

## Princes of the Apocalypse



The strangers:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Keothi – goliath barbarian (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

*Session 1: 3-12-2016*

**Chapter 6 (you know, the beginning...)**

### **Trouble in Red Larch**

The party travelled with a caravan to the town of Red Larch in the Dessarin Valley. The caravan stopped at Red Larch to sell their goods at market day in 3 days. After some discussion with the storage keeper the characters ended up at the Inn.

Trycara and Keothi had some lunch and asked about the crumblecake which is apparently available at the bakery.

Gale, Zeratul, and Dobby arrive at the inn and ask for a room. Kaylessa is the innkeeper. Gale and Trycara ask about crumblecake and are directed to the baker (Mangobarl Lorren).

Zeratul and Dobby rent an upstairs room for 5sp.

The characters meet in the dining room for lunch.

Trycara leaves for the bakery and purchases some crumblecake. Mangobarl tells Trycara about a ghost sighting by the at the tombs in the nearby hills with possible treasure. The Mhandyvver grandkids know more about the sighting. He does not know about any moon elves but will look into the matter.

Zeratul and Dobby go to Tarnlar's clothier and speaks with the shopkeeper (Helvur). Zeratul asks about her contact in the Lord's Alliance who is the shopkeeper's wife, Maegla Tarnlar. Zeratul asks if they know about the whereabouts of a missing Waterdhavian noblewoman. Four

children run in and report about a dwarf near lance rock saying to keep away because of the plague. Dobby asks about Haeleeya and is directed to her house.

Gale goes to the bakery and orders some crumblecake. Learns that the Pel Mhandyvver's grandkids have discovered a haunted tomb with a ghost. He goes to Mhandyvver's Poultry to investigate more. Grandmother Minnie said to stay away from the place. Mangobarl Lorren hasn't seen who Gale is looking for.

Zeratul and Dobby go to the the bakery and learn about the tomb.

Dobby goes to the home of Haeleeya's bath house and dress shop and asks about the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. Haeleeya will investigate and get back in a couple of days.

Everyone goes to the tomb as separate groups. Gale and Zeratul are hidden, but Trycara, Keothi, and Dobby are visible. Trycara finds a camp with a half ogre and a goblin.

Trycara and Keothi attack and surprise the half ogre and goblin. Trycara fells the goblin. Then Zeratul and Dobby show up and assist finishing off the half ogre. Gale saunters in a round later.

We enter the tomb and encounter a spectre which tells "all intruders to leave." We beat a hasty retreat and return to the inn for dinner.

Trycara drops the severed goblin head on the back stairs of the bakery, godfather style, then joins the party for dinner at the inn.

At dinner Kaylessa tells us that Lance Rock has an evil presence which may be behind some of the strange weather around town. She will pay us 50gp for the party to investigate.

## **Lance Rock**

After an uneventful night in the inn, the party set out for Lance Rock. Bypassing signs warning of death from disease, the party proceeds into a network of natural caves underground.

In the first room there was a single zombie which was quickly dispatched. Zeratul used the create bonfire cantrip to light our way.

In the second room rocks fell on the head of Gale. Then two zombies fell from the ceiling. The party quickly dispatched these zombies.

In the third room there were three zombies (dressed as a bear, a jester, and a woman). The party quickly dispatched these zombies.

In the fourth room, there was a zombie sewing together body parts. We attacked and 5 severed hands crawled from the baskets and attacked us. Trycara used a thunderwave spell to murder the hands. In addition to the zombie there were 4 skeletons and a wizard. The wizard bellows, "Bow before the Lord of Lance Rock! Me! Behold my dark terrors!"

Gale and Zeratul took to the air and quickly discovered the skeletons had bows. Gale was knocked out by arrows and brought back by Dobby with a cure light wounds spell. After killing the skeletons, the party chased the wizard into another room.

In the room the party saw a pedestal fashioned of severed arms arranged to clutch one another in a cone. Cradled in the uppermost hand is a glowing crystal sphere. A dark sigil with an eyelike slit floats above the sphere.



The party approaches the pedestal to investigate it. “Can’t you see it? It’s the Eye! It sees your every move! Don’t you fear it?” they hear from the far side of the room. Bearkiller feels a little strange but shakes it off. “Leave now! The Lord of Lance Rock commands it!”

Zeratul located the wizard with detect magic then literally lit a fire under his ass. The wizard jumps out from behind the purple draperies. He disappears and appears in front of Zeratul. With a touch of his shadowy hand he drains life force from Zeratul and she falls. Dobby revives her with his second spell. The wizard is promptly overwhelmed and murdered. With a death wail he disappeared in a wisp of black flame.

After searching the room, we found the following loot which was split amongst the party:

- (Trycara) Orb is a driftglobe – small sphere that hovers and follows you around, it will emanate light per daylight spell, useable once per day.
  - This small sphere of thick glass weighs 1 pound. If you are within 60 feet of it, you can speak its command word and cause it to emanate the light or daylight spell. Once used, the daylight effect can't be used again until the next dawn.
  - You can speak another command word as an action to make the illuminated globe rise into the air and float no more than 5 feet off the ground. The globe hovers in this way until you or another creature grasps it. If you move more than 60 feet from the hovering globe, it follows you until it is within 60 feet of you. It takes the shortest route to do so. If prevented from moving, the globe sinks gently to the ground and becomes inactive, and its light winks out
- (Zeratul) Wand of magic missiles with 7 charges
- 165 sp
- 78 gp

- 4 50gp gems

After searching the fourth room we discovered some alcohol, embalming fluid, and tools. Some of the dead bodies have distinctive clothing that looked similar to what was sold at Tarnlar's clothier.

On the way out the party looks in the 5<sup>th</sup> room where there are 12 corpses leaning against the wall. Three skeletons come to unlife and attack. The skeletons gang rushed Keothi and knocked him out. Dobby stabilizes him just before the skeletons knocked him out. The party dispatched the rest. Trycara healed both with a potion.

The party returned to the Swinging Sword inn. We reported our adventure back to Kaylessa, collected the 50gp reward.

Trycara went to the bakery and spoke with Mangobarl. Learned that "the Believers" are a gang running the town. The network should put them in their place. Ilmeth Waelvur, who runs the wagon works, is a believer. The Believers have been known to "take care" of people that aren't inline. For example, Drouth's fine Poultry received a mysterious message to stop doing business with the town of Amphail. Mangobarl mentioned that Gale is in the network and may be able to assist with the mission.

The party rested overnight and is now level 2.

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### ***Session 2: 8/13/2016***

Trycara spoke with Steiner Thistlehair (Zentarim contact) to find out more about "the believers." Steiner said to meet at "The Helm at High Sun" (inn) tonight.

Zeratul and Dobby found a cellar door behind the wagon works. Behind the door is a tunnel. After travelling 200 feet through rough tunnel, they emerged into a natural cavern from the north. Zeratul lifted 5 robes and a waterskin. On the east of the cavern is a door. Beyond the door is a manufactured tunnel with doors on the right and left. The doors are made of stone with reliefs that depict a stern dwarf in chain mail. After getting nervous they retreat to the inn.

Trycara and Gale go to the Helm to meet with Steiner. Mango told us that the believers are causing problems for the network. Steiner shares that Ilmeth Welter and other hooded figures have been seen going through the cellar door late at night. They went back to the Swinging Sword inn to pick up Keothi.

Keothi and Dobby are having a drinking contest at the Swinging Sword with Zeratul watching. Trycara and Gale walk in. The party discusses the cellar door and decides to investigate.

The party puts on the robes and approaches the cellar door at midnight. They light a torch and travel to the cavern, then through the door to the hallway with two doors. Gale explores the hallway looking for traps. After passing the doors, a cage falls from the ceiling, catching Gale

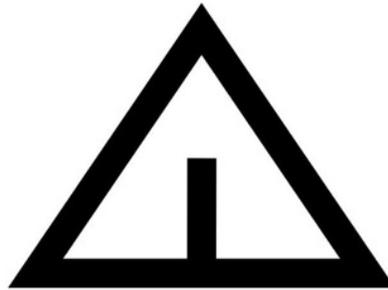
and trapping his leg for 7 damage. Then Dobby follows and is trapped in a second cage. Trycara passes a healing potion to Gale with a mage hand.

Keothi lifts the second cage and frees Dobby. Then Keothi hands off the cage to Dobby and lifts up the first cage and frees Gale. Gale crawls to freedom and drinks a healing potion.

A third cage falls next to the doors trapping the party in the corridor. Keothi lifts the third cage and everyone crawls under, back to the doors.

Zeratul opens the north door. Zeratul and Gale proceed down a corridor that turns right then opens into a room. The room contains three corpses and two giant rats. Gale kills two rats, one with an arrow and one with his sword. Then three more rats emerged from the walls and attack Gale. The rest of the party runs up and kills two and Gale kills the final one. Dobby heals Gale and Keothi with Cure Wounds.

Gale examines the three corpses. There is a triangle symbol carved into the skull. Gale recognizes it as the symbol for the element of Earth.



*Figure 1 Black Earth Elemental Cult Symbol*

After another corridor the party finds a room containing a 1 foot rock that hovering 3 feet from the floor. Zeratul pokes the rock with a 10 foot pole, and it drops to the ground. The party discovers that anything in the center of the room will levitate.

The party continues down the hallway and finds a door. Behind the door is a 50 foot square room with three doors. In the middle of the room is a reassembled broken statue of a dwarf held together in a wooden frame. In front of the statue on the floor is a dagger, coins, and gems.

Zeratul, picks up the magical dagger. The pommel has the word “reszur.” It is a +1 dagger with a command word to enable a 20’ light. The party finds 440cp, 253sp, 97gp, and 80gp in gems next to the statue.

The party opens the right hand door and finds another 50x50 room. There is a door on the opposite wall with a viewing slit with 10 pull chains. In the center of a room is a 8 foot tall stone. A small humanoid is pinned to the floor with rocks. Trycara blocks the viewing slit by hanging a cloth with a mage hand and starts removing rocks from the small humanoid.

We release the humanoid, Braelen, an 11 year old human. He was being punished by his father, Rothar, for not delivering the message to Ilmeth Welter two days ago. Say “a believer approaches” to avoid traps (already sprung). We send Braelin to the Inn with coin for food.

Displease not the delvers. Braelen says that the believers guard the delvers to make sure no one disturbs them. The stones are three doors behind us. He says the dwarf statue is a delver and we give tribute to honor them.

The party opens the left hand door.

There is 40 foot corridor with an old man whittling a stick. He says “do not hurt me and do not provoke the wrath of the delvers. Stones in the next room may move when no one is watching. They warn us when we make bad choices. Don’t move the stones and give tribute to the delver statue in the other room. And don’t make the priests mad, either. The priest is almost always there interpreting the stones.”

We go through the door. 20’ ceilings. An odd array of some upright and other three stone arches, 6 low stone slabs set against the walls, each has humanoid bones on top, like an open tomb. There is a lantern in the middle of the floor.

As the party enters the room, a “priest”, sticking to the wall like a spider, attacks with some kind of sonic attack doing heavy damage to Keothi, Zeratul, and Dobby. Melee ensues. Magic missiles are stopped by a magic barrier. Zeratul is downed and Dobby heals her. Eventually we take him out, no thanks to Gale missing with every arrow.

Examining the bones, each has a crushed part of the body. Examining the priest, he has the symbol of elemental earth. Find 4 one foot long iron bars. They are Mirabar trade bars worth 5gp each.

We find a secret door that reveals a tunnel that comes out at the stone works. (map #18)

All characters are now level 3.

**Treasure log:**

(Gale) +1 dagger with command word to enable 20’ light.

440cp

253sp

97gp

80gp gems:

- 6 small agates 5gp each.
- 2 moonstones 50gp each.

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*Session 3: 11/19/2016*

The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- ~~Keothi – goliath barbarian (Andrew)~~
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

In a sudden and tragic turn of events, Keothi was struck by a meteorite and is no more.

It is still the middle of the night. After leaving the stone works, we notice 5 townsfolk gathering in the center of town with torches. Zeratul approaches stealthily by rooftop. Ilmeth Welver is there talking about how his shop was broken into.

After a few minutes the other 4 go to the butcher shop. Ilmeth walks down the east street.

The party returns to the Swinging Sword Inn and notices the innkeeper and a purple ninja talking in the common room. Trycara seems to know the purple ninja and has a secret conversation involving a note.

The next day the “party” continues to search for a purpose. Zeratul speaks with Maegdla Tarnlar (runs the clothier, #7) her contact with the Lord’s Alliance. Maegdla asks Zeratul to find a missing delegation. Tarnlar suggested that Zertul visit Marlandro to see if he has heard anything about the missing delegation.

Aki excuses himself and goes to visit Mangobarl with a note which indicates that a delegation from Mirabar to Waterdeep has gone missing. The Zhentarim see an interesting opportunity here to rescue the missing delegates and win the gratitude of the leaders of Mirabar. It should greatly help official and “unofficial” trade. A Zhentarim who wants to prove good faith to the Black Network should lend a helping hand. Mangobarl notes that this is a good opportunity to forge an alliance with the Lord’s Alliance. To fight the enemy of his enemy. He suggested asking at to Marlandro’s barber shop (#17) to see if Aki can learn more.

Dobby visits her Emerald Enclave contact Haeleeya. Haeleeya has learned of the missing delegation and that the moon elf Teresiel is an important Silverymoon diplomat. She has in her possession a pouch of magical seeds she was taking to the abbey of Goldenfields, not far from Red Larch. When planted, these seeds are supposed to grow into a magical grove. We must recover Teresiel and her magical seeds.

Zeratul shows up and visit Marlandro. Marlandro (the town barber) tells Zeratul and Dobby he doesn’t know anything about the missing delegation but that Larmon has found something strange. They go talk with him who happens to be in the barber shop drinking. Larmon (a shepard) tells Zeratul and Dobby that 4 cairns appeared out of nowhere in the Sumer hills.

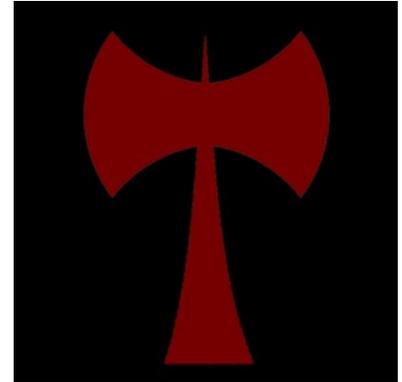
Trycara, Aki, and Gale go to Marlandro (barber). After talking with Larmon they also learn about the cairns. They also find Zomith (female half orc) at the barber shop who encountered the caravan in Beliard, two tendays ago. Larmon agrees to take the “party” to the cairns.

The “party” discusses their shared goal to find the caravan and agrees to work together TEMPORARILY.

The party travels for a half day and Larmon directs the party to a nearby hilltop. On the hilltop are 4 fresh shallow graves covered by stones.

Zeratul uses magic to open the 4 graves:

- Male dwarf dressed in robes – matches robes from Mirabar.
- Female human warrior, red surcoat, black axe – symbol of Mirabar’s army
- Male human warrior, black cloak, stony armor – with the symbol for elemental earth on the back of armor.
- Male human in white robe with black feathers on shoulders – another mark on the clothing. (elemental air - upside down Christmas tree with 3 legs)



They died from arrow wounds or crushing blows. We find tracks, and remnants of a fight. Several miles to the west we can see Red Larch, the long road, and to the north a slender tower circled by large birds.

Larmon knows that the tower is the Feathergale Spire. Knights from Waterdeep (on flying monsters) go to the tower. (hippogriffs)

The party proceeds to the tower.

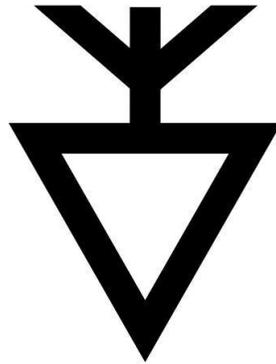


3 Giant vultures with knights on their back fly toward the party with hostile intent.

Battle ensues:

- Aki threw a shuriken with darkness on it and transferred the darkness to the bird.
- Zeratul casts sleep and knocks two of them out of the sky.
- Gale hits one bird with two arrows.
- The remaining bird dives into the darkness in an attempt to rescue two of the knights, but is felled by magic missile and the ninja attack.

One of the knights has a map with indicates the location of the spire, and symbol of elemental air on the map.



*Figure 3 Air Elemental Cult Symbol*

### **The Feathergale Spire**

The party goes toward the spire, located in a canyon with a drawbridge leading to the canyon edge. Zeratul flew over to the tower and made our presence known to 4 people cooking on the drawbridge floor (2<sup>nd</sup> floor). Also on the roof, Zeratul spotted 2 birds and 3 knights.

Surveilling the tower reveals occasional scouting parties of giant vultures mounted by knights and not much else.



Zeratul casts sleep on one of the patrols and the bird falls slowly to the ground. Trycara realizes a featherfall spell was cast. They capture the Feathergale night and begin interrogating him.

Trycara casts detect thoughts and asks if he knows about the missing caravan from Mirabel.  
Knight: "Don't know anything about the caravan" (thoughts are of talking to another knight about the caravan)

Gale: "What is your name and tell us about your organization. Aldrus, member of the Feathergale knights, enthusiasts of flying mounts, like squeaky my pet vulture. Like to hunt, looking for a manticore in the canyon. Noble, honorable, society. HQ is the tower."

Trycara: "Do you know Sara Bellabranta?" (surface thoughts are of a noble in the tower)

Knight: "How do you know Sara?"

Zeratul: "I am only supposed to tell it to her and her alone."

Knight: "Sure we can allow you to visit Sara" (surface thoughts not good)

Dobby: "Have you heard about the circle of the Scarlett moon?"

Knight: "No."

Trycara: "I know you are lying about the disappearance of the caravan from Mirabar, the ones not buried in the cairns."

Knight: "Don't know anything about that. But you can ask our captain, Thurl Merosska."  
(thoughts: image of conversation with another knight & Thurl)

Trycara: "Where are the survivors of the caravan from Mirabor? Talk to the captain."

Zeratul knows that this organization is a bit of an elite hippogriff flying club, known in Waterdeep for being flamboyant. They are not known for any criminal activity.

As useful information is not forthcoming, Aki knocks Aldrus unconscious. Then the bird is killed.

The party goes to the tower to exchange Aldrus for Sara.

Trycara uses her Thaumaturgy to improve intimidation (shake the ground, eyes glowing red, voice is booming).

A small window in the tower opens “This is Sara. What do you want with me? Please don’t hurt Aldrus.”

Trycara: “Come out now and we will not hurt you. Come out within 20 seconds or Aldrus dies. 15 seconds... 10 seconds... 5 seconds...”

The drawbridge lowers and the countdown stops. Two knights one a female and other a taller more powerful male knight. After a short conversation, Sara nervously walks halfway out but refuses to come all the way across.

Male knight: “How do we know you will keep your word and return Aldrus?”

Trycara: “Sara you have our word that we will not harm you and will only return you to your parents.”

Sara comes all the way over and Aldrus was released. He shuffles his way across the drawbridge. As the party backs away 7 flying creatures with mounted knights attack.

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#### ***Session 4: 12/2/2016***

The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

Swooping up from the canyon 4 hippogriffs and 3 giant vultures each mounted by a knight fly into view.

Zeratul and Gale each cast sleep and put a hippogriff to sleep and it falls into the valley. Gale runs back and takes cover. Trycara uses thunderwave to knock a hippogriff out from under one of the knights leaving the knight in mid-air. The party notices webbing on the arms and see the knight begin gliding towards the plateau.

Thurl Merroksa (the knight leader) runs up and casts ray of frost on Trycara. Several rays of frost shot by knights miss other party members.

Aki drags Sara back to some rocks and takes cover. Zeratul shot a magic missile at a knight and took him out. Gale took out another hippogriff with sleep and it falls too. Trycara uses a second thunderwave to push the two opponents on the drawbridge. Aki casts darkness on one of the flying knights, who lands on the plateau. Zeratul cast Ice Knife on one of the vultures and damages it.

While initially the combat goes well for the party, the Feathergale knights begin to overwhelm. One of the knights lands on the drawbridge and knocks Trycara unconscious.

Gale ran forward and used thunderwave to hit a knight and mounted vulture. The knight was pushed off the cliff. Aki runs up and finishes off the damaged vulture with a flurry of blows.

Then knights surround Aki and Dobby and knock them unconscious. With most of the party down, Zeratul uses misty step then invisibility to escape from the knights.

Gale is surrounded on all sides. In a moment of quick thinking he disengages with Thurl and swan dives off the drawbridge. He uses his Air Genasi levitation to break his fall.

Gale is approached by 5 aarakocra who offer to help. Gale asks if they are associated with the Spire. The aarakocra: "No, the knights of the tower are disturbing the balance. They are in



Figure 4 Feathergale Knight

league with the evil forces of air and must be stopped.” While invisible, Zeratul circled back, noticed Gale and the aarakocra. After listening to the conversation, she eventually revealed herself to Gale and the aarakocra.

The aarakocra share that the captured party members will be healed then thrown off the top of the spire as a sacrifice to Yan-C-Bin, the Evil Prince of Elemental Air. Gale, Zeratul, and the aarakocra hatch a plan to rescue the party: They will sneak in from the top of the tower during the night and open a can of whoop ass on the tower.



Figure 5 Thurl Merrosska

Meanwhile... Trycara, Aki, and Dobby wake up inside the spire in a large room, with their limbs bound to chairs arranged around a large table. The knights' leader, Thurl Merrosska, interrogates the characters, and threatens the party with becoming a sacrifice. He shows particular interest in the Zeratul and asks the party why they are looking for the caravan from Miribar. They un gag the three of them. Trycara says nothing and just glares at him with her red eyes. Aki and Dobby throw insults at Thurl.

“I tire of this. Prepare them for the offering,” says Thurl and leaves letting his knights watch over them.

Gale and Zeratul take a long rest. The aarakocra watch the spire and early in the morning while it is still dark they set out flying for the top of the spire. Gale is carried there by two aarakocra.

After arriving at the tower, the aarakocra do their aerial chicken dance in a farty manner and summoned an air elemental named Flat (short for flatulence). Zeratul was leading them in this dancing frenzy.

Gale (as every good rogue should) checks for traps on the stairs and quietly goes down. On the first level down, he finds 4 doors. In the first room we find Thurl Merrosska sleeping. We subdue and tie him to his bed. Gale searches the writing desk and find a cylindrical leather case containing two letters. The first reads as follows:

*Merosska,*

*We are pleased to hear about the outcome of your altercation with the Black Earth cult, and we praise you for the capture of one of their prisoners. This noblewoman from Waterdeep has an interesting tale to*

*tell, and we shall enjoy interrogating her further. Keep a close watch on the Sacred Stone Monastery. I want to know what our enemy is planning next.*

*Your beloved queen,  
Aerisi Kalinoth*

The second is a scouting report from Windharrow.

*Merosska,*

*As you suspected the Black Earth cult has allies. On a recent scouting mission, we spotted Miraj Vizann at Rivergard Keep. No doubt the mud sorcerer was seeking the services of Grimjaw and his mercenary band. I know not for what purpose. We will continue our surveillance for 2 more days and then return to Knifepoint Gully.*

*Windharrow*

The party loots a chest containing a sack of 320gp, 1 potion, and 2 scrolls. In the second room, we killed two sleeping knights and found a feathered cloak (cult member garb) and 67 GP.

The third room is another bedroom but this time empty. They find 7GP and 2 feathered cloaks. The fourth room is also empty and the party takes 97 GP of treasure and 2 feathered cloaks.

The party descends to the second level and finds another circular room with a set of double doors. Gale listens at the doors and hears people talking about “how long until the offering.” The party decides to go kill everyone else in the tower before breaking in, so reinforcements can’t arrive.

The third level has three single doors and one double door with a lever next to it. The party suspects the double door may lead to the drawbridge room. The stairs go down further. Zeratul thinks the stables are down there.

After listening, the party enters the quiet rooms. The first room contains lots of plants growing in a solarium. The second room is the kitchen.

The third room contains 4 double bunk beds with 8 people sleeping. They appear to be domestic workers. Gale decides to leave them alone.

The fourth room contains one knight and two lackeys. On opening the door the guards are surprised. Gale and Zeratul both cast sleep. The 2 lackeys fall asleep. Flat (air elemental) slams the knight and the 5 aarakocras finish him.

The aarakocras are not stealthy and squawk through the whole thing, causing the sleeping kitchen workers next door to have nightmares about vengeful chickens. Everyone looks out the door and they see the kitchen workers coming out. Gale tries to intimidate them and tells them that if they want to live, they need to stay in their room and be quiet. With an astounding 10, the DM decides to give him advantage, and he rolls a 7. Surprisingly, the DM takes mercy and the worker ducks back inside the room.

***DM Note: Actually, Gale failed and they prepared to fight back.***

After a moment, they hear talking and other noises behind the door. Zeratul sticks her head in and tries her own intimidation (check was 23). But she can't get out the words, because a lightly dressed human casts thunderwave (and wakes up the entire tower in the process). Zeratul and Gale both save, as does Wendy. Two aarakocra fail and get slammed into the wall. One dies. Such is the price of 'morals.'

Everyone rolls initiative and decides to let the air elemental go first so it can enter the room and kick ass. He goes into the middle of the room and does a whirlwind attack. One worker is thrown into the wall and hits one guy (another dodges) on the way. Another worker is thrown (another dodges) into the wall and dies. The others take minimal damage. The bunk beds are totaled.

Zeratul throws an ice knife and kills 3 kitchen workers, but not the mage who thunderwaved everyone's asses. The aarakocra (the ones still living) go in to kill the other workers, leaving the mage for Gale. He has advantage and sneak attacks for a grand total of 11 damage. The mage gets up and sees his opponents set up in perfect formation to do another thunderwave. Three more aarakocra die, leaving only one remaining, besides Zeratul. Of course, with 2 thunderwaves, the entire tower is now awake, and the rescue party's strength has been severely diminished.

The remnants of the rescue party position themselves to ambush anyone coming down the stairs. Someone peeks around the corner and the air elemental takes him out.

Meanwhile the prisoners...

Trycara used mage hand to loosen the ropes on Aki. After hearing the first (of two) thunderwaves, two guards left, but Sara and two other guards remained.

The party makes their move. Aki pulled free from the chair. Trycara misty stepped across the room and thunderwaved the two guards. Dobby did his dragon born poison breath on the same two guards. Aki freed himself from his bonds and rushed up to the guards. With a flurry of blows he takes down both guards.

About this time the rest of the party comes up the stairs and the full party is reunited. The party chases down the remaining knight, captures Sara, and finds the parties items stored in the room next to the drawbridge.

The party reaches level 4.

Treasure from this session:

- 491gp
- potion of heroism → Gale
- scroll of beast bond → Dobby
- scroll of skywrite → sell
- 5 feathered cloaks → all

Plus the Treasure log from before:

- 440cp
- 253sp
- 97gp
- 80gp gems:
  - 6 small agates 5gp each.
  - 2 moonstones 50gp each.

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### ***Session 5: 1/15/2017***

The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

#### **A quick recap on the mission...**

Mirabar delegation (caravan) is missing.

Mangobarl (crumblecake guy) gave mission to recover people from the delegation.

Larmon (shepherd) led us to graves. Graves matched Mirabar, elemental earth & elemental air.

#### **Back at the spire...**

Trycara takes revenge by killing the final guard knight. The party fetches Thurl from upstairs and ties up Sara. We leave both in the great hall, guarded by two aarakocra and Aki.

