30 poison damage (save ends).
Stage 3: The target dies. If the creature is returned to life, it still has Stage 2 of this disease.

Corrupted Talontar	Level 30 Artillery
Medium plant humanoid	

HP 200; **Bloodied** 100 — **Initiative** +20
AC 42, **Fortitude** 43, **Reflex** 40, **Will** 43 — **Perception** +16
Speed 6 — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison
Resist 20 necrotic, 20 radiant

TRAITS

Faithful Servant
The Talontar can sacrifice itself to its deity at any time as no action. The Talontar dies, and Talona either regains hit points equal to the Talontar's current hit points or may use *virulent infection* or *wasting death* as a free action.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m Slam • At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +37 vs. AC
Hit: 4d10 + 16 (avg 38, crit 56) damage.

R Corruption Bolt (poison) **• At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +35 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 4d10 + 16 (avg 38, crit 56) poison damage and the target is dazed (save ends).

MINOR ACTIONS

C Nauseous Form (disease) **• At-will 1/round**
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in burst); +35 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

C Death Burst (poison) **• Encounter**
Trigger: The Talontar drops to 0 hit points.
Effect: The Talontar may teleport to swap position with Talona.
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in burst); +35 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 4d10 + 16 (avg 38, crit 56) poison damage and ongoing 30 poison damage (save ends) and vulnerable 30 poison (save ends).

Str 32 (+27)	Dex 46 (+34)	Wis 29 (+25)
Con 41 (+31)	Int 31 (+26)	Cha 48 (+35)

Alignment chaotic evil   **Languages** Common, Supernal, telepathy 10
Note: Based loosely on Corruption Shard. Talontar are Talona's most devout humanoid followers, clerics who bring plague to all of her enemies. These followers died, but were so corrupted by disease that they live as eternal vessels of rotting death.

Vaults of the Underdark poster map
T = Talona; C = Corrupted Talontar
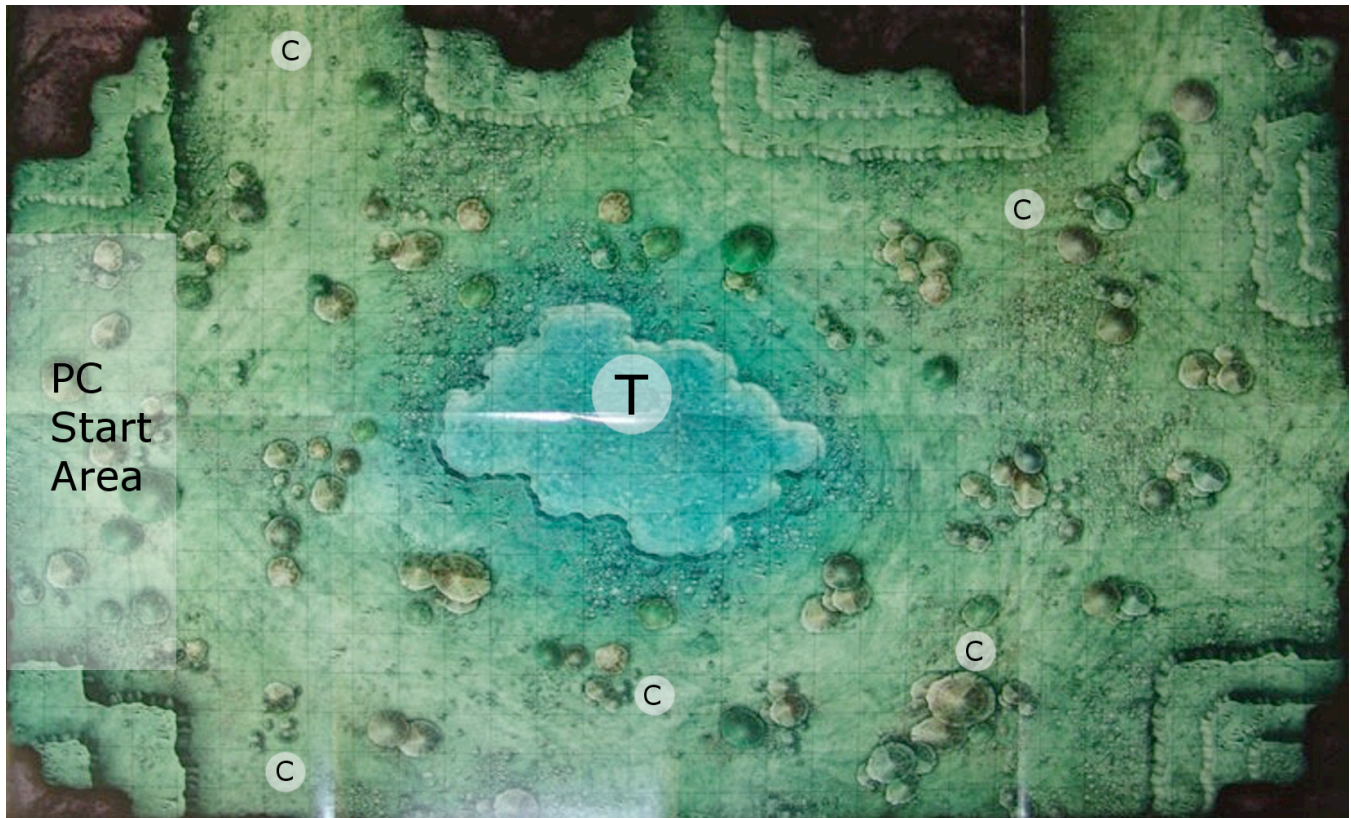
Encounter 5A: Shar's Shadow

Key NPCs

Sseth (greater deity), the Slitherer Supreme, the Great Snake, the World Serpent, the Sibilant Death.
Zehir (deity), the Great Serpent, Master of Poisons and Shadows.

Setup

The PCs continue up to the summit of the mountain, where they must overcome the sense of loss and hopelessness inflicted by Shar, then negotiate their way past Sseth and Zehir.

Refer to Encounter 4A for guidance in managing these skill challenge scenes.

The PCs do not get a chance to rest during Encounter 5A, so any powers used are not available during Encounter 5B.

Scene 1: Fear and Loathing

With Talona dead, the vile rain of death has ceased, but a menacing shadow covers the area, dimming even the greatest of your lights.

Talona was a deadly threat, but was only the weakest of Shar's servant deities. With rising dread, you realize that you have embarked on an impossible mission.

You cannot hope to face Shar in her own realm. Turn back now.

Shar's shadow lies over the top part of the mountain. As the PCs enter this part of the mountain, their faith is tested as their greatest fears and secrets rise to the surface of their minds, compelling them to turn back.

Each PC can make either an Intimidate or Religion check, either for itself or an ally, to overcome the mixture of charm and fear effects inflicted by Shar. PCs may spend an action point to make both checks.

PCs who make a check for an ally and don't spend an action point are treated as having rolled a 0 on the d20 for their own check.

PCs may choose whether to use their own check, or the check received from an ally, whichever is better.

PCs who are immune to both charm and fear ignore this challenge and should assist an ally. PCs who are immune to either charm or fear (but not both) gain a +5 bonus to the check made for them, while PCs who have bonuses to saves specifically against charm or fear gain an bonus equal to half the save bonus (rounded up) to the check made for them.

Divine PCs more easily resist Shar's manipulation, gaining a +5 bonus to checks in this scene.

PCs who possess EPIC17 Hope of the Blessed Order (from *EPIC4-1*) may void the story award in order to permanently release their halo in an enormous blast of light that gives a +2 bonus to the checks of all PCs in this scene. This bonus is cumulative if multiple PCs sacrifice their halos for this purpose.

Some methods which might assist the PCs include actions which assist against charm or fear, as well as any inspiring actions or those which snap an ally out from mental compulsions.

- **DC 42:** no effect.
- **DC 32:** The PC takes a -5 penalty to initiative until the end of the adventure.
- **DC 24:** The PC takes a -10 penalty to initiative until the end of the adventure.
- **Below DC 24:** The PC takes a -15 penalty to initiative until the end of the adventure.

Scene 2: Why Does It Have To Be Snakes? Again!

A colossal flying snake with barred fangs materializes before the gates to Shar's palace. Coiled at its tail, ready to strike, is a gargantuan serpent, its fangs dripping with poison.

The flying snake is an avatar of Sseth, and the serpent is an avatar of Zehir. Although they are allies to Shar, they have no interest in being dragged down in the mess she has created and the attention she has gotten from the other gods. While far from loyal, they are still willing to help their ally if it comes down to it.

Sseth does most of the talking, though Zehir chimes in if addressed directly. The PCs can talk with them as long as they wish, but it soon becomes clear that the snakes are trying to delay them from entering the palace.

- First, these gods question the presence of the PCs and their allies (they know who the PCs are), accusing them of trespassing, first by entering the realm, and then intruding on their home. They accept whatever reason the PCs give for their presence.
- Next, Sseth tells the PCs that they are wasting their time, as they will never survive the traps in the palace or the Hungering Dark.
- Zehir would greatly prefer Shar to kill the PCs, than risk himself, and makes it known:

"Even ssshould you sssomehow sssurvive, Shar's ssshadows will ssslay you," hisses Zehir.
"Ssshush," replies Sseth.

- Both gods are interested in verifying whether Talona is really dead or, if the PCs spared her, perhaps seeing how weakened she is.

Sseth and Zehir are not interested in risking themselves in a fight to the death with the PCs, especially since the PCs already defeated Talona, but want to make sure that Shar does not punish them later for shirking their duty. It quickly becomes obvious that they are there in avatar form, rather than in true body, and are interested not in a true battle, but rather in making it appear that they fought and were routed.

Assuming the PCs do not turn back, Sseth and Zehir half-heartedly attack them. Each PC should make a check, either to represent their skill in fighting the two deities, or their skill in talking to the deities up until now, using any appropriate skill. Reward excellent roleplaying with a bonus to the check and make it clear that PCs should use one of their better skills.

The PCs' success convinces Sseth and Zehir to leave them alone or to at least end the combat sooner. One of two things now happen:

Two Gods Left: If the PCs have two gods with them, one god steps forward and warns that the poison from these gods is very debilitating and the god would like to ensure the snakes do not attempt to follow the PCs. That god grants the PCs a boon (as if sacrificed) and engages Sseth and Zehir, taking the brunt of their attacks. The PCs can easily get past, but their ally cannot rejoin them until after the adventure.

- **DC 52:** No effect.
- **DC 42:** The PC loses a healing surge.
- **DC 32:** The PC loses a healing surge and takes a -5 penalty to their healing surge value for the adventure.
- **Below DC 32:** The PC loses two healing surges and takes a -10 penalty to their healing surge value for the adventure.

One God or Fewer Left: If the PCs have one or no gods with them, then Sseth and Zehir skirmish with the PCs for a couple of rounds, then flee. All of the PCs are at least scraped and find they are affected by a debilitating poison, the effects of which linger for some time.

- **DC 52:** The PC loses a healing surge.
- **DC 42:** The PC loses a healing surge and takes a -5 penalty to their healing surge value for the adventure.
- **DC 32:** The PC loses two healing surges and takes a -10 penalty to their healing surge value for the adventure.
- **Below DC 32:** The PC loses three healing surges and takes a -20 penalty to their healing surge value for the adventure.

If any PC has resist poison 10+, that PC loses one fewer healing surges. The penalty to healing surge value is a poison effect.

SCENE 3: SHAR'S PALACE

Shar's dark palace is a maze of dark and twisting passages, all alike. In every intersection and corner lurks a deadly surprise.

Anything that strays from the light is devoured. Spheres of annihilation drop down on intruders who take a wrong turn. Demonic faces jet beams of disintegration at intruders. Entire corridors seal, then hurl into the Abyss.

Each PC should make an Arcana or Thievery check, to bypass and disable this warren of epic traps.

- **DC 42:** The PC can grant a +5 bonus to one ally, applying the bonus retroactively after seeing the ally's result.
- **DC 32:** The PC loses a healing surge to the harsh environment.
- **DC 24:** The PC loses a healing surge to the harsh environment, and takes a -1 penalty to AC and Reflex until the end of the adventure.
- **Below DC 24:** The PC loses a healing surge to the harsh environment, and takes a -2 penalty to AC and Reflex until the end of the adventure.

SCENE 4: PRISON OF THE MIND

This journey brings back memories, from fighting kobolds in Tymanther or unmasking Netherese in Cormyr to gathering information in Waterdeep.

Your journey is coming to an end soon, but where did it start?

Each PC is being flung into a memory. Each player should recount some notable moment from the beginning of the PCs career or backstory.

The PCs themselves are caught in this memory, or move to another, reliving it. The memories loop and seek onwards, as if something else is driving. The PCs may begin to notice their shadows seem odd, as if slightly different than they should be: facing the wrong way, wielding a different weapon, paying attention to something else, or holding the shadow of a weapon up against the back of the PC.

Each PC should make an Insight, Perception, or Bluff check to either recognize the flaws and lies in the memories, wrongness of the shadows, or to take control of the memories and alter the details until they manage to break out.

Give a +2 to +5 bonus to PCs who describe an interesting and entertaining memory.

- **DC 42:** no effect
- **DC 32:** The PC is dazed until the start of their first turn of Encounter 5B.
- **DC 24:** The PC is dazed until the start of their first turn of Encounter 5B and takes a -1 penalty to Will until the end of the adventure.
- **Below DC 24:** The PC is dazed until the start of their first turn of Encounter 5B and takes a -2 penalty to Will until the end of the adventure.

Ending the Encounter

The PCs appear next to shadows of themselves, spread around a room. Continue with Encounter 5B.

Milestone

Encounters 5A and 5B collectively count as one encounter towards a milestone.

Treasure

There is no treasure in this encounter, but if a god left the PCs to deal with Sseth and Zehir, they gain the benefits as if that god sacrificed itself (see Appendix 5).

Each PC selects one of the following:

- Regain a daily power (can't regain a particular daily power more than once, nor regain a power that has already been recovered through some other means)
- Resurrect a PC from dead (no death penalty) and/or heal to full hp
- Gain a blessing (see Player Handout 4)

ENCOUNTER 5B: HUNGERING SHADOWS

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures at all Adventure Levels:
1 hungering dark
5 legendary shadows

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove a legendary shadow.
Six PCs: Add a legendary shadow.

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the difficulty level.

Faster: Whenever a legendary shadow would gain 100 temporary hp it instead gets only 50. Shar does not heal them at the end of each round. Instead, all PCs and shadows take a cumulative -5 penalty to all defenses at the end of each round.

Easier: The PCs act before their legendary shadows, instead of afterwards, and can make a free action skill check both before and after their turn.

Harder: The legendary shadows can use a free action to take a standard action when reduced to 0 hp.

Glory: The Hungering Dark gains a +10 bonus to initiative. Each shadow gains an action point.

SETUP

The PCs awaken from their memories in Shar's palace at the pinnacle of the Towers of Night. The foyer is a grand hallway. Each PC starts on the outside of a different statue on the map. Each statue looks like a PC, though it shows signs of age, damage, and abuse.

The chamber swirls with shadows and a woman's voice echoes all around you.

"You dare come to MY realm? You dare to face ME here? Fools. All that is shadow is mine. All that is secret is mine. Now, YOU will be mine."

A vortex of shadows surrounds you, tearing at your statue, then shattering it. You hear a horrible rumbling as the Hungering Dark fills the center of the chamber.

In the distraction, your own shadow raises a weapon to strike at you.

Each PC starts in a vortex of darkness facing a *legendary shadow,* their own shadow empowered by Shar. While in the vortex of darkness, the PC only has line of sight and line of effect to their *legendary shadow* and the Hungering Dark, and the *legendary shadow* only has line of effect to

that PC. When the PC dispels the vortex of darkness, they gain line of effect to their allies and other *legendary shadows* who have also escaped the vortex.

PCs with companions (mount, familiar, spirit companion, druid or ranger animal, fey beast, etc) should decide whether the companion is an important part of their character. If it is, then the PC starts mounted or adjacent to the companion and can use them to full effect within the vortex, but their legendary shadow also has a shadowy version of the companion it can use to full effect. Otherwise, the companion is left outside of the room and cannot join the combat.

Roll initiative. The *legendary shadows* act immediately before each PC. (Ever notice how your shadow knows what you are about to do right before you do it?)

If the PCs still have a god with them (they managed to get 2+ gods through the portal), they see the god fighting a shadow of itself. Throughout the combat, the god can be seen engaging in a titanic struggle with its shadow, both slipping out of reality to avoid exposing the PCs to danger.