The party searches the bottom floor and there are supplies but nothing of interest. Searching the rest of the tower they find 2 healing potions and a scroll of knock.

Zeratul uses sending scroll to let the Lord's Alliance know that she has Sara. Message back they are sending someone to collect Sara and to keep her safe. Zeratul takes off to deliver Sara.

Interrogation of Thurl proceeds.

Trycara: "What was the purpose of your group in this valley?"

Thurl: "We are aviation enthusiasts"

Trycara: smacks him and asks again.

Thurl: "We are loyal servants of Yan-C-Bin"

Trycara: "What is your current mission?"

Thurl: "We serve the cult"

Trycara: "Which cult?" smacks him

Thurl: "Why should I answer you when you will kill me anyway?"

Trycara: "You can be killed instantly, or perhaps the black network will want to question you?"

Thurl: "At least you aren't one of the other cults like the slow-moving earth cultists. I suppose the mercy of the Zhentarim is better than Aerisi."

Trycara: "Tell us about the caravan from Mirabar that went missing"

Thurl: "They were ambushed by the earth cult. But we got them good."

Trycara: "Did you take out one of their strongholds?"

Thurl: "They killed all but the most noble, but we attacked them and stole Deseyna"

Trycara: "What interest does Aerisi have in Deseyna"

Thurl: "I know not. She is not the true representative of Yan-C-bin. I would be far better."

Trycara: "Where can we find Aerisi? Certainly you would not be distressed if she met with an unfortunate accident?"

Thurl: "I would like nothing better, but Yan-C-bin moves swiftly to those who betray the cult".

Trycara: "How is Windharrow mixed up in this?"

Thurl: "That charmer knows nothing, charming his way into her favor. That band of floutists is a terrible thing to hear."

Trycara: "We need you to mark some locations for us: Riverguard keep, knifepoint gully, and the Sacred Stone Monastery"

Thurl marks the location of the Monastery.

We travel to Red Larch with Sara and Thurl as prisoners.

We visit Mangobarl and repeat what we have learned. Mangobarl suggests that we take the prisoners to Nalaskur Thaelond at the Bargewright Inn. To pass the gates you may want to ask for Chalaska Muruin (the senior sword).

### **Lead summary...**

They discuss the letters found in the tower and what to do next with the many leads. They need to locate the following:

- Sacred Stone Monastery – black earth cult
- Rivergard Keep – Miraj Vizann (the Genasi mud sorcerer) has been seen there. Gale wants revenge on him because of a robbery.
- Knifepoint Gully – last known location of Windharrow (half-moon elf bandit leader). Trycara shares that the black network wants him dead.
- TBD - Aerisi Kalinoth (air queen?). She has captured noblewoman Deseyna Majarra of Waterdeep, who is a member of the caravan and should be returned to the Lord's Alliance.
- Bargewright Inn (on the map) – Nalaskur Thaelond (Zentharim contact)

The party spent the night at the inn and embarked for the town of Bargewright Inn.

The party encountered Habrem Thornwatcher, who they identify as a priest of Tyr (the god of justice). He and his pilgrims are going to visit Lady Stormbanner at Summit Hall to become Knights of Samular, dedicated to the justice of Tyr.

### **Ambush!**

In the afternoon, the party is ambushed by water cultists. The party manages to kill the mage and all but two warriors. We interrogate the warriors:

warriors: "We just work for for him. We'll tell you everything."

Trycara: "Who do you work for?"

warriors: "Jolliver Grimjaw"

Trycara: "Is Grimjaw with the water cult?"

warriors: "We don't know but he is in charge of the Riverguard Keep"

Trycara: "Where is that on our map?"

warriors: They indicate where it is located on the map.

Trycara: "Why are you attacking us?"

warriors: "That's what the priest said to do. The dead one over there. We don't know his name."

Trycara: "When did this priest decide to attack us?"

warriors: "We have been watching for a few miles and chose this place to attack."

Gale: "How did you come to be recruited by Grimjaw?"

warriors: "We were passing through Womford and we're approached by Shoalar Quanderil, one of Grimjaw's associates. Shoalar looks a bit like you with the blue-ish skin."

Gale: "Are there other (describes earth genasi) people in the cult?"

warriors: "We've seen one, but he is not there now."

Gale: "Eid you see him at riverguard keep?"

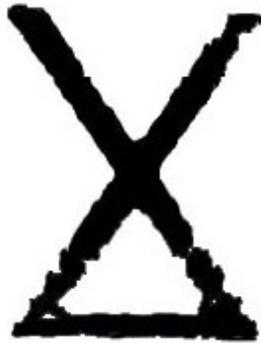
warriors: "Yes."

Aki kills them in a horrific and brutal fashion.

They search the bodies and find nothing of interest other than a couple of sharktooth longswords (1d8; 2d8 vs. unarmored target) (taken by Aki and Trycara) and symbols of elemental water ('X').



WATER CULTIST WARRIOR



*Figure 6 Water Elemental Cult Symbol*

They arrive at Bargewright Inn and ask for Chalaska Muruin. The guards direct us to the inn.

At the inn, they ask for Chalaska. After 30 minutes, she comes to see us.

Trycara: “We were sent by Mangoboro”. They exchange the secret Zhentarim handshake. “We would appreciate an introduction to Nalaskur Thaelond (Zentharrim contact)”.

Chalaska: “Nalaskar is not here, but on a trip for provisions.”

Trycara: explains about Thurl and the air cult and Yan-C-Bin and the water cult ambush.

Chalaska agrees to accept the prisoner and let Nalaskur know that they were here.

Gale: “What is your relationship with Nalaskar?”

Chalaska: “I call the shots. Nalaskar runs the inn.”

Trycara: “Do you know where we can find Knifepoint Gully?”

Chalaska: “No but if Thurl knows we will get it out of him.”

After some conversation, the party learns she doesn’t know Windharrow or Hearld Greyspear or Aerisi Kalinoth.

They spend the night at the inn, and Zeratul catches back up with the party. They see the village of Womford across the river. The party wanders over to Womford looking for Shoalar Quanderil. They are directed to the third dock. Shoalar emerges from the boat. He is a plump water genasi.

Trycara spins a tale about how we are in trouble with the law, there is a priest of Tyr after us, and that we are looking for a way out of town with pay.

Shoalar indicates that he is escorting stuff up the Dessarin river. He offers 20sp for the job. We spend the afternoon loading provisions, then depart upriver to Rivergard Keep. Pike, a halfling thug, and two others join for the journey.

After a day and a half they see Rivergard Keep, a small castle overlooking the river. There are white banners with a blue gauntlet (Jolliver Grimjaw's banner). We pull up to the dock and unload the cargo. Shoalar puts in a good word with Jolly and gets the party hired by Grimjaw.

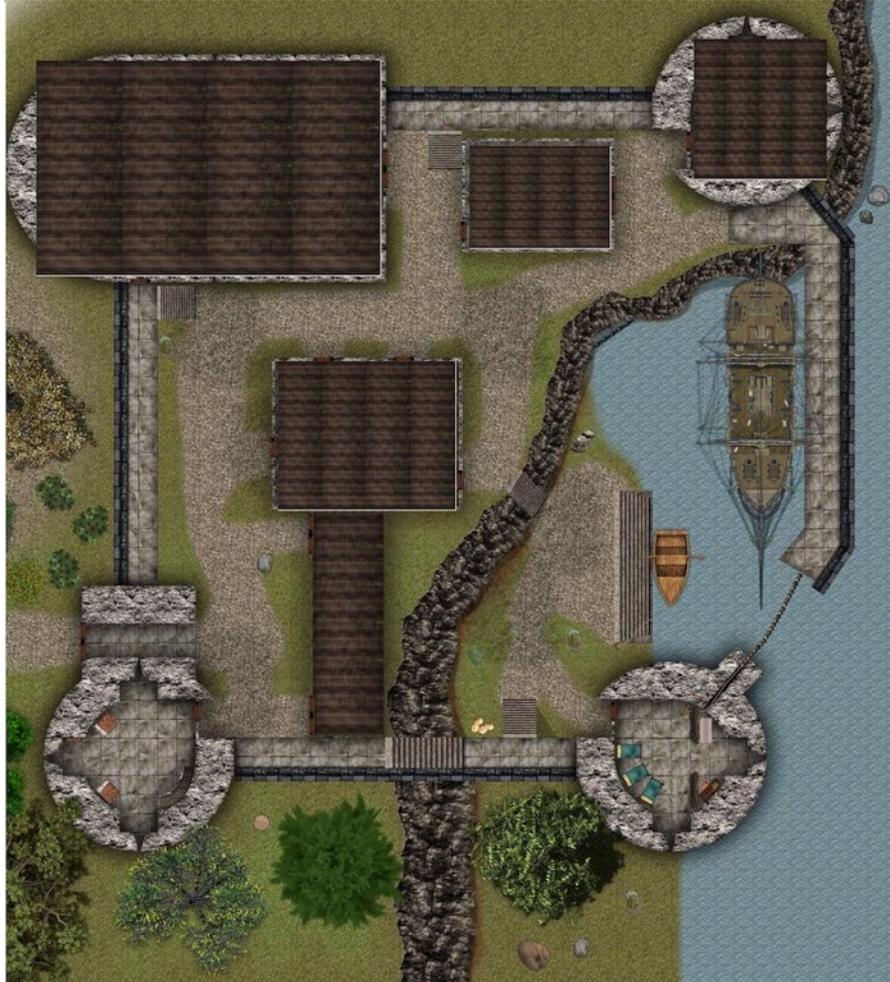


Figure 7 Riverguard Keep

The party is led to the castle yard and into the main room of the keep with Grimjaw (human) sitting in the central chair. After some discussion and questioning, Grimjaw calls for Reash (human with blueish skin, not genasi) and orders him to find us accommodations. They learn that Grimjaw is taxing/controlling transportation on the river and that there are likely cultists in the chapel. The plan is to lay low and cooperate for a few days to see what we can learn.

#### Party Treasure:

- 491gp
- scroll of skywrite → sell
- 2 potions of healing → Gale, Trycara
- potion of heroism → Gale
- scroll of Knock → Zeratul
- 5 feathered cloaks

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## Session 6: 3/25/2017

The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

### A quick recap on the mission...

Mirabar delegation (caravan) is missing.

Mangobarl (crumblecake guy) gave mission to recover people from the delegation.

Larmon (shepherd) led us to graves. Graves matched Mirabar, elemental earth & elemental air.

Graves led the party to the tower where we found the leads below.

The party infiltrated the Rivergard Keep and have been hired by Grimjaw.

### Lead summary...

They discuss the letters found in the tower and what to do next with the many leads. They need to locate the following:

- Sacred Stone Monastery – black earth cult (member of caravan was taken by them)
- Rivergard Keep – water cultist work for Grimjaw. Miraj Vizann (the Genasi mud sorcerer) has been seen there.
- Knifepoint Gully – last known location of Windharrow (half-moon elf bandit leader). Trycara shares that the black network wants him dead.
- TBD - Aerisi Kalinoth (air queen?). She has captured noblewoman Deseyna Majarra of Waterdeep, who is a member of the caravan and should be returned to the Lord's Alliance.
- DONE Bargewright Inn (on the map) – Nalaskur Thaelond (Zentharrim contact)

The party has infiltrated the Riverguard Keep. They get a tour from Reash showing the barracks / privy / armory. The barracks contain two available bunks, and wants us to work on repairing the SE tower near the water. Akinari stays behind in the barracks with the party gear while the rest of the party goes to the tower.

Upon arriving at the tower, Gale barges in to the lower floor. Reash and 3 water cult warriors are in there. Reash directs us to the roof of the tower to do some construction. While working, the party observes 4-6 human guards on the walls and people walking around between buildings.

At sunset the party goes to the main hall for dinner. 10-15 people are eating. Grimjaw is seated at the central table with a human female with bluish skin. Shoalar calls us over to another table. Shoalar invites us to go on the river with him tomorrow and we agree.

Akinari sneaks out to examine the Keep. First he examines the NE building, which is some sort of chapel. Then some figures exit the main hall walking south on the west wall. Three humans, one female in robes, walks down the stairs toward Akinari.

Akinari stealthily climbs up onto the roof of the privy. The humans walk to the chapel and Akinari jumps down from the roof and looks through the window into the chapel.

Temple contains the symbol of elemental water. They make the water symbol and the female monologues, while the other guys look uncomfortable: “Flow where the water takes you.” “Blessings to Olhydra” “there is truth in the deep waters” “We shall wear our enemies down like the waves of the ocean on the beaches” “Olhydra has touched many among us” “Speaks through Gar Shatterkeel” “Those of the eternal flame lack the patience of the wave, but those of the earth understand the greater powers of the elements” “Those of the wind can not be relied upon”

Akinari sneaks over to the SW tower, looks through the arrow slit, and sees four bunks. He does not enable the second floor. Akinari sneaks over to the stable, which is a ruin, then returns to the barracks.

In the morning the party reports to Shoalar’s boat for a day of piracy on the river. Shoalar and two humans (one named Pike) are on the boat. “The plan is to attack the wealthy vessels and protect the others, and rough em up but don’t kill em.”

A boat approaches. Gale and Zeratul cast sleep and knock out the 4 crew members. Zeratul flies to the boat and steers it over to our boat. We tie up alongside and bind the crew. Zeratul and Dobby go into the hold and search.

Dobby finds:

- 150sp – Shoalar took
- 6 blue jaspers (50gp each) – Dobby took

Zeratul finds:

- 2 lbs exotic spices (30gp) – Shoalar took
- 4 lbs cooking spices (8gp) – Shoalar took

Akinari finds:

- 1 set of fine clothes (15gp) – Akinari took as his cut for today, but hands over to Shoalar.
- 1 wheel of cheese (1gp) – Shoalar took
- 5 blue quartz (10gp each) – Akinari took

The Zeratul and Dobby takes everything and tells Shoalar about everything except for the jaspers and quartz. Shoalar says that it’s an OK haul and we should take it all.

Second boat approaches, Zeratul casts sleep, ties up the boat, then realizes that the crew has no weapons. Upon looting the boat, Zeratul finds:

- 5 bottles wine
- flour
- barley

- salted meats

The crew drinks the wine and eats the meats for lunch.

Third boat approaches, it is a gigantic boat that appears to be heavily loaded. Zeratul flies overhead and observes four people: 1 well dressed, 3 common.

Everyone hides below deck except for Shoalar and Akinari. Shoalar hails them for a trade discussion. Akinari mentions that we have wine, cheese, meats, and spices. Nobleperson mentions that we are shipping fine cloth. Shoalar asks how many people are on the boat, and the nobleperson says just us 4. Shoalar says “this will be easy” and attacks.

After Shoalar knocks out the nobleperson and one commoner, a knight and 5 other warriors emerge from the hold. Zeratul, Dobby, and Gale recognize the Knight as Chelaska (the Zhentarim from the Bargewright Inn).

Gale announces that “this boat is protected by the Network, and this robbery must be stopped”. Gale and Dobby cast Thunderwave, knocking the two bandits climbing the rope ladder off.

Shoalar turns around “How dare you turn on me!” and casts tidal wave on 3 PCs and 4 NPCs.

Aki shouts “I’m Zhentarim” and jumps onto the River Maid (Shoalar’s boat).

Gale shouts “Chelaska, call off your goons, we are trying to help!”, then misses Shoalar.

Dobby wild shapes into a Bear.

Shoalar teleports onto the River Maid to escape melee. Trycara, on the River Maid, casts 3 scorching rays at Shoalar.

Aki launches 4 attacks and takes out one of the goons. Gale casts sleep and puts one of the boat goons to sleep. Dobby (bear form) jumps 10’ over the water onto the River Maid. The warriors on the large boat shoot arrows at one of Shoalar’s goons on the River Maid. Zeratul flies over and unloads an entire wand of magic missiles on Shoalar. Shoalar teleports into the river. As a water genasi, he should feel at home. Trycara misty stepped over to Shoalar in the water and cast thunderwave at Shoalar while falling into the water, then surfaced.

Gale take a running jump off the front of the ship landing near Shoalar, finds him underwater and stabs him with his dagger. Dobby wildshapes into a shark, swims over to Shoalar, and bites him. She misses but he is not moving, apparently slain by Gale’s dagger. Gale levitates the body to the surface and Trycara drags them over to the boat.

Chelaska asks the party why they attacked. Zeratul explains that we were undercover. Chelaska points out that Riverguard keep is behind the attacks on the river and they must be stopped. The attacks have cost the Zhentarim dearly, having lost three ships in the past tenday. Chelaska pledges Zhentarim forces (8 sellswords and Chelaska) to take out the keep.

The party loots Shoalar’s body and finds:

- spell book – Zeratul tool
  - o Disguise Self
  - o Mage Armor
  - o Magic Missile
  - o Hold Person
  - o Misty Step
  - o Tidal Wave
  
- leather belt pouch
  - o 10gp
  - o 3 small malachites (10gp each)
  - o potion of healing – drank it

locked chest

- 190sp
- 95gp

cargo hold

- stolen goods
- casks of ale
- salted fish
- 12 bundles of cured pelts (40gp each)

Gale and Dobby stay behind while Trycara (disguised as Boyle, one of the goons), Zeratul, and Aki re-infiltrate the keep with the story that the rest of the crew was attacked and Captain Shoalar, Pike, and the others gave their lives.

Grimjaw seems more concerned about the warriors tracking the raids back to the keep than about vengeance for the loss. Boyle (Trycara) tells Grimjaw that they were not followed.

After eating dinner, Trycara disguises self as an attractive human female. She purposely encounters the guard on the North wall.

Lolly (Trycara): “My name is Lolly and I’m new here. I’ll be working in the kitchen starting tomorrow. Do you protect us?”

Paul: “yep. As long as the coin keeps coming”

Lolly: pumps him for information about the security measures. “what is the safest part of the castle?”

Paul: “The great hall”

Lolly: “How many of you are there?”

Paul: “there are 20 in the barracks and 1d4+6 cultists” (LOL)

Lolly: “What about the blue lady?”

Paul: “That’s Urshnora. She runs the servants. Is surprising that she hired you if Reash likes you. They hate each other. Time for you to go.”

Lolly (Trycara) wanders over to the NE tower. She encounters three guards and they escort her back to the barracks in the great hall.

Lolly (Trycara) encounters three servant women who explain that it isn't safe here as Grimjaw has beaten servants to death before. She asks to use the Privy and is escorted there by a guard. While walking through the mess hall, she signals Aki and Zeratul to come along. Once in the privy, Zeratul casts sleep on the guard and Trycara slits his neck.

Zeratul drags the body over to the water. Along the way the guard on the N wall spots Zeratul. Zeratul pretends to be drunk but the guard doesn't buy it. The guard runs down and figures out that there is foul play. He heads for the barracks. Zeratul puts him to sleep, slits his throat, and throws both bodies into the water. Trycara and Aki are watching from the roof of the SE tower.

Reash emerges from the SE tower, saying that he doesn't know anyone named "Lolly." Reash emerges from the tower with 5 guards. Aki sneaks into the tower to examine the chain mechanism.

A guard discovers Trycara on the roof. Trycara kills him with a scorching ray. More guards run over looking for the source of the commotion. Trycara drops into the water to escape.

The Keep goes on full alert.

**Party Treasure:**

- 596gp
- 190sp
- scroll of skywrite → sell
- 5 feathered cloaks

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**Session 7: 7/9/2017**

The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)



*Figure 8 Riverguard Keep (river entrance)*

**Recap:** We ended with your Zhentarium contacts offering help to take out the bandits in Riverguard Keep. They have been wreaking havoc with trade on the Dessarin River and the network would appreciate clearing them out. You have 8 sellswords and Chelaska to support whatever plan you come up with. Unfortunately, the recon mission has put the keep on alert.

The party takes a long rest to recharge. We have the two boats and the sellswords to work with.

While the party rests Gale and Dobby investigate the underwater gate. Dobby turns into a phirana. The gate is blocking a 30' wide 12' tall cave (6' below water, 6' above water). Dobby swims 100' into the cave and found two rowboats tied to a dock. She goes back for Gale who unlocks the gate and swims in. Gale casts dancing lights then finds a stairs up to the back side of a secret door. On the other side of the door he hears Grimjaw talking with Urshnora about the TPS report. Gale ties the boats to the inside of the gate. Then Gale and Dobby return to the party and report on what they found.

The plan is to sneak the party in through the water gate, assassinate Grimjaw and Urshnora from within the main building. Trycara will cast water breathing on Trycara, Aki, Zeratul, (Gale can breathe underwater, Dobby is a piranha), Chelaska, 6 bandit guards. We will leave the remaining 2 bandits behind to guard the camp.

The party arrives at the spiral staircase. Gale listens at the backside of the door and hears a meeting with Grimjaw, Urshnora, and two more unidentified male voices. The plan is to cast silence, storm the room, and murderize everyone.

Aki casts silence on a coin. Gale opens the secret door and tosses the coin into the center of the room to keep things quiet and prevents Urshnora from casting spells. Gale sneaks into the room and shoots an arrow at Grimjaw. Zeratul steps in and casts a lightning bolt, hitting Grimjaw, Urshnora, and a reaver. Trycara casts fireball hitting everyone and killing one reaver. Dobby casts spike growth in the room. Our minions run into the spike growth, take damage, and stop.

Gale shoots Grimjaw again. Grimjaw turns into a wereboar, and runs to attack Zeratul with a terrible gore of his tusks. Grimjaw misses. Zeratul flies away and is hit as she leaves. She fails her save so may be infected. Zeratul lands by the front door and casts a lightning bolt killing the second reaver and damaging Grimjaw. Trycara casts a fireball killing Urshnora and Grimjaw. Trycara has a wild magic surge and levitates herself.

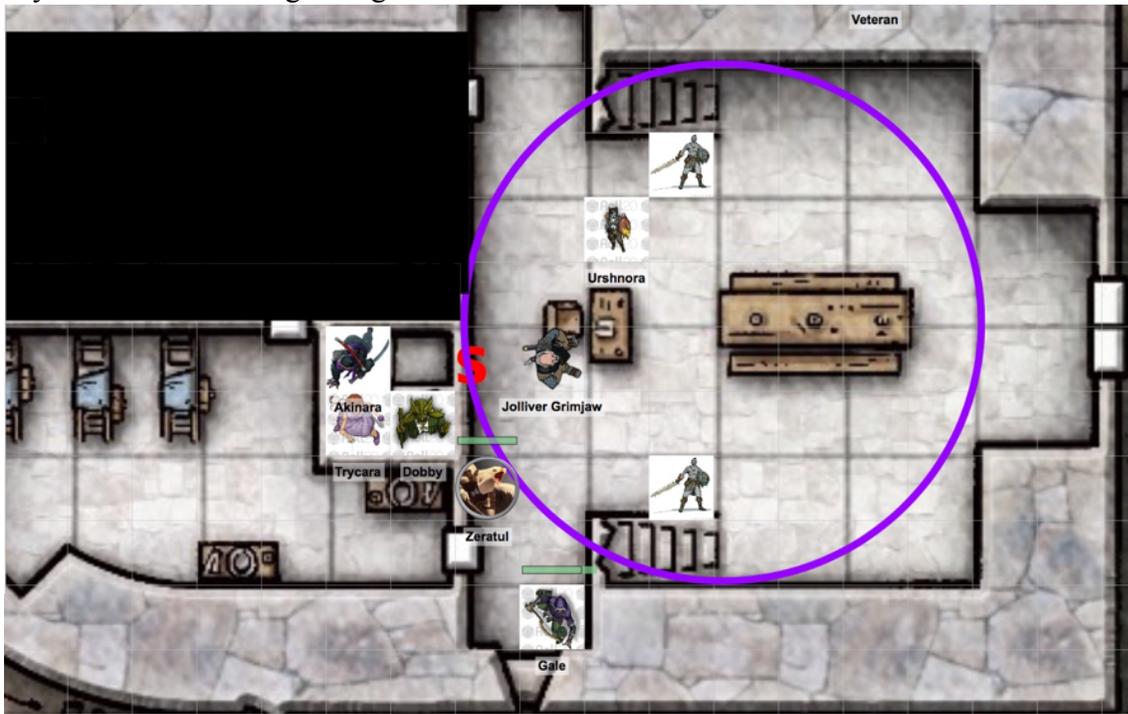


Figure 9 Ambushing Grimjaw and the cultists

The party runs upstairs and dispatches three reavers and four golden-masked monks. After some healing and searching, we remove the head from Grimjaw and Urshnora, and display Grimjaw on a pike and Urshnora on the charred table.



*Figure 10 Fighting the mysterious monks*

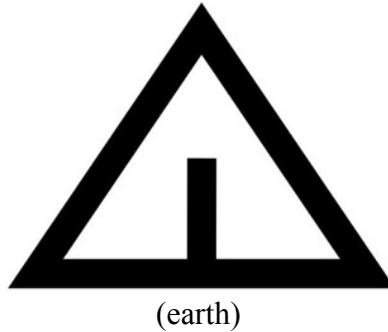
Outside, a handful of bandits beat down the front doors. Trycara uses Thaumaturgy to shake the ground and speak: “Grimjaw is dead. Urshnora is dead. Lay down your arms and you will not die this day!”

One of the bandits mutters, “We didn’t sign up for this!” Another runs off yelling, “Open the gate, open the gate, there are demons, get out while you can!” They all begin rushing off toward the front gate. The portcullis opens, and the bandits rush from the keep.

The party searches the north room and finds a secret door.

- 3 scrolls – Zeratul took
  - haste
  - wall of water
  - knock
- 12 books worth 25gp each
- chest with
  - 80sp
  - 30gp
  - 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
  - Note from Miraj Vizann

Searching the monk bodies the party finds this tattoo on their left forearms.



Through the secret door is a simple bedroom with chests containing:

- 600sp
- 450ep
- 15 blue azurites worth 10gp each

In the great hall, we find another document, the RL report about caravans and loot taken.

The party investigates the chapel and finds nothing of interest.

The party investigates the NE tower and finds nothing of interest.

The party investigates the barracks and finds:

- 95gp

The party investigates the bath house and finds nothing of interest.

The party investigates the armory and finds quite a few weapons, leather armor, and shields.

The party investigates the SW tower / gatehouse and finds a locked wooden coffer:

- 150sp
- 40gp
- potion of healing – Zeratul took
- potion of diminution

The party investigates the SE tower and finds nothing of interest.

### **Lead summary...**

From various letters found in the tower and the keep:

- Sacred Stone Monastery – Black earth cult (nobles from the caravan was taken by them). Miraj Vizann should be there. Marked on the map.
- Knifepoint Gully – last known location of Windharrow (half-moon elf bandit leader). Trycara shares that the black network wants him dead.
- TBD - Aerisi Kalinoth (air queen?). She has captured noblewoman Deseyna Majarra of Waterdeep, who is a member of the caravan and should be returned to the Lord's Alliance.
- Ruins of Tyar-Besil – Marlos Urnrayle close to unlocking elemental secrets.
- Sumber Hills – Knights of Samular are at Summit Hall, founded by Samular Caradoon, serve Tyr, god of Justice and is a threat to Miraj Vizann who wants to keep them out of the Sumber Hills.

Chalaska – there is an abandoned keep in the Sumer hills. The knights at Summit Hall know where to find this keep.

Since the Black earth cult have taken nobles from the caravan, we will proceed to the Sacred Stone Monastery next session.

**Party Treasure (not on character sheets):**

- 761gp
- 450ep
- 1020sp
- 5 feathered cloaks
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
- 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
- Things to sell:
  - scroll of skywrite
  - potion of diminution
  - 12 books @ 25gp each

**Note from Miraj Vizann**

*Urshnora, Enchanter of Water,*

*Marlos Urnrayle is most thankful for our partnership. It has taken many years, but we are close to unlocking the elemental secrets in the ruins of Tyar-Besil. And we have consolidated considerable power.*

*Yet there are still threats in the Sumer Hills that we much watch carefully. Most concerning are the Knights of Samular. They have serviced Tyr, god of justice for hundreds of years ever since Samular Caradoon founded the order. We attempted to make an ally of Renwick Caradoon, but he took no interest. We must not give them a reason to investigate the Sumer Hills. Have Grimjaw and his thugs keep a close watch on the knights in Summit Hall.*

*I return to the Monastery to continue my work. Please be sure this message is delivered safely to Gar Shatterkeel.*

*Respectfully,  
Miraj Vizann*

**Note labeled Red Larch Report**

*R.L. Report*

*Caravans - last tenday*

- 6 caravans at market day
- 4 passing through other days

## Log

- 40 silver pieces, traveler near W.
- 10 casks ale near W.
- 15 blue azurites, traveler near A.
- wagonload of flour, near B.
- 9 rose quartz crystals, caravan near G.
- 4 longbows and 100 arrows, near Y.
- 6 agates, 100 gp, near W.
- 5 suites leather armor, guards on River D.
- 5 shorts words, guards on River D.
- 3 horses, caravan near R.L., sold
- 12 large bundles of cured belts, caravan R.L.

*A tenday ago a band of troublemakers arrived at RL. A strange group. Very easy to spot. Wood elf dressed in purple, human female with strange eyes, bluish human. The last two really strange. One a flying bird and one a dragonborn. They appear to be friends. Very disruptive to our friends.*

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## Session 8: 9/2/2017

The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

After fully looting the keep, the party turns the keep over to Chelaska of the Black Network.

Zeratul discovers the terrible truth that she has been cursed with lycanthropy. She knows:

- Lycanthropes can curse those they bite or core. A medicine check can diagnose.

- Lycanthropes are extremely feared by common folk (Grimjaw must have hidden it)
- The curse can be controlled except during a full moon. (Every evening you make a constitution check to control the curse. On a failure, you turn.)
- On a full moon, infected turn into the were creature.
- Only magic can cure the curse (remove curse, greater restoration, or wish)
- Upon changing back, the infected is exhausted (1 level of exhaustion) and could suffer madness
- As a human, you get none of the benefits (immunities and resistances) until you submit fully to the curse.
- In were-form you get the benefits but have uncontrollable bloodlust to attack every non-lycanthrope you see.
- Belladonna (aka wolfsbane) can control the curse but it is expensive and poisonous
- Belladonna costs 5 gp per dose and taking it causes 1d6 poison damage and on a failed CON save (DC13) you are poisoned for 1d4 hours.



Dobby shares that Haeleeya (her Emerald Enclave contact in Red Larch who runs the bathhouse and dress shop) shared that the enclave is present in Goldenfields (a huge walled temple-farm dedicated to Chauntea, the goddess of agriculture) and that there is the best chance to find healing magic and exotic medicines like belladonna.

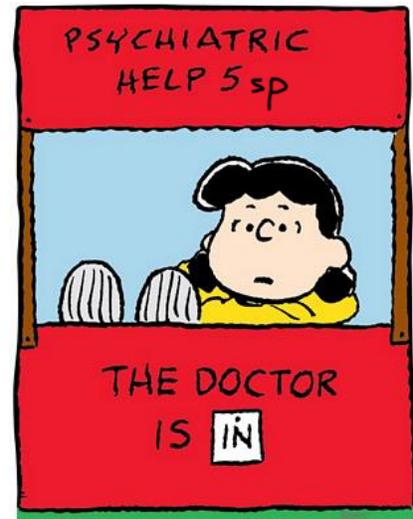
Zeratul is frightened of the curse and seeks to leave right away. Dobby is ready to help her. Zeratul tries to convince the rest of the party. She finally finds a way when she reminds Trycara that she risked her life and limb to help rescue her, Dobby, and Aki from their captures in the Feathergale Spire. Being somewhat honorable and not wanting to be in a life debt, Trycara agrees to accompany them to Goldenfields and convinces Aki as well. Gale realizing that he cannot take the monastery by himself agrees to go as well.

*[Helen and Amy, feel free to email me corrections anything I have wrong.]*

Chelaska leaves a contingent behind and agrees to transport us to Womford. We depart mid-afternoon and float overnight toward Womford. Zeratul turned to a wearboar overnight but fortunately was chained as a precaution so no harm was done.

The party arrives in Womford before noon. Trycara attempts to negotiate water passage to Goldenfields. Linus Hilasker offers us transport for 20sp each (120sp for the party).

After preventing Zeratul from murdering the boat captain, he made a hasty departure for his therapist:



The party travels by foot to Goldenfields and arrives at sunset. The guards escort the party to the abbey.

Dobby requests the abbot noting her association with the Emerald Enclave. Abbot Ellardin Darovik (a male human priest) greets her and the party. She asks for magic healing for Zeratul. He does not offer a cure but does offer doses of Belladonna for 5gp each. We buy one dose for 10ep. He also offers healing magic for sale. Healing potions cost 50gp each.

We trade the 12 books @ 25gp each for 2 scrolls of prayer of healing → Trycara and 2 healing potions → (Aki, Zeratul).

Towards the end he pulls Dobby aside and tells her the Archdruid would like to see her. She is taken to the guest quarters and let into a room by the abbot where she meets the Archdruid who appears to be a non-remarkable human female in druid ropes.

Dobby introduces herself as Don Jon.

Archdruid: "Welcome Dobby of dragon kind. Your scales and colors remind of me of Claugiyliamatar [*ancient female green dragon Claugiyliamatar, better known to many as "Old Gnawbone"*]. She still terrorizes the Kryptgarden forest. Are you descended from her?"

Dobby: "I know not."

Archdruid: "What brings you to Goldenfields?"

Dobby: "I seek a cure for my friend Zeratul who is infected with lycanthropy."

Archdruid: "Does your party serve the Emerald Enclave?"

Dobby responds with "I serve the Enclave, and the party is working toward the same goals. We are investigating a missing caravan from Mirabar."

Archdruid: "I find you and your party quite fascinating. We do not often see dragonborn in these parts. Or aarakocra, thieflings, and gensai for that matter."

“The caravan has something of great importance to the enclave. The moon elf Teresiel had in her possession a pouch of magical seeds she was taking to the abbey of Goldenfields. When planted, these seeds will into a magical grove. Increasing our magic now is more important than ever.”

Archdruid: “I can cure the friend, but your party must first prove commitment to balance and the natural order.”

Dobby: “We drove the air cult out of the tower and the water cult out of Riverguard Keep.”

Archdruid: “Impressive. The Emerald Enclave is most concerned with recent events. The lycanthepe you encountered is only the beginning of the unnatural magic coming from the depths of Tyr-Besil. The good nights of Samular have kept things in check all these years but it spills out of the Sumber Hills into the lowlands now.”

“Even more concerning, the Enclave has learned that recently our druid brothers and sisters of the Scarlet Moon have grown their circle. Dark rumors of unnatural magic surround them. Investigate and root out any unnatural magic. Their hall is in the foothills of the Sumber Hills not far from the Sighing Valley and Feathergale Spire.”

Dobby: “My party and I have done much already. I implore you to give my friend the cure.”

Archdruid: “I don’t doubt your commitment to the natural order, but if you and your party return with the information about the Scarlet Moon druids, I will cure your friend.”

Dobby goes back to the Abbot and asks for a two-week supply of Belladonna. The party negotiates 20 doses for 50gp.

The party walked to Bargewright Inn, borrowed horses from the Zhents and promised to drop them off at Riverguard Keep. The party travelled by road to Red Larch and delivered messages to Mango. Then took the Larch Path into the Sumber Hills. Along the way the party encountered a homesteader, Gilian. He noted there are many travelers on this path going to the Scarlet Moon Hall for some ritual.

While travelling on the road in the foothills, 2 Ankhegs spring from the earth and shoot acid at the party. Battle ensues, and we destroy the Ankhegs before they can attack again.

The party travels the rest of the way to the Monastery. After a long rest out of sight, the party approaches the monastery front door and knocks on the door, while wearing monk costumes and golden masks with Dobby hidden as a pocket snake.

Trycara: “We are here to see Miraj Vizann.”

Woman answers the door: “Qarbo will want to see you then.” A single monk (Marissa) lets the party into the Monastery central courtyard. There are 4 gargoyle statues standing in the courtyard. Then into the main temple with an altar and stairs descending below.

Qarbo appears similarly to the earth cult priest from underground near Red Larch. He is surrounded by two well-armored goons. The Altar has chiseled runes and symbols. The altar was previously dedicated to the Dwarven god, Moradin.

Qarbo: "Are you new recruits?"

Trycara: "We were sent by Larrakh (Red Larch Earth Cultist) to report to Miraj Vizann."

Qarbo: "Are you worthy?"

Trycara: "We try."

Qarbo: "What can you do to help?"

Trycara: "We heard that the air cultists were driven from the tower."

Qarbo: "Those air cultists are so unreliable."

Trycara: "Yes they are not grounded like we are."

Qarbo: "All recruits start with a period of self-denial and reflection. Please turn in all your armor, weapons, and equipment."

Trycara and Zeratul cast disguise self to hide their weapons. Gale and Aki give up their weapons. Dobby remains a pocket snake. Marissa leads the party to two different barracks rooms. The first barracks room has 3 people sleeping and 3 awake (Duergar). The second barracks room has beds and no people. Trycara talks with the Duergar and learns they are mercenaries.

Marissa grabs the party for lunch and directs us to the dining hall. We count 13 sacred stone monks, Qarbo, and his two guards.

Gale and Dobby notice that one monk is wearing a different mask with no eye holes. She appears to be blind but functioning normally. After a silent lunch, the monks don their masks and file out. Marissa leads us into the kitchen to begin work.

Zeratul poisons the porridge with her infected blood in an attempt to implement biological warfare. Party members avoid the porridge then go to back to their rooms.

Trycara discusses the blind woman with the Duergar. They inform her that the blind woman is in charge.

Meanwhile in the middle of the night...

In barracks room #1, Trycara, Zeratul, and Dobby quietly assassinate the four sleeping monks. In barracks room #2, Aki casts silence; then Aki and Gale fight the 8 monk cultists. Eventually all of the cultists are awoken. Three of them turn into wereboars. At this point Gale and Aki leave the room and hold the door shut. After a few minutes, they release the door to see that the 3 wereboars have killed all of the cultists. A large, loud fight in the hallway ensues. With lightning bolts, thunderwaves, and fireballs the party manages to kill the wereboars, but not before Aki is gored. Zeratul later determines he has been infected to.

After the battle, Qarbo, his two guards, and a few other cultists show up. They tell us to disarm and go into barrack #1. Then after some explanation of how we fought off the boar creatures, Qarbo decides what to do with the party.

From the altar room the party is directed to the stairs. Qarbo throws the bronze lever causing the stairs to turn into a slide. Gale uses levitation to slow the descent into a room that contains an umber hulk.

After a draining 6 charges from the magic missile wand and a lightning bolt, the hulk takes out Aki and injures Gale. Then a final lightning bolt fells the beast. Dobby brings Aki back from unconsciousness.

Qarbo's voice booms from above: "Well, you have passed the test. You may be more useful than I thought. Marlos Urnrayle may find you a fine addition to our cult if you can be trusted. We will see if you worthy to be a servant of eternal earth."

Qarbo sends us back to our original barracks to clean up the large mess. 3 Duergar and 1 monk join us in each room watching the party's every move.

In the morning Marissa escorts us to a new room for an interview with Hellenrae, the blind cultist leader. There are four monks sparring with Hellenrae. Hellenrae stops sparring and invites Aki to fight her.

Aki falls in a couple of rounds. Then Hellenrae invites Gale to fight. Gale grabs a whip and levitates to the ceiling. After whipping Hellenrae, she grabs a pike and stabs him to unconsciousness. She concludes the interview.

Gale returns to his room for a short rest to heal 12 HP. Meanwhile Aki leads our tails on a wild goose chase outside to the horses. After the rest, Gale, Dobby, Zeratul, and Trycara explore various rooms in the Monastery.

Trycara misty steps past a locked door followed by Dobby (as a snake) and Zeratul. She has a brief conversation with what appears to be a powerful undead creature. He insists that she leave so she does.

Then the group found stairs leading down to some passageways being excavated by slaves. The party runs into an ancient dwarven tomb. Trycara approaches the large sarcophagus and reads the inscription "Here Lies Samular Caradoon, Defender of the North." She remembers he is the founder of the Knights of Samular. He founded the order and its monastery, Summit Hall [*I accidentally called it Summit Hill*]. She disturbs 6 undead, then makes a hasty retreat.

Next the party finds three cells filled with prisoners who are being forced to excavate the mines. Some prisoners say they were taken in the middle of the night from Red Larch and other homesteads. They identify a member of the Mirabar delegation for Trycara.

Speaking with Bruldentharr, a dwarven historian from Mirabar, he recounts the delegations being ambushed on the road and captured by earth cultists. Then bandits flying on giant vultures attacked the earth cultists and took one of the group (Deseyna Norvael). The delegates Rhundorth and Teresiel were taken below to an unknown fate.

One of the prisoners mentions that he can take us to Knifepoint Gully if we rescue everybody.

To be continued...

### **Lead summary...**

From various letters found in the tower and the keep:

- Knifepoint Gully – last known location of Windharrow (half-moon elf bandit leader). Trycara shares that the black network wants him dead.
- TBD - Aerisi Kalinoth (air queen?). She has captured noblewoman Deseyna Majarra of Waterdeep, who is a member of the caravan and should be returned to the Lord's Alliance. Also the Zhentarim has offered a bounty for return of the delegation.
- Ruins of Tyar-Besil – Marlos Umrayne close to unlocking elemental secrets.
- Sumer Hills – Knights of Samular are at Summit Hall, founded by Samular Caradon, serve Tyr, god of Justice and is a threat to Miraj Vizann who wants to keep them out of the Sumer Hills.
- Archdruid at Goldenfields asked Dobby to travel to the Scarlet Moon Hall to find out what they are doing and “restore the balance”. In exchange, the Archdruid will cure lycanthropy.
- Gale wants to locate Miraj Vizann to deliver justice.
- Enclave wants us to recover magical seeds carried by the moon elf Teresiel.

### **Party Treasure (not on character sheets nor in party possession at the moment):**

- 761gp
- 440ep
- 900sp
- 5 feathered cloaks
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
- 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
- Things to sell:
  - scroll of skywrite
  - potion of diminution

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### **Session 9: 10/7/2017**

The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)

- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

Trycara, Gale, and Dobby are in the dungeon. They tell the prisoners that they will scout an escape route and return within 24 hours.

They check out the abandoned mine tunnel, are attacked by a Grick, kill it, hide the body, clear the rubble, then investigate the mine tunnel. It goes for a long way in the dark.

They turn back and head up to our room prior to dinner. Aki returns with the guards. Zeratul poisons the beer with tainted were-blood. At dinner they see Qarbo, two guards, 6 monks, and Hellenrae. They all drink water, not beer. After dinner they retire to the barracks and rest while one person keeps watch.

In the morning they have breakfast. They lead the 4 monks who have been assigned to watch the party into the barracks. They cast sleep, sleep, and silence, murder the guards, then Zeratul raises them as zombies.

Gale picks the lock and the party enters what looks like a nice barracks (later the party notices these are actually the quarters of Qarbo and his guards). They enter and unlock three chests that are at the foot of various bunks where they find:

- Aki's stuff
- Gale's stuff
- 120gp
- 90ep
- cloth of gold priestly vestments 40gp
- 2 gold bracelets @ 30gp each
- 3 scrolls
  - earth bind (2<sup>nd</sup>)
  - Maximillian's earthen grasp (2<sup>nd</sup>)
  - transmute rock (5<sup>th</sup>)

They go back into the dungeon and follow the long mining tunnel until it emerges into daylight ¼ mile away from the monetary. Then they return to the dungeon, unlock the portcullis and proceed to the lower level.

They encounter a large chasm with a bridge going across. Dobby and Gale noticed three gargoyles hanging out near the ceiling. They send a zombie across. The gargoyles fly down and knock it off the path and it falls to its second death.

The next zombie makes the earth symbol and crosses unmolested. The rest of the zombies and the party make the earth symbol and cross the bridge.

They find the entrance to an ancient dwarven fortress of Tyar Basil. There are 4 hobgoblins, a land shark, and a heavily armored human.



*Figure 13. Attacking the land shark*

After launching a fireball at them the land shark and the human flee. The hobgoblins get massacred. The party realizes they are looking at a bulette, commonly called a land shark. The bulette and guard attack. The party takes down the bulette, and the guard runs away for help.

As the party chases him, two doors open into the room. Two guards and several cultists pour out. From the other door 5 duergar start throwing javalins and knock Dobby out of wildshape. Trycara throws another fireball. A few attacks later and the cultists are defeated, but one .

Loot from Denath (armored human) and the others:

- 44gp
- 5pp
- 5 fine citrine gems @ 40gp each

The party explores the two rooms (one is quarters and the other a guard room) and finds nothing interesting. They continue searching down the east corridor to find a crossroads with a statue of Ogremach, the prince of evil earth.

Heading north, the party stumbled into the mess hall and have lunch with a few cultists. They ask about Miraj and learn that he is in his laboratory. Paul (their cultist server) agrees to take us to Miraj. As they walk through the entrance hall carnage, Paul gets suspicious, so they take him into the east guardroom and interrogate him.

Through their interrogation of Paul they learn Miraj oversees the tunneling operations and is the liaison with the water cult. Marlos Urnrayle (leader of the earth cult) has asked them to dig and find the elemental nodes in this dwarven fortress which will give the Earth Cult true power. “The Earth will consume all.” The elemental node will allow to them to bring Ogremach to this world. Miraj is Marlos’s right hand.

They ask about the two missing caravan prisoners. He knows of a moon elf from Silverymoon and a shield dwarf from Mirabar. They came through, but he does not know where they are. He directs us to Miraj’s lab. Trycara provides a firebolt through the ear and the party leaves the corpse behind.

The party approaches Miraj’s lab and carefully opens the door. Large stone statues carved to look like scowling dwarf warriors line the walls of this large chamber. In the middle stands Miraj Vizann who says “I’ve been waiting for you.”



Figure 14. Miraj Vizann

Miraj continues, “Gale Lightfoot, are you looking for this?” He lifts his hand to show the Lightfoot family signet ring on his ring finger. “I rather like it but I would be willing to return it to you in exchange for a little help.”

Miraj Vizann: “The druids of Scarlett Moon Hall are actually fire cultists and have been most troublesome. If you can stop what they are planning I will give you back your ring.”

Gale: What are these fire cultists doing?

Miraj: “They look to unleash the power of Imix. Ogremach and Olhydra are the true elemental princes. Bring me the body for Elizr Dryflagon, and I will return your ring.” (*Olhydra is the prince of evil water.*)

Zeratul sends in the zombies. Gale approaches to examine the ring. Meanwhile Zeratul casts invisibility on Aki who sneaks up behind Miraj and gives him multiple flurry of blows with damage: (aki)12+15+7+15+(zombie)11+(Zeratul MM counterspelled)

A bulette with an armored rider emerges from beneath the ground and attacks, killing a zombie. (From their mess hall conversations, the party learns these armored riders are called burrowsharks. *DM freebie.*)

Trycara casts a firebolt and Miraj counterspells it.

Dobby attacks with bear claws for 9 damage.

Gale sneak attacks with rapier for 18 damage.

Golem attacks Gale and takes Gale down.

Zeratul does a firebolt for 11.

Dobby attacks for 10. (Miraj has stonewall)

Miraj creates a stone wall containing Miraj, the golem, Dobby, and unconscious Gale.

Aki takes out the Bulette.

Zeratul cast stone to mud to destroy the wall simultaneously damaging the golem.

Miraj misty stepped away and bolted out of the room.

The burrowshark got a solid hit on Trycara, taking her down to 1HP.

Miraj runs down the hall and casts another stone wall to prevent the party from catching him.

***DM note: some info here occurred out of game. Read carefully!***

The party finishes off the stone golem and heals Gale. Zeratul grabs Miraj's notebooks (written in Primordial) in the hope of learning more arcane secrets. In the lab Trycara looks to the nature of this lab and Miraj's experiments. Her investigation reveals that it appears Miraj has been working to reanimate the dwarf stone golems. He has not been completely successful as several are clearly melted and deformed.

Additionally, the search reveals that Miraj's worktables and shelves hold common alchemical ingredients and notebooks, including unusual mineral salts and solutions. The notes also indicate that the melted statues are golems that Miraj experimented on without success.

A wooden chest stowed under one of the worktables holds a small hoard of 220 gp, nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each, and a potion of water breathing.

Trycara smashes all the tables and ingredients (except for any she takes for herself) on her way out. The party finds nothing further in the rooms as they exit the stronghold.

Tired and dejected the party leaves the fortress, rescues the prisoners, and leads them out of the dungeon along the mining tunnel. The party covers the exit with rubble from the other side after passing through. The group hikes to the river, camps for the night, then treks to Riverguard Keep.

At Riverguard Keep they turn the prisoners over to the Zentharrim, including Bruldentharr the Dwarf. One of the prisoners shares with the party that the location of Knifepoint Gully is ¼ mile upstream from Feathergale Spire.

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### **Interlude: Resting at Riverguard Keep**

Zeratul grimaced as she stalked across the grounds of Riverguard Keep. They had had victory in their hands, and that slimy Mud Sorcerer had somehow slipped through their grasp. The name was appropriate; in Zeratul's natural language the term meant the foulest of excrement, of the sort that accompanied the worst of intestinal illnesses. As such, she cursed in her native tongue, her sharp squawks sending Zhent minions scrambling from her path as she made her way to the Great Hall. The rotting heads of Jolliver Grimjaw and his witch-woman still decorated the top of the structure, mounted on pikes for all to see. The reminder of the party's past victory only tasted sour now. She had tried to assuage her feelings of anger by re-animating a hapless peasant who had fallen and broken his neck, forcing the undead creature to perform menial tasks until he had literally worked his fingers to the bone. Yet the sight of skeletal hands sticking out of rotting flesh no longer amused her as it once had, and she had forced the creature to throw itself from the top of the keep, watching what was left of its brains spatter onto the rocks below.

Nothing helped. Perhaps it was the barely-latent lycanthropy thrumming through her veins that made it seem so close to the surface, yet whatever was fueling her rage, it was not to be denied.

No one escaped the wrath of Zeratul of the Aarakocra. No one. A desire for vengeance burned inside of her. Nothing was more important than taking down Miraj Vizan.

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Dobby watched her friend as she approached the Great Hall. Zeratul's dark mood was evident to all around her, and Dobby had never seen the aarakocra in such distress, even after she had been infected with lycanthropy. Certainly they had suffered a tremendous setback when they had failed to defeat Miraj Vizan, or find the other prisoners from the caravan raid. Dobby only hoped that Zeratul would be able to focus on their mission once more: to destroy all parts of the elemental evil cults that were wreaking havoc with the natural order.

They had to get back to work. The longer they waited, the worse things would get... for all of them.

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Gale paced back and forth across the floor of the Great Hall, waiting for the others, the air swirling around him as he moved gracefully through it. He had been about to earn his vengeance, visiting retribution upon Miraj Vizan and recovering the Lightfoot family ring, yet it had all vanished when that cursed stone golem had brought him down. He had awoken from the blow only to find that the Mud Sorcerer had escaped. His first thought had been that this pathetic

excuse for a party had not truly fought to slay his enemy. But as he witnessed the frustration and disappointment on their faces, saw Zeratul's reaction to this setback and Trycara's determination to fight on, he knew that it had not been so. They had given everything they had to defeat Miraj Vizan, and they had been unable to do so.

They had to try again. Even now, Miraj would be gathering reinforcements, preparing for their return. They had to go after him with all haste. The day they had spent bringing the prisoners to Riverguard Keep was a day too long. They had to return immediately, and he had to convince the others to go with him. For one thing was clear: he could not do this alone.

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Aki entered the Great Hall silently, slipping quietly into a seat. Gale, lost in his own dark thoughts, did not notice or acknowledge the ninja's presence. Aki understood the need to work through excessive emotions, and had left his companions time to do so. Yet he also knew that the Zhents were expecting them to return to the field quickly, and Aki's first allegiance was to the Black Network. If the other members of his party could not pull themselves together, he would have to leave. Fortunately, it would likely not be alone. He knew that Trycara was as dedicated as he to the Zhentarim, and it wouldn't take much to get her back on the right path, if she wasn't already.

He heard a noise, watching as Zeratul entered the Hall, Dobby close behind. They sat down at the opposite table, the dragonborn whispering furiously to the aarakocra. Aki could well imagine what they were saying. A flash of movement caught his eye, and he saw Trycara descending the stairs, arriving in their midst. Finally, they were all together.

But how long would they stay that way?

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Trycara sat near her friend Aki, yet leaving enough space that he would understand that she needed to process this alone. She knew why Gale had called them all together, yet she wasn't entirely certain she agreed with what he would propose as their course of action. She knew where Knifepoint Gully was located; Windharrow was in her grasp. Yet if he too was allied with these elemental forces, then he might prove more difficult to defeat than she had anticipated. She might well need the help of this motley crew with whom she had found herself aligned. It was worth hearing what Gale had to say.

"We need to go back after Miraj Vizan." Gale announced without preamble. "He is a threat to the area, and he is on the run. We need to catch him before he musters his defenses against us."

"Maybe he's already fled the area." Dobby suggested. "If we go back, he might be gone. All of those Earth cultists might be gone."

"No." Gale shook his head. "Miraj wanted to find the earth node and raise the Prince of Elemental Earth. He was there for a reason. He won't leave. He needs to complete his work."

“That makes sense.” Dobby agreed. “And it did sound like he was close to succeeding in that. But what about Scarlet Moon Hall? We must investigate there, in order to get the lycanthropy cures we need from The Enclave!”

“That is not the most important task we have in front of us.” Gale frowned.

“I don’t care about lycanthropy!” Zeratul shouted angrily. “Those self-righteous, stuck-up druids don’t want to cure me, and they won’t cure Aki either! They just want to keep us on a short leash, doing their bidding, doling out their precious belladonna. Gale is right. We have to go after Miraj, now!”

“You all promised to help me.” Trycara reminded them, her eyes flashing red, the flames in the room flickering wildly as she spoke. “I must find Windharrow! If I call in my debts from all of you, you must pay them.”

“Windharrow’s power will be weakened if we take out the Earth Cult and Miraz Vizan first.” Gale responded. “And perhaps we can eliminate the Fire Cult as well, on the way back to Feathergale Spire. Then Windharrow will have no reinforcements, and we will be able to take him down easily.”

“What you say has merit,” Trycara grudgingly admitted, “but I have been waiting too long already.”

“You’ve all forgotten about the other caravan prisoners.” Aki reminded them. “The Black Network wants them recovered, and Miraj has them. We need to search the rest of that Dwarven fortress and locate the prisoners.”

“But...” Trycara interjected.

“But...” Gale huffed.

“But...” Zeratul scowled.

“Aki’s right.” Dobby agreed. “Recovering the prisoners is an important goal, and one that should be followed. We all accepted assignments to find them.” The dragonborn glared at the others, and they all immediately understood the seriousness of this matter.

“We kill Miraj Vizan.” Zeratul insisted, to which Gale nodded.