Customize the deity interactions for your group. Some examples include:

Amaunator stares at his shadow, "This is not amusing."

Garl Glittergold giggles, "I always knew I'd be the death of me. One way or another."

Asmodeus shakes his head, "Oh, I rather think not." *He then disappears in a puff of brimstone, followed a moment later by his shadow.*

UNIQUE BENEFITS

Perfect Memory
Each PC may choose to lock away the memory of one encounter power. The PC and their legendary shadow both cannot use that encounter power during this encounter. Each PC also gains a +10 bonus to their skill checks to harm the *legendary shadows.*

Wings of Light
The wearer of this artifact is immune to the vortex of darkness, so has no limited line of effect to anyone in the encounter. The wearer also acts before their *legendary shadow,* rather than afterwards.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Vortex of Darkness: The vortex of darkness generated by Shar through the legendary shadows prevents the PCs from aiding each other. Each PC faces a near-duplicate of themselves. The vortex shatters when either the PC is reduced to 0 hit points or the legendary shadow becomes bloodied.

The PCs immediately notice that the legendary shadows are imperfect copies, representing their most harmful qualities. The PCs can accuse the shadows of their darkest sides and/or channel their own brightest memories at the shadows to confuse and distract the shadows, until they disperse harmlessly.

As a minor action once per round, and again as a free action once at the end of the PC's turn, the PC can share their feelings, knowledge, and memories with the legendary shadow to weaken the PC's shadow. A PC can make an Arcana, Dungeoneering, History, Nature, Religion, or Streetwise check and deal the result in damage to the PC's legendary shadow. Streetwise is most effective, as it deals with more emotional memories and less with dry knowledge - the PC can roll an additional d20 and add its result when making a Streetwise check.

If a PC has already defeated its legendary shadow, then the PC can use a standard action to make a check to harm any other PC's legendary shadow (even one still in a vortex of shadow). This may be required to free an ally who has little means of fighting.

Empower Shadows: At the start of combat, each *legendary shadow* gains 100 temporary hit points. At the end of each round, Shar heals each *legendary shadow* for 30. If this healing unbloodies a shadow, Shar casts that shadow and the corresponding PC back into a vortex of shadow.

Chamber: The chamber is 4 squares high and bordered by swirling shadow until the end of the encounter. The PCs cannot leave the chamber by any means (including removing from play), though movement within the chamber is not restricted.

TACTICS

The legendary shadows know how to best use all of the PC's abilities, especially how to cause the most injury. Have each PC play their corresponding shadow and advise you on tactics. The shadow can only attack the corresponding PC while in the vortex, but once the vortex is shattered, the legendary shadow can target any PC who is also no longer in the vortex.

The legendary shadows are impeded and pained by being inside the Hungering Dark, so avoid being inside it so long as it is possible to still fight the PCs.

The Hungering Dark has line of effect to the PCs whether they are in the vortex or not. It attacks all PCs, drawing them into itself where it can devour their surges then kill them. The PCs cannot harm the Hungering Dark while the legendary shadows exist.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the legendary shadows are defeated, if the PCs still have a god with them, the god appears and drives the Hungering Dark off, allowing the PCs to continue,

but then leaves again pursued by their shadow. Customize this interaction depending on what god is left:

Amaunator reappears and yells, "Shar must be punished. Let the shadows burn!"

A blinding flash fills the room, driving away the shadows and opening an exit. The Hungering Dark screams in pain, fleeing back to Shar.

If the PCs had no god with them, then Shar was unable to make a legendary shadow of a god, so the Hungering Dark would now be vulnerable to their attacks. Shar immediately recalls the Hungering Dark to make her last stand in her sanctum at the top of the Tower.

The PCs can take a short rest before continuing.

TROUBLESHOOTING

It may be easiest to ask each player how their PC would best defeat themselves, and then let them roll the dice to determine the outcome of their attacks. Some players cannot or will not provide good methods of defeating themselves, so may require some effort on your part to extricate effective attacks. If you notice that a PC suggests an ineffective tactic to you, then moves on to perform a very effective tactic (using at-will and encounter resources the shadow could have used), it may make sense to pause the game temporarily and verify why the PC switched tactics, and change the shadow's actions accordingly.

For most groups, it is preferable for the shadows to focus on offensive powers rather than defensive powers. Note that they cannot use powers to heal themselves or gain temporary hit points, nor may they use triggered actions like immediate or make opportunity attacks.

In some groups, the PCs may have a great deal of difficulty dealing enough damage to their shadows, even with the additional skill checks in damage. The loss of line of effect can particularly cause problems for parties that rely on synergies and their leader. It is expected and reasonable for PCs that are not self-sufficient should have some difficulties, but you may need to take steps in some parties.

In optimized groups, PCs may take so much damage or conditions that they do not get a chance to act. Remind the PCs that the blessings granted by the gods can be used to regain hp at any time, potentially bringing back a dying PC. If the PCs still have a god, raising a dead PC or preventing a TPK may make a good final act.

ROLEPLAYING

Defeating the *darkness inside you* or otherwise overcoming your weaknesses is a common trope in games and movies. Play up this aspect of the encounter and encourage your players to do the same. By vanquishing the evil or darkness within, many PCs take

the final step towards ascension and their epic destiny. Feel free to give appropriate bonuses if the PC names their shadow, or otherwise personifies it with the dark side of their personality, to gain an edge in defeating it.

After this encounter, the PC no longer casts a shadow.

MILESTONE

Encounters 5A and 5B count collectively toward a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter. If a third god accompanied the PCs, they gain the benefits as if that god sacrificed itself for them.

Each PC selects one of the following:

- **Regain a daily power (can't regain a particular daily power more than once, nor regain a power that has already been recovered through some other means)**
- **Resurrect a PC from dead (no death penalty) and/or heal to full hp**
- **Gain a blessing (see Player Handout 4)**

Legendary Shadow	Level 30

HP as the PC; **Bloodied** as the PC
Initiative special **Perception** as the PC
Defenses as the PC
Speed as the PC

TRAITS

Mirror Powers

The legendary shadow is an exact duplicate of the PC at the start of the combat, except that it cannot use daily or consumable abilities, does not have an artifact if the PC has one, cannot regain hit points or gain temporary hit points except through *empower shadows* or *shadow surge*, and cannot take any triggered actions except shadow surge or basic striker mechanics like sneak attack and curse damage.

When a legendary shadow uses encounter powers, it does not expend the PC's powers, or vice versa.

The legendary shadow and the PC cannot be hidden from each other.

Hungering Darkness

The legendary shadows can see through the Hungering Dark, but cannot exist fully within it. While a legendary shadow is in a square of the Hungering Dark, it is weakened and takes a -5 penalty to all defenses.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Shadow Surge • Encounter

Trigger: The legendary shadow becomes bloodied.

Effect (No Action): The legendary shadow gains 100 temporary hit points.

Note: Generally speaking, the legendary shadow is an exact duplicate of the PC. The PC likely needs to use their triggered actions, daily powers, action points, and teammates to gain an edge over the darkness within.

Hungering Dark	Level 30 Elite Hazard

Trigger

This hazard activates when combat begins and acts thrice per round. Each round, on initative count 40, it uses *paralyzing fear*. On initiative count 30, it uses *shadow tendrils*. On initiative count 20, it uses *devour soul*.

Consume Soul

An enemy that starts and/or ends it turn inside the Hungering Dark's space loses a healing surge. A creature with no healing surges remaining instead takes its bloodied value in damage.

Hungering Darkness

Enemies inside the Hungering Dark's space do not have line of sight beyond their square, but are otherwise unimpaired.

Ↄ **Paralyzing Fear** (fear, psychic) • **At-Will**

Attack: Close burst 20 (enemies in burst); +35 vs. Will

Hit: 4d12 + 12 (avg 38, crit 6d12 + 60) psychic damage, the target is slowed and cannot teleport (save ends both)

Ↄ **Shadow Tendrils** • **At-Will**

Attack: Close burst 20 (enemies in the burst); +35 vs. Reflex

Hit: 4d12 + 12 (avg 38, crit 6d12 + 60) cold and necrotic damage, the target is pulled up to 6 squares towards the center of the Hungering Dark.

Miss: Half damage and the creature is pulled up to 3 squares.

Ↄ **Devour Soul** • **At-Will**

Attack: Close special (enemies inside the Hungering Dark); +35 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 4d12 + 12 (avg 38, crit 6d12 + 60) necrotic damage.

Effect: If the target has 0 or fewer hp, it dies.

Countermeasures

The Hungering Dark is under Shar's protection and cannot be affected until all of the legendary shadows are destroyed.

Note: Use the 8x8 dark cloud tile to represent the Hungering Dark. It begins in the center of the map and does not move.

ENCOUNTER 5B: HUNGERING SHADOWS

E1 Death's Reach poster map. Add an 8 x 8 tile of darkness for the Hungering Dark.
Alternatively, most half-sized poster maps that depict a large room could work.

The upper half of the map is not used during the encounter (the PCs scaled up the mountain and made their way easily past the traps, went through the doors into the palace, then are attacked by their shadows and sealed in the room).
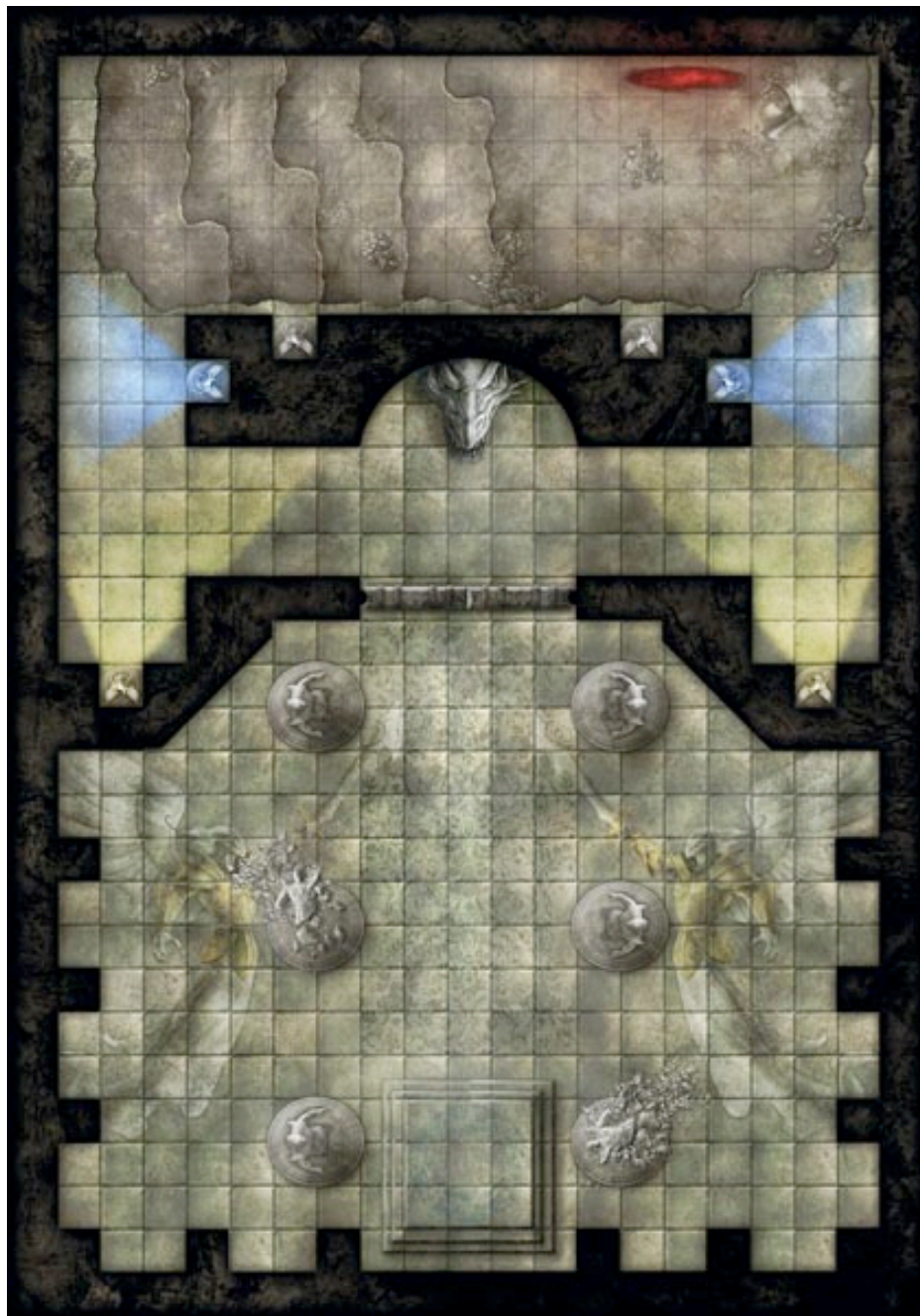
ENCOUNTER 6: EVERYTHING ENDS

SETUP

The PCs confront Shar at the top of the Towers of Night, except Shar avoids allowing the PCs to directly threaten her for as long as possible. This is a multi-phase fight in which the PCs:

1) Rescue Selûne from domination.
2) Free Mystra's soul from the Shadow Weave.
3) Destroy the Hungering Dark.
4) Defeat Shar.

Each phase is intended to be fairly quick, only 1-3 rounds each, but the PCs cannot take a short rest between the phases. There is some resource recovery given between each phase, and it is reasonable to allow boons to be changed between phases.

You have climbed to the top of the Towers of Night, past every monster and pitfall Shar has set before you. You feel, through your connection to Selûne, that she lies beyond. Shar and the Hungering Dark are almost assuredly there as well.

Your quest is about to come to an end.

Make it clear to the PCs that they are entering Shar's sanctum and beginning the final showdown with her before beginning this encounter.

It may be worth verifying how much of a challenge your table wants out of the conclusion of this campaign. Many tables want a real risk of failure, to make victory all the sweeter, while other tables would rather relax and enjoy the final moments of characters after several years of play. If your table is not interested in a challenge that has a real chance of failure at the end of their career, consider reducing the difficulty of encounters 6C and 6D in particular.

These encounters are balanced with the assumption that multiple PCs should die. Remind PCs that the blessings can often be used to prevent death by expending for healing. Any PCs unable to avoid death, using blessings, epic destinies, rare artifacts, or other options, have one option other than being simply destroyed by the Hungering Dark or Shar: a final sacrifice, made to save their allies.

Dead PCs who cannot return to the fight may choose to permanently sacrifice themselves so their souls can fight on. They can never be resurrected, by any means, but they can help their allies to survive the fight.

Each round on their turn they gain one of the following abilities (so 5 rounds after death they have 5 powers) which can then be used on any other turn:

- 1/round force an enemy to reroll an attack roll, and take the lower result.
- 1/round force an ally to reroll an attack roll, and take the greater result.
- 1/round an ally deals an extra 50 damage.
- 1/round an ally regains 50 hp.
- 1/round an ally can make a saving throw.

This information is repeated in Player Handout 6.

Each encounter uses set initiatives for all enemies. It does this so that you can establish initiative for the first encounter, then maintain initiative throughout the entire finale as new creatures replace old ones in initiative.

At the end of each phase, set the "end of the round" to immediately after the currently active PC, then proceed with the next PC or creature in initiative for the following phase.

Example: A PC acting on initiative 36 finishes Encounter 6A in the second round. 6B starts on initiative 35 (with the Hungering Maw).

The following table summarizes the initiative by encounter:

	6A	6B	6C	6D
55	Selûne	Maw Instinctive	Heart	Shar
45	Oozing Shadows	Shadow Eaters	Vile Phages	Shar
35	Dread Shadows	Hungering Maw	Heart	Shar, Servants
After PCs			Shar	
End of Round	Duplicate, Selûne	Selûne	Selûne	Selûne

Note: Shar's initiative in 6D varies by number of PCs

Ending the Encounter

When the PCs are ready to enter Shar's sanctum, proceed to Encounter 6A.

Roleplaying

Throughout each of the four phases, there are some NPCs that you can use for roleplaying:

Shar has suffered continual setbacks at the hands of the PCs, but remains close to success at a plan that has taken her more than a century to arrange. She is angry, but realizes that she cannot underestimate the PCs. She treats them as challenging foes that she has to outwit and force to make mistakes.

While Selûne was controlled by Shar, she was saving her strength to fight back when it mattered most. She also was taking a page from her sister's book and used the time to learn more about Shar's plans. Once combat begins, she begins to fight back, occasionally getting a word in, until the PCs free her. Once they do, she adopts serene confidence as she tells them what they need to know to ultimately win.

The Hourglass of Creation has largely taken a backseat while observing the events of the past epic adventures. Secretly, Ao the Overgod has used the hourglass to gather information. He uses it as an unbiased proxy to ask frank questions about the intentions of the PCs, question their definitions of good and evil, and find out what would make a good solution for the mess that has been made of Toril. He does not reveal he is Ao until the Conclusion, though the PCs may suspect something strange is going on with it based on what it says.

You may also use the Hungering Dark as a source of background noise, especially during Encounter 6C. It largely rumbles in hunger, gnashing its many maws and teeth in anger at not having a meal, or delight in bloodying or crunching down on a PC.

If any of the PCs possess Shadowbane, the sword adds its own joy at destroying shadow creatures. In particular, during 6C and 6D it is forceful that the PC needs to destroy the Hungering Dark and Shar right now!
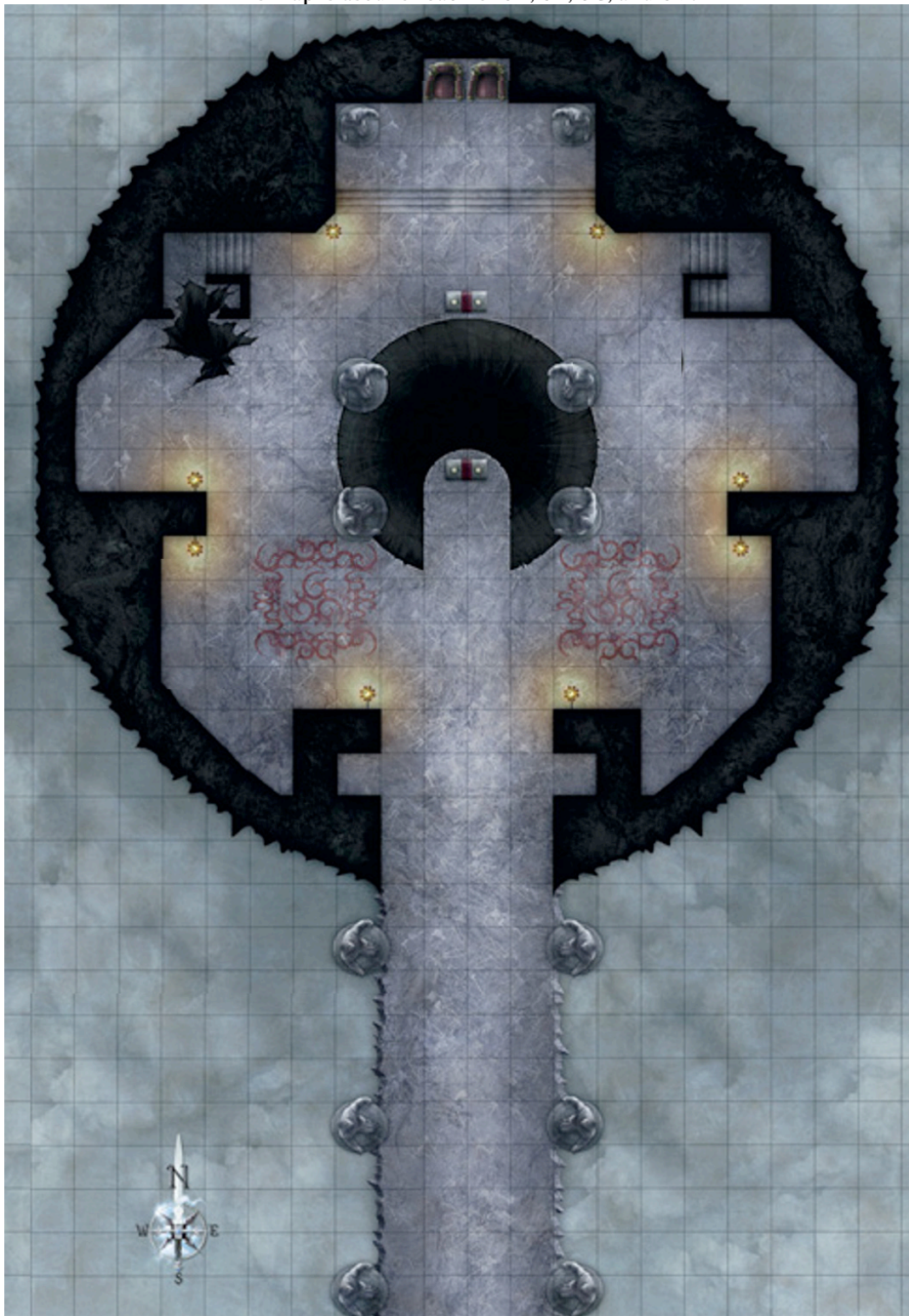
Milestone

Each phase 6A, 6B, 6C, and 6D count towards milestones.

ENCOUNTER 6: EVERYTHING ENDS

Haunted Temples poster map
This map is used for each of 6A, 6B, 6C, and 6D.

ENCOUNTER 6A: UNENDING DREAD

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:
10 oozing shadows (O)
3 dread shadows (D)
Selûne (ensorcelled by Shar) (S)

Half of the oozing shadows do not start on the map, emerging from the maw of the Hungering Dark on their initiative in the first round and acting immediately.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove a dread shadow and 2 oozing shadows.

Six PCs: Add a dread shadow and 2 oozing shadows.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: +2 attack. Reduce the dread shadow hp by 40.

Easier: -5 damage. Duplicate dread shadows spawn with half as many hp and cannot *dread shriek*.

Harder: +2 attack and +5 initiative. Dread shadows use *dread shriek* when first bloodied and again when reduced to 0 hp.

Glory: +2 defense and +5 initiative. Add two dread shadows. Duplicated dread shadows retain the spawn shadows ability.

SETUP

Selûne waits for you at the highest point in Shar's palace. Shadows swarm all around her, caressing the possessed goddess.

Selûne speaks, Shar clearly in control, "Your insanity gives you the courage to think you can face me here. I will teach you to know true dread. You may have defeated the darkness within, but darkness is everywhere and unending."

A shadow forms before her, drawing a blade of darkness. An instant later, it splits in two, forming identical shadows. It charges forward, turning invisible, even as it looks as if it will continue to duplicate.

The dread shadows begin the combat invisible and hidden (Perception DC 39). <u>They are invisible until the end of the first round.</u>

<u>At the start of the combat, the PCs are hammered with intense dread:</u> the PCs are all -5 to attack and all

defenses (save ends). Aftereffect: -2 attack and defenses (save ends). This is a fear effect.

6A – 6D use set initiatives, to greatly assist in managing the combat rounds.

Initiative	Name
55	Selûne (Possessed)
45	Oozing shadows
35	Dread shadows
End of Round	Duplication, Selûne

<u>Any PCs with the EPIC5-1 story award EPIC29 Shar Revealed gain a +5 initiative bonus, for their entire confrontation with Shar.</u>

Do not reroll initiative in 6B, 6C, or 6D. Use the order already established. When you end each encounter 6A – 6C, set the new end of round to after the current initiative and continue in initiative order. For all encounter based durations and effects, the PCs can consider 6A – 6D as one encounter or as separate encounters, whatever works better for them for each individual element. A PC could, for example, spend an action point in each encounter, while keeping up a power that lasts until the end of the encounter through all four.

The PCs do not get a chance to take a short rest, but gain some limited ability to recharge encounter powers and spend a surge after each encounter.

SKILL CHALLENGE: RESCUE SELÛNE

Goal: Stop Shar's possession of Selûne.
Complexity: 4 (10 successes required, 8 for 4 PCs, 12 for 6 PCs)
Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate, Religion
Victory: Selûne assists the PCs for the remaining encounters.
Failure: The PCs can only fail by killing Selûne. If they kill her, they make future combats much more difficult so may ultimately doom themselves.
The PCs must either rescue Selûne from domination, or kill her.

Once per round, each PC can make a Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate, or Religion check to help Selûne to fight off the possession. This check is a free action **within 5 squares** of Selûne, or a minor action from further away.

DC 32 (1 success)
DC 42 (2 successes)

Once the PCs reach 10 successes (8 for 4 PCs, 12 for 6 PCs), she is freed. She immediately weaves a shield of light around herself to protect her from all attacks:

"You did it!" Selûne cries out, her hands weaving a protective shield of light around herself.

"I knew you'd save me," she says, smiling.

She no longer acts on initiative 55, instead granting the PCs saves at the start of their turns and damaging enemies at the end of the round.

UNIQUE BENEFITS

Instant Death Technique

PC attacks bypass the insubstantial defense of any duplicates made of the original dread shadows.

Arrow of Fate

The wielder of this artifact knows the location of each dread shadow at all times. When the wielder hits one of the dread shadows, that dread shadow loses invisibility and insubstantial (duplicates it makes also lack those benefits).

Shadowbane

Any PC starting its turn within 2 squares of one or more wielders of Shadowbane may make a single saving throw against any fear effect that a save can end.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Maw of the Hungering Dark: The dark circle at the center of the tower is a swirling pool of the Hungering Dark that seems to descend into oblivion. Any PC that ends its turn in the area takes 50 damage from grasping tentacles and snapping jaws.

Selûne: Once Selûne is freed, she assists PCs: PCs can make a saving throw against a single save ends effect at the start of their turns. At the end of the round, she also deals 50 damage to all non-minion enemies. Selûne is immune to the dread shadows and oozing shadows so long as the PCs live.

TACTICS

The oozing shadows attempt to mob all PCs, in order to slow their approach to Selûne.

The dread shadows ensure combat advantage for all their attacks. They initially spread their attacks, if the PCs are at all separated, to minimize the amount of burst damage the shadows take. If they cannot spread out while attacking, they instead focus all attacks on one PC and position the entire party within 3 squares.

Selûne begins with *horde of puckish sprites* then either uses *meteorites* to keep PCs away or *moonstruck* to blind ranged PCs or PCs grouped up near the dread shadows. If any PCs have made a check to free Selûne, she attempts to keep all PCs as far away as possible by moving and using forced movement on the PCs.

ROLEPLAYING

Shar delights in speaking as Selûne, taunting the PCs to attack her. She seems surprised once she realizes that Selûne can actually fight free with the PCs' help.

Once Selûne is free, she thanks the PCs for their help, but warns that the battle is far from over.

The Hourglass of Creation likely stays silent at this point, observing.

Shadowbane is eager to join this fight, its cries for battle urging the PCs to overcome Shar's fear and strike down all of the shadows.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs free Seûne and defeat the original shadows, proceed to Encounter 7B. Alternatively, if the PCs have freed Selûne and it is the end of the 3rd round of combat, Selûne destroys the remaining enemies. Proceed to Encounter 7B.

Each PC may recharge an encounter power and may spend a healing surge. An encounter power recharged in this fashion may not be recharged in any other way until the end of the adventure.

Instead of recharging an encounter power, a psionic PC can choose one augmentable at-will that they can augment once without paying power points. That at-will cannot be chosen again at the end of another encounter.

TROUBLESHOOTING

It is possible that one or more PCs might try to ruin the fun of the rest of the table by killing Selûne: take any steps necessary to preserve the fun of your table.

If the PCs as a group intentionally kill her, they deserve the increased difficulty in the remaining encounters, especially against Shar in Encounter 6D.

MILESTONE

Each of 6A, 6B, 6C, and 6D counts toward a milestone. An action point can be used each encounter.

TREASURE

None.

ENCOUNTER 6A: UNENDING DREAD

Oozing Shadow (O) — Level 31 Minion Skirmisher
Medium shadow beast

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	**Initiative** +27
AC 45, **Fortitude** 44, **Reflex** 42, **Will** 43	**Perception** +23

Resist 20 necrotic, 20 radiant
Speed 8, fly 8 (hover)

TRAITS
O Unending Hunger • Aura 2
Enemies that end their turn in the aura take 20 damage.

STANDARD ACTIONS
m Tendrils (necrotic) • **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +36 vs. AC
Hit: 20 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

TRIGGERED ACTIONS
Maddening Shriek (psychic, fear) • **Encounter**
Trigger: An enemy reduces the shadow to 0 hit points.
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in blast); +34 vs. Will
Hit: 20 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Str 18 (+19)	**Dex** 23 (+21)	**Wis** 27 (+23)
Con 23 (+21)	**Int** 15 (+17)	**Cha** 23 (+21)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Supernal

Note: Abyssal madness ghoul (*E3 Prince of Undeath*). The oozing shadows resemble blobs of darkness with little defined form.

Dread Shadow (D) — Level 31 Lurker
Large shadow humanoid (undead)

HP 180; **Bloodied** 90	**Initiative** +28
AC 45, **Fortitude** 41, **Reflex** 45, **Will** 43	**Perception** +21

Speed 10, fly 10 (hover); phasing
Immune disease, fear, poison; **Resist** 30 necrotic

TRAITS
Insubstantial
The dread shadow takes half damage from any source, except those that deal force damage.

Combat Advantage
The dread shadow deals an extra 20 damage whenever it has combat advantage.

STANDARD ACTIONS
m Dread Blade (necrotic) • **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +34 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 56) necrotic damage and the target is blinded (save ends).

TRIGGERED ACTIONS
C Dread Shriek (fear, psychic) • **Encounter**
Trigger: This creature is first bloodied.
Effect: This creature teleports up to 10 squares to a square adjacent to an enemy.
Attack (No Action): Close burst 3 (enemies in burst); +34 vs. Will
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 56) psychic damage and the target is dazed (save ends).
Miss: Half damage and the target is dazed until the start of its next turn.

Spawn Shadow • At-Will
Trigger: At the end of every round.
Effect (No Action): A duplicate is created of this creature, including its current hp, conditions, and other effects. The duplicate loses the Spawn Shadow power.

Skills Stealth +29

Str 24 (+22)	**Dex** 28 (+24)	**Wis** 12 (+16)
Con 20 (+20)	**Int** 14 (+17)	**Cha** 28 (+24)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Supernal

Note: Dread wraith assassin (*E3 Prince of Undeath*). The dread shadows resemble large wraiths with blades of darkness.

Selûne-Shar (S) — Level 31 Artillery
Medium immortal humanoid (god)

HP 500; **Bloodied** 250	**Initiative** Special
AC 46, **Fortitude** 42, **Reflex** 45, **Will** 44	**Perception** +25
Speed 8. fly 6 (hover), teleport 6	darkvision, blindsight 2

Resist 20 necrotic, 20 psychic, 20 radiant
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

TRAITS
Possessed Deity
Selûne scores critical hits on a natural roll of 17-20. When Selûne ends her turn, she removes one harmful effect or condition. Selûne acts twice each round, on initiative 55 and again at the end of the round, taking a full complement of actions.

STANDARD ACTIONS
m/r Radiant Strike (radiant) • **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 or Ranged 20 (one creature); +34 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) radiant damage.

C Meteorites (fire, radiant) • **At-Will 1/round**
Attack: Close burst 10 (all enemies in burst); +34 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d8 + 20 (avg 34, crit 6d12 + 44) fire and radiant damage, and the target is pushed up to 3 squares.

A Moonstruck (psychic) • **At-Will 1/round**
Attack: Area burst 2 in 20 (enemies in burst); +34 vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + 20 (avg 34, crit 6d12 + 44) psychic damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

A Horde of Puckish Sprites (psychic) • **Encounter**
Attack: Area burst 3 in 10 (enemies in range); +34 vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + 20 (avg 34, crit 6d12 + 44) psychic damage.
Effect: Enemies in the burst slide up to 5 squares and must use an at-will attack against a target of Shar's choice. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Str 18 (+19)	**Dex** 23 (+21)	**Wis** 27 (+23)
Con 23 (+21)	**Int** 15 (+17)	**Cha** 23 (+21)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Supernal

Note: Selûne is a white-haired but still youthful woman.