“Of course.” Dobby replied.

“Fine.” Trycara grudgingly conceded. “You will all only deepen your debt to me if I assist you in this matter. Aki is right: I do have a commitment to find the other prisoners, if I am able.”

“Then let us depart immediately.” Gale declared. Zeratul was already on her feet.

“Not so fast.” Trycara stopped them with a sharp command. “You all want to head right back to the Monastery. But the Mud Sorcerer will have gathered reinforcements. We need a different plan.”

“And what would this plan be?” Gale asked, finding himself interested. The tiefling’s plans were usually good ones.

“I have an idea...” Trycara grinned nastily.

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### On Miraj Vizan’s Notes

Zeratul and Gale begin researching Miraj’s voluminous notes. They quickly realize it will take weeks if not months to search them all. He was quite methodical in recording all of his experiments. They work night and day to see what they can learn of the earth node and the cultists’ plans.

From the notes and your encounters, you know Miraj calls himself a “mud sorcerer” because he practices earth and water magic, and he reveres both Ogremoch and Olhydra. He bears the water cultists no ill will and sometimes acts as an advocate or emissary on their behalf.

#### ***DM Note: TIME IN THE REALMS***

*The people of the Forgotten Realms number the years by the Dalereckoning calendar, which is abbreviated “DR.” Years are also given names, which are drawn from the writings of a great seer from long ago. The adventure is set in 1491 DR, the Year of the Scarlet Witch. Each month consists of three ten-day long weeks called tendays. People refer to tendays the way people in other worlds refer to weeks.*

Zertatul’s and Gale’s work is also rewarded when they find the following notable passages in Miraj’s notes.

*Kythorn 7, DR 1490: The prophet’s visions bring us to the Sumer Hills in search of Ironfang. This abandoned monastery will provide us the seclusion we need to begin our hunt. The prophet commands us to dig for Tyar-Besil. The work is slow yet steady. Our cultists raids have brought in many townsfolk to help us with our tunneling. Perhaps some of them will join us.*

The prophet = Urnrayle (earth boss)

#### **THE CALENDAR OF HARPTOS**

Month	Name	Common Name
1	Hammer (Annual holiday: Midwinter)	Deepwinter
2	Alturiak	The Claw of Winter
3	Ches	The Claw of Sunsets
4	Tarsakh (Annual holiday: Greengrass)	The Claw of the Storms
5	Mirtul	The Melting
6	Kythorn	The Time of Flowers
7	Flamerule (Annual holiday: Midsummer) (Quadrennial holiday: Shieldmeet)	Summertide
8	Eleasis	Highsun
9	Eleint (Annual holiday: Highharvestide)	The Fading
10	Marpenoth	Leaffall
11	Uktar (Annual holiday: The Feast of the Moon)	The Rotting
12	Nightal	The Drawing Down

Eleasis 15, DR 1490: A tenday ago we found the stairs down to the dwarven fortress. Even in its battered state, it is marvelous. Our Prophet of Earth can feel the tremors of the node. He grows impatient and makes an example of one of the townsfolk. We work even more resolutely in his service.

Marpenoth 22, DR 1490: The prophet has taken this corner of Tyar-Besil as his personal fortress. My lab is now complete, and I work to reanimate some of the ancient dwarven magic in these stone statues. We encountered the Cult of the Eternal Flame. They are strong but are very erratic. For now, they leave us alone.

Uktar 28, DR 1490: Just as the prophet predicted, there is more beneath Tyar-Besil. We found a maze of natural caverns and ancient structures that were here long before the dwarves. Carvings describe this as the Fane of the Eye. My research suggests this shrine was built long ago by drow exiles devoted to the worship of the Elder Elemental Eye. Already the other cults are here, but I have assured our prophet that our orderly, steadfast search will find the node before any of the other cults.

Alturiak 11, DR 1491: Finally, we found it! The Black Geode is beautiful. I can feel its power as it regularly moves the earth beneath us. Even now Marlos and Ironfang transmute the node to prepare for his coming. The Evergrowing Mountain shall come and remake these lands in his own image.

Tarsakh 27, DR 1491: The winter snows are now starting to melt, and the hunting parties find better game. One of our raiding parties raided a large caravan from Mirabar. Their riches will help our cause. Those of the Howling Hatred surprised from the air and made off with one of the caravan members. What they want with her I cannot imagine. They are not as clever as they think. Only three other members survive. The dwarf known as Bruldenthar is not much use to us, but in my meeting with the water cult I will see what we can trade his tomes for. His companion Rhundorth has skills and will work in our deep smiths. The moon elf Teresiel can serve our prophet in the Temple.

Mirtul 7, DR 1491: I have finally convinced the prophet to let seek out the Crushing Wave. I've taken several monks with me to meet Urshnora. She took us on her boat from the Dark Stream to the southeast entrance of Tyar-Besil. There we were met by Thuluna Maah and Morbeoth.

As an offering I gave them the dwarf's historic tomes. In exchange they shared news from their spy in Red Larch. In recent days a group of visitors has been asking around regarding the whereabouts of the caravan. Their contact described a truly strange party: an aarakocra, dragonborn, genasi, tiefling and wood elf. They have dealt a serious blow to the Howling Hatred, killing most of their guards at the Feathergale Spire. While I certainly care not for the howlers, this demonstrates that they are a real threat.

We agree to work together for our mutual protection. The Crushing Wave has agreed to send out a raiding party to find and kill these meddling do-gooders. The strength of Earth and the wave cannot be matched.

**Party Treasure (not on character sheets nor in party possession at the moment):**

- 5pp
- 1145gp
- 530ep
- 900sp
- 5 feathered cloaks
- nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
- 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
- 5 fine citrine gems @ 40gp each
- cloth of gold priestly vestments 40gp
- 2 gold bracelets @ 30gp each
- 2 scrolls
  - earth bind (2<sup>nd</sup>)
  - Maximillian's earthen grasp (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Things to sell:
  - scroll of skywrite
  - potion of diminution
  - potion of water breathing

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**Session 10: 11/4/2017**

The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

Factions:

- Air – Feathergale spire – Dead – Howling Hatred
- Fire – Scarlet moon hall – Eternal Flame
- Water – Riverguard keep – Dead – Crushing Wave
- Earth – Sacred Stone Monastery – Black Earth
- Druid Enclave – Goldenfields – Abbey – Emerald Enclave – Asshats

**The Scarlet Moon Hall**

The party leaves Riverguard keep and journeys for most of the day to reach the Scarlet Moon Hall via the Larch Path. Zeratul takes to the air and scouts the area. She gets shot at by arrows and quickly returns.

We approach the south encampment and see four robed figures chanting around a large bonfire and two elk are grazing nearby. Farya introduces herself as from the Circle of the Shadow Top Cathedral and asks if we are here to join the circle for the Rite of the Wicker Giant. She arrived yesterday and is so excited about it.

Dobby: "I am from the Circle of the Cave Bear." And shows the symbol of the emerald enclave.

Farya: "Have you met Elizar Dryflagon (leader of the fire cult)."

Dobby: "Where is Elizer?"

Farya: "Elizar is likely in the tower preparing for the rite tonight."

Dobby: "Are you in the Circle of the Scarlet Moon?"

Farya: "No but they are all around here and we would love to be a member."

Dobby: "Where can I find a member?"

Farya: "Up the path to the east."

The party heads down the east path where we find two human men and a leashed brown bear at a camp.

Dobby: "Are you in the circle of the Scarlet Moon?"

Man: "Yes, are you?"

Dobby: "I wish to speak with Elizar Dryflagon"

Man: "He is very busy. Why?"

Dobby: "We have news of the Black Earth cult."

Man: "What news?"

Dobby: "We need to tell Elizar directly."

Trycara makes the symbol of elemental earth (badly) and gets the symbol in return then waves her hand through the fire.

Aylbrith introduces himself and leads the party up the hill to the hall in the North. Some of the walls have collapsed. There is a two-story wicker giant in the courtyard. The tower is under repair with scaffolding. Two robed druids are praying in courtyard, and two guards with crossbows on west scaffolding.



*Figure 15. Scarlet Moon Hall*

Aylbrith enters the hall on the east side, then returns with 3 others including Elizar.



Figure 16. Elizar Dryflagon

Trycara reveals her horns. The guards look surprised, drop to their knees and say “Oh, the prophet!”

Trycara says that she serves the prophet.

Elizar: “Do you know the prophet, Queen Vanifer. She shares your same eyes and infernal bloodline.”

Trycara: “I have news of Miraj Vizann. The mud sorcerer is a stain that must be removed from the earth. We have already cleansed the water cult from Riverguard Keep. Miraj has attempted to hire people to kill you. We must burn them all.”

Trycara asks for their assistance to infiltrate the Dwarven fortress where they have found the earth node and must stop them.

Elizar: “We have to protect the hall, but I can spare some to help you.” He talks with a guard and he runs off. “The rite of the wicker giant attracts more people to help our cause.”

Elizar invites the party for drinks. Trycara provides one of the black crystals and claims it may be a portion of the earth node. Elizar states that Aylbrith and three guards will accompany us and asks what our plan is. Albreth is a priest of the eternal flame (a sorcerer). The guards are wearing breastplate, longswords, crossbows.

Dobby asks to see the plant stores but is unable to find belladonna. He decides there may be druids in the one of camps who may have the flower. Dobby, Aki, and Zeratul head off to the first camp at the bottom of the hill to see what they can find.

The first camp consists of two extra hairy men.

Dobby: “Do you have any Belladonna?”

Hairy man: “What a strange request, go away!”

They erupt and turn into werewolves.

Dobby, Aki, and Zeratul run south. The werewolves catch up to Zeratul and attack her. Aki gets the druids in the south camp to join the fight. The druids entangle the werewolves which helps the party quickly defeat them. After the werewolves are defeated, Zeratul finds 7 doses of belladonna at their camp.

Meanwhile, Elizar asks for the party’s plan.

Trycara: “We know of an underground tunnel that goes below the monastery and directly to Tyar-Besil.”

Trycara: “How goes your effort to raise Imix?”

Elizar: We have found the fire node, and Imix will come forth from her plane to consume all. Queen Vanifer is making steady progress”

Trycara flirts with Elizar and is invited into the tower for drinks. On the top floor of the tower, Elizar agrees to spare another priest and 2 more guards. Trycara spends then night. Queue metaphorical rocket launch.

In the morning, the party sets out for the monastery. Travel takes half a day. Zeratul flies ahead and confirms that the tunnel is clear.

### **Tyar-Besil and Miraj Vizan**

The party descends to the entrance to Tyar-Besil. We send in a minor illusion to see if there is a trap. The illusion runs past the arrow slits and is attacked by a Minotaur in the second room. After a large battle, the party takes out three Minotaurs and two soldiers.

Yarsha, a powerful magic user known as a Black Earth stonemelder, surrenders and offers to help us take down Miraj Vizann by showing us a secret passage. We told Yarsha that if she shows us the secret passage that we will let her live. Neither the party nor Yarsha believe each other.

Two of the cultist warriors are dead, so we burn the bodies. Yarsha takes us to the kitchen and says that Miraj is through there. We kill Yarsha then Zeratul raises two zombies from the earth soldiers. We enter the kitchen, kill 3 cultists, the proceed into the barracks.

We find an iron coffer containing:

- 210sp – half to the guards
- 140ep – half to the guards
- pouch of 6 obsidian flakes @ 10gp each
- potion of greater healing – Trycara takes it.

A rough passage leads to a cavern with a 50-foot drop and a narrow ledge wrapping around the edge toward a passage on the other side.

The party chickens out and goes around to the south where there are double doors. Gale and Trycara use mage hands to open the doors.

There is a man-deusa standing there. One of the zombies turns to stone and Gale is restrained.

Gale fails his save, spends inspiration, fails again, then Zeratul spends inspiration and Gale makes his save to avoid petrification. The party quickly closes the door and leaves.

Miraj Vizan's lab is in the state we left it, mostly destroyed.

The party continues south to a room with a chasm. There are two land sharks chained to a pillar on the other side of the chasm.

Continuing on to the south, they find a room with a fountain and fight two one-eyed monsters.

Further south there was a door with a small metal door leading to a water cult guard post. Someone behind the door shot crossbow bolts at the party. Dobby, in bear form, bashed down the door. A combat ensued with 1 mage, 3 water reaver cultists, and a dark tide knight (who is captured).

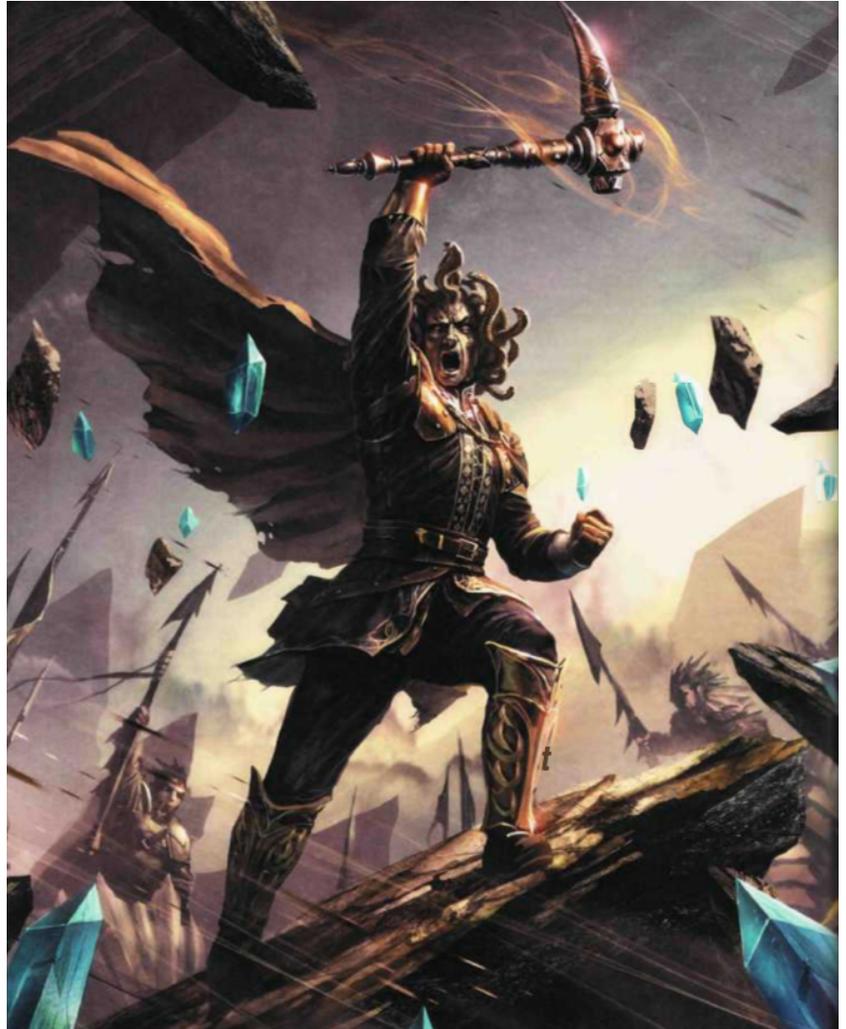


Figure 17. Man-deusa

The dark tide knight had a pouch containing:

- 30gp
- 12pp
- 4 garnets @ 100gp each
- 2 potions of greater healing – taken by Gale and Trycara

We interrogate the dark tide knight and learn the following.

- The elemental factions are working together because the elemental eye told them to.
- They are at peace and at war.
- The prophets told them to follow the elemental eye.
- This is the northern guard post for the water cult area.
- The howling hatred are to the west and are most troublesome.
- They have not seen the fire cult.

- Only the prophets talk to the elemental eye.
- He doesn't know about the water in the fountain.
- How do you get to the surface? There is an entrance by way of water, but you will never get there from here.

The party tests the fountain water by feeding it to the knight. He looks more healed (gets a free short rest). Then we kill him.

**Party Treasure (not on character sheets nor in party possession at the moment):**

- 17pp
- 1175gp
- 530ep
- 900sp
- 5 feathered cloaks
- nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- 4 garnets @ 100gp each
- 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
- 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
- 5 fine citrine gems @ 40gp each
- cloth of gold priestly vestments 40gp
- 2 gold bracelets @ 30gp each
- 2 scrolls
  - earth bind (2<sup>nd</sup>)
  - Maximillian's earthen grasp (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Things to sell:
  - scroll of skywrite
  - potion of diminution
  - potion of water breathing

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**Session 11: 1/28/2018**

**The party:**

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

**Factions:**

- Air – Feathergale spire – Dead – Howling Hatred
- Fire – Scarlet moon hall – Eternal Flame
- Water – Riverguard keep – Dead – Crushing Wave
- Earth – Sacred Stone Monastery – Black Earth
- Druid Enclave – Goldenfields – Abbey – Emerald Enclave – Asshats

## **Lead summary**

From various letters found in the tower and the keep:

- Knifepoint Gully – last known location of Windharrow (half-moon elf bandit leader). Trycara shares that the black network wants him dead.
- TBD - Aerisi Kalinoth (air queen?). She has captured noblewoman Deseyna Majarra of Waterdeep, who is a member of the caravan and should be returned to the Lord's Alliance. Also the Zhentarim has offered a bounty for return of the delegation.
- Ruins of Tyar-Besil – Marlos Urnrayle close to unlocking elemental secrets.
- Gale wants to locate Miraj Vizann to recover his signet ring and deliver justice.
- Sumber Hills – Knights of Samular are at Summit Hall, founded by Samular Caradon, serve Tyr, god of Justice and is a threat to Miraj Vizann who wants to keep them out of the Sumber Hills.
- Archdruid at Goldenfields asked Dobby to travel to the Scarlet Moon Hall to find out what they are doing and “restore the balance”. In exchange, the Archdruid will cure lycanthropy.
- Enclave wants us to recover magical seeds carried by the moon elf Teresiel. Teresiel was in the caravan.

At the healing fountain, the party takes a full rest and levels to 7.

## **Miraj Vizann and Marlos Urnrayle**

The party makes its way across the chasm and back to the entrance room. There are two guards looking around. Zeratul casts sleep with no effect. The party charges into the room Leroy Jenkins style.

A large battle ensues including the two guards, two wizards from the east door, two guards and Miraj Vizann from the west door, and a shadow demon from the west hall.

Dobby wild shapes into a bear and holds off the two wizards. The rest of the party focuses on the guards in the main room. Miraj creates a magical blob of water and traps Gale and a couple of the fire cult warriors until Zeratul dispelled the water blob.

Aki, Gale, and one of the guards chase Miraj into the west rooms. He retreats into the west hall where Zeratul traps him in a magical web. Trycara casts a fireball and hits Miraj and the shadow demon. Gale delivers the killing blow with a massive hit from his +1 dagger sneak attack.

As Miraj dies: “Enjoy your win today. We will win. Even now we attack your precious Zhent...aaaagh.”

From the far end of the hall: “if you want to do something right, you have to do it yourself.”

The man-deusa (Marlos Urnrayle) appears in the hallway near Aki and one of the fire guards. The fire guard is petrified, then Aki uses a chi power to cast darkness on Marlos's armor. Trycara and Zeratul proceed to cast AoE spells on the center of the darkness while Marlos runs

away. Aki manages to hit three times with shurikens. Zeratul casts web on Marlos to stop his escape and he finally succumbs to his wounds laying in the web.

Meanwhile Dobby and the fire priests take out the two wizards from the East room. When killed, the mage turned to stone and exploded, doing damage to Dobby. Gale takes out the last remaining earth guard, then runs to the west to help with Marlos.

Loot:

- Marlos's head in a bag.
- Ironfang, Marlos's magical war-pick
  - Legendary, requires attunement
  - Can speak terran
  - Resistance to acid damage
  - Tremorsense to 60 feet
  - Can sense presence of precious metals and stones within 60 feet
  - Can cast dominate monster (DC 17) on an earth elemental (once/day)
  - Shatter: level-2 (DC 17). 3 charges. Regains 1d3 charges at dawn.
  - Gain flaw: "I like to break things and cause ruin."
- Shadow demon body
- Suit of elven chain mail (+1 AC) (worth ~2500gp)
- 100 pp (1000gp)



Given to fire cult:

- 30pp (300gp)
- 1100 sp (110gp)
- Tapestry of a flying dragon (400gp)
- Carved Lyre (250gp)
- Robe (80gp)

The party celebrates the success of their plan ("Take that DM." ☺). The party returns to Riverguard keep by nightfall.

### **Return To Riverguard Keep**

We are met Moritz Oswald, who recognizes us. We are escorted to the great hall. A few people are wounded. In the throne sits Nalaskur Thaelond (the Barge Wright Innkeeper).

Nalaskur: "Womford and the Barge Wright Inn were attacked by robed cultists with glowing orbs that created massive earthquakes and floods. Churlaska was killed. The inn is gone. They killed all of the protectors. Only us few were able to escape."

Trycara informs Nalaskur about our activities and that there may be a link to the passages under this keep.

Part of the attacking force included cultists with gold masks including one without eye holes (Hellenrae) and included a wet blue skinned person.

Nalaskur tells the party to take out all of the cults. “We must stop them before they damage the Zhenartium again!”

Priorities for next time according to the party discussion with Nalaskur:

- Investigate passages below Rivergard Keep
- Take out the water and earth cults
- Windharrow
- Missing prisoners from the caravan (3 more)
- Air Cult
- Fire Cult?

**Party Treasure (not on character sheets nor in party possession at the moment):**

- 117 pp (1170 gp)
- 1175 gp
- 530 ep (265 gp)
- 900 sp (90 gp)
- 5 feathered cloaks
- nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- 4 garnets @ 100gp each
- 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
- 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
- 5 fine citrine gems @ 40gp each
- cloth of gold priestly vestments 40gp
- 2 gold bracelets @ 30gp each
- 2 scrolls
  - earth bind (2<sup>nd</sup>)
  - Maximillian’s earthen grasp (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Marlos’s head in a bag
- Ironfang, Marlos’s magical war-pick – went to Aki
- Shadow demon body – went to Zeratul
- Suit of elven chain mail (+1 AC) (worth ~2500gp)
- Things to sell:
  - scroll of skywrite
  - potion of diminution
  - potion of water breathing

### The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

### Factions:

- Air – Feathergale spire – Dead – Howling Hatred
- Fire – Scarlet moon hall – Eternal Flame
- Water – Riverguard keep – Dead – Crushing Wave
- Earth – Sacred Stone Monastery – Black Earth
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From various letters found in the tower and the keep:

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- Sumer Hills – Knights of Samular are at Summit Hall, founded by Samular Caradon, serve Tyr, god of Justice and is a threat to Miraj Vizann who wants to keep them out of the Sumer Hills.
- Archdruid at Goldenfields asked Dobby to travel to the Scarlet Moon Hall to find out what they are doing and “restore the balance”. In exchange, the Archdruid will cure lycanthropy.
- Enclave wants us to recover magical seeds carried by the moon elf Teresiel. Teresiel was in the caravan.

Nalaskur takes Trycara aside and clarified the priorities of the Zhentarim which are:

- Capture Windharrow alive so he can be questioned
- Protect Riverguard Keep
- Deal with the elemental cults

### *Interlude:*

Inglor Brathren, a male dwarf and Nalaskur's assistant, approaches Trycara and they have a private conversation. ***(DM note: Trycara can choose how much to reveal from this conversation.)***

After the conversation, Trycara makes an impassioned plea for the party to go after Windharrow. “The interrogation of Thurl Merroksa revealed he knows Black Network secrets. We don't know what though and must get him alive.”

Nalaskur is concerned about protecting the Keep from the Water Cult that is suspected. Trycara suggested posting guard at the landing under the Grand Hall. She also suggests they send a

delegation to the Fire cult to form an alliance and see if they can get the Knights of Samular to harass the cults.

Trycara convinces the rest of the party to go along with the mission to Windharrow.

Nalaskur and Inglor had off for Yartar. The party take a day to rest and level and resupply. The next day they travel to Feathergale Spire.

### **Knifepoint Gully**

Zeratul scouts the Sighing Valley and takes a few arrows from gnolls. She also stumbled onto a pair of Griffons at their nest and in some quick thinking polymorphed the attacking Griffon into a frog and darted out of there.

At the Spire, the Aarakocras that the party left in charge greet the party. Trycara asks about humanoids in the valley. The Aarakocras mention that a group of humanoids left from the gully and headed south along the river.

The party explores knifepoint gully and finds a cave entrance guarded by 3 air cultists. After climbing/levitating/flying down, the party surprises the cultists. Aki casts silence to avoid reinforcements. Zeratul catches them in a web. Gale and Aki attack and quickly kill 2 of them. As the last runs away, Gale quickly shoots an arrow through the webbing and it strikes true killing him. Trycara falls and turns to gaseous form to stop her fall.

The party enters the cave which is the entrance to a dwarven city. There is a door which is not trapped. Trycara goes through in gaseous form to scout. She takes an hour to scout many areas of the dungeon. At the gate there are many arrow slits with 4 bird-like creatures behind them. Beyond the far door, there is a hallway with emaciated humans chained to pillars. The next room contains a huge step pyramid shaped building surrounded by a moat. Sitting on top of the pyramid is a wyvern mounted by a humanoid. Inside the pyramid there are levitating cultists chanting a hymn. Stairs lead up within the pyramid to a room containing an ancient Dwarven floor map and a throne. The room contains a large demonic bird-like creature with feathered wings. Atop the throne is a moon elf playing a flute. She deduces that this must be Windharrow. Behind the throne there is a great spiraling horn in an alcove.

Trycara returns and shares her scouting report. The party spends quite some time coming up with a plan to infiltrate, polymorph Windharrow, and sneak out.

The party infiltrates the pyramid by dressing as air cultists, walking through the entrance hall while displaying the air symbol. In the subsequent hallway, Dobby wildshapes into a bat and hides in Zeratul's pocket while Zeratul, Gale, and Trycara are invisible. Trycara turns Aki into gaseous form. The party sneaks up to the pyramid's second level, casts darkness to prevent light from leaking out, then Zeratul casts stone shape to create a hole leading to the second floor of the pyramid.

After entering the second floor, Trycara casts polymorph with bend luck (-11 to save) on Windharrow and turns him into a goldfish. Aki casts silence just before the rest of the party takes out the demonic bird creature while Trycara puts the fish into a water bottle. The party grabs the horn and the flute, then exits as a bat, 3 invisible characters, and 1 character in gaseous form.

The party leaves the air cult dwarven fortress. After an hour Windharrow turns back so the party subdues, binds, and gags him for transport. The party takes a long rest at Feathergale Spire.

### **Return to Red Larch**

In the early morning Dobby stands atop the spire meditating before starting his day. From the distance he sees a hawk fly straight towards him. It lands a few feet from him and speaks with a human tongue. He realizes this is an animal messenger and recognizes the voice as that of the Archdruid. It says, "New Cult threat. Red Larch needs your protection. Emerald Enclave agent Kestra Ashbinder waits for you there with information and will help with the curse."

Dobby takes the message to the party and tries to convince them to go save the town. Trycara is not interested as she is concerned of the risk of losing Windharrow. But she does feel she owes a debt to Mangobarl and suggests they send Aki in to get the trusted contact. Aki agrees.

Zeratul feels responsibility for her employers (they paid her well) and perhaps an opportunity to make some coin and decides to go rescue the Tarnlar's. Dobby is determined to do everything she can for Red Larch, even as the rest of the party wants to turn their backs on the town.

The party proceeds to Red Larch and observes smoke from the southern part of the town. Dobby, Zeratul, and Aki go into town while Gale and Trycara guard Windharrow.