ENCOUNTER 6A: UNENDING DREAD

Haunted Temples poster map
S = Selûne-Shar; D = Dread Shadow; O = Oozing Shadow.
5 Oozing Shadows emerge from the central pit on their first turn.
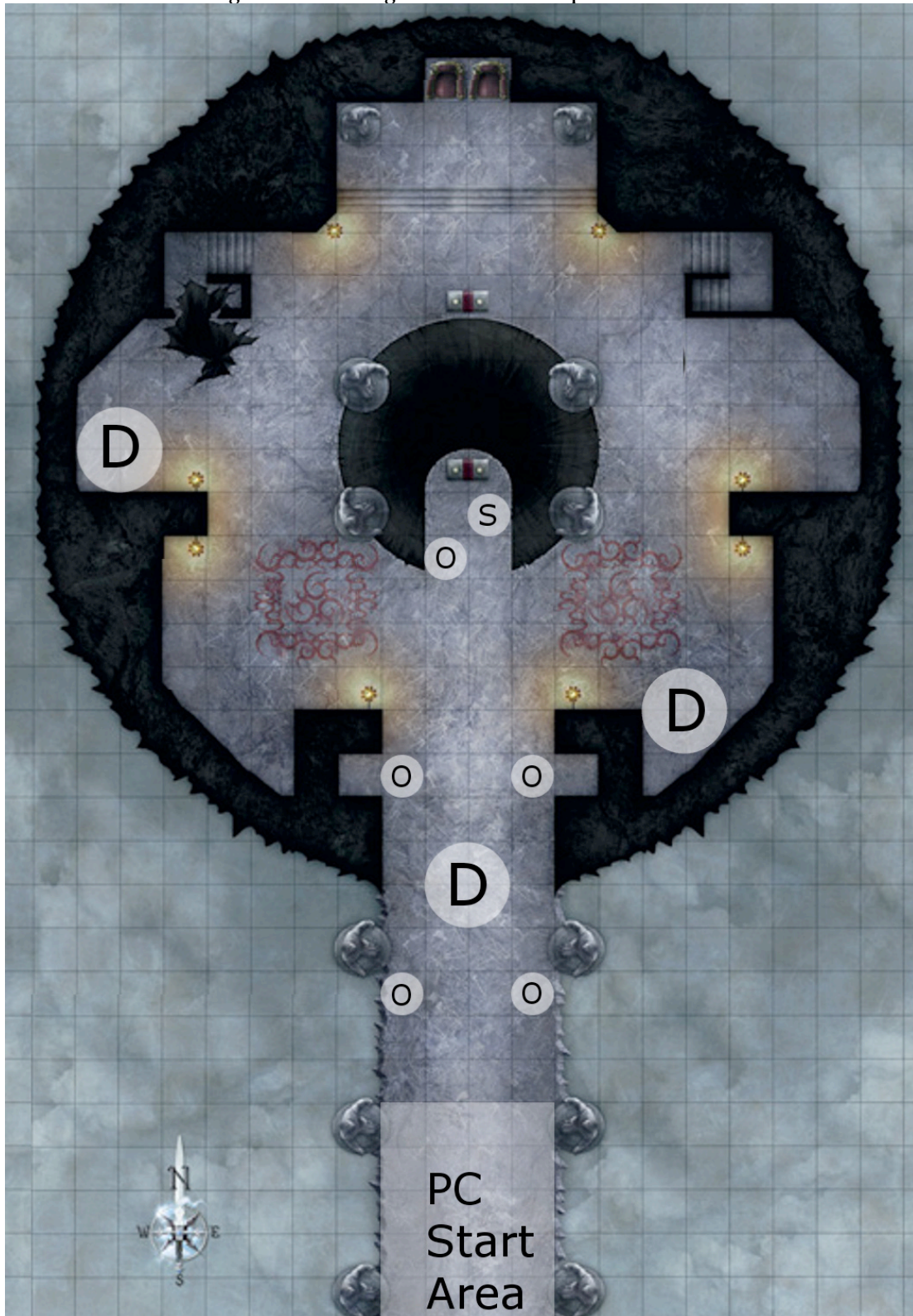
ENCOUNTER 6B: SOUL OF THE WEAVE

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:
1 hungering maw (M)
3 shadow eaters (E)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove a shadow eater and decrease the hungering maw's hp by 150. Remove the hungering maw's action point.

Six PCs: Add a shadow eater and increase the hungering maw's hp by 150. Add an action point to each shadow eater.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: Reduce non-minion hp by 50 and increase damage rolls by 5.

Easier: -5 damage. Reduce all monster hp by 100.

Harder: +2 attack and +5 initiative. Add a shadow eater.

Glory: +2 defense and +5 initiative. Add a second hungering maw. Both rise from the pit like a massive two-headed beast. Both maws must be defeated to end the encounter.

SETUP

Selûne says, "While Shar used me as a puppet, I did not entirely waste my time. I found a way to read her thoughts and memories, and I learned much."

Moonbeams scatter from her hands, slashing through the shadows at the far end of the throne room revealing an enormous loom stretching away out of reality. Threads of shadow writhe amongst threads of glimmering starlight. The shadows seem to be eating the starlight, energizing the new Shadow Weave.

"Mystra's soul is being destroyed as part of recreating the Shadow Weave. We need to save her."

The Hungering Dark roars in hunger and a massive maw forms in the center of the room. Tentacles extend out to independently grab at you.

Shar whispers, "You will all be torn from reality and destroyed first."

Starting Positions: PCs do not move from their positions at the end of Encounter 6A. Selûne moves to an edge of the room to get out of the way.

If any PCs are currently in the dark circle at the center of the map (the Hungering Dark area), the hungering maw forms around them automatically swallowing them (as if it had hit with its *swallow* attack).

The shadow eaters start the combat anywhere within 5 squares of the hungering maw, preferring to block the movement of PCs towards Mystra's soul.

Shar lurks in the shadows of the room, effectively removing herself from play. Notify PCs that she appears to remove from play any PC who harms her servants too much.

Whenever a PC deals 100 or more damage in a turn (totaled over however many targets), that PC is removed from play until the start of its next turn and can take no further actions on the current turn.

Initiative	Name
55	Hungering Maw Instinctive
45	Shadow Eaters
35	Hungering Maw
End of Round	Selûne

SKILL CHALLENGE: SAVE MYSTRA'S SOUL

Goal: Unravel Mystra's soul from the Shadow Weave.
Complexity: 4 (10 successes required, 8 for 4 PCs, 12 for 6 PCs)
Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Thievery
Victory: Mystra's soul escapes. Mystra's fate, as well as the fate of the Weave and Shadow Weave, is determined in ADCP6-1 The End and The Beginning.

To work on unraveling Mystra from the Shadow Weave, PCs must be within the upper 3 squares of the chamber.

The PCs can use Arcana / Athletics / Thievery to pull the strands of Mystra's soul from the loom.

Standard Action DC 24 (1 success) / 42 (2 successes)
Minor Action DC 32 (1 success)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Selûne: If she's conscious, PCs can make a saving throw against a single save ends effect at the start of their turn. At the end of the round, she also deals 50 damage to all enemies. As long as the PCs live, Selûne is immune to the hungering maw and shadow eaters.

Shar: Shar has removed herself from play, stalking the shadows between realms. She can be seen but never touched while in this state. At the end of each round, she automatically deals 40 damage to every enemy who is removed from play (however it happened). Those enemies also gain vulnerable 10 all until the end of the adventure.

Hungering Maw: The dark circle in the center of the room represents the hungering maw. It cannot be moved or removed from play. Any PC that ends its turn in those squares is automatically swallowed by the hungering maw (as if hit by its *swallow* attack).

Loom: The northern alcove of the room, starting at the stairs and covering up to the throne is covered in a complex weave of darkness and Mystra's soul. The bulk of the Shadow Weave extends off through the planes towards Faerûn where the Netherese are busy working on it.

TACTICS

The monsters attempt to drag the PCs away from Mystra then swallow them to remove them from play. If given a choice, the shadow eaters focus their attacks on bloodied PCs.

The hungering maw avoids attacking defenders, as they do not tend to be very digestible. It prefers to use *crushing bite* to weaken strikers. It drags ranged PCs or anyone working on freeing Mystra adjacent to it, and attempts to *swallow* leaders.

ROLEPLAYING

Shar stalks the shadows between reality. She is murderously and viciously angry with the PCs, and makes it clear.

Selûne warns that Shar cannot be allowed to use Mystra in recreating the Shadow Weave. If she did so, she could remake all of magic, and perhaps even all of reality, in any image she chose. And the image Shar chose would be very dark indeed.

The Hourglass wants the PCs to explain why either destruction or Shar's version of reality might not be better option than continuing. The current version of reality has seen several cataclysms (about every time Mystra died) and is far from perfect. It is not confrontational about it, but more curious, wanting the PCs to justify their actions.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs free Mystra and defeat the hungering maw, proceed to Encounter 7C. Any PCs that are removed from play return at that time, freed either along with Mystra or with the destruction of the hungering maw.

Each PC may recharge an encounter power and may spend a healing surge. An encounter power recharged in this fashion may not be recharged in any other way until the end of the adventure.

Instead of recharging an encounter power, a psionic PC can choose one augmentable at-will that they can augment once without paying power points. That at-will cannot be chosen again at the end of another encounter.

TROUBLESHOOTING

PCs may feel that being removed from play is actually an advantage. Clarify that they see Shar stalking them there, and that the other monsters do not seem impeded by them being removed from play.

The Hourglass's debate could become prolonged with certain PCs. Keep a careful eye on time to make sure you have enough time for the remaining encounters.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

None.

ENCOUNTER 6B: SOUL OF THE WEAVE

3 Shadow Eater (E)	Level 30 Brute
Large shadow magical beast	XP 7,000
HP 332; **Bloodied** 166	**Initiative** 45
AC 42, **Fortitude** 41, **Reflex** 44, **Will** 42	**Perception** +19
Speed 6, fly 6	Darkvision

TRAITS

Eater of Reality
  This creature's attacks can target anyone removed from play.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m **Bite • At-Will**
  Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +35 vs. AC
  Hit: 5d12 + 16 (avg 49, crit 76) damage.

r **Grasping Tendril • At-Will**
  Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +33 vs. Reflex
  Hit: 4d12 + 14 (avg 40, crit 62) damage, and the target is pulled 9 squares to a space adjacent and grabbed (escape DC 32 ends).

M **Gobble • At-Will**
  Requirement: The shadow eater must be bloodied.
  Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +35 vs. AC
  Hit: 5d12 + 24 (avg 57, crit 84) damage and the target is grabbed (escape DC 32 ends). If the target is bloodied, the shadow eater recharges *swallow* and uses it against the target.

M **Swallow • Recharge 5-6**
  Attack: Melee 2 (one bloodied creature grabbed by the eater); +33 vs. Fortitude
  Hit: The target is removed from play (save ends). The target can take actions as normal, but there is no line of sight or line of effect except to itself and to this creature. The effect also ends when this creature drops to 0 hp. When the effect ends, the target appears in an unoccupied space of its choice adjacent to the shadow eater.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Drawn into Shadow (teleportation) **• Encounter**
  Trigger: The shadow eater is first bloodied by an enemy.
  Effect (No Action): The triggering enemy is removed from play (save ends). The enemy reappears adjacent to the shadow eater when it saves.

Str 27 (+23)	**Dex** 20 (+20)	**Wis** 13 (+16)
Con 21 (+20)	**Int** 13 (+16)	**Cha** 17 (+18)

Alignment chaotic evil   **Languages** -

Note: Banderhobb Abductor (*MM3*) upgraded to epic tier. Each Shadow Eater resembles a large tentacle with a giant toothy mouth. The hungering maw is represented by the circle of darkness on the map. It is an enormous worm that can lash out a hundred feet to snare its prey.

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1 Hungering Maw (M)	Level 30 Elite Brute
Gargantuan shadow magical beast	XP 14,000
HP 700; **Bloodied** 350	**Initiative** 35
AC 44, **Fortitude** 44, **Reflex** 40, **Will** 42	**Perception** +22
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	blindsight 25

Resist 20 cold, necrotic, psychic, radiant

TRAITS

Eater of Reality
  This creature's attacks can target anyone removed from play.

Instinctive Action
  On an initiative of 20 + its initiative check, the maw may take a standard action.

Giant Hazard
  The maw cannot move, be moved, or be removed from play. Whenever this creature would get a standard action (even if it cannot take it), it can sacrifice that standard action in order to remove one harmful condition or effect.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m **Slam • At-Will**
  Attack: Melee 20 (one creature); +35 vs. AC
  Hit: 5d12 + 16 (avg 49, crit 76) damage, and the target is pulled adjacent.

M **Crushing Bite • At-Will**
  Attack: Melee 4 (one creature); +33 vs. Fortitude
  Hit: 4d12 + 14 (avg 40, crit 62) damage, and the target is dazed and weakened (save ends).
  Aftereffect: The target is weakened (save ends).

M **Mauling Fury • At-Will**
  Effect: This creature makes two *slam* attacks then makes a *crushing bite* attack.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Bloodied Frenzy • Encounter
  Trigger: This creature is bloodied for the first time.
  Effect (Free Action): This creature uses *mauling fury*.

Swallow • At-Will 1/turn
  Trigger: The maw hits a target with a *crushing bite* attack.
  Attack (Free Action): Melee 4 (triggering target); +33 vs. Fortitude
  Hit: The target is removed from play (save ends). The target can take actions as normal, but there is no line of sight or line of effect except to itself and to this creature. The effect also ends when this creature drops to 0 hp. When the effect ends, the target appears in an unoccupied space of its choice adjacent to the maw.

Str 47 (+33)	**Dex** 22 (+21)	**Wis** 25 (+22)
Con 38 (+29)	**Int** 20 (+20)	**Cha** 23 (+21)

Alignment chaotic evil   **Languages** telepathy 20

ENCOUNTER 6C: DARK HEART

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:
1 heart of darkness (H)
3 vile phages (P)
projections of Shar (S)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove a vile phage. Reduce the heart of darkness's hp by 200. The heart loses its action points.

Six PCs: Add a vile phage. Increase the heart of darkness's hp by 200. The heart gains an additional 2 action points and may spend 1 each turn, rather than once per round.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: Reduce non-minion hp by 100 and increase attack rolls by 2.

Easier: -5 damage. PCs do not fail death saves from the Hungering Dark and are dazed by *vile horrors* instead of helpless.

Harder: +2 attack and +5 initiative. Add a vile phage.

Glory: +2 defense and +5 initiative. Shar's projection reappears whenever the heart of darkness takes damage.

SETUP

Selûne says, "Good work. Now, Shar is protecting the Hungering Dark from destruction. I'll force her to –"

Shar interrupts her sister, appearing next to Selûne with her hand around Selûne's throat. "Kill you," is all Shar says, leaping with her sister into the Hungering Dark.

Shar and the Hungering Dark can slay Selûne in moments, unless someone rescues her. Immediately.

The PCs need to follow the goddesses through the maw of the Hungering Dark that they destroyed and into its belly, or they lose their quest. Make it clear that hesitation or preparation spells their doom.

The crumpled and unconscious form of Selûne lies at the center of the Hungering Dark.

Slithering blobs of darkness close in from all sides, attempting to destroy you. The entire world rumbles in hunger and anger.

Shar appears, though she seems strangely ephemeral. "Time to end this."

Starting Positions: All PCs appear within the dark circle center of the map, near to the bloodied and unconscious form of Selûne. Arrange the heart of darkness and vile phages around the PCs in a rough circle 2 – 5 squares from the PCs. Place Shar anywhere within 5 squares of a PC.

The tower is sealed (there is no walkway leaving it), the circle instead representing the gullet of the Hungering Dark.

Initiative	Name
55	Heart of Darkness
45	Heart of Darkness
35	Vile Phages
End of Round	Selûne, Hungering Dark
After Each PC	Projections of Shar

Whenever a projection of Shar is present, the heart of darkness is immune to damage. Make it clear to the PCs that she is protecting it, so they need to take steps to keep disrupting the projections and/or coordinating attacks in order to destroy the Hungering Dark.

Selûne can assist the PCs further, but only if the PCs can keep her alive. She has 3 healing surges, with a healing surge value of 100. Adjacent Heal checks made as a standard action heal her for the check result, or a minor action heals half the check result. She starts at an effective 0 hp, and dies if she goes to -200 hp. Only the heart can harm her, and it only does so with its close attacks. Assume that it misses her normally on a 1-5, modified by any attack penalties or marks inflicted on it.

The heart of darkness can inflict the sometimes misunderstood helpless condition which does not inhibit the ability to take actions in any way.

Helpless: While a creature is helpless, it grants combat advantage and can be the target of coup de grace.

Coup de Grace: A coup de grace must be a standard action attack against an adjacent helpless enemy. If the attack hits, it automatically scores a critical hit against the target. If the critical hit deals damage greater than or equal to the target's bloodied value, the target dies.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Hungering Dark: At the start of the combat, and again at the end of each round, all PCs (even those currently removed from play) take a cumulative -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the adventure, take 50 damage, and fail a death saving throw. At three failed death saving throws, a PC usually dies.

Selûne: If she's conscious, PCs can make a saving throw against a single save ends effect at the start of their turn. At the end of the round, she heals one PC for 40 hp and inflicts several penalties on all enemies in

Encounters 6C and 6D. <u>These penalties are cumulative and cannot be removed</u>.

- Vulnerable 20 all (vulnerable 40 after 2 rounds, 60 after 3, etc)
- -2 to all defenses
- Attacks against the enemies score critical hits on a number 1 lower than usual.

TACTICS

The heart of darkness attempts to keep Selûne in its void blast, as well as any creature that marks it.

Shar prefers to weaken strikers, remove leaders and defenders from play, and to kill controllers. She attempts to make the PCs vulnerable to all damage initially.

The vile phages focus on any groups of PCs, using *furious smash* as often as possible.

ROLEPLAYING

Shar enjoys taking a more direct role in the combat, denying the PCs the ability to truly strike at her or the Hungering Dark. As long as it seems like the PCs are not doing well, she is dignified and begins to discuss ways that her world will be an improvement over the current one.

Selûne is afraid for her life and for the lives of the PCs. When awake, she exhorts the PCs to strike down her sister and coordinate their attacks against the Hungering Dark, as it's the only way they stand a chance of destroying it.

The Hourglass is interested in Shar's plans, and asks the PCs how they'd change things instead. PCs might advocate the destruction of all evil creatures or any number of sweeping changes. In a non-confrontational way, the Hourglass points out any logical flaws, wondering why they feel they know better how to arrange creation than existing gods.

The Hungering Dark is delighted to finally have the PCs and Selûne within it for it to devour. It never believes it can be destroyed, though it may register some confusion at feeling any pain from the attacks on its heart. As each PC and Selûne take damage, are bloodied, or reduced to 0 or fewer hp, it describes in details the flavor of their body and souls, the crunch of their bones, tang of their blood, sweetness of their foolishness, gaminess of their insanity, etc.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs destroy the heart of darkness, all of the vile phages disappear and the shadowy environment bursts. The Hungering Dark is destroyed, forever.

The PCs reappear in Shar's throne room within the circle of darkness. Proceed to Encounter 6D.

Each PC may recharge an encounter power and may spend a healing surge. An encounter power recharged in this fashion may not be recharged in any other way until the end of the adventure.

Instead of recharging an encounter power, a psionic PC can choose one augmentable at-will that they can augment once without paying power points. That at-will cannot be chosen again at the end of another encounter.

TROUBLESHOOTING

It is possible initiative results in the Heart of Darkness acting twice before a PC can act to help Selûne, at which point luck might result in no misses and one or more critical hits dropping Selûne before the PCs can assist her.

If no PCs can protect or heal Selûne before the heart's two turns, assume it automatically hits (but does not miss or crit) her for average damage (should leave her at -160) during the first round.

This encounter can be brutal. <u>PCs who would die should be reminded that blessings can be used to help prevent death</u> (by removing helpless, healing the PC, turning a failed save into a successful save, or turning a critical hit into a normal hit).

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

None.

Encounter 6C: Dark Heart

3 Vile Phages (E) — Level 30 Brute
Large shadow magical beast

HP 341; **Bloodied** 170	**Initiative** 45
AC 42, **Fortitude** 44, **Reflex** 40, **Will** 42	**Perception** +19
Speed 6, fly 6	Darkvision

TRAITS

Wave of Retribution
Whenever the heart of darkness takes damage, any enemy within 2 squares takes
20 damage.

Void Reality
This creature bypasses resistances, immunities, and insubstantial.

STANDARD ACTIONS

 m **Slam • At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +35 vs. AC
Hit: 4d10 + 20 (avg 42, crit 60) damage.

C **Furious Smash • Recharge 6**
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in burst); +35 vs. AC
Hit: 4d12 + 24 (avg 50, crit 72) damage.
Miss: Half damage.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Unfettered Apocalypse • Encounter
Trigger: This creature is first bloodied.
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in burst); +33 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 4d10 + 20 (avg 42, crit 60) damage, and the target is knocked prone.
Miss: Half damage.

Str 17 (+15)	**Dex** 20 (+14)	**Wis** 13 (+13)
Con 21 (+17)	**Int** 13 (+13)	**Cha** 17 (+15)

Alignment chaotic evil   **Languages** Common

Note: Light of Amoth (MM3) simplified. The vile phages are part of the Hungering Dark's immune system, massive cells covered in short tentacles and mouths.

Projections of Shar (S) — Level 33 Hazard
Medium immortal humanoid (god)

HP Special	**Initiative** Special
AC 49, **Fortitude** 45, **Reflex** 47, **Will** 49	**Perception** +25
Resist 30 cold, 30 necrotic, 30 radiant	

TRAITS

Shadow Projection
A new projection is created within 5 squares of a PC at the start of that PC's turn. A projection is destroyed if it takes any damage or when a new projection is created. If the projection is able to act (has not been destroyed or affected by action preventing conditions) by the
end of that PC's turn, the projection makes a standard action attack against that PC.

Shield of Shadow
As long as a projection of Shar is active, the Hungering Dark cannot be
damaged. Any damage against it is reduced to 0.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m/r **Imminent Doom • At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 or Ranged 20 (one creature); +40 vs. AC
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) damage and the target gains vulnerable 10 all until the end of the adventure.

R **Shadowed Grasp** (necrotic) **• At-Will** 1/round
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +38 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) cold and necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

R **Rip from Reality** (teleportation) **• At-Will** 1/round
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +38 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) damage, and the target is removed from play until the start of its next turn.

R **Prison of Thought** (psychic) **• At-Will** 1/round
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +38 vs. Will
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) psychic damage, and the target cannot use more than one encounter or daily power per round (save ends).

Str 18 (+19)	**Dex** 23 (+21)	**Wis** 27 (+23)
Con 23 (+21)	**Int** 15 (+17)	**Cha** 23 (+21)

Alignment unaligned   **Languages** Supernal

Heart of Darkness (H)   Level 32 Artillery

Huge shadow magical beast

HP 1000; **Bloodied** 500	**Initiative** Special
AC 46, **Fortitude** 44, **Reflex** 44, **Will** 44	**Perception** +22
Speed 4, fly 4 (hover)	**Blindsight** 25

Resist 20 cold, 20 necrotic, 20 psychic

Immune helpless, dominated, fear, petrified, polymorph, unconscious, removed from play

Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

TRAITS

Hungering Dark

The heart of darkness acts twice each round on initiatives 55 and 45, taking a full set of actions on each turn. Whenever it ends its turn, it removes all harmful effects and conditions and becomes immune to all of those harmful effects and conditions for the encounter.

Defender

marks and striker basic damage methods such as quarry, oath, and curse are not affected.

Void Reality

This creature bypasses resistances, immunities, and insubstantial. All means of ignoring its attacks and damage do not work.

Destructive Chance

The Hungering Heart scores critical hits on a natural 16-20, and automatically hits on a natural 11-20.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m **Slam • At-Will**

Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +39 vs. AC

Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) damage.

C **Vile Horrors • At-Will** 1/turn

Attack: Close burst 20 (enemies in burst); +37 vs. Fortitude, Reflex, and Will. If one or more defenses are hit, damage is taken once. For each defense hit, refer to an additional special effect below.

Any Defense Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) damage.

All Defenses Missed: Half damage.

Fortitude: The target is helpless (save ends). *Failed Save:* The target dies.

Reflex: The target takes ongoing 30 damage (save ends). *Failed Save:* The target dies.

Will: The target is slid up to 6 squares and must make an at-will attack against an ally as a free action. This attack does not provoke

opportunity attacks.

MINOR ACTIONS

C **Void Blast • At-Will** 1/turn

Attack: Close blast 20 (enemies in blast); +39 vs. AC

Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) damage.

Miss: Half damage.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Survival Adaptation • Encounter

Trigger: This creature is reduced to 75% or lower hp.

Effect (No Action): This creature is immune to damage until the end of the current turn. A projection of Shar appears in any legal square and may make an attack against one enemy.

Bloodied Frenzy • Encounter

Trigger: This creature is bloodied for the first time.

Effect (No Action): A projection of Shar appears within 5 squares of the currently acting creature.

This creature uses *vile horrors*. This use is not subject to 1/turn or 1/round limitations.

Final Adaptation • Encounter

Trigger: This creature is reduced to 25% or lower hp.

Effect (No Action): A projection of Shar appears within 5 squares of the currently acting creature.

Until the end of the encounter, whenever any creature damages the heart of darkness, that creature takes an equal amount of damage.

Str 47 (+33)	**Dex** 22 (+21)	**Wis** 25 (+22)
Con 48 (+34)	**Int** 20 (+20)	**Cha** 23 (+21)

Alignment chaotic evil   **Languages** telepathy 20

Note: The heart of darkness represents the most tangible piece of the Hungering Dark. It is a massive purplish-gray chunk of flesh, remnant of the primordial used to create the abomination. Eyes, mouths, and tentacles sprout from every surface as it babbles a litany of destruction.

ENCOUNTER 6C: DARK HEART

Haunted Temples poster map
S = projection of Shar; H = Heart of Darkness; P = Vile Phages.
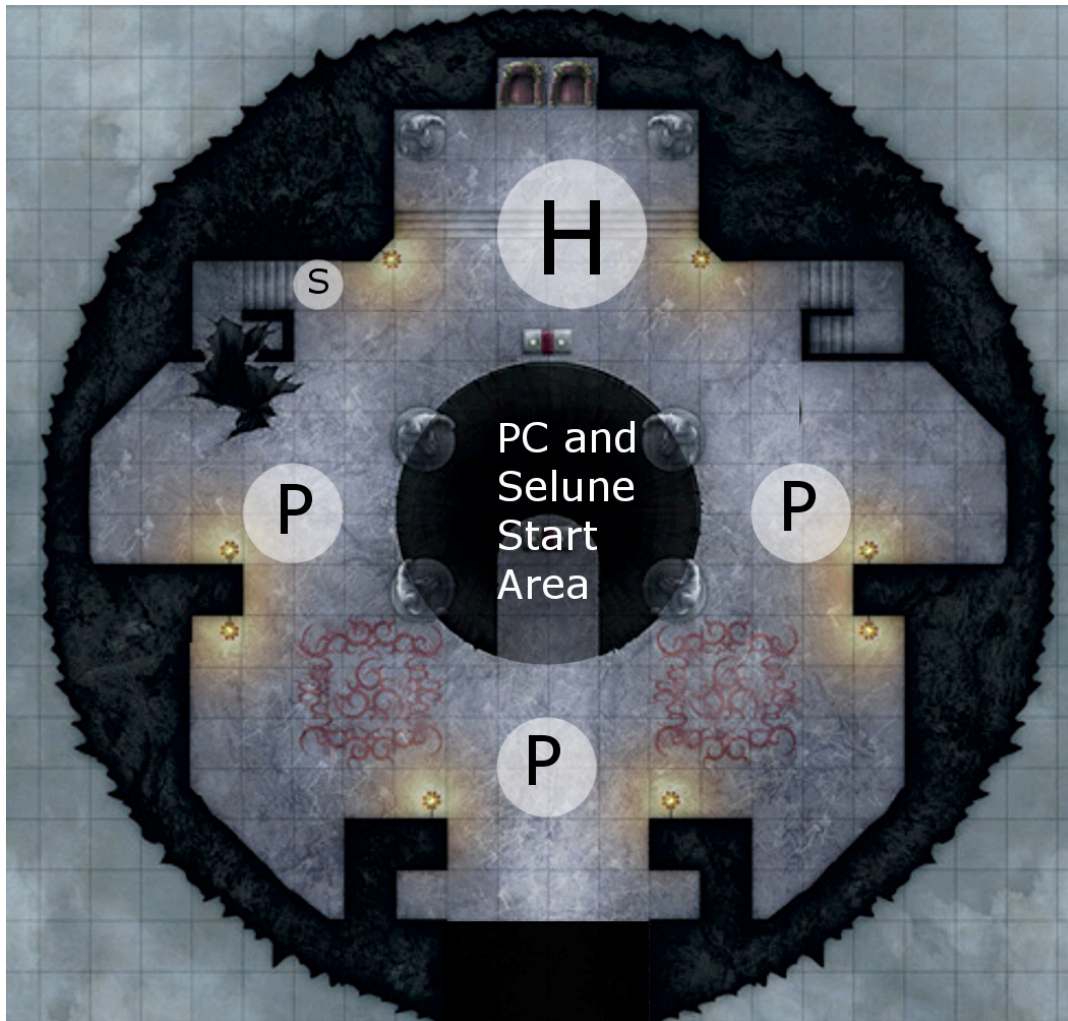
Encounter 6D: Dark Death

Creatures

This encounter includes the following creatures:
Shar, Dark Goddess (S)
10 dark servants (D)

When Shar is first bloodied, several spirits of the void vomit forth from her, each appearing within 3 squares of a different PC. The spirits enter initiative immediately after the the turn they appear.
5 spirits of the void

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove 2 dark servants. Reduce Shar's hp by 400. Shar has 4 action points and acts twice each round, on initiatives 55 and 45.

Six PCs: Add 2 dark servants. Increase Shar's hp by 400. Shar has 6 action points and gains an additional minor action on each turn.

Make the following adjustments as necessary for pacing and difficulty:

Faster: +2 Attack. Reduce Shar's hp by 100 per PC.

Easier: -5 damage. Reduce Shar's hp by 100 per PC.

Harder: +2 attack and +5 initiative. When Shar is reduced to 25%, she reanimates all of her dark servants and gains insubstantial while any dark servant lives.

Glory: +2 defense and +5 initiative. Double Shar's hit points. At the end of each round, Shar summons a number of dark servants equal to the number of PCs. The spirits of the void all gain an action point.

Refer to Appendix 7 for a number of entirely optional ways that Shar can respond to more powerful PCs or PCs who have particularly unfair combinations of abilities. Glory PCs almost certainly require such steps.

Setup

The Hungering Dark explodes out from you, every piece disintegrating in final destruction. Shadows recoil and die throughout the room. In their absence, Shar is revealed in true form for the first time, glorious in her fury.

Selûne shines like a blazing beacon beside you. "Sister, this cannot go well for you. Surrender, and justice may find mercy."

Shar laughs, "I think not. I kill them, then I kill you. No more games."

Sharran clerics and archmages appear throughout the room, chanting prayers to aid Shar in her time of dire need.

Initiative	Name
55	Shar
45	Shar
35	Shar, dark servants
End of Round	Selûne
Shar bloodied	spirits of the void

Starting Positions: The PCs do not move from their positions at the end of Encounter 6C. Shar appears either on her throne or by the exit. Her dark servants are spread throughout the room, none next to a PC and preferably more than 2 squares from any other dark servant.

Devil's Due: Any PC who sold their soul to Asmodeus (*WATE3-3* or *EPIC5-3*) takes a -10 penalty to all defenses this encounter. Shar purchased their marker from Asmodeus, and now uses it ruthlessly against them.

Spirits of the Void: When the spirits of the void erupt from Shar, they carry some of the darkness within her out into the battle. Once a spirit is defeated, a PC can take a minor action within 3 squares of any defeated spirit of the void to draw away or destroy Shar's power. Each spirit can only be used so once. When the PC does so, the PC can choose to remove one of the following from her:

- Immunity to fear and stunned effects.
- Resistance to cold, necrotic, and radiant.
- Ability to inflict the weakened condition with her powers.
- Ability to remove her enemies from play with her powers.
- Ability to restrict her enemies from using encounter or daily powers.
- Ability to dominate enemies with her powers.

Once all of the spirits have been drained of power and Shar is weak enough (25% or lower hp), Selûne can cleanse the taint of the void from Shar, drawing away the darkness that has turned her sister to evil these past eons, and restoring her to the twin to Selûne she once was.

Features of the Area

Selûne: If she lives, PCs can make a saving throw against a single save ends effect at the start of their turn. At the end of the round, she heals one PC for 40 hp and inflicts several penalties on all enemies. These penalties are cumulative, including with all penalties inflicted during Encounter 6C, and cannot be removed.

- Vulnerable 20 all (vulnerable 40 after 2 rounds, 60 after 3, etc)
- -2 to all defenses

- Attacks against the enemies score critical hits on a number 1 lower than usual.

Selûne is immune to Shar's attacks so long as the PCs prevail. As long as the PCs kept Selûne alive through 6C, Selûne escapes even if the PCs lose the encounter.