Dobby visits Haeleeya, an Emerald Enclave contact. She shares that cultists have just started burning the town and pleads with him to help save Red Larch. Dobby agrees to delay the cultists as long as he can while Haeleeya helps those escape. She tells Dobby that his contact, the druid Kendra Ashbinder, has already gone to fight them. As Dobby leaves, she grabs him. "Dobby take this staff. It'll help you save us all." Dobby later learns it is a Staff of the Woodlands.

Meanwhile, Zeratul visits Tarnlar's to rescue her the contacts who helped her before. She finds Maegla.

Maegla: "We must save the town. Help us protect the town."

Zeratul: "I care not about the town. I'm here to rescue you."

Maegla: "I can't leave without my husband. He already ran off to help with the defense of the town. Find him. I'll get away to safety with the children."

Zeratul grudgingly leaves to go find Tarnlar. As she leaves the cloister she sees Dobby running south.

Aki visits Mangobarl Lorren. "I'm here to take you to safety"



STAFF OF THE WOODLANDS  
Staff, rare (requires a

This staff can be wielded

that grants a +2 bonus

made with it. While holding

to spell attack rolls.

The staff has 10 charges

Mangobarl: “You must save the town. I know of your great deeds defeating the cultists throughout the valley. You can save us!”

Aki: “The town is lost, and we have a more important mission to complete. The Black Network is regrouping in other towns. Come with me or not.”

Mangobarl: “I cannot leave all these people to die. They are my friends.” Aki look is incredulous. “I can’t leave my investments. I will be ruined. You must save us!” Mangobarl implores.

Aki: “There is no time for this. Come with me or not. 3, 2, ... 1.” Mangobarl doesn’t move.

“Coward!” Mangobarl yells as Aki leaves the bakery.

Starting to head back north out of town Aki pauses. “*Oh stlarn!*” he thinks. “*I hope I’m not going to regret this.*” He turns and heads towards the flames chasing after Zeratul and Dobby.

“**stlarn**,” “**stlarned**” and “**stlarning**” – Common:- are fairly polite equivalents for “tluin,” of about the blasphemous strength of “Darn!” and see use where we might say “screw” or “bloody” (So saith Ed - May 9, 2004) [http://forum.candlekeep.com/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=13403](http://forum.candlekeep.com/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=13403)



Figure 18. Cultist attacking Red Larch (with fire instead of lightning)



Figure 19. Cultist with Box (artist rendition)

Dobby, Zeratul, and Aki meet on the Long Road near the burning buildings. There are 5 fire cultists. One of the cultists has a fancy box.

Dobby intended to try diplomacy to get the cultists to back down, but before she could attempt a word Zeratul attacked. She is hurt badly by two fireballs from the cultist.

As Dobby runs to the front lines she sees townspeople and one druid standing up to the cultists. The druid says, "Dobby. Let me help you." and casts *Barkskin* on him. "*She must be Kendra Ashbinder,*" thinks Dobby.

Zeratul polymorphs Aki into a T-Rex that quickly dispatches a few cultists. Dobby summons a cave bear that keeps one of the spell casters busy. The remaining cultists retreat to cover behind a burning building. The priest opens the box which contains a glowing fiery orb. This orb explodes in a wave of heat that envelops the whole town with 120-degree heat. Fire breaks out at the detonation point followed by more fires throughout Red Larch.

The party quickly defeats the remaining cultists. The town constable, Harburk, thanks the party and coordinates a fire-fighting effort. Zeratul finds Helvur. Helvur shares that he has learned a similar orb has appeared in Yartar. The cultist threat continues to grow.

Kestra Ashbinder hands Dobby a bin. "You're an Autumnreaver (level 3) now. The Archdruid thanks you for your work against the fire cult and all the cults. We need you to find Teresiel and stop these cults."

The party rejoins and travels north to Westbridge where they take a long rest. In the morning the party charts a cab to Yartar for 22gp for 6 people. The ride through the night [*and suffer 1 level of exhaustion*] and reach Yartar early in the morning.

## Yartar

In the town of Yartar, the party goes to a tavern named the Wink and the Kiss. Trycara locates a Zhentarim contact and asks for Inglor, an Ardragon (level 4) of the Zhentarim. The party locates Inglor at the docks. Trycara hands over the captured Windharrow, the flute, and the horn, and delivers news of the fire cult orb device. Inglor indicates that they have also learned of the orb and that it is with the Hands of Yartar, a local thieves' guild. They are auctioning it to the highest bidder.

Aki reports what happened in Red Larch. Zeratul agrees to join the Zhents. Inglor hands a ring of evasion and a coin to Trycara. The coin has a viper stamped on it which symbolizes level 3 in the Zhents. Trycara passes her coin to Gale. This coin has a wolf which symbolizes level 2 in the Zhents. Gale hands his coin to Zeratul. This coin has the image of a fang which symbolizes level 1 in the Zhents.

Inglor assigns the Zhents in the party to retrieve the orb from the Hand of Yartar. Nareen Dhest is auctioning the orb to the highest bidder. You can find her at the Wink and the Kiss.

The party goes to level 9.

### Party Treasure (not on character sheets nor in party possession at the moment):

- 117 pp (1170 gp)
- 1153 gp
- 530 ep (265 gp)
- 900 sp (90 gp)
- 5 feathered air cult cloaks
- 5 water cult cloaks
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- gems / jewelry
  - nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each
  - 4 garnets @ 100gp each
  - 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
  - 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
  - 5 fine citrine gems @ 40gp each
  - 2 gold bracelets @ 30gp each
- Marlos's head in a bag
- Things to sell:
  - cloth of gold priestly vestments 40gp
  - elven chain mail (+1 AC) (worth ~2500gp)
  - scroll of skywrite
  - potion of diminution



- potion of water breathing
- 

### **Session 13: 3/31/2018**

#### **The party:**

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

#### **Factions:**

- Air – Feathergale spire – Dead – Howling Hatred
- Fire – Scarlet moon hall – Eternal Flame
- Water – Riverguard keep – Dead – Crushing Wave
- Earth – Sacred Stone Monastery – Black Earth
- Druid Enclave – Goldenfields – Abbey – Emerald Enclave – Asshats

#### **Lead summary**

From various letters found in the tower and the keep:

- TBD - Aerisi Kalinoth (air queen?). She has captured noblewoman Deseyna Majarra of Waterdeep, who is a member of the caravan and should be returned to the Lord's Alliance. Also the Zhentarim has offered a bounty for return of the delegation.
- Sumer Hills – Knights of Samular are at Summit Hall, founded by Samular Caradon, serve Tyr, god of Justice and is a threat to Miraj Vizann who wants to keep them out of the Sumer Hills.
- Enclave wants us to recover magical seeds carried by the moon elf Teresiel. Teresiel was in the caravan.

Nalaskur takes Trycara aside and clarified the priorities of the Zhentarim which are:

- Capture Windharrow alive so he can be questioned
- Protect Riverguard Keep
- Deal with the elemental cults

*Interludes:*

#### **Why you shouldn't arrest Evil Wizards**

**By Amy Brubeck**

Zeratul hissed angrily behind her gag as she worked her talons against the ropes binding her wrists.

Stupid magical alarms. She really should have noticed that.

Finally, the rope snapped apart and she was able to ungag herself and untie her ankles. Zeratul stood, flexing her slightly numb fingers as she looked around the dark jail cell. Then she started quietly gagging, forcing her (thankfully waterproof) components pouch out of her crop.

While the guards had stripped her and taken her things, they hadn't checked to make sure she hadn't swallowed anything before they caught up to her.

That trick probably wouldn't work twice, but now Zeratul could cast all of her spells. Still, without her spell book, she wouldn't be able to prepare new ones, so she carefully peeked outside the dark, stone-walled cell, making sure no-one was looking, before whispering a familiar pair of incantations in Auran.

*"Misty Step. Invisibility."*

The threads of the Weave bent easily to her, warping her outside the cell and bending the light away from her. Zeratul smirked, carefully making sure her talons didn't click against the wooden floor of the tower as she walked in the direction she'd seen the guards go with her stuff.

After a few moments, she made it to a cell by the stairs, and saw a glint of metal reflecting back from inside. Zeratul repeated her earlier spell chain, warping into the cell, before rummaging around quietly in the assorted junk on the floor.

She felt her feathery hand close around a cool, glasslike rod and a leather book that seemed to thrum happily in her grasp. Smiling, she retrieved her two most precious possessions: her spell book and her wand of magic missile. Excellent, they were both here and unharmed. Zeratul hunted for her robes for a moment, putting them back on, before deciding to sort through the rest since she was here anyway.

Now, what would she do in retaliation for this insult?

Zeratul pondered what to do as she pocketed a bottle with a banded brown, silver, and grey liquid in it. She could convert part of the tower's base into mud, perhaps? No, the spell was too small for that to make a sizable dent in the foundation, and it was too obviously magical. Trycara would know it was her in an instant, and the tiefling would be... upset, to say the least.

She had just gotten this job with the Zentarim; she didn't want to lose it within a day.

Her gaze idly jumped over a lantern on the wall, hanging above a wooden floor, and shifted back.

Wood and oil...

She grinned nastily under her hood. Well, well, well...

*"Fireball."*

*FWOOSH!*

The lantern exploded, covering the floor and stairwell with burning oil. The wooden flooring caught, tongues of flame licking hungrily at the structure. Zeratul laughed, "*Dimension Door*," and took to the skies, watching the panic in the early dawn light as the tower began to burn.

It had been right next to the down stairwell.

The entire floor burned, and a few floors above and below. There weren't any survivors in the blaze.

### **I Want to Contribute Too** **By Lindsey Gebhardt**

Dobby was walking around a bustling market at town square of Yartar. He was searching for potion ingredients. (If he happened upon a useful magic item though, he would inquire after it.) Lost in thought, he wondered at what point had he thrown in his lot with a bunch of evil (and chaotic neutral) adventurers to fix the mess the world was in.

Dobby was sent by the Emerald Enclave to investigate the Desserin Valley for anomalies that may be linked to an evil druid circle. He had agreed to take a job with an old acquaintance in exchange for transportation. In a bar, he met a mysterious evil sorceress and her brute friend, who sadly disappear one night without a trace. There was also a stern blue fellow (Who know there was such a thing?).

They had been sent by the town to defeat a menace, which they did with great skill. Then they went to attack a tower for a special prisoner.

But before this happened, there was the arrival of an elf garbed purple wielding a katana. Out of the entire strange cast, Dobby liked this one the best. He was a great fighter and, although he works close with the sorceress for some sort of evil alliance, deep down Dobby sensed he was a good person who would do the right thing in the time of need.

After getting the prisoner, the party was sent on a goose chase to find a lost caravan. They visited a fort on the river that attacked ships and a monk monastery with a mandusa at its core.

Now was a time for rest. While the others were committing crimes or hunting for magic items, Dobby figured his talents would be best used for making greater healing potions.

"Excuse me, sir, are you going to buy that?" the shopkeeper asked. She couldn't see Dobby's dragonesque appearance due to the hood he was wearing.

Dobby observed the hearty root in his hand. It would be perfect for the potions. "Uh, yes. Thank you," Dobby slid a few silver pieces across the counter to the shopkeeper. Pocketing the root, Dobby went off to find the other ingredients.

As he walked, he wondered what was in store for him next. Would the party be able to obtain the orb and keep it out of the wrong hands? Would the Emerald Enclave cough up the lycanthrope cure? Would they be able to stop the evil cults upsetting the balance of the world? Would Dobby ever be able to beat Andrew's characters at drinking contests?

### **Copper Piece for your Thoughts?** **By Andrew Brubeck**

Akinara Kanegawa was lying down on the bed, considering his company on this odd journey.

They had started by meeting in a carriage ride to Red Larch, Trycara had told him. The crumble cake was very good there, Aki thought, recalling his first trip to that certain bakery the Zents all know and love.

Trycara told him of a large buffoon type she had met named Keothi. He was nice, but big and stupid, so she could use him easily. One night he disappeared without a trace. Perhaps he had made enemies?

Trycara herself was an old friend. Aki remembered some nice times together, like that whiny nobleman they'd killed offering them a thousand thousand gold pieces. We laughed. To be honest, she's kind of bossy and pretentious (with all of those fancy illusions) but she's a good leader and her head's on right.

Aki couldn't say the same for their wizard, Zeratul. He'd never say this in front of the squawking lunatic herself, but she's a few silvers short of a gold piece. She's good enough at frying who we point her at, Aki thought, but she just seems... a little dangerous. Perhaps a liability in the future? The Zents would deal with it.

Enjoyable company, Gale was always lighthearted with a little drink in him. However, Aki had only caught him like this once, and for most of the journey, he had been stoic and serious. He was, however, a good thief and sneak, and Aki respected him for that. Once he had stolen Aki's katana (it was stored while the pick was out) and he had been a laughingstock. Aki resented this, but thought well of his skill.

A close second to Trycara, Dobby was one of Aki's favorites. He was always fun and cheerful, and a fierce fighter. Over drink and combat together, they had formed a close bond that only near-death experiences could forge. Aki smiled at this thought, and hoped that his newfound friend would see sense and join the Zents. The only flaw in an otherwise perfect friend, Aki considered.

All in all, they were a tight bunch. Sure, they got on each other's nerves, and that wizard was almost more creepy than helpful, but Aki figured, 'eh, she's fun enough, so why not?' Anyway, it's almost time to-

“Are we gonna rob these guys or what?” a rogue asks through the thick wooden door.

“Showtime.” Aki says.

### **Other Downtime Activities**

Trycara was able to exchange the elven chain for a +1 shortbow for Gale and boots of elvenkind for Aki.

Gale and Aki team up and engage in a high-end crime spree, stealing 1000 gp from each of two noble houses in the outskirts of town. Gale shares the wealth by handing out 50 gp to homeless people around the town.

### **Wink and the Kiss**

The party travels to the Wink and the Kiss tavern to meet with Nareen Dhest. Along the way, we hear the city guard (Shield of Yartar) looking for a bird like creature. Apparently Zeratul’s burning down of the city jail has attracted some heat from the fuzz.

Inside the Tavern, Trycara asks the bartender for “persimmon,” the code word we were provided by the Hand of Yartar. The bartender directs us to the back room.

In the back room the party meets with Nareen. After learning that we should submit our best and final offer in a sealed auction with a starting bid of 1500 gp, Trycara slips a piece of paper stating that we will pay 3000 gp.

She states that we have a deal and extends her hand when a crossbow bolt crashes through the window and punctures Nareen causing her to slump over on the table.

Zeratul misty steps through the window and chases after the assassin while the rest of the party engages in a brief combat with Nareen’s guards. Dobby heals Nareen. Gale pleads with the guards that we are not the culprits.

Zeratul chases after the assassin. The chase attracts the attention of the Shields of Yartar. Many Shields begin chasing after the two of them. Zeratul hears whistles which she surmises are calling even more guards to the chase.

Zeratul eventually catches up and successfully uses hold person to stop her. Zeratul picks her up and takes to the sky while being shot at with crossbow bolts from many Shields of Yartar. Some hit the mark.

Meanwhile, Aki dives through the window and perceives disappointment in the air. Gale dives through the window and perceives Zeratul flying somewhere in plain sight. After pointing out the large bird creature in the air to Aki, Gale and Aki chase after Zeratul. Dobby wildshapes into a giant eagle and flies through the window joining the chase.

Dobby flies up to Zeratul. In a death-defying move, Zeratul hands off the prisoner to Dobby in mid-air then misty steps out of crossbow range.

Gale uses mage hand to disrupt the crossbow bolts, however several bolts make contact with Zeratul and Dobby.

Dobby lifts a map from the assassin, then drops the prisoner on the roof of the inn, while taking enough damage from crossbow bolts to revert from wild shape.

Back at the Wink and the Kiss, a few Shield of Yartar agents show up at the tavern and begin an investigation of the incident asking questions about what happened. Trycara explains what happened and that her “agents” were chasing the assassin.

The guards (and Gale) proceed toward the inn. When the guards arrive they demand that the people on the roof surrender. Aki and Dobby cooperate and bring the prisoner to the guards.

The guards are blocking the front of the inn so Gale sneaks in through the back door. The guard captain, Artur, insists that Nareen, Trycara, Aki, and Dobby accompany him to the shield tower for questioning.

### **The Shield Tower**

The party notices a crumblecake shop across the street from the Shield Tower:



**YARBUCKS®**

After questioning, the party is released. Dobby wildshapes into a fly sneaks back in to eavesdrop on the interrogation:

The Assassin: “I am Haliyra Ravenfast, and am being held against my will. Those bird creatures attacked me without provocation.” The guards put her into a cell inside the tower.

Trycara goes to see Nareen in the police tower. Trycara apologizes for the disruption and asks if the agreement is intact. Nareen says yes. Trycara points out that we found a map and will follow up on it. Nareen asks for help in getting released.

Trycara bribes the guard to get Nareen released. Nareen asks for payment for the orb and she will tell Trycara where it is. Trycara negotiates 50% payment now and 50% payment later. Trycara hands over 1500 gp of party money.

### **The Cemetery and the Orb**

Nareen takes the party to the cemetery east of town. There is a mausoleum with Kraken people trying to break in. After some awkward discussion, a combat ensues. Trycara cast an insect swarm that causes the bulk of our opponents to run away. The rest of the party kills the cleric while Zeratul dimension doored into the mausoleum and stole the orb. Their goal in hand, the party leaves the cemetery.

### **Meeting with Inglor**

In the morning the party went to the moneychanger to get the 3000 gp from the Zhents. The remaining 1500 gp was paid to Nareen and 1500 gp to restore the party funds.

We met with Inglor and handed over the orb.

Inglor thanks the party and pulls out a bag of goodies:

- Gale receives gloves of thievery (+5 bonus to Dexterity (Sleight of Hand checks and Dexterity checks made to pick locks).
- Trycara receives a sending stone for communication with Inglor
- a rope of climbing
- scroll of faerie fire
- scroll of guiding bolt
- and a bag of holding.

Inglor helps arrange passage on a boat back to Riverguard Keep.

### **Riverguard Keep**

As the boat approaches the keep, the party is suspicious because we don't recognize the person on the battlements. Gale and Dobby hide underwater. Aki hides on the boat. Trycara and Zeratul cast disguise self to hide their weapons.

We are greeted by cultists who demand that we drop our weapons. Trycara flashes the water sign and they start a discussion. They let slip that the water cult has re-taken the keep. The boat may not leave because the Zhents can not find out. Most of the Zhents were killed but those captured were sent to Gar Shatterkeel.

Trycara and Zeratul bluffed their way into the keep by telling the water cultists that they have business with Gar Shatterkeel. They were led to the underground dock and took one of the boats. After the guards left, they came back and met Dobby (in alligator form) and Gale.



*Figure 20. Re-enactment of Gale riding Dobby*

Gale rides Dobby back to the boat to retrieve Aki. Aki casts pass without trace and they rejoined Trycara and Zeratul at the underground dock.

### **Temple of the Crushing Wave**

The party takes the boat down the river from the secret underground dock. En route, the party changes into water cult garb and makes the water cult sign.

Eventually the party reaches a dock and is challenged by water cultist guards who ask us to reveal our faces. Gale, Trycara, and Zeratul cast disguise self to look like nondescript humans.

One of the guards said he must check in with Morbeoth. He jumps in the water and rides away on a shark.

Dobby (in crocodile form), explores the lake, encounters a giant octopus, and runs away.

Trycara chats with the dock guards.

- Morbeoth and Thuluna are always quarreling.
- We are on the lookout for a group of adventurers that attacked our earth brothers.
- We are expecting them to return and have a surprise for them.
- ‘Crush’ is our surprise

The guard returns and asks us to follow him to see Morbeoth. The party rows their boat across the lake to a gravel landing. The guard guides the party north through some passages to a room containing alchemical reagents.

The party chats with Morbeoth:

- Trycara tells him about the fire cult using the orb in Red Larch and Triboar.
- We must slow Vanifer (fire cult tiefling) before she gets too far
- Unkind words about Thuluna.
- Did you hear what we did to Womford? (destroyed with mud)
- We still have power to inflict damage.
- Thurl was captured by the Zhents. We freed him from Bargewright Inn. We captured him as our prisoner.
- We trust him to deliver the news to Gar Shatterkeel.
- There is an opportunity for us both, to make a good impression on Gar.
- We should try to expose Thuluna's treachery.



Figure 21. Morbeoth

Gale, Zeratul go to the main hall with Eyon (shark rider) and speak with some cultist reavers and a humanoid with pale blue skin:

- Thaluna thinks she is in charge because she has inhuman monsters under her control
- Morbeoth attacked Womford and took Riverguard keep.
- Thaluna didn't send her lizardfolk to help.
- Thaluna is here. She has most of the eastern side. Morbeoth keeps to his workshop in the west.
- Thaluna is trusted by Gar Shatterkeel.

## Recognized

Morbeoth and 4 reavers take Trycara, Aki, and Dobby (as a crocodile) go to interrogate the prisoners. There are 3 prisoners: Thurl, and 2 low level Zhents from the keep. Thurl recognizes Aki and calls the party out as traitors.

The party kills Morbeoth. Thurl runs out of the room and into another room full of cultists. Thurl says that we are traitors. Aki chases Thurl and convinces them that Thurl is the prisoner and needs to be captured. The cultists subdue Thurl. Aki takes Thurl back to the prison room along with some additional cultists.

These cultists figure out that something fishy is going on and attack. Trycara vaporizes the cultists with a fireball and damages Thurl, eventually killing him. The cultists knocked Dobby out of crocodile form. Dobby kills them with her poison breath.

Meanwhile in the common room, one of the guards runs in reporting trouble in the jail started by the newcomers. Everyone in the room looks at Gale and Zeratul. Gale plays dumb and deceives the group that we are not with the newcomers.

One of the group runs to warn Thaluna. Gale follows, casts sleep, and takes him out.

Zeratul follows the group toward the jail and fireballs the group. Along with the rest of the party, easily takes out the cultists and the blue humanoid sorcerer.

The party loots Morbeoth and the wizards:

- 2 potions
- Key
- 20gp
- Morbeoth's head

The party locates a room full of lizard people and fireballs them to death.

The party locates a room with 2 ogres, makes the cult symbol, and says we are here to see Thaluna. The ogres announce to Thaluna that she has visitors. Thaluna enters the room and asks what we want.

Trycara throws Morbeoth's head at her feet and announces that there has been a "change in leadership at this temple." Thaluna says "Yessss...I'm in charge. You have done me a great favor. With those humans gone, the true worshipers of Olhydra are supreme. Let me get you a reward."

The party follows her into the mess hall where she rings a large gong. Crush (dragon turtle) emerges from the water. The party fights Thaluna, her two ogre body guards, and Crush. The battle is intense. Zeratul polymorphs Aki into a Giant Ape and the two take turns beating on each other. Aki as an Ape takes the brunt of damage while the rest of the party takes cover and shoots at the most available target. They quickly take down the two ogre body guards. Thaluna gets a few attack spells off but is pushed back by the party's spellcasters and quickly dispatched. Crush does a lot of damage, but can not withstand the onslaught.

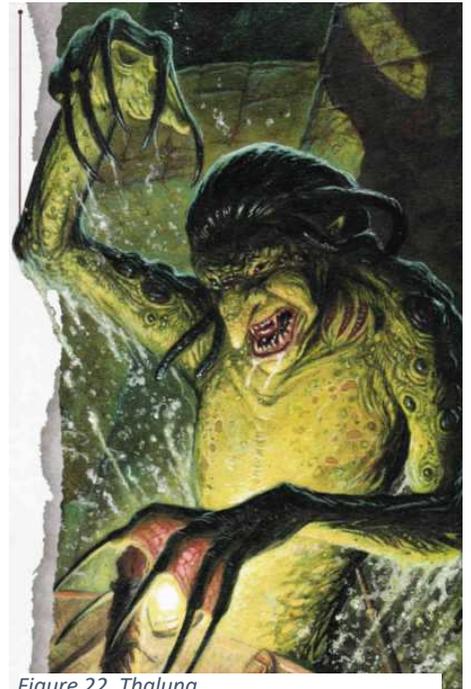


Figure 22. Thaluna



Figure 23. Aki vs. Crush

Loot: chest & chair cushions:

- 190gp
- 8pp
- 3ep
- potion hill giant strength
- potion fire resistance
- +1 long sword (sense dragons)

The party exits through the guard room. Gale sleeps two guards and the party kills the other two.

Then the party rests in the room with the fountain. The party goes to level 10.

**Party Treasure (not on character sheets nor in party possession at the moment):**

- 125 pp (1250 gp)
- 1933 gp
- 3ep (1.5gp)
- 100 sp (10 gp)
- 5 feathered air cult cloaks
- 5 water cult cloaks
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- gems / jewelry

- nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each
- 4 garnets @ 100gp each
- 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
- 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
- 5 fine citrine gems @ 40gp each
- 2 gold bracelets @ 30gp each
- Marlos's head in a bag (not useful)
- Things to sell:
  - potion hill giant strength
  - potion fire resistance
  - +1 long sword (sense dragons)
  - cloth of gold priestly vestments 40gp
  - scroll of skywrite
  - potion of diminution
  - potion of water breathing
  - scroll of faerie fire
  - scroll of guiding bolt

## Session 14: 4/21/2018

### The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

### Factions:

- Air – Feathergale spire – Dead – Howling Hatred
- Fire – Scarlet moon hall – Eternal Flame
- Water – Riverguard keep – Dead – Crushing Wave
- Earth – Sacred Stone Monastery – Black Earth
- Druid Enclave – Goldenfields – Abbey – Emerald Enclave – Asshats

### Lead summary

From various letters found in the tower and the keep:

- TBD - Aerisi Kalinoth (air queen?). She has captured noblewoman Deseyna Majarra of Waterdeep, who is a member of the caravan and should be returned to the Lord's Alliance. Also the Zhentarim has offered a bounty for return of the delegation.

- Sumber Hills – Knights of Samular are at Summit Hall, founded by Samular Caradoon, serve Tyr, god of Justice and is a threat to Miraj Vizann who wants to keep them out of the Sumber Hills.
- Enclave wants us to recover magical seeds carried by the moon elf Teresiel. Teresiel was in the caravan.

### **Fall of the Water Temple**

Trycara used the sending stone to report the party progress to Inglor (head of the Zhents):

Killed Morbeth at water temple. STOP. Riverguard held by water cult. STOP. Still cleaning out water cult.

Inglor responded:

Will raise troops to retake keep. STOP. New cult threat found. STOP. Investigating in Red Larch.

The party explores more of the water cult area. Back in the lunchroom area the cultists are cleaning up the carnage. Zeratul sneaks in and animates the dead Thaluna and one ogre into zombies which surprise attack the cultists. After a brief combat the party dispatches all of the cultists.

To the north, the party finds a bridge across a canal with two doors across the bridge. Zeratul sends a zombie across making the water cult symbol. Then Gale uses mage hand to open the door. There is a loud explosion re-killing the Thaluna zombie and knocking it into the canal.

Aki sneaks into the room through a culvert carved in the shape of a yawning dwarven face to the right of the door. Inside Aki finds the temple to elemental water with an alter to the Princess of Water guarded by a large brown monster with sharp teeth, two robed cultists, and 5 lizardfolk. Aki casts shatter to get things going. Zeratul and Trycara cast fireballs from the door, then one of the robed figures showers the south half of the room with obscuring freezing rain and sleet.

Aki swims over to the far side of the room and attacks the brown monster. With the tremorsense from Ironfang, Aki can tell the lizardfolk are running towards the alter through the sleet storm.