TACTICS

Shar uses *divine dispel* to remove debilitating conditions and the most egregious encounter duration powers the PCs may have active. She uses *divine accuracy* on PCs she misses on an 11+.

Shar attempts to make the PCs vulnerable to all damage with minor actions. She uses her standard actions to layer multiple save ends effects. For her minor actions, she prefers to weaken strikers, remove leaders and defenders from play, and to kill controllers, though she knows the PC defenses so targets her attacks appropriately.

ROLEPLAYING

Shar is extremely focused on slaying the PCs, and refuses to be distracted by banter. Anything she says at this point is to gain tactical advantage or mislead her enemies.

Selûne implores her sister to surrender, to give in to justice. Shar laughs in her face, and that only makes Selûne more resigned to what is to come. When Selûne realizes that the PCs might have a chance to cleanse Shar, she seems hopeful, but expects that they will choose to destroy Shar instead. She accepts whatever choice they make.

If Shadowbane is with the party, it demands that they destroy Shar forever, uncaring for any other options. Should the PCs seem about to cleanse her sister, the artifact begs: *"Just let me destroy her! It is the purpose of my very existence!"*

The Hourglass recognizes that these moments have decided the fate of Faerun. Without any attempting to sway the PCs to one path or another, it asks them what there is to gain or lose from the different options in defeating Shar (surrender, destruction, and cleansing). It leads the conversation to what the PCs would do in Shar's place, with her power. It also asks whether Shar, supposedly cleansed or not, could ever be trusted and whether she must answer for her crimes.

Attempt to make sure the PCs feel that the action they choose, whether cleansing or destroying Shar, is the correct decision, and that they personally made it. If they are looking forward to destroying Shar, Selûne should not leave a sour note that they did not do the right thing.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs do one of the following, the combat (and the Epic Campaign) ends. Proceed to the Conclusion.

- Reduce Shar to 25% or lower hp and have no means of preventing her discorporation (see Encounter 1) (Shar escapes - the PCs did manage to rescue Selûne and Mystra, and set Shar back a lot)
- Reduce Shar to 25% or lower hp and request that she surrender, or reduce her to 50% or lower hp and remove her immunity to fear then Intimidate her. (As above, but the PCs get concessions - Shar is trapped for a thousand years, is branded with a magical inability to harm her sister, etc)
- Reduce Shar to 25% or lower hp, destroy all spirits of the void and drain Shar's power from them, and ask Selûne to cleanse her sister. (The PCs are fighting the evil within Shar, as long as they hold off on killing Shar once she's weakened, they can destroy the evil within her (the spirits) then Selûne can cleanse her, making her more like she was back when she first made the world. Not perfect, but not crazy destroy the world lady.)
- Destroy Shar (She is defeated forevermore, someone steps up to claim her portfolio, perhaps the PCs, perhaps Lolth, the struggle may rage between claimants, eventually settled by Ao)

TROUBLESHOOTING

As the final combat of the campaign, having already saved Mystra and Selûne, it is not intended that victory be certain or easy. It is expected that some PCs die, obtaining the option for a final sacrifice (see Player Handout 6), and that there is a real threat of TPK. Adjust appropriately for your group, attempting to provide the best game possible for the PCs. Make a memorable showdown rather than a boring one.

If the PCs let Selûne die in a previous encounter, then this combat is much more difficult. Shar is extremely tough, and the PCs may lack the ability to survive or deal enough damage, and are far more vulnerable to the save ends effects in this encounter.

One of the fastest ways to end the combat is to bloody Shar, remove her immunity to fear, then intimidate her. Doing so causes her to surrender, but means that the PCs cannot cleanse or kill her. Any attempt to take further action (to obtain a more conclusive victory) causes her to rejoin the combat.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

The stuff of dreams, the threads of creation, and true divinity are the PCs' to claim.

ENCOUNTER 6D: DARK DEATH

Dark Servants (D)	Level 30 Minion Brute
Medium shadow humanoid	

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion   **Initiative** +27
AC 43, **Fortitude** 40, **Reflex** 42, **Will** 42   **Perception** +23
Speed 6

STANDARD ACTIONS

m **Dagger • At-Will**
   Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +35 vs. AC
   Hit: 20 damage.

r **Bolt of Darkness** (cold, necrotic) **• At-Will**
   Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +33 vs. Reflex
   Hit: 20 cold and necrotic damage.

MINOR ACTIONS

R **Curse of Blood • At-Will**
   Attack: Ranged 20 (one unbloodied creature); +33 vs. Fortitude
   Hit: 20 damage.

Str 18 (+19)	**Dex** 23 (+21)	**Wis** 27 (+23)
Con 23 (+21)	**Int** 15 (+17)	**Cha** 23 (+21)

Alignment unaligned   **Languages** Supernal

Note: Cultist meets Carnage Demon. The dark servants are high priests and archmages that worship Shar.

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5 Spirits of the Void	Level 33 Skirmisher
Large shadow humanoid	XP 11,000

HP 292; **Bloodied** 146   **Initiative** Special
AC 47, **Fortitude** 43, **Reflex** 45 **Will** 47   **Perception** +24
Speed 6, teleport 3   low-light vision

STANDARD ACTIONS

m **Claw • At-Will**
   Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +38 vs. AC
   Hit: 4d10 + 20 (avg 42, crit 60) damage and ongoing 30 damage (save ends).
   Miss: Half damage.

M **Void Strike • Recharge** 4-6
   Effect: The spirit teleports up to 6 squares and makes a *claw* attack. If it hits, the target loses a healing surge.

R **Dark Slice** (teleportation) **• At-Will**
   Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +36 vs. Will
   Hit: 4d10 + 20 (avg 42, crit 60) damage.
   Effect: The spirit teleports to within 5 squares of the target.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

C **Oblivion's Embrace • Encounter**
   Trigger: The spirit drops to 0 hit points.
   Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +36 vs. Reflex
   Hit: 4d10 + 20 (avg 42, crit 60) damage.
   Miss: Half damage.

Skills Athletics +25, Stealth +28

Str 25 (+20)	**Dex** 30 (+23)	**Wis** 26 (+21)
Con 27 (+21)	**Int** 15 (+15)	**Cha** 19 (+17)

Alignment chaotic evil   **Languages** Primordial

Note: The spirits of the void are dark faceless representations of the evil in Shar, and her desire to return all of creation to the void from whence it came.

Shar, Dark Goddess (S) — Level 33 Artillery

Medium immortal humanoid (deity)

HP 2000; **Bloodied** 1000 — **Initiative** Special
AC 49, **Fortitude** 45, **Reflex** 47, **Will** 49 — **Perception** +34
Speed 8, fly 6 (hover), teleport 6 — Darkvision, blindsight 8
Resist 30 cold, 30 necrotic, 30 radiant
Immune disease, dominated, fear, petrified, polymorph, stunned, unconscious, removed from play
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 5

TRAITS

Divine Fortune
Shar scores critical hits on natural rolls of 16-20. Once per turn, when Shar misses with an attack or fails a saving throw or skill check, she instead automatically succeeds.

Greater Deity
Shar acts three times per round, on initiatives 55, 45, and 35, taking a full complement of actions on each of those initiatives. She can spend one action point per turn. When Shar ends her turn, she can choose to remove one harmful effect or condition. Shar does not provoke opportunity attacks for making ranged or area attacks.

STANDARD ACTIONS

C Dark Claws • At-Will
Attack: Close burst * (all enemies in the Towers of Night, including those currently removed from play or in extradimensional spaces); +40 vs. AC
Hit: 3d12 + 10 (avg 30, crit 6d12 + 46) damage and ongoing 30 damage (save ends).

C My Realm, My Rules (psychic) **• Encounter**
Attack: Close burst * (all enemies in the Towers of Night, including those currently removed from play or in extradimensional spaces); +38 vs. Will
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) psychic damage and the target cannot use more than one encounter or daily power per round (save ends).

C You Defeat Only Yourself (charm, psychic) **• Encounter**
Attack: Close burst * (all enemies in the Towers of Night, including those currently removed from play or in extradimensional spaces); +38 vs. Will
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) psychic damage and the target is dominated (save ends).

C Your Attacks Cannot Hurt Me (cold, necrotic) **• Encounter**
Attack: Close burst * (all enemies in the Towers of Night, including those currently removed from play or in extradimensional spaces); +38 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) cold and necrotic damage and the target is weakened (save ends).

C Begone, Intruders • Encounter
Attack: Close burst * (all enemies in the Towers of Night, including those currently removed from play or in extradimensional spaces); +38 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) damage and the target is removed from play (save ends).

C I'll Take You With Me (cold, necrotic) **• Encounter**
Attack: Close burst * (all enemies in the Towers of Night, including those currently removed from play or in extradimensional spaces); +38 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) cold and necrotic damage and whenever the target damages Shar, it takes damage equal to the damage it dealt to her (save ends).

MINOR ACTIONS

m/r Imminent Doom • At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 or Ranged 20 (one creature); +40 vs. AC
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) damage and the target gains vulnerable 10 all until the end of the adventure.

R Shadowed Grasp (cold, necrotic) **• At-Will 1/turn**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +38 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) cold and necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

R Rip from Reality (teleportation) **• At-Will 1/turn**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +38 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) damage, and the target is removed from play until the start of its next turn.

R Prison of Thought (psychic) **• At-Will 1/turn**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +38 vs. Will
Hit: 3d12 + 20 (avg 40, crit 6d12 + 56) psychic damage, and the target cannot use more than one encounter or daily power per round (save ends).

Divine Dispel • At-Will
Effect: One effect, condition, conjuration, or zone within 20 squares of Shar ends.

Divine Accuracy • At-Will
Effect: Ranged 20 (one creature Shar has missed); Shar gains a +5 bonus to attack rolls against the target until the end of the encounter.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

This battle has barely begun • Encounter
Trigger: Shar is reduced to 75% or fewer hp.
Effect (No Action): Shar becomes invisible and insubstantial until the end of her next turn, uses any one of her minor action powers, then teleports up to 10 squares.

I will tear the hope from your souls • Encounter
Trigger: Shar is reduced to 50% or fewer hp.
Effect (No Action): Shar becomes immune to damage until the end of her next turn. She creates a number of spirits of the void equal to the number of PCs and recharges her standard action encounter powers.
Special: The PCs should now be made aware of their options to make Shar surrender, kill her, or cleanse her, as well as their ability to strip Shar of her power.

This cannot be • Encounter
Trigger: Shar is reduced to 25% or fewer hp.
Effect (No Action): Shar removes all harmful effects on her, teleports up to 10 squares, and she may use any one of her standard or minor action powers. The PCs can now capture or cleanse Shar.

Str 38 (+30)	**Dex** 43 (+32)	**Wis** 37 (+29)
Con 33 (+27)	**Int** 35 (+28)	**Cha** 43 (+32)

Alignment unaligned   **Languages** Supernal

Note: Shar statted as two combined level 33 solos rather than one level 38 solo. Shar can manifest as either a beautiful dark-haired dancer, or a huge being of pure darkness, whichever she prefers.

Concluding the Adventure

Shar fled:
- Selûne smiles, thanks the PCs for rescuing her and Mystra, and reflects that they should find the other gods and see if they can't do a little more damage to the Towers of Night then leave.
- The other gods, including those from the beginning, rejoin the PCs.
- Ao appears, talks about the end.

Shar surrendered:
- Selûne wonders what the PCs might want to do with Shar, what demands they might make. She gives them some time to make a plan for how to rearrange matters.
- Ao appears, talks about the end.

Shar slain:
- Selûne is sad, but also relieved that an eons long conflict has come to an end. Reality reels from the loss of the god, and who knows what effect this has elsewhere. If any of the PCs step forward to claim one or more parts of her portfolio (perhaps even multiple), that's cool. Other gods known to them, like Lolth, may also be appearing to try to get a piece of the action.
- Ao appears, halting any possible struggles, and divvies the portfolio among the remaining PCs, if any of them make sense at all.

Shar cleansed:
- Selûne hugs the PCs and her sister, who seems utterly stunned and confused. The two conspire with each other, and the PCs, for how they might repair the damage done by their millennia of conflict. Shar suggests that she should no longer have some aspects of her portfolio and wonders if any of the PCs could provide a more beneficial spin on them.
- Ao appears, echoing his agreement if it seems safe enough.

Regardless, when Ao appears, he concludes:
"The world has been disfigured by these struggles, in many ways. Others on Faerun are busy working to restore Mystra and the Weave. A realms changing cataclysm seems almost inevitable, but perhaps it is time that we step in to correct past errors.

I am well pleased by your actions of these past years. If you are willing, the pantheon must be restored to its former strength, so we can begin our work."

Each PC should narrate how their PC completes their epic destiny, whether they join the pantheon as a new god or replacement for an old god, or if they return to Faerun to help oversee the rebuilding, perhaps leading an empire formed by the alliance that defeats Netheril, or retiring to the Library of Dreams to oversee the unfolding of reality's repairs and hold onto a few of its greatest artifacts in case there is ever a time in which they are needed again.

For some groups, this may be a good launching point into D&D Next, with the cleanup that follows heralding a change of editions. For others, they might wish to independently create an epilogue in which their PCs wrap up any epic destiny concerns. If Shar is dead, the world should be drastically affected, her portfolio weakened or absent in its effects. This is good in many ways, but not entirely: shadows provide respite from the sun, loss of memory allows hurts to be forgotten, and sometimes it is in everyone's best interest to keep secrets. Similarly, ascending PCs may cause changes to any aspects of their portfolio, including any aspects of Shar's portfolio they claim.

APPENDIX 1: TIME MANAGEMENT

This adventure is designed to run in 12-15 hours. Some groups can easily run longer, through roleplaying or slower more thoughtful combat. In a time-sensitive environment, you may need to carefully manage time. Consider the following methods for playing faster while still having fun. Please don't lose track of time and do a disservice by cutting out roleplaying or rushing the final battle and conclusion.

- Pre-Draw Maps – This is absolutely vital! Many of the maps are available in poster form.
- Pre-Roll Initiative – In addition to saving some time each encounter, this lets you consider monster tactics in advance.
- Use Average Damage – Average damage is listed for all monsters. This may be less exciting for some players.
- Call Fights – If a fight's conclusion seems foregone, narrate a resolution and move on. You can charge a reasonable number of healing surges, or not, as befits your group's desire for challenge.
- Play Quickly – Everyone should decide and execute turns quickly. Don't rewind time or allow group consensus tactics if doing so bogs the game down.
- Fun First, Worry Second – Don't worry about optimal rules or perfect play. Make a call, forget unimportant details. Focus on the enjoyment of the table!
- Pace Play – Keep an eye on the clock and have a good idea of what's left to play.

Each combat encounter includes a suggestion under scaling for a way to make that particular encounter run faster. These suggestions are primarily intended for tables that are more defensive than offensive, so take longer to defeat enemies. If the table is already having trouble, the increased damage output may cause them difficulty; instead just treat the party as one smaller, use Easier guidelines, or don't give the monsters the benefits listed for Faster, only the penalties.

The Faster suggestions are not intended for initiative and damage optimized parties, and may make the adventure easier.

APPENDIX 2: DIFFICULTY MANAGEMENT

Epic tables have amazing variation in effectiveness. Some tables are a perfect synergy of characters optimized to breeze through any combat, while other tables might severely lack a key aspect like damage output, healing, or control.

Most of the encounters in this adventure can be made easier or harder simply by using different tactics, such as focus firing key PCs and matching attacks to weak defenses for tough groups, or spreading out damage and using less dangerous powers for more fragile groups.

For other groups, it may be necessary to make greater adjustments for optimal enjoyment. Many of the encounters contain information for scaling for difficulty to make the challenge easier or harder. Do not use these options without discussing difficulty with the table first. Feel free to offer less optimized tables the option to face an easier challenge so they can finish the adventure faster, and offer stronger tables the option to show off with a more legitimate challenge. In general, Easier tries to give the PCs a little more control by blunting key monster synergies, Harder tries to give the monsters a greater chance to be able to act, and Glory changes the encounter in a tactical way to challenge intentionally optimized parties.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to treat the group as having a different number of PCs for scaling. Only particularly strong or weak groups require both scaling for a different number of PCs and easier/harder difficulty. Be very careful doing so unless a group seems guaranteed to TPK or begs for more challenge.