*Figure 24. Demon protecting the Water Temple*

Dobby wildshapes into a crocodile, swims to, and jumps through the other culvert face to join Aki in the melee (in a spectacular move with a natural 20 climb check). One of the blue-skinned cultists originally seen at Riverguard Keep (Reash) appears next to Aki and attacks him. Later he turns into a water-shaped like a snake and retreats over to near the robed cultists.



Figure 25. Reash returns!

Zeratul, Trycara, and Gale use shape water to gradually move through the storm. After some time Zeratul gets frustrated and dispels the entire storm.

Gale shoots the brown demon and criticals with 48 points of damage. Then Trycara casts synaptic static and causes the brown monster and one of the robed cultists heads to literally explode. One of the robed cultists shoots a magic missile at Aki but Zeratul counterspells to negate it. Dobby's crocodile form clamps down on one of the lizardfolk grappling it. Then Gale shoots the lizardfolk through the eye killing it. Aki uses shatter on the robed cultist and water snake. Then the water snake escapes under the door to the west. Zeratul pursues but cannot locate him. Gale shoots the final robed cultist with an arrow and takes him down.

After the combat, Aki swims into a hidden tunnel below the water which emerges into a natural cavern where he finds 4 chests. Aki opens the 4 chests and finds:

- 730 gp (Aki hides 500gp from the party)
- 900 sp
- Silver ewer
- Scroll of tidal wave
- Scroll of vitriolic sphere
- Leather satchels that contain 50 tomes written in old dwarvish (the party believes these to belong to the dwarven sage Bruldenthara).

Zertaul does scrying regarding the location of the water snake. She determines that the water snake turned back into Reash and is located in a chamber with wall paintings. There is an insectoid creature who asks:

“What do you serve?” Reash answers, “The princess of Evil Water.”

“What are you?” Reash answers, “I am nothing.”

“What lies below?” Reash answers “the Fane of the Eye.”

The creature steps aside and Reash walks down the stairs. While making a symbol with his hands, Reash walks north along a stream then turns into a water serpent again and swims down into a waterfall which leads to a mossy cavern where there is a flat boat with a globe of water hovering in mid-air. He then goes northwest into a room with stalactites/mites and a rocky island. He continues south down another waterfall into a large cavern with thick mist concealing the ceiling and the occasional stalactite piercing the fog. Reash travels south down yet another waterfall into a cavern with heavy rain lightly obscuring all vision. There are shattered sailing vessels in the center of the room. Reash continues south in the cavern and down another waterfall to a room with an island covered in coral in a large lake at the epicenter of three roaring waterfalls. A gigantic globe of water floats in the center of the room. He approaches what must be Gar Shatterkeel with a trident in his hand, concentrating on the water globe. Reash tells Gar, "The temple has fallen."

Gar responds, "No matter. The princess of evil comes. They cannot stop her now."

*[DM note: I made a few corrections to the scrying as I had not read this dungeon carefully yet.]*



Figure 27. Gar Shatterkeel



Figure 26. The Water Node

Back in the temple, the party finds finds 10ep, 25sp, 12gp, 6 small agates (10gp each) on top of the altar.

The party explores the rest of the Temple of the Crushing Wave. They find an empty room that must have been the priests' quarters. There is a room with the insectoid creature who asks the three questions. The party answers them and continues searching the level. There is a room with three trolls which the party instructs to clean up the mess in the dining hall. "But take your time," finished Trycara. They stop getting up and take full advantage of the command.

Near the lab is a brewery room containing two rows of oxidized copper vats and with old peeled murals of dwarves tending to hop vines. There are three glass backpack-sized containers with a carrying harness. The tank radiates magic. There is a liquid in the tank. Aki decides to take one of the tanks. Zeratul identifies it as a magical item that can be commanded to open and close allowing a water being to be released.

In Morbeth's lab there is evidence that he was building these tanks. Lab notes indicate that they can be used to carry water from the elemental node and can be used to attack people.

The party also finds:

- 260 sp
- 22 ep
- A series of unsigned letters reporting on the events in Red Larch.

South of the lab is a deserted guard room and a hallway leading to a portcullis which opens with Morbeth's key.

Having explored the water temple, the party proceeds to the healing fountain then the abandoned granaries. Trycara uses the sending stones to report to Inglor (head of the Zhents):

Defeated water temple. STOP. Found passage to water node.  
STOP. Will eliminate Gar Shatterkeel there.

Inglor responded:

Cult has new ally. STOP. Need help to stop dragon. STOP.  
Meet in Red Larch immediately.

### **Riverguard Keep... Liberated?**

The party rests in the granaries then proceeds to Riverguard Keep via the boat dock and stairs to the secret door behind the throne. Upon opening the throne, the party is greeted by 25 or more elven soldiers who tell the party to drop their weapons. Trycara steps forward, announces that we are not water cultists, and shows her Zhent tattoo. From the balcony, the Arch Druid, Galina Rose Lancaster, appears.

"Trycara, touched by Asmodeus, we are not your enemies."

The Arch Druid requests to speak with Dobby in private. Dobby returns from her meetings with the Arch Druid. She was promoted to Autumnreaver (level 3 Emerald Enclave). She does not report that the enclave is planning to attack the fire cult.

The party senses that the warriors are preparing for battle. Trycara learns that first thing in the morning they are heading to the Circle of the Scarlett Moon to “get rid of the pretenders.” Trycara reports to Zeratul and Aki about the Druid’s plan. Trycara sends Aki with a message to Elizar Dryflagon to warn them.

Aki runs ahead to warn the fire cult (who are allied with the Zhents) and meets the party on the road. Dobby is not aware of Trycara’s treachery.

### **Back to Red Larch for a New Mission**

The party does reaches Red Larch at late at night. The party locates Mangobarl, wakes him up, and asks to find Inglor. Mangobarl tells the party to ask for Howard Smirk at the swinging sword. After waking up the innkeeper, Kaylessa Irkell, she reluctantly summons Smirk from his room. He comes down and is immediately recognized as Inglor. He shares that a powerful shadow dragon called the Dark Lady lairs underneath Rundreth Manor.

“One of our agents saw robed cultists leaving the manor. We’ve never seen anyone leave Rundreth Manor alive, so that could mean our enemies have a shadow dragon on their side.” His eyes narrow. “Your goal is to shatter this alliance any way you can. You need to break this alliance any way you can. I recommend negotiation.”

Trycara asks about resources to use for the negotiation. “Our resources have been stretched to the limit by these cults.” Inglor has nothing to offer. On the side Trycara, tells Inglor of Aki’s work warning the fire cult of the attacking Emerald Enclave forces and encourages him to promote Aki. “Very good work! He will get his promotion. That is if he comes back from the manor. No reason to waste a promotion on a dead man,” Inglor says with a mean laugh.

Zeratul consults her tomes and remembers from her studies that Shadowdragons don’t like light and are extremely powerful. “Yes. Try negotiation, since they are difficult to fight.”

The next day walking through town it is easy to see the town is just beginning to recover from the damage caused by the fire cult attack. Gale investigates at the barber shop to learn more about the Dark Lady. Marlandro Gaelkur, the shopkeeper, shares that only folktales tell of the Dark Lady. A minstrel named Inder Braelen wrote a ballad to the Lady. It reveals that she is a drow who loves to conceal things with powerful magics. Due to her legendary beauty many male adventurers have sought the Dark Lady, but she is elusive.

## Rundreth Manor

The party rests in Red Larch and sets out for Rundreth Manor in the morning and arrives at dusk. The manor is a ruin. Aki foolishly explores the ruin at night, nearly falling through a hole in the flagstones that drops down 20 feet. The party camps outside the ruin until morning.



Figure 28. The Ruins of Rundreth Manor



Figure 29. The Dark Lady

Aki climbs down the hole into the basement of the manor. The air shimmers and a gorgeous female drow appears in the center of the chamber.

“What brings you to my manor?”

Aki says that he represents the Zhentarim and we wish to negotiate. Gale notices the sword (dragon detection) glows warm and the rubies glow slightly. “I love to talk. And I love company. Have your friends come down to talk,” the drow implores. The party except for Zeratul climbs down into the pit.

Trycara attempts to begin negotiations but is cut off. “You do not interest me tiefling.” She turns to Akki and looks at him intently for a moment. “Are you an elf? Yuck! You think you’re better than everyone else.”

She then looks at the dragonborn. “Tall and strong. I like tall and strong. What do you have to say for yourself?”

Dobby says, “We would like for you to not help the cults.” Dark Lady: “I taught them in blood to leave this place alone.” Trycara tries to pass off the silver ewer as a gift. She swats it out of her hand.

The Dark Lady looks at Gale and asks: “And what are you?” Gale levitates (because he can) and says “Oh your beauty is uplifting. We have a quarrel with the cultists and we intend to thwart them.” Gale recounts their party’s work stopping the cult and what they have learned through the adventure. “What have you learned?” asks Gale.

“Well of course you know about the princes: Imix, Ogremoch, Olhydra, and Yan-C-Bin. They are working together. The elemental eye keeps them working together. No one knows exactly what the elemental eye is. Some believe that it is a dark primordial god that created the elements. But it is clearly growing again in the Sumber Hills.”

“Again?”

“Yes. Many millennia ago and deep in the Sumber Hills the drow built a shrine to call forth the elemental eye and they got more than they could handle. Time passed. Then the dwarves came in and built their fortress: Tyar-Besil, one of the last dwarven strongholds of fallen Besilmer. And then they too were forgotten.”

With a small gesture she conjures the symbol of the Elder Elemental Eye.



Figure 30. Elder Elemental Eye

“Have the elemental nodes been formed?” she asks. Gale explains what they know about the nodes and how they have learned Gar Shatterkeel works to bring forth the water node. He also shares that they have stopped Marlos Urrayle in the Temple of Black Earth showing her the severed head of the mandusa.

“Impressive work,” is her sultry reply. “But what happened to Ironfang?”

Aki: bluffs that the Zhents have it.

Gale: Why do you care about Ironfang?

Lady: I like shiny objects.

In a sad attempt to flirt, Gale shoves gold pieces down his shorts.

Gale: "I have some shiny objects downstairs."

Lady: What else do you know?

Gale: tells her about the Druids going after the Fire cultists, orbs, etc.

Lady: I'd like to acquire an orb.

Gale: What would you exchange for an orb?

Lady: What do you want?

Gale: Information on how to defeat the Eye

Lady: The elemental nodes are the key. If you want to defeat the cults you must close the nodes.

Gale: And how do we go about closing the nodes.

Lady: You must use Ironfang to close the node. Do you know the weapons?

Trycara: Yes, Gar has a trident.

Lady: Oh yes, Drown. Tenderstrike, the dagger or fire. Windvane, the spear of air.

"The weapons were formed centuries ago by a dark Drow named Vizeran DeVir. He used the power of the shrine to make the four elemental weapons. They have been under the Sumer Hills most recently calling out to the prophets and bringing them and the cultists."

"Each weapon is powerful on its own but is also is connected to an extraplanar Prince of Elemental Evil. When channeled properly it can open a portal to the Inner Plane of that element and allow the prince to come through. But it can also close those portals. Should the weapon contact the portal it will close immediately."

Gale thanks the dark lady and says we will bring her an orb.

"But how can I be certain you will return to me?" She addresses Gale alone showing no interest in the rest of the party. "What of value can you give me that will assure you return?"

Trycara motions to her ring finger suggesting without word that Gale give the Dark Lady his signet ring as collateral. Gale has spent many months searching for that mud sorcerer who took his ring and his family honor. Having suffered so much to finally retrieve it and have a chance to return to the nobility that is his right, he hesitates. But in the end, he determines it will have to wait. The cults must be stopped. With his mage hand he sends the ring over to the Dark Lady. Mysteriously it falls through her hand. "Oh. You weren't supposed to see that," she says.

"A beautiful ring. I shall keep it safe," the Dark Lady says as she turns and walks away. "Oh. I have no use for this. Perhaps you will." She tosses Gale a sword hilt.

"Thank you m'lady. We shall return," Gale says chivalrously.

"Now leave me! Leave while I allow it. Leave! Be Gone!"

Gale levitates out. The rest of the party climbs out.

Trycara uses the sending stones to report to Inglor (head of the Zhents):

Spoke with Dark Lady. STOP. Not allied with cult. STOP.  
Destroy nodes by touching with artifact weapons. STOP.  
Aki lived looking for promotion.

Inglor responds:

Believe Nalaskur and captured Zhents still alive. STOP.  
Mounting rescue mission. STOP. Join in Red Larch as soon  
as you can.

Gale attunes to the hilt and learns that it is a sun blade. It appears to be a longsword hilt. While grasping the hilt as bonus action you can cause the blade to spring into existence.

#### **Sun Blade:**

- 1d8 +2 attack / +2 damage.
- +1d8 radiant damage vs. undead.
- Has the finesse property. (required for sneak attack)
- Can be used with short sword or long sword proficiency.
- Blade emits bright light (sunlight) 15' radius, then dim light additional 15' radius.
- By action, each light radius can be expanded 5 feet at a time between a 10 foot each minimum and 30 foot each maximum.



As the party leaves the manor a torrential downpour begins. Wind and rain pummel everything relentlessly with no stop, and lightning continuously lights up the sky.

Dobby remarks, “The heavens weep like I’ve never seen them before. Gar Shatterkeel must be getting close to summoning Olhydra.”

***DM Note:** I forgot to mention this in session. This unnatural weather causes the following:*

- *The adventurers can't finish a long rest unless they are indoors.*
- *All overland travel takes twice as long.*
- *Vision is heavily obscured past 100 feet.*
- *It is easier to become lost.*

*Great session! Everyone gets inspiration!*

- *Dobby – for his promotion to Autumnreaver*
- *Aki – for great use of nearly all of Ironfang’s features*
- *Trycara – for playing in character by warning the Fire Cult*
- *Gale – for roleplaying with the Dark Lady and giving up signet ring for cult information*
- *Zeratul – for scrying Reash and finding a route to the water node*

**Party Treasure (not on character sheets nor in party possession at the moment):**

- 125 pp (1250 gp)
- 2175 gp
- 35 ep (17.5 gp)
- 1285 sp (128.5 gp)
- Silver ewer
- 5 feathered air cult cloaks
- 5 water cult cloaks
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- gems / jewelry
  - nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each
  - 4 garnets @ 100gp each
  - 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
  - 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
  - 5 fine citrine gems @ 40gp each
  - 2 gold bracelets @ 30gp each
  - 6 small agates @ 10gp each
- Marlos’s head in a bag (not useful)
- Things to sell:
  - potion hill giant strength
  - potion fire resistance
  - +1 long sword (sense dragons)
  - cloth of gold priestly vestments 40gp
  - scroll of skywrite
  - potion of diminution
  - potion of water breathing
  - scroll of faerie fire
  - scroll of guiding bolt
  - scroll of tidal wave
  - scroll of vitriolic sphere
  - Leather satchels that contain 50 tomes written in old dwarvish

## Session 15: 5/5/2018

### The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

### Factions:

- Air – Feathergale spire – Dead – Howling Hatred – Windvane (spear)
- Fire – Scarlet moon hall – Eternal Flame – Tenderstrike (dagger)
- Water – Riverguard keep – Dead – Crushing Wave – Drown (trident)
- Earth – Sacred Stone Monastery – Black Earth – Ironfang (war pick)
- Druid Enclave – Goldenfields – Abbey – Emerald Enclave – Asshats
- Knights of Samular – Summit Hall – Goody two shoes – Avoid

### Lead summary

From various letters found in the tower and the keep:

- TBD - Aerisi Kalinoth (air queen?). She has captured noblewoman Deseyna Majarra of Waterdeep, who is a member of the caravan and should be returned to the Lord's Alliance. Also the Zhentarim has offered a bounty for return of the delegation.
- Enclave wants us to recover magical seeds carried by the moon elf Teresiel. Teresiel was in the caravan.
- Close the elemental portals with each of the legendary weapons (listed above)

### Journey to Riverguard Keep

The party proceeds to Red Larch to help Inglor rescue Nalaskur. Due to the heavy rain this takes 2 days. Aki goes ahead and gets there in 1 day with exhaustion.

Aki speaks with Mangobarl at the crumblecake shop and is directed to the Swinging Sword where he locates Inglor's representative, Vanda Moor.

Vanda: "Inglor left yesterday to get more help from Yartar. At least 20 zhents, including Naskalar, have been taken deeper into the temple to be sacrificed." Aki tells Vanda that the party will proceed to the water temple and attempt the rescue.

Aki takes a long rest, then runs back to the party, meeting them in the evening of the second day.

Trycara send a message to Inglor (Zhent leader)

Aki went ahead to meet Vanda. STOP. Party going to water temple. STOP. Aki proving useful.

Response back is:

Good speed is of the essence. STOP. Will join soon.  
STOP. Well done Aki.

The party proceeds to Riverguard Keep which takes 2 days. The next day Trycara sends the passwords to enter the Fane of the Eye to Inglor.

Riverguard keep is still under control of the elves / druids. Dobby asks for entrance and the party is let in. Dobby asks about the assault on the Scarlet Moon Hall.

Gale, in a poor move of judgement, left his adventure journal for Aki to take over.

The party decides to stop for a delicious grilled lunch of hamburgers and hotdogs. They also purchase some YARTAR coffee from a restaurant chain called McGuffins.

The food was poor quality, almost disgusting, and the chicken nuggets had bones in them, but it was O.K.

2/5 stars. Best restaurant I've ever had the displeasure of eating in.

Aki doodles in Gale's notebook the sign on the restaurant.



The party arrived at Riverguard keep. Trycara spoke to one of the Emerald Enclave elves, who told Trycara that there were more prisoners who were rescued and healed by the Enclave. They believe that the battle is won. However, they know nothing about the secret entrance to go lower into the keep.

Gale, sick of Aki's antics, punches him in the face and reclaims the journal. Unfortunately, Aki's additions were in permanent ink.

### **Water Temple Redux**

The party proceeds to the water temple by boat. At the landing the party convinces the bugbear guards that we are water cultists, and not the adventurers they are looking for. The party takes the boat over to the landing near the stairs going down. After stating the passwords, the party proceed down into a natural cavern with a lake and water proceeding north.

Dobby in crocodile form, slips into the water and is attacked by a pair of water weirds. After a brief combat the party proceeds to the north, following in the steps of Reash from Zeratul's scrying.

To the north is another natural cavern with two waterfalls. The party proceeds down stairs along the two waterfalls into another cavern with a large globe of water hanging in the air. The arcane members of the party sense that it is strong transmutation magic as if a creature that has been or could be transformed.

A giant octopus tentacle reaches out of the water and strikes Dobby. After a brief combat, Trycara kills it with a scorching ray.

The party takes the boat from the bottom of the stairs and paddles to the northwest passage. There is an island with a man tied to the island and yelling "help." Gale uses mage hand legerdemain to untie him. He reveals that he is a Zhent, so the party adds him to the boat.

He tells the party "Nalaskur and others were given to other cults, but there are other Zhent prisoners down here." and that the party should go to the west (Reash went south). Aki detects that he is lying and threatens him. Zeratul sees an enchantment leave him. He says "I am free! It was horrible and got into my mind with its tentacles and gaping maw! It has the others. Nalaskur really has been taken. It wants more sacrifices. Save the prisoners to the west. Avoid the nets, then you arrive at an entrance to a temple. There are fish looking humanoids who are very religious. They took one of us into the next room and I heard blood curdling screams. There are stairs up to a throne with a tentacled monstrosity got into my head and made me do his bidding. There are two more of my brothers prisoner there."

Trycara senses a voice in her mind showing the Zhent prisoners and saying, "Come to me." followed by a bunch of horrific images. Trycara resists and warns the rest of the party to guard their minds.

The party takes the boat south over a waterfall into a next large cavern, then south down another waterfall into a small cavern. Gale notices an underwater passage and points this out to the rest of the party. This cavern opens into a huge cavern with shipwrecks and a torrential rain. The party rows the boat around the shipwrecks. The party is almost sucked by the current into a side passage but manages to pull through.

At the south side of the cavern is another waterfall leading to a large chamber containing a lake and island in the center where Gar Shatterkeel is summoning in front of the water node.

The party charges in and attacks Gar and his minions including a Reash, wizard, water elemental, and several crocodiles. Aki was polymorphed into a giant ape with stonewall (courtesy of Trycara's spell). Aki climbed to the ceiling and swung across the stalactites to the island where he dropped 80 feet onto Gar Shatterkeel. Trycara swam down the waterfall. Zeratul was flying around casting spells at various water cultist targets. Gale was levitating near the ceiling while being towed by Zeratul. Dobby wildshaped into a giant eagle and grabbed Dave (the Zhent prisoner) and flew in following Zeratul.

The party prepared their attack. Aki was a polymorphed into a giant ape with stonesskin (courtesy of Trycara's spell). Trycara swam down the waterfall. Zeratul flew in preparing to cast spells at convenient water cultist targets. Gale levitated near the ceiling while being towed by Zeratul. Dobby wildshaped into a giant eagle and grabbed Dave (the Zhent prisoner) and flew in following Zeratul.

The party charged in. Dobby and Gale noticed a giant crocodile shaped shadow swimming near the island. They begin their attack of Gar and his minions including a Reash, wizard, water elemental, and several crocodiles. Aki's initial 80-foot drop onto Gar hits him solidly. Zeratul and Trycara unloaded with a barrage of high level spells. Dobby flew in and attacked as a giant eagle. Gale levitated firing arrows from above.



Trycara cast fireball on the island, and then misty stepped 60 feet onto the island Zeratul counterspelled several attempts by Gar and the priest to cast sleet storm and other spells.

Dobby attacked as a giant eagle.

But the cultists strike back. Gar cast hold person and paralyzed Gale and Akki. After taking some spells from the casters, he lost concentration. He then dove into the water to get away from the spell casters and others. A water elemental rose up and attacked Akki. A giant crocodile surprised Trycara biting and grappling her on the island. She misty stepped away from it. The priest cast a barrage of magic missiles at Zeratul and along with Reash dove into the water to avoid the powerful spells.

Gar dove underwater to escape but was quickly hunted down by the Zeratul and Trycara. Gar healed himself several times and attempted to cast other spells. He was soon overwhelmed by the attackers and perished on the bottom of the lake collapsing into a pool of inky water leaving the trident behind him.

Reash turned invisible and escaped (again).

Their counterattack failed, the water cultists and their minions are easily slaughtered by the party.

After the combat the party grabbed the trident. Aki (as a gorilla) touches Drown to the elemental water node. The moment it touches he feels it pulled strongly into the node like the strongest magnet. He tries to hold on, but it finally slips from his grasp and disappears into



Figure 31. Gar's similar fate

the portal as the portal collapses to nothing. The other water globes floating around the room disperse into the water. The trident was sucked into the portal and is gone.

The party finds on the priest a:

- Cloak of protection +1,
- Ring of Jumping, and
- Scroll of Feather Falling.

Near Gar's demise they find a Ring of Mind Shielding.

The party goes to level 11.

**Party Treasure (not on character sheets nor in party possession at the moment):**

- 125 pp (1250 gp)
- 2175 gp
- 35 ep (17.5 gp)
- 1285 sp (128.5 gp)
- Silver ewer
- 5 feathered air cult cloaks
- 5 water cult cloaks
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- gems / jewelry
  - nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each
  - 4 garnets @ 100gp each
  - 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
  - 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
  - 5 fine citrine gems @ 40gp each
  - 2 gold bracelets @ 30gp each
  - 6 small agates @ 10gp each
- Marlos's head in a bag (not useful)
- Things to sell:
  - potion hill giant strength
  - potion fire resistance
  - +1 long sword (sense dragons)
  - cloth of gold priestly vestments 40gp
  - scroll of skywrite
  - potion of diminution
  - potion of water breathing
  - scroll of faerie fire
  - scroll of guiding bolt
  - scroll of tidal wave
  - scroll of vitriolic sphere
  - Leather satchels that contain 50 tomes written in old dwarvish

## Interlude: Water Node Exploration via Email

After defeating Gar Shatterkeel, the party retreats to the far corner of the massive cavern. In that corner Zeratul casts Leomund's tiny hut on a small dry patch, and the party proceeds to rest and recovery from the intense fight.

When they finish the rest they immediately notice that the water level has subsided quite a bit. The large underground lake has contracted by at least several feet.

With his dancing lights, Gale searches the cavern for any would be threats. The cavern is dark and deserted. "With the dead of Gar Shatterkeel, has the water cult has completely abandoned these caverns?" he ponders.

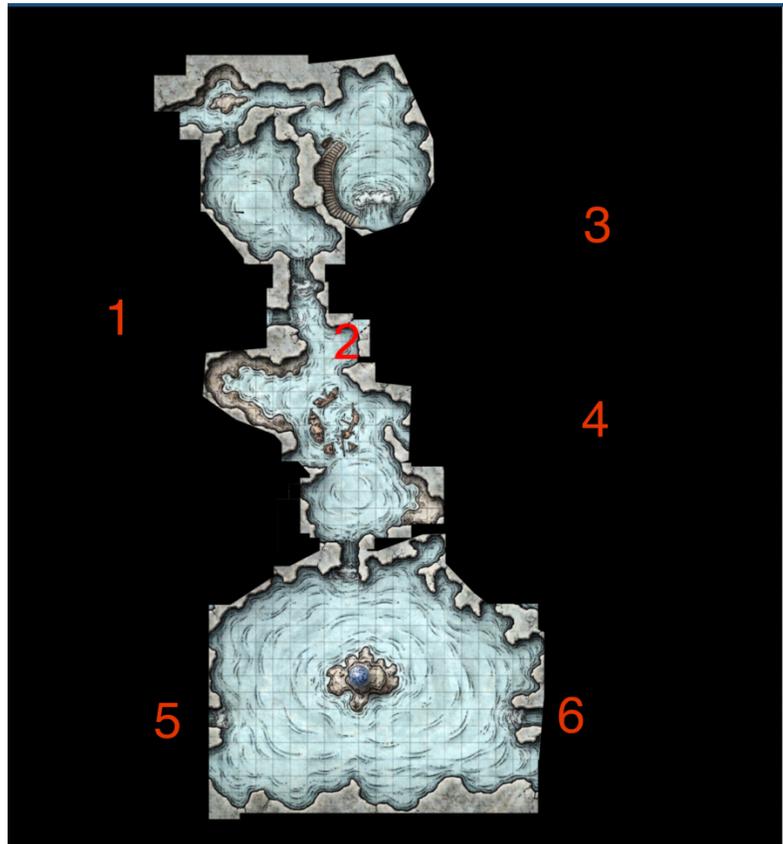


Figure 32. Area 6

Packed and ready to search for the missing Zhent prisoners, the party hides their tracks casting *pass without trace*, and then climbs or flies their way up a 40-foot waterfall to the east (area 6). At the top they see another large cave. A crude stone hut perches atop a stony island in the midst of a wide pool. Water drizzles from the cavern ceiling, and the roar of the waterfall echoes throughout. Gale sees a water cultist holding lances. Seeing his dancing lights, they run to the water and two water weards come up to meet them. They mount the creatures and proceed to charge the party submerging as they approach.

The party easily defeats them. *[I will the party to describe how you dispatch these monsters.]*

Searching the hut contains the party finds two hammocks made from fishing nets, clothing, and belongings. None of these belongings are valuable.



Figure 33. Area 4 with the ice mephits

The party returns to get their boat from the water node and while it takes some time they manage to lift it up the waterfall giving them an easy way to traverse the still flooded cave.

In addition to the waterfall on the southern end, there is an opening to the north of the cave (see image).