If you seem to have absolutely no chance to threaten a PC with death, because the monsters never get to act or just can't seem to hit or damage the PCs, it's worthwhile to verify if that's truly the experience that the players desire. Some players never want to be challenged, while others want to play on glory tier as a larger party. Do remember, though, that Shar knows almost every secret and capability of the PCs. She can share that information with any allies or servants, as she chooses. It is more than reasonable for the monsters to use her knowledge to appropriately aim for low defenses, gang up entirely on linchpin characters, or take appropriate actions to nullify certain power usage.

Appendix 3: Gods

Amaunator, Keeper of the Eternal Sun

"Shar has broken all covenants and must pay for her crimes."

Interests: sun, law, order, rulership, time

RP Notes: Amaunator is harsh, but fair. He believes in strict adherence to law and order, following the word rather than the spirit. He resents the destruction of his Companion, blaming Shar for its fate, so has decided to assist the PCs against the goddess.

Asmodeus, Supreme Master of the Nine Hells

"Shar will be distracted and vulnerable. Much opportunity can be made in such circumstances."

Interests: sin, souls, oppression, evil

RP Notes: Cunning and manipulative. Utterly confident.

Auril, The Frostmaiden

"I will tear Shar's dominion of darkness away from her, to go with my own rulership of cold."

Interests: eternal winter, icy domination

RP Notes: Auril has been under a curse for millenia that compelled her to evil. She cared only for freezing the world and making all fear her. She is harsh, but it is possible to turn her away from its corruption.

Bahamut, God of Dragons

"We will fly forward with valor and bring Shar to a long deserved justice."

Interests: good dragons, wisdom, justice tempered with mercy

RP Notes: Bahamut believes in the highest ideals of honor and justice, ones that require fighting evil and oppressive regimes.

Bane, The Black Hand

"You know nothing of war. I will show you how this is done, and claim Shar's realm for myself."

Interests: fear, hatred, tyranny

RP Notes: Bane acts through intermediaries, controlling his enemies with fear or force. He was once an adventurer himself, so has more respect for the PCs ability to seize divinity and potential usefulness in the days to come.

Chauntea, The Great Mother

"Shar and Selûne have fought for as long as I have lived, and that is a very long time indeed. We must rescue Selûne with all haste."

Interests: agriculture, life, summer

RP Notes: Chauntea is the embodiment of civilized nature, caring for the protection and feeding for all people and harmonious cultivation. Many halflings worship her through her Aspect, Yondalla.

Garl Glittergold, the Sparkling Wit

"I'm not sure anyone has ever laughed in Shar's realm. I love a challenge."

Interests: gnomes, humor, gems, protection

RP Notes: Garl believes that everyone, especially those in authority like other gods, takes everything far too seriously, and helps provide laughter with jests and pranks.

Gond, Wonderbringer

"Shar risks all of creation. We must stop her, but we should be wary of possible traps."

Interests: craft, smithwork, artifice

RP Notes: Result driven. Cares little for speech or intentions. Open to new ideas. Scientific method.

Ilmater, The Crying God

"We shalol show Shar the error of her ways and bring Selûne out from that dark place."

Interests: Perseverance, Martyrdom, Compassion

RP Notes: Ilmater is the eternal foe of suffering, seeking to aid others to endure all abuse and taking on the burdens of those who cannot. Ilmater is quiet with a kind and gentle nature, good-spirited and even tempered, eager to forgive.

Kelemvor, Lord of the Dead

"Judgment has been given. Let us kill them all, then I will sort this out afterwards."

Interests: death, judging the dead, fighting undead

RP Notes: Kelemvor is extraordinarily serious and reluctant to misstep in his judgment. He once blundered seriously in his role by thinking too much like a human.

LOLTH, QUEEN OF THE DEMONWEB

"When gods war, gods die. It is our time to strike and take what we want."
Interests: drow, darkness, spiders
RP Notes: Lolth is domineering and cruel, crushing the weak. She is cunning and calculating, outwitting or seducing the strong.

LOVIATAR, MAIDEN OF PAIN

"The world is filled with pain and torment, and the best you can do is deal as much pain back to those who offend. Cry in your suffering and find the strength to serve me."
Interests: agony, suffering
RP Notes: Cold-hearted bully, calculating and despotic. She is a master of inflicting psychological suffering.

MORADIN, ALL FATHER OF THE DWARVES

"I still have much to do fixing the damage done to Carceri. Let us resolve this quickly, then get back to work."
Interests: dwarves, smithing, stonework
RP Notes: Harsh, but fair. Moradin looks out for the best interests of his dwarves while fighting against evil, especially Gruumsh and the orcs.

OGHMA, LORD OF KNOWLEDGE

"Be ready for anything. Shar will not go quietly, but this time I think her passions outdone her intellect. We'll prevail, sure enough."
Interests: bards, knowledge, inspiration, invention
RP Notes: Oghma is a charming bard known for his love of knowledge and tales.

SILVANUS, OAK FATHER

"We must intervene now, in order to prevent Shar from any greater destruction."
Interests: nature and the wilds
RP Notes: Silvanus resents destruction and life-threatening impulses, believing in keeping a careful distance and preserving a balance and cycle of life.

SUNE, LADY FIREHAIR

"Shar's spite is a blemish upon an otherwise beautiful form. Is it time we all kissed and made up?"
Interests: beauty, love, passion.
RP Notes: Sune is an artist and a lover, who believes in beauty both inner and outer. She disdains the unattractive, in either appearance or personality.

TEMPUS, FOEHAMMER

"Finally, let the battle begin!"
Interests: war, honorable battle, force of arms
RP Notes: Tempus' orders: "1. Be fearless. 2. Never turn away from a fight. 3. Obey the rules of war."

TORM, THE LOYAL FURY

"Shar is corrupt and evil, and deserves a quick death, but we must be wary to avoid playing into her schemes and focus first on protecting all good beings on Faerun."
Interests: law, duty, righteousness
RP Notes: Salvation may be found through service. Your duties are to faith, family, those you serve, and all good beings of Faerun.

TYMORA, LADY LUCK

"Luck favors the brave, and any who join this mission rank amongst the fearless!"
Interests: adventurers, fortune, victory
RP Notes: Tymora favors the bold, those willing to place themselves in danger and rely on fate.

UMBERLEE, THE BITCH QUEEN

"Shar must be destroyed, I agree, but there is no reason to save Selûne as well."
Interests: ocean and sea
RP Notes: Umberlee is a demanding goddess who requires respect and fear from all those who dare cross her domain.

WAUKEEN, THE MERCHANT'S FRIEND

"It might take quite some effort to renovate the Towers of Night after we're done, but it should be well worth the investment."
Interests: trade, money
RP Notes: Waukeen makes deals for everything, bribing and trading coins, favors, and knowledge to gain any advantage.

Appendix 4: Shar, Mistress of the Night

Shar is a greater power of darkness and destruction known as the Mistress of the Night, Lady of Loss, and the Dark Goddess. As a deity, she rules over the night and all that is dark, lost, or secret. She knows everything that happens in the dark and every secret that has been forgotten.

Shar and Selûne formed together during the creation of the universe. Originally, the twins were so close they believed themselves one being. The twins worked together to form the heavens and the world, but eventually came to creative differences. Selûne wished the world to be bright and full of life, while Shar preferred the dark and the void from which she'd formed. The twins battled violently, creating many other gods in the aftermath. The end of their struggle came when Selûne sacrificed a piece of herself to tear a hole in Shar, forming Mystryl from the conjoined pieces. Shar could not stand against both Selûne and Mystryl and fled, vowing revenge against them both.

Shar has schemed for millennia to earn her revenge. She saw to Mystra's death with the Spellplague, and now acts against her sister, Selûne. Shar's centuries of gathering power, servants, and tools ensures that she is far more powerful and dangerous than any of the gods who might dare to interfere with her plans.

Shar knows every secret and dark thought of the PCs. She has spied on them so thoroughly that she may know them better than they know themselves. Every word is considered for its impact in manipulating the PCs to her goals. She will taunt to distract, seduce to delay, and compliment to confuse.

Shar maintains two avatars, Dark Dancer and Nightsinger, who are themselves almost as powerful as a minor god.

Dark Dancer is a lithe, barely dressed beautiful woman with jet black skin who uses exotic dance to manipulate her allies and enemies alike.

Nightsinger is tall, wearing a voluminous robe and mask of feathers. She sings in a voice filled with sorrow and loss.

APPENDIX 5: USING THE GODS

The PCs have brought a few gods through with them. Each encounter they are taking care of many of their own problems, much as the PCs are. That said, at least once per encounter (and possibly once a round or more if necessary for the enjoyment of your table) it is reasonable to have a god take direct action in support of the PCs. Encounters 3A - 5B have suggestions for Using the Gods in each. The PCs may also call for assistance in specific ways, especially if someone is about to die, or has already died.

Use the gods as much as is fun for your table, but never let them overshadow the PCs. Some gods are good for assisting in different ways, based on their portfolio and methods. Lolth and Tempus are unlikely sources for healing, while Ilmater is an unlikely god to slay an enemy.

Consider one or more of the following options when a god intervenes, or make up options of your own:

Deal 100 damage to one enemy.
Heal a PC for 50 hp.
Slide one creature up to 10 squares.
Let the entire party reroll a group skill check and take the better result.
Automatically succeed on a missed attack roll or saving throw.
Raise a PC from the dead (usual death penalty, costs 2 surges, heals to full)

If the PCs are in true trouble, close to a TPK, one of their gods will intervene. In doing so, the god is so badly wounded or drained of power that they cannot continue the adventure (or is even slain, if appropriate). When that happens, the god's assistance provides one of the benefits to each PC (the PCs should get a chance to choose their own benefit):

Regain a daily power (can't regain a particular daily power more than once, nor regain a power that has already been recovered through some other means)
Resurrect a PC from dead (no death penalty) and/or heal to full hp
Gain a blessing (see Player Handout 4)

Unless a god needs to sacrifice itself to save the group during Encounter 3B, gods leave on the following schedule:

3 gods: A god leaves in 4B, 5A, and 5B.
2 gods: A god leaves in 4B and 5B.
1 god: A god leaves in 4B.

APPENDIX 6: ARMY OF DARKNESS

	Army of Shadar-Kai	Shade Casters	Dark Host	Shadowmanta Siegers	Eye of Darkness	Finding the Leadership
Risk						
Actions						
Awesome						
Skill						
God / Avatar						
Total						

Risk:

Negligible Risk:	50 damage	0 points
Moderate Risk:	80 damage	1 point
Extreme Risk:	120 damage	3 points

The PCs subtract their AC from the damage taken. Each PC chooses their own level of risk and takes the appropriate damage. PCs can use powers or resistance to all damage to mitigate the damage taken.

Actions:

1 encounter:	1 point
2+ encounters:	2 points
Any useful daily:	3 points
Any very useful/powerful daily:	5 points

Remember to give PCs an extra point if their actions are creative and/or awesome!

For each objective, consider the points obtained by the single PC assigned to that objective:

0-5 points: Failure.
6-9 points: Success (no change).
10+ points: Total Success.

Skill:

DC 32-41:	1 point
DC 42-51:	2 points
DC 52-61:	3 points
DC 62+:	4 points

God / Avatar:

A god can assist one PC by adding 2 points.
Dark Dancer (if alive) can impede a PC by subtracting 2 points.
Nightsinger (if alive) can impede a different PC by subtracting 2 points.

OBJECTIVE 1: SHADAR KAI ARMY

Skills: Endurance or Intimidate

Total Success: Remove Reinforcements.
Failure: Add 2 * (# of PCs) shade channelers.

OBJECTIVE 2: SHADE CASTERS

Skills: Acrobatics or Arcana

Total Success: Remove the magic missiles.
Failure: Increase the magic missile damage to 40.

OBJECTIVE 3: DARK HOST

Skills: Insight or Religion

Total Success: The dark angels all take 50 damage.
Failure: Add an additional dark angel.

OBJECTIVE 4: SHADOWMANTA SIEGERS

Skills: Athletics or Perception

Total Success: Remove the artillery.
Failure: Choose four artillery targets instead of two.

OBJECTIVE 5: EYE OF DARKNESS

Skills: Bluff or Stealth

Total Success: Remove the tentacle.
Failure: The tentacle also damages a second target.

OBJECTIVE 6: LEADERSHIP

Skills: History or Streetwise

Total Success: The monsters take a -2 penalty to all defenses and PCs may shift their speed from the starting area at the start of the combat.
Failure: The monsters gain a +10 bonus to initiative and +2 bonus to attack rolls.

Appendix 7: Shar Cheats

Bearing in mind that D&D is played in drastically different ways by different groups, the following abilities may not be necessary for your group, or any group, but are designed for Shar to use to break up combinations of abilities which might cause the game to degenerate. Depending on the group, these abilities could be Encounter, Recharge, or At-Will.

For some groups it might make sense for you to alter or make up entirely new abilities. Keep them fun, not to completely prevent the normal workings of a PC, but Shar does have near complete control of her realm so it is reasonable to change even some of the basic rules of the game. In particular, if Shar knows that a particular combination of PC abilities will be extraordinarily dangerous to her, she can plan to stop that combination.

I don't think so
Trigger: Shar is hit by an attack.
Effect (No Action): Shar is removed from play until the end of the current turn.

Best used when the PCs coordinate multiple powers and attacks to trigger on her this turn, or a cascade of attacks might trigger from a single hit.

Your allies are a crutch
Effect (No Action): A creature currently taking an action has no allies and is ally to no one until the end of the current turn.

Best used when a PC relies on an ally to keep them alive or provide massive bonuses to damage.

Enough is enough
Effect (No Action): No other creature can take more than 6 combined actions or attacks this turn. Once a creature has taken that many actions or attacks, they cannot take any other actions or attacks until the end of this turn.

Best used when a PC makes extra attacks on criticals and has multi attack powers.

I bleed not alone
Trigger: Shar takes 500 or more damage in one turn.
Effect (No Action): When Shar takes any further damage, the creature damaging her takes an equal amount of damage.

Best used when Shar takes 500 damage and more attacks are likely this turn.

Come out and fight
Effect (No Action): Any creatures currently removed from play, placed in an extradimensional space, or otherwise "not existing" temporarily in the encounter is placed in the encounter adjacent to Shar.

Best used when Shar cannot effectively attack or kill a creature without bringing a defender or companion back.

I am no common enemy
Trigger: An enemy attempts to ignore Shar's immunities.
Effect (No Action): Shar's immunities cannot be ignored by that enemy.

Best used when an enemy uses a feat or epic destiny to inflict a status effect (like unconscious) on Shar.

For some groups, it is instead the PCs who need the assistance, so it might make sense for their allied gods to provide cheats for them, allowing them to duck some of Shar's most evil tricks, or empower some of their own latent abilities.

Handout 1: The Story So Far...

EPIC3~1, EPIC3~2, and EPIC3~3

Two years ago, the flow of abominations from Carceri to Arvandor increased dramatically. Many of the abominations appearing in Arvandor were tainted with a virulent poison capable of corrupting mortals and immortals alike. Arvandor had become so overwhelmed by these incursions that many of them spread beyond Arvandor into Faerûn itself. Fearing that these incursions were too much for the exalted of Arvandor to handle, Corellon sent for aid from the fey kingdoms of Faerûn.

Adventurers traveled to Arvandor and joined the Glorious Hunt. Through their heroics, they cleansed Corellon and his *ruesti* of the poison that threatened their very existence and destroyed the abominations that carried it. After their victory, Corellon set the adventurers on a quest to travel into Carceri, discover the source of the poison and increased flow of abominations, and put a stop to it.

Lolth had taken control over the metaphysical funnel that links Carceri's isle of Agathys to Arvandor through use of a powerful ritual. Understanding that a direct assault upon Arvandor would prove to be fruitless, she employed Sinmaker with crafting a poison powerful enough to bring certain death to Corellon. Her plan to increase the flow of abominations into Arvandor and infuse them with Sinmaker's virulent poison was working perfectly until the PCs interceded. Her plan foiled, Lolth retreated back to the Demonweb, leaving a number of powerful servants within Agathys to maintain control over the funnel. Typical of her nature, she did not hold up her end of the bargain with Sinmaker before taking her leave.

The adventurers followed Lolth's treachery into Carceri and, with Sinmaker's aid, managed to defeat the forces that maintained Lolth's hold over the funnel. With the denizens of Carceri bearing down on them, the adventurers managed to escape the prison plane through a portal to the Demonweb that Lolth's forces had planned to use for their own escape. Corellon then requested that the PCs assist him once more by seeking out Lolth as his emissaries.

Tsien Chiang, a Shou sorceress of immeasurable power and knowledge, devised a scheme to distract Lolth long enough to siphon energy from the Demonweb for her evil schemes. Disguised as a young priestess of Lolth, she manipulated a drow matron, Zarylene, into discovering the means by which Lolth could corrupt Corellon and his realm of Arvandor. Zarylene prayed to the Spider Queen with her new apprentice's scheme. Lolth heard her prayers and launched her campaign against Arvandor shortly thereafter. Following Lolth's departure, Tsien disappeared into the depths of the Demonweb Pits bearing the shard of an ancient artifact. She planted the artifact and quickly fled the Demonweb before Lolth's return. Once planted, the artifact began to siphon power from the Demonweb and channel it through a planar conduit to Tsien.

Shortly after Tsien's disappearance, the Demonweb began to unravel, erupting into chaos as entire sections dissolved and long-imprisoned demons escaped into Faerûn. Lolth returned to her realm severely weakened and furious that she had allowed herself to be tricked. All of her power bent on keeping the Demonweb together, Lolth was in need of help.

The PCs navigated their way through the dissolving Demonweb to Lolth's throne, where she negotiated several concessions in exchange for destruction, or removal, of the shard. The PCs defeated the shard, thus bringing stability back to the Demonweb.

HANDOUT 1: THE STORY SO FAR... (CONTINUED)

EPIC4~1, EPIC4~2, AND EPIC4~3

Having stolen power from Corellon and Lolth, Tsien Chiang made plans to drain power from Sehanine. Following her trail, the PCs stopped Candlekeep from burning to the ground and made their way to Myth Dyraalis, where several of Sehanine's most devout followers had been petrified while holding a vestige of the goddess' power.

The PCs interrupted Tsien's attempt before she could completely drain Sehanine's power, but were unable to defeat the sorceress, due in large part to enchanted gems; the hearts that originally freed Tsien to return to Faerûn. Tsien took the power she had drained and stole the Mistress of the Night, heading to another plane to work further on her ritual.

It was then that Sehanine offered her assistance to the PCs, aiding them to muster an army to attack at I'Cath, Tsien's stronghold, while the sorceress was out. The PCs quickly gathered armies from all over Faerûn and assaulted the island, fought their way into the Palace of Bones and overcame Tsien's generals and daughters. They then learned that the corrupted angel Karadrach, last seen orchestrating Corellon's poisoning, was an ally of Tsien who had aided her in creating her magic defenses, and knew a way to defeat them.

The PCs traveled through a portal to a strange land where ancient divine defenders had been misled by Karadrach and another evil angel who called up demons to face the PCs and used some strange magic to alter the flow of time around the heroes.

Karadrach used a powerful magic, called Words of Destruction - perversions of the Words of Creation the gods used to create the world - to strip the PCs of their defenses, but they still prevailed against him, and secured the research about the words which would allow them to remove the defenses of Tsien's hearts the next time they fought.

The PCs returned to the Palace of Bone through the portal, only to find that many years had passed since they stepped through hours ago. Unbeknownst to them, they had actually entered the Barrens, a duplicitous layer of the abyss that is actually a post-apocalyptic version of reality. Its Demon Lord, Oublivae, Angel of the Everlasting Void, appeared as a misguided angel. She attempted to inflict supernatural despair against the PCs and delay them from stopping Tsien's ritual in time.

The PCs traveled for an indeterminate time in the Barrens, slaying all manner of evil and shadowy creatures, while witnessing allies tortured and destroyed. Everywhere they went, the PCs saw the effects of Tsien having successfully summoned the Hungering Dark out from Carceri and taken control of it.

The PCs threw off the effects of Oublivae's despair, and struck back at the most dreadful forces she could muster against them. Bit by bit, they proved themselves stronger than her power, kindling a force of Hope to strike back against her magic.

Eventually, the demon monarch confronted the PCs in a final showdown. In a final fight over a bottomless pit down into the Abyss, the PCs defeated Oublivae and managed to escape her realm back to reality.

There, the PCs hurried to gather information and resources necessary to stop Tsien Chiang's ritual to summon and control the Hungering Dark.

Across four locations in and above Faerûn, the PCs fought against Tsien Chiang, liberating the power of the gods Auril, Corellon, Lolth, and Sehanine that she'd stolen, destroying her magic hearts, then finally defeating the sorceress moments before the Hungering Dark arrived in Faerûn.

Though Tsien Chiang was stopped, the Hungering Dark was freed from Carceri and lost somewhere between the planes.

Handout 1: The Story So Far… (Continued)

EPIC5~1

The PCs embarked on a daring plan to re-imprison the Hungering Dark. Powering the Calimemnon crystal using the djinn Calim and efreet Memnon, and firing a bolt of chaotic spellplague energy at the Hungering Dark using the Pandemonium Stone, the PCs were able to weaken the Hungering Dark and gain its attention.

Before they could fully imprison it, however, Oublivae (who had only staged her previous death) interfered. She had been secretly using holes in the plaguelands to turn pieces of Faerûn into the Barrens layer of the Abyss. The Demon Queen met her final end at the PC's hands, which forced Shar to reveal her guiding hand upon events. She struck directly at the prison, scattering the weakened Hungering Dark in shreds across the nations, then fled away.

EPIC5~2

Shar and the Cult of the Dragon used the Hungering Dark to recreate the Rage of Dragons from the dracorage mythal in the Far North. There the PCs discovered portals fueling a dark ritual in a Dread Realm. The portals led to several major cities under assault by dragons and dracoliches.

The PCs saved each of the cities in turn, discovering the Cult of the Dragon's plan to resurrect Sammaster and transform him into a draconic god of death. Finally, the PCs broke into Shar's Dread Realm where the Cult of the Dragon worked their ritual of apotheosis. In an epic struggle that tore asunder the Dread Realm then spilled into the skies over Baldur's Gate, the PCs not only slew Sammaster but saved the souls of tens of thousands.

EPIC5~3

The PCs were asked to speak at a council of the gods concerning Shar's crimes. There, the PCs greatly impressed the gods, many receiving invitations to become exarchs. Shar declared that the Council could demand nothing of her and sent angelic servants to rebuke the PCs for their defiance of her.

When the PCs returned, they learned that Shar had initiated two apocalyptic plans that would win Netheril the war that very day. She was taking control of Entropy, the Great Nothing, Devourer of Gods, a gigantic living sphere of annihilation, while also creating a neverending horde of seemingly invincible shades. The PCs stopped both plans, then discovered that Telamont Tanthul, Most High Prince of Shade, was secretly performing a ritual to animate the Ordulin Maelstrom.

In order to destroy the Ordulin Maelstrom once and for all, the PCs had to obtain a star from Amaunator and violently ride it down into the Maelstrom. The explosion caused massive destruction, but the PCs were only successful after a desperate battle against Telamont Tanthul, both of Shar's Avatars, Dark Dancer and Nightsinger, and a vile curse of nemesis cast by Shar upon them.

HANDOUT 2: ARTIFACTS

Each of these items can be used without taking up an item slot or hindering the use of the character's normal items. Each artifact also has a major hidden benefit during one of the encounters during the adventure, manifesting a powerful ability in theme for the artifact which will make that encounter much easier.

Codex of Infinite Planes

Sandwiched between the heavy covers of this outsized volume are uncountable pages of metal with a dizzying array of images of symbols inscribed upon them.

Property
You cannot be unwillingly removed from play.

Property
You gain a +5 bonus to all skill checks.

Power (teleportation) • **Encounter** (minor action)
Effect: You teleport up to 10 squares.

Power (teleportation) • **Encounter** (immediate interrupt)
Trigger: You are targeted by an attack.
Effect: You teleport up to 5 squares and become insubstantial until the end of your next turn.

Power (teleportation) • **Daily** (move action)
Effect: You and all allies within 5 squares teleport up to 10 squares.

Iron Fortress of Intellect

This iron helm was crafted by Moradin to protect the mind. The dwarven runes covering it warn intruders away, both politely and not so politely.

Property
You gain resist 30 psychic.

Property
You cannot be dominated or forced to attack yourself or allies.

Power • **At-Will** 1/round (free action)
Trigger: An enemy makes an attack against your Will defense.
Effect: The enemy takes 30 damage.

Power (healing) • **Encounter** (no action)
Trigger: You start your turn dazed, stunned, or unconscious.
Effect: You regain hp equal to your healing surge value. Remove the dazed, stunned, and unconscious conditions.

Power • **Daily** (minor action)
Effect: Attacks automatically miss your Will defense (even on a natural 20) until the end of your next turn or you are bloodied, whichever comes later.

Necklace of Tears

This necklace is made from a string of blue tear-dropped astral diamonds, symbols of Ilmater.

Property
You gain 3 healing surges.

Property
When you spend a healing surge, one ally within 10 squares regains hp equal to your surge value.

Power • **At-Will** 1/round (free action)
Trigger: An ally within 10 squares of you fails a saving throw against a harmful save ends effect.
Effect: You transfer the harmful effect to yourself.

Power • **Encounter** (free action)
Trigger: An ally within 10 squares of you is reduced to 0 hit points or fewer.
Effect: Before the ally takes the damage, you spend a healing surge, regaining no hp, but triggering the property for spending a healing surge. The triggering ally also gains temporary hp equal to your healing surge value.

Power • **Daily** (minor action)
Target: One dead or dying ally adjacent to you.
Effect: You restore the ally to life and the ally removes all failed death saves. The ally regains hp equal to its bloodied value and may make a saving throw against all effects that a save can end.

Gauntlet of Vigilance

This gauntlet was worn by Helm, the Vigilant One. Before his death, he was the protector and watcher of the gods, and the gauntlet was his symbol of authority.

Property
Enemies you have marked cannot choose to remove that marked condition. If you have a defender aura, enemies in the aura cannot teleport.

Property
You gain a +10 bonus to your healing surge value.

Power • **At-Will** 1/round (free action)
Trigger: An ally within 3 squares of you is damaged by an attack.
Effect: The damage is redirected from the ally to you.

Power (healing) • **Encounter** (no action)
Trigger: You would be reduced to 0 hp or fewer.
Effect: You regain hp equal to your healing surge value before taking the damage.

Power • **Daily** (no action)
Trigger: You would die from damage or a failed death save.
Effect: You instead remove all failed death saves and gain immunity to all damage until the end of your next turn.

Arrow of Fate

An ancient shard of the fallen dragon god Io's physical form, the Arrow of Fate is a powerful weapon.

Property

Your gain blindsight 20.

Property

You gain combat advantage on all enemies and do not grant combat advantage to anyone.

Power • At-Will 1/round (free action)

Trigger: You hit an enemy within 20 squares with an area or ranged attack.

Effect: Your allies gain combat advantage and a +2 power bonus to attack rolls against that enemy until the start of your next turn.

Power • Encounter (free action)

Trigger: You miss with a ranged or area attack roll.

Effect: You may reroll the attack roll. You must take the new result.

Power • Daily (minor action)

Target: One ally within 20 squares who died since the end of your last turn.

Effect: The target is restored to life at their bloodied value in hit points and removes all failed death saving thows.

Wings of Light

This ancient stole is inscribed in Netherese runes praising Amaunator. Those who wear it blaze with the light of the sun.

Property

You gain resist 30 necrotic and resist 30 radiant.

Property

You may fly (hover) at speed 8 or increase your flight speed by 2 when you fly using some other source.

Power (healing) **• At-Will** (minor action)

Effect: You may make a saving throw and may spend a healing surge to regain hp, regaining an additional 30 hp.

Power (fire) **• Encounter** (free action)

Trigger: You hit an enemy within 10 squares.

Effect: The enemy gains ongoing 50 fire damage until you are reduced to 0 hp or fewer. Every time the enemy makes an attack that includes you, the ongoing damage increases by 50, to a maximum of ongoing 200 damage.

Power (healing) **• Daily** (no action)

Trigger: You would be reduced to 0 hp or fewer.

Effect: You do not take the damage. You are instead restored to full hit points.

Handout 3: Mantles of Authority

The gods may help awaken the power of the gods within the PCs. When a mantle of authority is chosen by a PC, all PCs gain the benefit from that mantle as long as the choosing PC is alive. Each of these mantles can be used without taking up an item slot or hindering the use of the character's normal items. Each mantle also has a minor hidden benefit during one of the encounters during the adventure, manifesting a useful ability in theme with the mantle.

Perfect Memory
You have ascended past mortal limits of mental capacity.

Property
You gain combat advantage on all enemies who have already acted in an encounter.

Power • Encounter (free action)
Trigger: You miss with every attack of an encounter or daily power.
Effect: You gain no benefits from using the power, as if you never used it at all, and do not expend the power. Your action is still spend.

Power • Daily (free action)
Target: You end your turn and have expended all of your class encounter attack powers.
Effect: You recharge a class encounter attack power.

Fist of the Gods
You smite your enemies with your divine presence.

Property
Whenever you would roll for damage, you may choose not to roll some or all of the damage dice and instead replace damage dice with static values as follow:
D4 = 3, D6 = 4, D8 = 5, D10 = 7, D12 = 8
Ex: 4d8+27=(4 x 5)+27 = 47 (usual average 45) or 4d12 + 6d6 + 40 = (4 x 8) + (6 x 4) + 40 = 96 (usual average 87)

Power • Encounter (minor action)
Effect: Melee 5 (one creature); 30 damage.

Power • Daily (standard action)
Effect: Melee 5 (one creature); 100 damage.

Mastery of Time and Space
You walk between worlds and realities.

Property
You gain a +2 bonus to speed and may increase the distance of any teleport you make by up to 2 squares.

Power • Encounter (free action)
Trigger: You roll initiative.
Effect: You either gain a +5 power bonus to initiative or can shift up to 2 squares.

Power • Daily (no action)
Trigger: You end your turn and could not take any actions that turn (due to being unconscious, dominated, or dead, for example).
Effect: On the next turn this encounter in which you can act, you gain an extra minor, move, and standard action, but you cannot spend an action point on that turn.

Instant Death Technique
With enough power, every swing beheads and every spell disintegrates.

Property
Whenever you hit an enemy and deal damage to it, if it has 30 hp or fewer afterwards, then it dies.

Power • Encounter (no action)
Trigger: You hit an enemy, but do not score a critical hit.
Effect: If a d20 result 2 higher than you rolled would score a critical hit, you instead score a critical hit.

Power • Daily (no action)
Trigger: You hit a bloodied enemy, but do not score a critical hit.
Effect: Your attack deals extra damage equal to the extra dice you would normally roll when you score a critical hit. This attack cannot be turned into a critical hit.

Fires of Creation
The fires of creation itself burn in your veins.

Property
Whenever you spend an action point, you gain an extra move action on your next turn.

Power (healing) • Encounter (no action)
Trigger: You start your turn.
Effect: You regain 30 hit points and may make a saving throw.

Power (fire, radiant) • Daily (no action)
Trigger: You are damaged.
Effect: Adjacent enemies take 50 fire and radiant damage.

Secret of Immortality
Refuse to die with enough conviction.

Property
You gain a +10 bonus to your healing surge value.

Power (healing) • Encounter (minor action)
Effect: Spend a healing surge to regain hp equal to your bloodied value.

Power • Daily (no action)
Trigger: You fail a saving throw.
Effect: You instead succeed at the saving throw.

HANDOUT 4: BLESSINGS

The PCs gain a number of blessings from their allied gods. Each PC may choose their own blessings, based on the number of successes the PC personally obtained from the council of the gods in *EPIC5-3*.

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BLESSINGS

( ) +3 to all skill checks
( ) +1d12 damage on crits
( ) +2 bonus on saves
( ) +2 bonus to all defenses while bloodied
( ) -5 to attack rolls against your allies
( ) +5 surge value
At any time as no action you may expend a blessing to regain 2 healing surges, remove a failed death save, change a failed save into a success, regain hp equal to your healing surge value, or turn a critical hit against you into a normal hit.

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Handout 5: Final Sacrifice

Dead PCs who cannot return to the fight may choose to permanently sacrifice themselves so their souls can fight on. They can never be resurrected, by any means, but they can help their allies to survive the fight.

Each round on their turn they gain one of the following abilities (so 4 rounds after death they have all 4 powers and can use all 4 each round) which can then be used on any other turn:

- 1/round roll a d20: you may replace an ally or enemy d20 roll just made with your d20 result.
- 1/round an ally deals an extra 50 damage.
- 1/round an ally regains 50 hp.
- 1/round an ally can make a saving throw.