Aki swims upstream through the north tunnel. It winds for about 75 feet and opens up. You feel the temperature drop noticeably along the way. The water flows from north-west and to the north-east a cave opens up. Cold air drifts from the cave.

Frosty mist fills this cave. Icicles and water crystals glitter along ledges, the ceiling, and the walls, and a brittle crust of ice surrounds a central isle upon which crouches a pale-skinned, bare-chested man wearing an eyepatch. He is surrounded by seven cackling, prancing, imp-like creatures made of ice. Five humans are spread-eagled against the far wall, frozen to its surface, their skin black from frostbite. Some hang upside down or sideways; some are missing fingers, hands, and feet.

Aki also notices an underwater passageway to the southwest of the open area.

Dobby casts barkskin and wild shapes into a crocodile and stealthily enters the cave underwater. Gale and Aki quietly push the boat into position so that Zeratul and Trycara can cast fireballs at the captors. Gale positions the dancing lights to illuminate the targets as well as distract them. The fireballs hit their mark and the ice creatures are enveloped and then each in turn bursts scattering jagged ice in all directions. The man misty steps across the cave towards the prisoners and some cover. He flips up his eye patch and you all see a blue glow where his eye should be. A ray bursts forth and hits Trycara with a stinging cold. Dobby surges out of the water to grab the one-eyed man and grapples him. He drags him under the water where he thrashes a bit before becoming forever still.

The party uses fire bolts and tools to remove the prisoners from their frozen shackles. Dobby administers first aid to them all using healing spells for the worst injured. Trycara, Gale, and Aki immediately recognize 4 prisoners as Zhents from the keep. The last is a dwarf they do not recognize.



“Where are Nalaskur and the other Zhents?” asks Trycara.

“Some were traded to the Cult of Howling Hatred. Nalaskur and others were given to the Cult of the Eternal Flame,” answers one of the Zhents.

“They are meant to be sacrificed to help bring forth the princes of elemental evil,” adds the dwarf.

“Who are you?” Gale asks.

“I am Rhundorth of Mirabar.”

*Figure 34. Ice Mephit*

You remember Bruldentharr, the dwarf you freed from slavery beneath the Sacred Stone Monastery, mentioned Rhundorth is a shield dwarf from Mirabar and was a leader of the caravan. You ask him what he knows of the rest of the caravan and of the cultist plans.

“Before being taken prisoner by these horrible cultists, our delegation was on an important trip to Waterdeep to share the results of our trade negotiations on behalf of these great cities. Teresiel of Silverymoon, Deseyna Majrra of Waterdeep, and I of Mirabar must reach the Open Lord with our news. I know that Lady Deseyna was captured by air cult raiders and that the moon elf Teresiel was handed over to the fire cult a couple of tendays ago. Please help rescue them before they are sacrificed. Please stop these cults before they bring ruin to the Sword Coast.”

There is a passage to the west, an underwater passage to the south-west, and the passage to the south that you came from.

The party takes a short rest and Dobby heals the prisoners and everyone.

Using the sending stone Trycara messages:

Rescued four Zhents and Mirabar diplomat from  
sacrifice. STOP. More taken by air and fire cult.  
STOP. Returning to keep. Have you retaken the keep? STOP.

Inglor responds:

The keep is ours. STOP. See you there soon. STOP.

You manage to figure out a way to travel in the boat with 8 of you. Zeratul flies and Dobby swims. You travel west and find a long pool fills the cavern, broken only by an island bristling with stalagmites. A drum stands amid the stalagmites on the island. A corpse floats face down in the water near the island. The barely recognizable corpse is that of a Crushing Wave initiate. You can see deep claw marks all over it.

Dobby finds an underwater tunnel leading to the north. This tunnel is blocked by a sturdy and locked iron gate. Four short iron chains ending in manacles are anchored to the iron bars of the gate. To the west is a 40-foot waterfall similar to the others you have found. After some effort you all get up the waterfall. In the next chamber you see a path leading to the east and a path to the north.

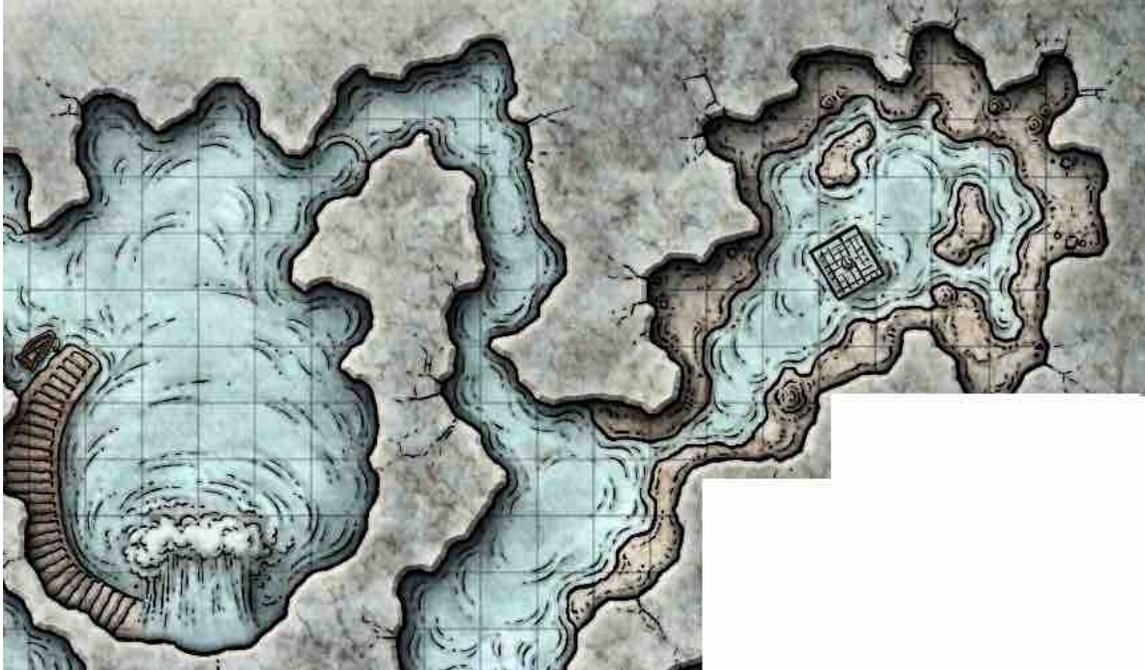


Figure 35. Area 3 with iron cage and back to the beginning

To the east a ribbon of dry land hugs the walls of this cavern, the walls of which are covered with chalk-scrawled symbols of elemental water.

In the center of the cavern, a wrought-iron cage dangles from a rope lashed to a stalactite. Three-fourths of the cage hangs submerged in the pool that fills the middle of the cavern. A dozen humanoids pack the cage, elemental water's symbol raised in a scar on every brow. Tired hands grasp at the bars as the captives struggle to press their mouths above the water. Among the mass of wrestling forms, some lay still, floating face down inside the cage.



Figure 36. General opinion of the party

Following the path to the north you see it eventually leads to the large basin and stairs you defened from the Fane of the Eye into these wet caverns.

You do not recognize any of the captives. You have seen devoted cultists will often carve the symbol on their foreheads as proof of their devotion. Zeratul says, "It is a trap. It is totally a trap. It was the most obviously trappy trapish mc traperstien trap that ever was."

The party leaves the water node and alas will never know if it was a trap. 😊

They make their way with the rescued prisoners out of the Water Node, the Fane of the Eye, and back through the underwater river to Riverguard Keep.

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## **Interlude 2: “The Druid must not know” and A Private Meeting**

While in the water node, Trycara waited for Dobby to be out of ear shot to talk with her fellow Zhents about what strategy to take. She felt strongly it would be better to make an alliance with the fire cult rather than go in there and destroy it. She feels an affinity with them, partly because of her shared tiefling ancestry with their prophet and partly because of her affinity to fire.

Trycara thinks she might very well get along well with Vanifer. Her ideal endgame would be to eliminate the other cults and leave the fire cult alone (as long as they're not trying to wipe out the entire world). In this scenario, the Zhents would ally with the Fire Cult, making them potentially (together) the strongest group on the Sword Coast. Hopefully the Fire Cult will be reasonable enough to see that an alliance with the Zhents is better than every other group bent on their destruction, especially given that the other cults are going down.

Her plan is to negotiate with the highest levels of the Fire Cult, offering to take out the remaining cults and in exchange they hand over their prisoners (including Nalaskur). She doesn't care too much about the druid Teresiel, so while she'll include her in their requests at first, she's willing to drop her from the negotiations if necessary.

Gale and Aki and Zeratul agree with this course of action for the Zhents. “We must not let Dobby suspect any of this,” Trycara sternly warns.

*Fast forward to the keep...*

As the party rests and recuperates at the keep, they begin to plan their next steps. Inglor requests an individual meeting with Trycara. After sharing how the party closed the water node and crippled the water cult, the conversation turns to recent events.

Inglor shares, “Even while you have weakened the water and earth cults, the others grow stronger. Fire elementals roam the hills destroying everything in their path. There are even reported sightings of a cloud giant and other greater elemental evils.”

“True we are at great risk, but Inglor, I think the fire cult can be a powerful ally,” Trycara begins. She shares the reasons the cult may want ally with the Zhents and her plans to negotiate an alliance.

“We warned the fire cult of the impending elf attack on the Scarlet Moon Hall. Aki sprinted ahead to he delivered the message before the attack. In fact, we drove those same elves out of OUR Riverguard Keep. Those are our mutual enemies that we can destroy by working together. We have both suffered losses, now we can both share in victories.”

“The two organizations could be very powerful together: the Fire Cult as 'enforcers' while the Zhents are 'acquirers'. The Zhents could conduct business dealings and supply the Fire Cult, while the Fire Cult takes out our enemies.”

“I'd much rather make them allies.” Trycara leans in as her eyes glow a fiery red. “But if negotiations fail I'll take out the Fire Cult.”

Inglor responds, “A bold plan Trycara. High risk, yet also high reward. You have my support. We have been so weakened we are in no position to help you if it goes wrong. I fear we wouldn't be able to repel the cultists, or the elves should they return to Riverguard Keep.”

He emphasizes this is in confidence as he doesn't want his garrison to know about increased fire and air cult activity or how concerned he is about their ability to hold the keep.

“Of course, I would not do this without yours and the Zhents blessing. Can you provide me with something... a letter, a seal, or a symbol so that I can prove I talk for the Black Network? I need to show this is a serious overture.”

“I can provide you with a signed and sealed note proposing the alliance. I also keep 500 glory pieces on hand which can be used to seal the alliance. These are newly minted... from the Darkhold Vale. They will show you are a high level Zhent. Let me be clear.” Inglor leans in closer to Trycara. “They are a loan.”

You know that glory pieces (also called “weeping wolfs”) are Zhent-minted gold pieces and that Darkhold Vale in the Sunset Mountains is the center of the Black Network.

Trycara is mildly insulted. She has always kept her word and that is all that is necessary to keep her loyal. (*She is lawful evil, emphasis on LAWFUL.*) But she understands the precarious nature of Inglor's current situation, so she's willing to let this pass and assume it was his stress talking.

She wraps the gold pieces in a cloth and places them carefully inside the bag of holding, away from prying eye and fingers. 😊

“How do you plan to contact the fire cult?” asks Inglor. Trycara just smiles as she leaves to prepare the party for her plan.



Figure 37. Zhentarim Glory Piece

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### Interlude 3: A Pair of Dreams



Figure 38. *The sparrow dream*

Dobby was in a deep sleep. The first uninterrupted sleep in a while. As she entered the dream state an image appeared before her. The Staff of the Woodlands stuck straight out of the ground. It then began twisting and growing eventually taking the form of a huge tree. A large fire erupted burning the tree to the ground. Then a small sparrow landed on its ashes. It poked around at the bits of wood and ash, hopping as it went. Finally, it stopped and whistled a beautiful song. Beneath its feet a new tree grew. Then the word “Sparrow” was whispered into Dobby’s ear.

When Dobby wakes up he realized that “Sparrow” is the missing command word that he could not figure out for the staff. He knows this is a message from the archdruid. But why? And what does the command word do?

Gale was reveling in an actual bed inside a room. Gale looked forward to sleeping in a proper bed and not surrounded by the stink of his lowly friends (all except, perhaps, Trycara). Gale had demanded this single room just to himself for the night. The keep certainly isn’t luxurious, but it was so much better than the all too many nights on the road or in the depths of the Sumber Hills.

He slept well... at least at first.

In his dream he suddenly heard the voice of the Dark Lady. “Did you forget me?” Out of the darkness she steps forward. “I’m waiting for you, but don’t come to me without my gift.” She disappeared from his mind’s eye replaced by an ornate case. Gale opened the box to reveal a red glowing devastation orb.

“Fire and air grow stronger,” her voice continued as images of burning fields and whirling air elementals slamming into buildings and picking up running villagers and farmers flashed across his mind’s eye. “Don’t get hurt. I need my little blue man in one piece. Call me and I will come for you... maybe.”

Gale wakes up wiping sweat from his brow. He just catches a slight glow coming from the hilt of his sun blade before it disappears. He eventually gets back to sleep, but not very restfully.

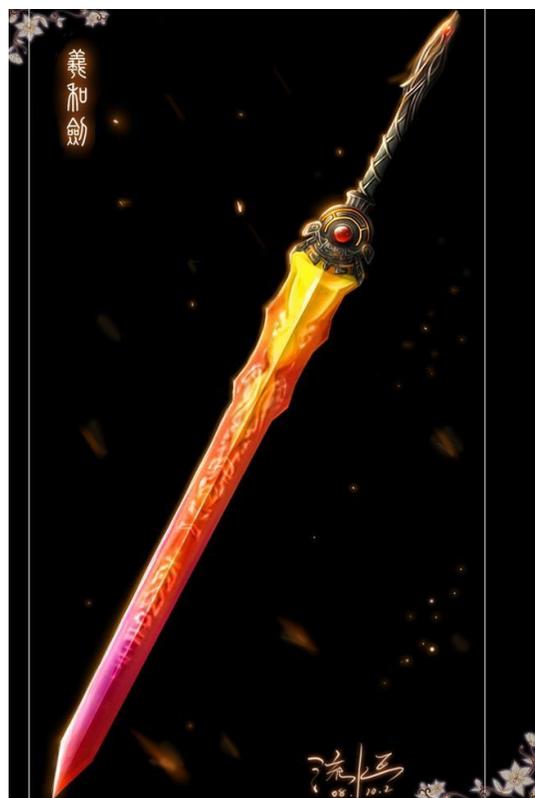


Figure 39. *The glowing sunblade*

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## Session 16: 7/7/2018: The Finale

### The party:

- Trycara – tiefling sorcerer (Helen)
- Aki – wood elf, purple ninja (Andrew)
- Gale – air genasi rogue (Dave)
- Zeratul – aarakocra wizard (Amy)
- Dobby – dragonborn druid (Lindsey)

### Factions:

- Air – Feathergale spire – Dead – Howling Hatred – Windvane (spear)
- Fire – Scarlet moon hall – Eternal Flame – Tenderstrike (dagger)
- Water – Riverguard keep – Dead – Crushing Wave – Drown (trident)
- Earth – Sacred Stone Monastery – Black Earth – Ironfang (war pick)
- Druid Enclave – Goldenfields – Abbey – Emerald Enclave – Asshats
- Knights of Samular – Summit Hall – Goody two shoes – Avoid

### Caravan leads summary:

- Rescued Rhundorth, shield dwarf from Mirabar.
- He mentioned that Teriesel of Silverymoon and Deysenya majora at Watedeep and he were on a mission to Waterdeep with news of the trade negotiations.
- Deyseynya was captured by the air cult.
- Teresiell was captured by the fire cult.

Trycara and Inglor return to the keep's main hall. Inglor tells the party they must take out the air and fire cults.

Trycara continues, "My guess is that the fire cult section of the temple complex is opposite from the water side. That means north of the air temple. We could enter through Knifepoint Gully and take out air cultists until we find it. Shouldn't be too long before we find it."

"But why not attack through the water temple?" persuades Gale.

"Very well." Trycara agrees.

The party goes through the water temple and unlocks the gate to the air temple with the key found previously on Morbeoth. The party enters the air temple from the southeast. They surmise the exit to Knifepoint Gully is in the southwest and recall that the pyramid-shaped air temple is in the center that they previously raided to capture Windharrow.

Proceeding in the dark, the party encounters a genie. Aki (somewhat foolishly) alerts the genie to his presence but sneaks out before any altercation.

The party backtracks to the entrance and proceeds west. There is screaming coming from a room to the north. The party suspects these could be Zhent prisoners and break in, kills the Kenku guards and rescue five Zhents. There is loot consisting of 15gp. The Zhents manage to find their way back to the keep. Zeratul used the fresh bodies to summon three ghouls (Huey, Duey, and Louie).

The party sneaks north past the air cult initiates chained to the pillars, past the pyramid, and proceeds to the north where there is a lit plaza with a stone statue and several ruined stores. There are four humans and two Kenku in the plaza. The party attacks everyone in the plaza with a surprise round and quickly takes them out.

The party proceeds north into the fire cult area. They immediately come to a barricade of loose stone defended by hobgoblins. Trycara convinces the hobgoblin guards to take the party to Elizar Dryflagon. The captain leads the party through a large room to east. This room appears to be sleeping and living chambers for a number of cultists. He directs them to an opening to the south which opens into another living area. As they enter the party notes there are many hobgoblins that accompanied them, and they are at attention.

In the southern room scorch marks and charred furnishings litter this chamber, and a burned tapestry spans the east wall. Dancing about the room are four small humanoids made of magma. Trycara immediately noticed Elizar as well as a human female mage. Trycara embraces Elizar, and he introduces Lyzzie Calderos the human mage.

Elizar turns to Aki and says, "Thank you Aki for the warning. Even though they still overwhelmed us, we managed to surprise the elves and druids. We killed and injured so many of them. As we retreated into the temple we collapsed the Scarlet Moon Hall preventing them from following us. The threat is still there but effectively neutralized. They will not stop our prophet's work."

Dobby (learning about this for the first time) lets out a screech (since he is in owl form).

"Betrayed!" The word screamed in Dobby's head.

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### *Dobby's meeting with the Archdruid*

Dobby thought back to his meeting with the archdruid at Riverguard Keep where her army prepared to strike Scarlet Moon Hall. Aki ran ahead to warn the fire cult. How could Aki betray him like that. These people are not his friends, but he did not think they were his enemies. How could he continue to support these evil Zhents.

But the archdruid had warned him. At their private meeting (*see session 14, page 80*) she had told him he would face enormous challenges that would require every ounce of self-control he had practiced all these years. Was this what she saw?

He knew the Zhents did not like the archdruid and wanted to strike at Goldenfields. It seemed petty their complaints in this fast multiverse. They even sought to convert him to their dark deeds. Many times, he had thought about leaving this group, but he stayed only because she had requested it.

“Donjon. Thank you for your information that the fire cult has infiltrated the Scarlet Moon Hall,” she had told him. “I grow increasingly concerned by these growing elemental forces and the imbalance they bring to the Dessarin Valley. Your evidence proves it. In fact, it was enough for me to convince the elves from the High Forest to band with the druids of Goldenfields to make a preemptive strike on the hall. Our forces have now all converged here at the keep, and in the morning, we leave.”

“Let me join you and your attack,” Dobby implored.

“No. Donjon, I have another mission for you.” Dobby was disappointed yet curious.

“The elemental cults are not the only risks to our valley. Even if we put these cults down, other forces will threaten the natural order. I have seen how powerful your Zhent friends have become. For now, your mission is to keep an eye on your companions.”

“Right now, we both seek to defeat these cults, but after that what? You will know, and you will warn me and the Emerald Enclave.”

He had kept his silence about so many things. He would have to continue to keep his silence... for now.

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Trycara requested an audience with Vanifer.

“That is not my request to grant,” replied Elizar. “Let me see what I can do.” And with that he left. The party noticed that the hobgoblins and mage continued to watch them very closely. It took the better part of an hour before he returned. With him came a fire genasi and introduced himself as Bastian Thermandar, in charge of the queen’s forges.

Trycara presents her proposal. She reminds them how the party has assisted the fire cult and worked together with the cult. She also shares how the party has already defeated the earth and water cults and would like a permanent alliance with you to defeat the air cult and control the valley together in “peace.”

Bastian listened to Trycara’s alliance proposal and then leaves to speak with the queen. Elizar invites Trycara behind the curtain into another room for some alone time.

Bastian returned after over an hour and shares that the queen will see you. Bastian leads the party through a red door with a black, stylized cauldron symbol carved upon it into a room with a dias, altar, and tapestries. There is a tiefling behind the altar. It must be Vanfier. Ten hobgoblins walk into the room and stand behind the party at the ready.



Figure 40. Bastian Thermandar



Figure 41. Vanifer

Trycara addresses Vanifer and introduces herself.

Vanifer notices that Trycara is also touched by the fiend.

“My subordinates have told me much about you and your companions.” She turns to Gale and says, “I knew a Lightfoot in Calimshan. Such a wretched place.”

Gale: “My father came from there, but I did not know him.”

Vanifer: “Tell me about your proposal for an alliance.”

Trycara: “The Zhentarim have long been masters of commerce on the surface but we recognize the power of the fire cult. However, we feel there is only room for one elemental cult. We propose an alliance with the fire cult, who will be the only elemental cult, and the Zhentarim will be the only surface faction.”

Vanifer: “This is an appealing offer. What do you want in return?”

Trycara: “A defined territory safe from incursions by the fire cult and the release of all Zhentarim prisoners.”

Vanifer: “This would be quite a powerful alliance. If you can eliminate Aerisi Kalinoth (air cult), that will pave the way.”

Trycara: “That will not be a problem, but we require a token of good faith.” She pulls out a bag of 50 Zhent coins and asks for release of the prisoners and to not attack Zhentarim strongholds.

Vanifer: “Prove that you can handle Aerisi, and we will have a deal.”

Trycara and Vanifer shakes hands. Vanifer tells Elizar to show them the way to the Fane.

Elizar with fear says, “I have never been to the Fane. Wouldn’t someone else be better?”

Vanifer says, “I command it. Imix commands it... Trycara commands it.” A sly smile appears on her face.

Reluctantly, Elizar takes the party to the fane. The party proceeds north to a crossroad then east down a long hallway then north into a large forge.

Noise, light, and heat issue from this massive chamber. Runnels of lava flow from holes in the west wall into bronze troughs. Heat shimmers, smoke, and steam rise toward the domed ceiling, escaping through vents. Staircases rise at opposite ends of the room, and a smaller passage exits to the east. An efreeti drives azers and salamanders to make armaments here while fire cultists strand guard. The ten hobgoblins continue to follow.

Elizar takes the party east to a room with an enormous vertical cavern with a floating disk. Elizar lowers a drawbridge and proceeds onto the disk motioning all the party to join him. The hobgoblins stay behind. Elizar says “ash” and the disk descends.

The disk stops near a ledge. Elizar lowers a drawbridge and says follow me. Elizar leads the party into a chamber with a charred ogre skeleton nailed to the wall. There are three minotaurs that appear to reside here. Elizar shows the fire cult symbol and says, “I am here at the request of our queen. Allow us to pass through.” Elizar leads the party east to a passage leading to a cloud of black fog.

Elizar: “Through here you will find Aerisi and the air cult. This is as far as I will take you.”

Trycara: “Many thanks, Elizar. It is my great hope that our organizations can be united.”

The party puts on the air cult cloaks. The ghouls are sent through the cloud and return unharmed. After the ghouls enter, Aki enters the cloud followed by Gale. Both feel nauseous but make it through the cloud. The rest of the party makes it through.

Beyond is a natural chamber with several exits all protected by black fog except for the southwest. In the middle of the chamber is a statue depicting an amorphous body and thick tentacles, hunching over as if to feed. A purple crystal the size of a human head represents one alien eye.

In the center of the chamber is a large statue. Gale remembers it is an idol to Ghaunadaur, a dark god associated with oozes, and Trycara senses that it is of drow origin. The gem at the top of the statue appears to be valuable, but Gale is able to tell it is worthless glass. The party moves on avoiding the statue.

The party proceeds to the southwest and runs into a fog that obscures vision. The party proceeds through along the right wall and emerges from the cloud. In front is a pool of tar between the party and the rest of the chamber.

Aki jumps over the tar river and is immediately attacked by three melee cultists. And two casting cultists throw spells. And that starts an epic combat.

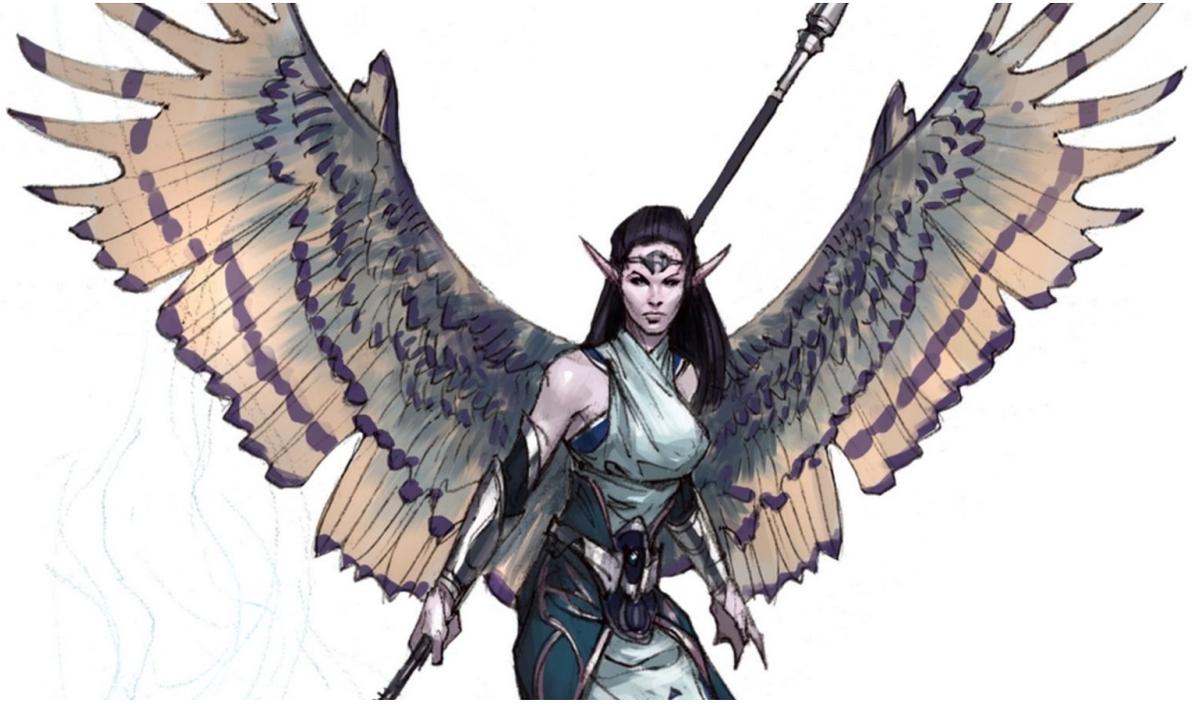


Figure 42. Aerisi Kalinoth attacks!

From behind a rock column the party sees Aerisi Kalinoth and cultist mages through spells at the party. Aki is hit by a Thunderwave spell and knocked into the tar where he gets stuck. Just before he learns through Ironfang's tremorsense there are more enemies in the fog cloud. From behind the party is attacked by a cloud giant and then an air elemental. Zeratul's ghouls take the brunt of the attack and fall quickly.

Some of the party get across the tar to the other side to attack the magic users. On the other side they see in the fog a large stone ziggurat capped by a huge altar of black granite stands in the middle of this cavern. At the foot of the altar lies a bound and gagged figure. Fresh rivulets of blood stain the altar and trickle down the steps of the ziggurat. As they get closer they realize the bound figure is Mangobarl from Red Larch.

From their new vantage point they can see that Aerisi and the mages are surrounded by innocents taken from Red Larch. Haeleeya Hanadroum (Dobby's Emerald Enclave contact) is among them. Despite the risk they continue throwing everything they got at Aerisi. Eventually she falls and her body disappears in a howling whirlwind that disperses quickly and harmlessly. Left behind the party finds a sliver spear. This must be the elemental weapon of air, Windvane.

The party manages to kill the three cultist mages, three cultists warriors, Aerisi, a cloud giant, and an air elemental. The party is winded, but all are in one piece. The innocents are rescued. Haeleeya was collateral damage in a fireball but was stabilized after the combat by Dobby.

Gale unties and talks to Mangobarl.

"It was awful," he starts. "They were going to open a portal and sacrifice them to the elemental eye on this alter. I did overhear that the air cult is worried that the fire cult might summon Imix

before they could summon Yuan Ti Bin.” The party releases the other prisoners who are all important townspeople from Red Larch. They include Mangobarl Lorren, Haeleeya Hanadroum, Harburk Tuthmarillar (the constable), Helvur and Maegla Tarnlar (Zeratul’s Lords Alliance contacts), Kaylessa Irkell (the proprietor of the Swinging Sword inn where the party stayed), and Endrith Vallivoe (a shopkeeper they did business with).

The party proceeds back to the minotaur room and attempts to rest in a Leomund’s Tiny Hut. Before entering the hut, Elizar shows up and asks us to immediately come up and speak with Vanifer. The party brushes him off and enters the hut to begin a rest. After 30 minutes, Elizar shows up with 6 minotaurs, the female mage Lizzy, a cultist warrior, and at least one smoke mephit. Lizzy’s first act is to dispel the hut. The minotaurs proceed to attack alternating between breathing fiery flames and charging on the party. A massive combat proceeds.



Figure 43. The Emberhorn Minotaurs attack.

Zeratul saves the day by casting mass suggestion, which slows some of the attackers. She then casts a wall of force separating the party from the Minotaurs. Elizar turns on the cultists and helps us dispatch the mephit, the mage (Lizzy), and a warrior. The mage and warrior attempt to escape on the disc, but Aki (polymorphed to ape) jumps onto the platform, Gale shoots the mage, and then Trycara casts distant thunderwave and pushes Lizzy and the warrior off the platform where they fall to their death.

Three of the minotaurs, thwarted by the wall of force, take off and circle around to come at the party from another direction. The party takes them out, then takes out the other two minotaurs on the other side of the force wall.

After the combat, Elizar begs the party to take him with them. “I am surely dead now if I return to Vanifer. Lizzy led the attack on Vanifer’s orders. She was never going to honor the deal or ally with the Black Network. Trycara, let me join you and the Zhents. Let me prove myself.”

“You have much to prove,” replies Trycara. “But you have made a good start. Help us take down Vanifer, and then we’ll see.”

“But first we must rest,” a ragged Zeratul implores.

Elizar takes the party to a safe room for a short rest. There is a sarcophagus there. Zeratul figures out that if you bow your head and think of valor, all non-evil characters gain healing (an aid spell worth 40 hit points).

After resting, the party proceeds back to the room with the mine cart. A ghost appears to Dobby and Gale and points to a pile of rubble. Gale investigates and locates a dwarven thrower hammer: +2 attack/damage, thrown property, range 20/60, deals extra 1d8 or 2d8 for a giant, returns to your hand after thrown.

Elizar takes the party to the disc, said “ash”, and the disk descends down to a lake of lava where it is extremely hot. Gale fails the save and has 1 level of exhaustion which means disadvantage on ability checks. Everyone else passes.

The party encounters a cultist and sleeping fire giant. The cultist challenges the party. Zeratul casts suggestion on him and he runs off to get a sandwich.

Gale notices climbing handholds along the wall. Zeratul sends her owl to explore. The owl enters a room with poison and expires. Aki is immune to poison, so he climbs up and explores. He finds a room full of skulls with an exit to the west and a shaft going down on the north side end of the room. Deftly moving down the shaft he learns it opens into a rough, circular cave is painfully hot. A curved wall of fire stretches from floor to ceiling and leaves only five feet between it and the surrounding walls. Avoiding prolonged exposure, he comes back up and explores the east exit of the room of skulls.

The east tunnel opens above a pool of lava, the surface of which is thirty feet below. A metal catwalk suspended 10 feet from the ceiling by iron chains connects to another



Figure 44. Flaming skull

tunnel on the far side, as well as to a stone column rising up from the magma. The catwalk passes through a hole in the column. In the lava below, serpentine creatures glide and splash. To the south, the lava cascades into the pool before the current continues down a channel to the north.

Aki crosses the catwalk and is attacked by four spears thrown from the lava. He dodges a few and shrugs off the damage from one. He runs for cover on the other side of the large cavern and explores a cave north seeing it open into a bigger room.



Figure 45. Efreeti

Not wanting to overextend he returns to the and the entire party climbs up and ends up in a temple. Basalt pillars rise from the glassy floor of this circular cave to support a smooth domed ceiling. Niches carved into the columns hold dancing flames that illuminate copper tapestries hanging on the walls. Each tapestry bears the symbol of the fire cult. Just in front of a wide exit tunnel stands a dais with an altar atop it. Before the altar kneel three cultists, two in robes and one encased in armor.

As the party enters, Trycara disguises herself as Vanifer. From the southern chamber an efreeti comes to scrutinize the situation. Trycara tries to bluff her way through. However, the efreeti knows that Vanifer is in the fire node, and he calls the bluff.

After a brief battle, the efreeti disappears and the three cultists are dispatched.

To the north and south are smaller chambers attached to the shrine. An ornate privacy screen blocks the view to the north. The southern room is circular and lavishly decorated.

The following items are found in the sleeping chamber:

- Fire orb (party will use for the dragon lady)
- Elixir of Health (Gale)
- 750gp (party treasure)
- Potion of speed/haste (Gale)
- Scroll of immolation (Zeratul)

The party proceeds into the fire node room. A red dragon swoops down and demands to know why he shouldn't eat the party. Trycara appeases him by offering 100 Zhent gold pieces, the silver ewer, +1 long sword that senses dragons, potion of diminution, and scroll of faerie fire.



Figure 46. *The Weeping Colossus*

The party enters a titanic cavern that is filled with a lake of gently undulating magma. A rough, uneven causeway of natural rock leads out into the middle, to a point where two crooked pillars of glassy black rock jut up on either side of a great altar of the same stone. Just beyond the altar, a gargantuan stone colossus rises from the lava to its waist, its head thrown back as if in agony. Tears of lava stream down its face, and lava wells from its gaping mouth. Eighty feet above the colossus's head hovers a great orb of fire and light—a miniature sun with motes of fire swirling around it. The ceiling is another twenty feet up, at least one hundred feet overhead.

Standing at the alter is Vanifer guarded by a fire elemental nearby. As the party approaches they see Vanifer hold *Tinderstrike* aloft and cry, "With this key, I call forth my master, the Eternal Flame!"

The fire portal flares, and a gout of flame strikes the fire elemental. With a howl of glee, the elemental transforms into *Imix*.

And begins an epic battle to save the *Dessarín Valley* and, perhaps, all of *Faerun*.

Seeing the dagger, Zeratul quickly misty steps then flies over to close the distance to Vanifer. She wrestles the dagger out of Vanifer's hand. With the item that can close the portal in hand she flies towards the large fiery orb.

"This may be Zeratul's last flight," she thinks as she stares down the most evil and powerful creature she has ever seen. She pushes with every last ounce of strength to reach the portal.

Seeing the threat, Imix flies to stop Zeratul. He is too late and Zeratul is able to touch the dagger to the portal. Once struck, the portal flares, consumes Tinderstrike, and implodes. It sucks Imix back to the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Vanifer cries out in agony and with a wrathful vengeance unloads deadly spells at Zeratul. She is knocked unconscious and fall out of the air. Fortunately, she was over the large weeping colossus and falls to it. Dobby wildshaped into a giant eagle flies up to catch her before she falls into the lava below.

The rest of the party quickly descends on Vanifer killing her in a matter of moments. Her body is consumed in a flash of fire and smoke.

Zeratul thanks Dobby, and the party takes a moment to realize they have stopped a prince of elemental evil.



The party explores south in the Fane toward the air cult area. They enter a complex dark network of caves where the wind howls loudly. In the caves they find some corpses with:

- Find daggers with rubies @ 1000gp each.
- Elven chain mail
- Scroll of primordial ward.



Figure 48. Air Portal

Eventually they find the air node in a deep cavern. In the middle of this cavern, spikes of stone jut upward like three immense claws. Between them, a churning thundercloud thrashes with lightning. Thunder cracks, and cascades of tiny rocks tumble from above. Beneath the thunderhead stands a raised area splattered with the blood of many sacrifices.

A silvery window is sometimes visible in the center of the cloud. It opens onto clouds in an endless sky.

They hurl Windvane into the center of the cloud, which collapses the node destroying Windvane in the process.

Party explores the Fane looking for a path to the earth node. They enter a hall. Weird crystals jut from the walls and the floor of this ancient hall, giving off violet light. On the east side, these crystals form a distinct doorway or gate, beyond which the floor slopes downward. Two huge bedrolls and barrels full of provisions are in the southern end of the room. There they find two hill giants playing tic tac toe using rocks of different colors.

"Hey! I wanna play dese li'l guys! Hey, puny-bones! Wanna play?" calls out one of the giants. Aki immediately accepts the challenge betting 10 gp. In a momentary lapse of attention, Aki misplaces his stone and loses to the giant [*He failed his intelligence contest with the giant, which ended up being the best option.*].

"HA HA HA!" screams the giant. "I win." And he scoops up his winnings. The giants allow the party to pass through the eastern passage which descends into the earth node.

"HA HA HA!" screams the giant. "I win." And he scoops up his winnings. The giants allow the party to pass through the eastern passage which descends into the earth node.

The party explores and eventually finds the earth node in a colossal cavern. This cavern is an alien landscape filled with soaring stone buttresses, weirdly twisting columns, and gargantuan shards of glowing crystal. A long path of steps is cut into the uneven floor and wends its way between the mighty stone pillars to the cavern's core. There, the steps climb to the base of a stone monolith that is constantly changing its shape, filling the great cavern with a thunderous grinding noise.

With some reluctance Aki agrees to use Ironfang to close the earth node. He had become quite fond of this weapon.

When he strikes the monolith, it chips the otherwise indestructible stone, causing the portal to implode in a grinding display, showering the area with pulverized rock and crystal. But it does not take Ironfang with it. Aki gets to keep Ironfang.



Figure 49. Earth Portal

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## Conclusion

With all the nodes closed such that the Princes of Elemental Evil are unable to reach the Material Plane, the Dessarin Valley is safe from Elemental Evil, for now. Over the next few months, the region returns to its tranquil state. It's still a frontier, but monster predations and banditry decline. The weather returns to normal, even if the people of Red Larch point out that “normal weather means bad weather around here, and unpredictable besides.”

Remaining cultists slink away and disperse within a tenday of the cults' defeat. Bereft of leadership and reeling from the events, the cultists decide the Dessarin Valley isn't the place for them. Some go to nearby cities, especially Waterdeep and Neverwinter, and attempt to hide amid the bustle as they rebuild their ranks. Any monsters loyal to the cult are free to fend for themselves.

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## Epilogue

### *Goldenfields*

In their dreams, the party (less Gale and Dobby) goes to Goldenfields. The party turns invisible and starts setting fires. The party is easily repelled by the guard and various high-level wizards.

Inglor talks Trycara out of attacking Goldenfields because it is not good business.

### *Trycara*



Eliminating the threat to the Dessarin Valley is noticed all the way to the leaders of the Zhentarium. Trycara is summoned to Darkhold Castle for a special audience with the Dread Lord of Dread Lords - Pereghost. There she is promoted to Ardragon and given a new mission – rebuild The Zhentarium network in Dessarin Valley.

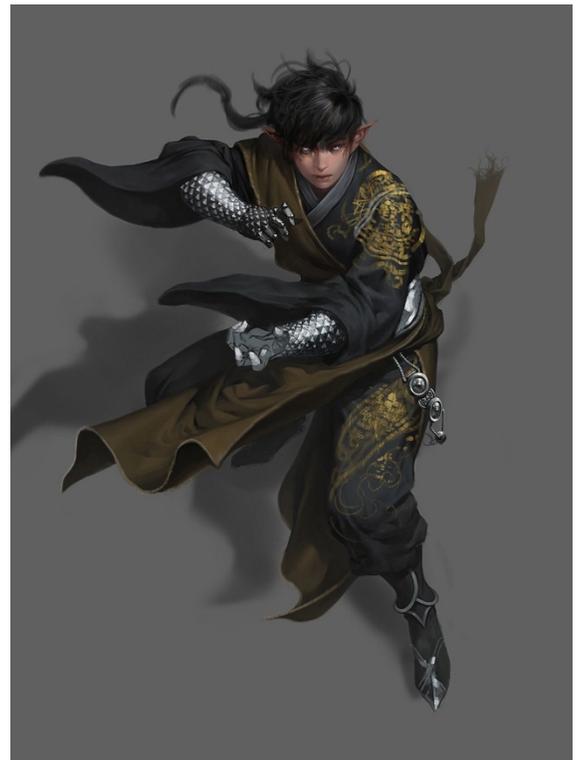
She returns to to the valley and takes on Akki as an apprentice. Together they rebuild Riverguard Keep and Bargewright Inn. It does not take long for the power of the Black Network to grow, eclipsing it's previous strength.

Trycara is promoted to Ardragon (level 4).

### *Akki*

Akki settles back in the Valley and starts his own monastery taking over the Sacred Stone Monastery. He quickly recruits many to his monastic order and serves Trycara and the Black Network well. He especially enjoys “training” his recruits by sending them on missions against the Knights of Samular. He loves to annoy those do-gooders.

Akki is promoted to Wolf (level 2) by the Zhent.



## *Donjun*

The Archdruid takes notice of Donjun's efforts to restore the natural order promotes Donjun to Winterstalker and takes him as her apprentice. "Keeping those Zhents on track to destroy the elemental evil was no small task. I have a new mission for you..."

His next mission for Donjun is to help unite the elf and Emerald Enclave factions in the High Forest. As a first step, Dobby approaches Morgwais, the Red Lady of the Wood, and convinces her to invite him to the Caerilcarn ("Council of the Wood") and help her unite the Emerald Enclave and Elves in the High Forest.



MALE DRAGONBORN GREEN DRUID | *Bauer*

## *Gale*

With the fire orb secured, Gale set off to return to Rundreth Manor to make good on his word. He approached the manor at night. Levitating down to the basement of the decrepit house, he calls out for the dark lady. It's not long before she appears. After some flirting they exchange the orb for the ring. Gale high tails it out of there but feels that he will encounter the dark lady again in the future.

He looks at his new viper coin. For his work part in expelling the cults, the Zhents promoted him to Viper (level 3). He returns to Waterdeep to look for more profitable business. His family signet ring secured, he believes bringing back wealth to his family will increase his and their status.



## *Zeratul*

Ever more the recluse, Zeratul returns to Lance Rock and takes over the labs there to continue her studies. Every month she goes into Red Larch to offer mortuary services (at an impressive discount) to the new priests at the Allfaiths Shrine. She gets business from Red Larch and all the surrounding areas. She hires employees of Helvur Tarnlar to dress and bury the corpses. Later with her minions she exhumes the bodies and takes them back to Lance Rock. Thus, she has an endless supply of experiments. Coincidentally, there have been many more ghost stories and sightings of dead loved ones walking Faerun again reported throughout the Valley.

Zeratul is promoted to Wolf (level 2) by the Zhent.

*And much later...*

As soon as Zeratul awoke, she broke out into triumphant laughter.

She bounded to her feet, wiggling the desiccated talons attached to them. She could see the skin pulled tightly across the bones as she watched them shift and move. The aaracockra couldn't help but laugh again, sweeping through the Lance Rock lab, a small, unremarkable jewelry box in hand.

"I've done it!" she cried ecstatically, "After all this time, I've done it!"

"I have become a lich!"

She collapsed into a fluffy chair in her library, not caring about the bloodstains she would leave on it and still grinning widely. She reminisced on what it took to achieve this moment.

She had gotten the knowledge from another Lich's lab, after dispatching him in a surprise attack. His phylactery hadn't been inside, unfortunately, but she had gotten what she wanted, and that was the guide to Lichdom, her most precious tome. Well, it was her most precious tome after she copied it to a blank book and left. Let the Lich think that they had just been disguised adventurers after magic items. The ruse seemed to have worked, since he hadn't bothered her since then.

Then had come the translating of the text. That had been somewhat difficult. It had been written in a cipher with words from Draconic, Elven, and *Celestial* of all things. That had taken a few years of study in the recently vacated Lance Rock to pull off. Of course, she had been busy dealing with all the infuriating *monetary issues* such as property taxes and acquiring groceries. That had been a pain, before she had gotten the mortuary business set up. On the other hand, she now had an endless supply of minions. Yes, those control runes had been an *excellent* innovation of the Animate Dead spell.

Her ties to the Zentarim had also helped as Trycara, who had become the local leader of the Zents, based out of Riverguard Keep, had pulled a few strings to get her the deed to the property. A few missions for the Zents had been a paltry price to pay for a secure base of operations from which to work.

After she had translated the text, she realized that she needed a *lot* more money and several rare magical ingredients to pull off her defiance of death. She closed up Lance Rock with orders for her minions to maintain the place, paid a couple years taxes in advance, and set off on her self-appointed quest.

As she drifted from party to party, Zeratul had been speedily reminded of exactly why she missed adventuring. The thrill, the danger, the quick adaptation of existing runes and incantations to create new spells on the fly, the treasure... the convenient meat shields to distract an angry dragon as she slung spells at it...

She had kept in touch with Dobby over the years, and with the renewal of her adventuring career, she had assisted the druidic dragonborn with several creatures threatening his little patch of nature. They had been good sources of ingredients for the ritual. This bit is only to be included if we don't end up having to kill Dobby and remain on good terms.

Yes, that had been fun. But eventually, she had everything she needed, and had returned to Lance Rock. She had surveyed the local area for magical locations that weren't the Fire Node, and had discovered to her delight that Lance Rock was actually directly above a half-mile deep pinhole to the Plane of Negative Energy. She had set her tireless undead minions digging a spiraling staircase with a shaft for flight down to the pinhole's level, and then carving a room around the thing suitable for resonating with and amplifying the necrotic power seeping through. That had taken months, and the crystals she had pilfered from the Earth Node had helped greatly.

She had finally had everything in place. She had prepared the ritual, crafted the phylactery, and drank the potion. As the deadly poison had chilled her veins, her victory had finally been achieved.

It had taken years, gold, and many lives, but it had all been worth it in the end.

Zeratul suddenly had a thought, the contented smile falling from her beak. Now that she had achieved her life's goal, and had eternity stretching ahead of her, what should she do?

As she got up and began casting Nystul's Magic Aura to hide the powerful necromancy exuding from the jewelry box, then grabbed a valuable magical amulet of hers to stash on top of the false bottom of the top compartment, she continued to ponder the issue.

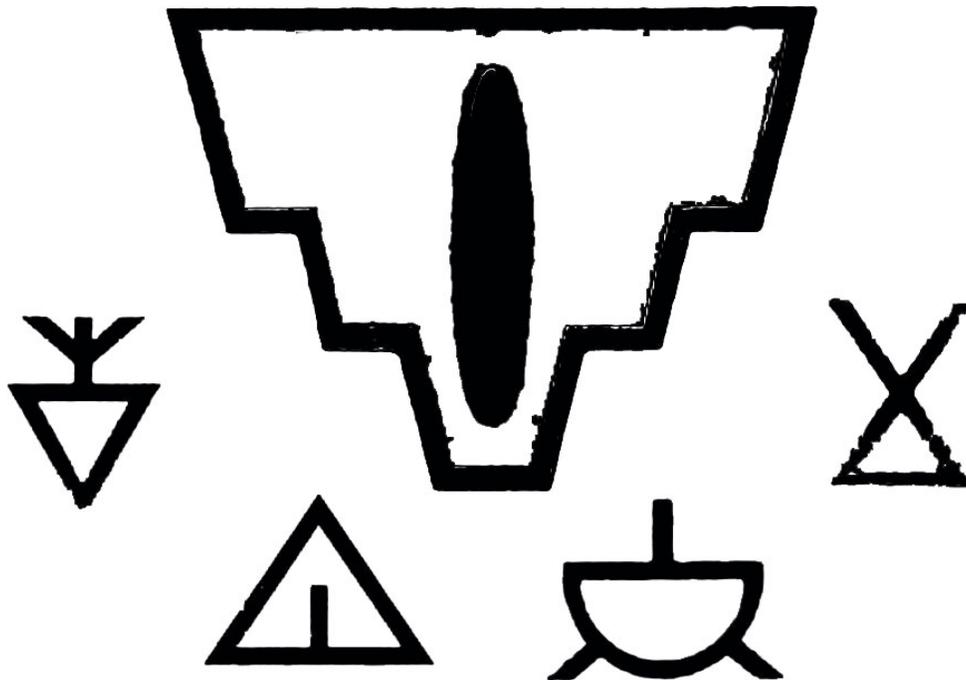
What now?

An idea came to her. As she retrieved a silver mask she had enchanted with extensive corpse preservation spells, placing it onto her face and securing it firmly, a feeling of excitement bubbled up. New books, new lore, new spells, new magical items... yes, she could obtain all these and more.

After all, she was immortal now, only needing to feed her phylactery. Death had no hold on her. Besides, she really did miss adventuring.

### *Elemental Evil*

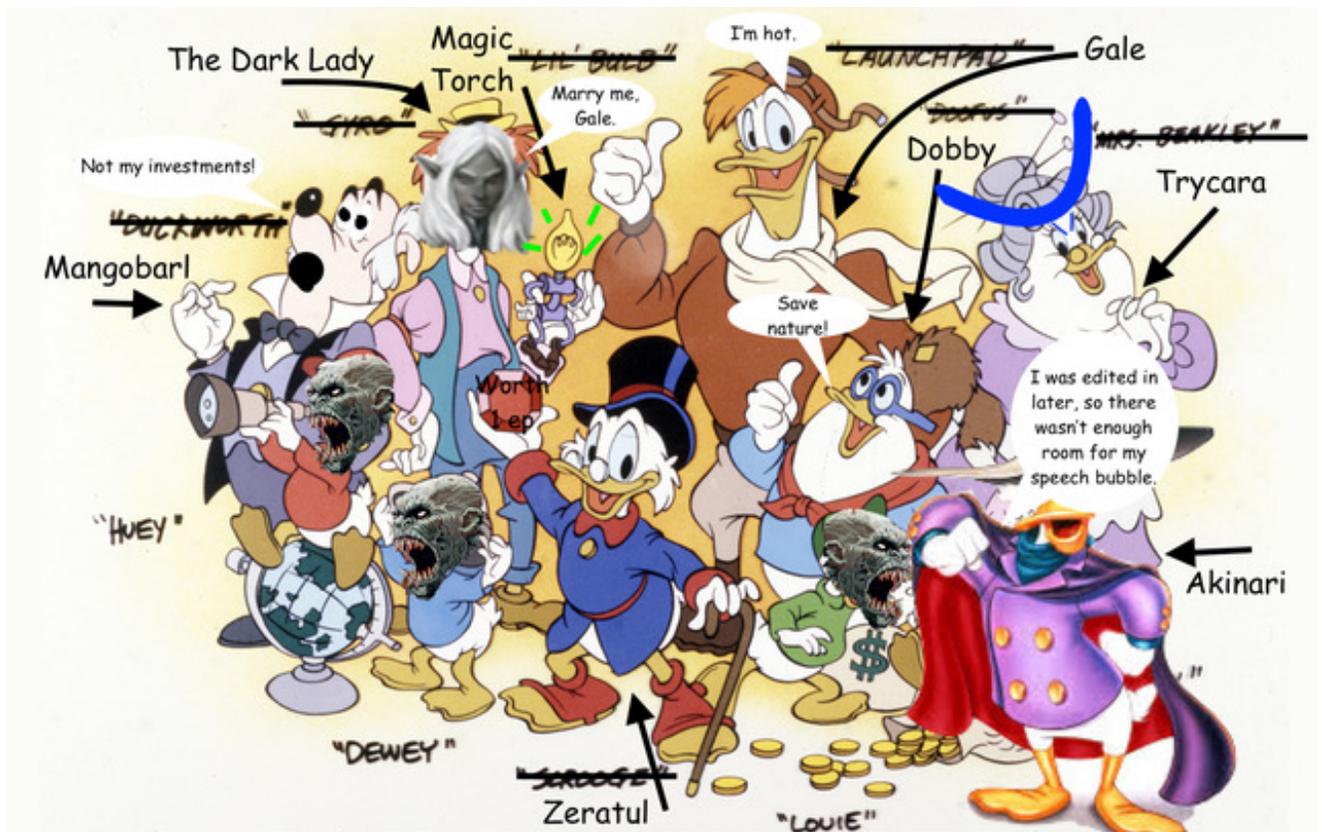
The Elder Elemental Eye—whatever that power is—has suffered a telling defeat in the Dessarin Valley. However, it hasn't been completely expunged. The four cults were a promising incarnation of Elemental Evil, but they ultimately failed the test placed before them. The Eye still lurks beneath Tyril-Besil growing its power and biding its time.



*Some Additional Artwork*

*Hello everyone. I just wanted to share some images i edited relating to our D&D adventure. The first one is Imix. The second one is based on how Zeratul's ghouls were called Huey, Dewey, and Louie. There are some other jokes in it too.*

*Lindsey Gebhardt*



### ***Final Listing of Party Treasure***

**(not on character sheets nor in party possession at the moment):**

- 125 pp (1250 gp)
- 2940 gp (minus 250gp for the dragon)
- 35 ep (17.5 gp)
- 1285 sp (128.5 gp)
- Fire orb (for the dragon lady)
- \*\*\*Silver ewer
- 5 feathered air cult cloaks
- 5 water cult cloaks
- 4 sets of golden masks and robes (earth)
- gems / jewelry
  - nine strange black crystals worth 50 gp each
  - 4 garnets @ 100gp each
  - 4 jaspers @ 70gp each
  - 15 blue azurites @ 10gp each
  - 5 fine citrine gems @ 40gp each
  - 2 gold bracelets @ 30gp each
  - 6 small agates @ 10gp each
- Marlos's head in a bag (not useful)
- Things to sell:
  - Hammer: dwarven thrower (+2 attack/damage, thrown property, range 20/60, deals extra 1d8 or 2d8 for a giant, returns to your hand after thrown.)
  - potion hill giant strength
  - \*\*\*+1 long sword (sense dragons)
  - cloth of gold priestly vestments 40gp
  - scroll of skywrite
  - \*\*\*potion of diminution
  - potion of water breathing
  - \*\*\*scroll of faerie fire
  - scroll of guiding bolt
  - scroll of tidal wave
  - scroll of vitriolic sphere
  - Leather satchels that contain 50 tomes written in old dwarvish