



## THE RED WAR

### **The Hour is Ripe for Conflict!**

The Cults of Elemental Evil had wrought incredible destruction on the city of Mulmaster, and in its hour of need, the City of Danger received aid from an unlikely ally – the Mageocracy of Thay. Now, with Mulmaster moving ever closer into Thay’s orbit, strife is brewing within the Factions as some call for action against the Red Wizards.

*A Three-hour Epic Adventure for 1st – 20th Level Characters*

# ELEMENTAL EVIL™

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## INTRODUCTION

Before beginning play, read Book 1: Event Overview and familiarize yourself with the event rules and Victory Events.

## ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure provides suggestions for adjusting for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

- DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH	
Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to adjust.

## BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Before you start play, consider the following:

Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.

Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battle maps.

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

## PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

**You're Empowered.** Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

**Challenge Your Players.** Gauge the experience level of your **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

**Keep the Adventure Moving.** When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling—play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

## TIER 4 PLAY

Tier 4 (level 17-20) is a challenging tier of D&D to adjudicate. At these levels, characters are extremely powerful and possess magic items that make each group wildly different. Consider the following guidance before tackling this tier as a DM:

### NOTE DOWN ITEMS, ALLIES AND ENCHANTMENTS

Before play begins, jot down all the goofy stuff that your players have available: shield guardians, wyvern steeds, simulacrum, rare and legendary items, permanent spell effects, etc. Consider whether these features increase the group's APL: but most important of all, ensure you know how they function.

### APPLY THE 'RULE OF COOL'

Assume every combat challenge will be easily overcome. Up the difficulty as needed, but let the players enjoy their capstone powers before searching for ways to counter them. You're good so long as everyone has fun. During combat, find ways to introduce character interactions and thrilling choices instead of just resorting to raw power.

## ADJUST ENCOUNTERS ON THE FLY

Every group plays differently at tier 4. More than ever, it's your responsibility to shake up encounters on-the-fly until you hit the right balance. Here are some simple tricks you can employ:

Introduce waves of reinforcements. Players sometimes blow their big powers early, leaving them exposed to new threats. Just add more enemies of the types already listed in the encounter.

Counter magic with magic. Consider adding an **evoker** for every spellcaster in the group.

Maximize enemy damage instead of rolling (including spell damage!)

If you overcompensate, introduce an **evoker** or a **champion** as an ally at the start of the next round.

At these levels, the characters should have plenty of allies to fall back on.

## KNOW YOUR SPELLS

High-levels spells often have complex conditions and limitations. To avoid slowing play, refresh your memory of the most troublesome spells before the game begins (start with *antimagic field*, *gate*, *imprisonment*, *simulacrum* and *wish*). In addition, don't be afraid to ask players "what powerful spells do you have prepared?"

In the hands of enemy casters, some spell combinations are especially potent. For example:

A 4th-level *glyph* cast into the hood of a cloak could *polymorph* a wizard into a Tyrannosaurus Rex when they drop below half hit points.

A *globe of invulnerability* protects a high-level caster from *counterspell*, allowing them to unleash their most powerful spells in relative safety.

Spellcasters can use the Ready action to cast a short-range spell outside of *counterspell* range, then move into range to release it without risk of being countered.

A *contingency* spell can trigger a *dimension door* to whisk a spellcaster to safety or cast *greater invisibility* on them when they take damage.

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW (TIER 4)

The Red War is the official "return to power" for the Red Wizards of Thay. The characters that participate in this adventure will be faced with great challenges and terrible prophecies while being faced with decisions that will undoubtedly have lasting ramifications for Faerun for years to come.

**The Warmest of Welcomes.** After Szass Tam deploys his counterstroke, the characters can trace him back to the Thayvian Embassy. Dread forces defend it.

**Inside the Mansion.** The Thayans have spent significant resources in the construction of this multi-faceted fortress. Reality is not as it seems.

**Workshop of Horrors.** Szass Tam pulls out all the stops and seeks to destroy the characters once and for all.

### LOCATION AND NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs and locations appear in this adventure:

**Mulmaster (MULL-master).** The City of Danger was once a sprawling cosmopolitan metropolis and gem of the Moonsea. However, it was devastated by the machinations of the Cults of Elemental Evil. In the years that follow, it has been rebuilding with the aid of the Mageocracy of Thay.

**Szass Tam.** This vile lich is the leader of the nation of Thay. He claims the title of Zulkir, but rules his fellow zulkirs through fear and might. Paranoid, he always has a long-term plan and has managed to turn every defeat he's been dealt into a victory in the long run. Often has contingency plans for his contingency plans, and will not hesitate to sacrifice every living being in Mulmaster if it means that he can eliminate a small number of powerful adventurers. Legends and myths are all that is really known about Szass Tam except to those in his inner circle.

## THE WARMEST OF WELCOMES

**Estimated Duration:** 45 minutes

Entering the grounds surrounding the Thayvian Embassy and then exploring its chambers should provide little in the way of a challenge – initially. The further the characters delve, the more dire the traps and residents become. If the characters wish to leave, they may retrace their steps at any time unless specifically noted.

The walls surrounding the Thayvian Embassy are crafted of tightly-stacked uniformly grey stones. The mortar is almost impossibly precise, and a series of wrought iron spikes have been placed atop the fifteen-foot-tall structure.

The gates into the Thayvian Embassy are open and unmanned. Any character that wishes to climb the wall may do so; the spikes are more for decoration than function; instead, the Thayans had relied upon the height of the wall to keep most of the prying eyes out of their business.

### PACING AND OPTIONS

Be mindful of time while the characters operate in this space. There are a number of buildings, but the majority of this adventure takes place within the depths of the Embassy. Allow the characters a few moments to explore the outlying buildings but do your best to shift their attention in the proper direction.

### EXPLORING THE COURTYARD

The interior of the courtyard is impeccably clean, with nary a spot of dust or debris to be seen. The tiles form a dizzying array of arcane sigils that surround a large, sprawling mansion dominates the center of the space; dark mahogany wood rails line the porches, bright white paint has been applied to the walls, and rich red drapes can be seen inside every perfect window. The double doors that face the gate appear to be the main entrance and are slightly ajar.

The characters may wish to spend some time exploring the courtyard. If they do, describe the environment inside the tall walls and allow them to explore as they see fit – but remind them that time is of the essence, and that time spent here means that Szass Tam is more likely to escape! A cursory examination takes no appreciable time and shows that only the Thayvian Embassy has viable points of entry – the other buildings are sealed tight by magic.

Should the characters decide to investigate the exterior of the building, it becomes apparent very quickly that the house is a little too perfect (no check needed). A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check confirms that this is a modified *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* spell. Furthermore, once the characters realize that the mansion is a modified spell effect, they also identify that the layout of the tiles actually comprise a permanent *glyph* spell. Neither the tiles nor the mansion can be damaged, dispelled, or disrupted due to the magical enhancements woven into this place by Szass Tam himself. This *glyph* triggers whenever something in the courtyard or on the front stoop of the mansion attempts to cast *dispel magic*, *antimagic zone*, or any similar effect that would include the mansion or otherwise prevent the mansion from operating normally. Note that the **Nobility in Mulmaster** and **Ally of Thay** story awards do not grant a character any ability to prevent the glyph from triggering.

As the characters prepare to enter the mansion, the doors slam shut. Read or paraphrase the following:

With a whooshing cracking noise, a rift in reality opens up nearby! Pure elemental energy begins snaking out, and a voice bellows from the top of the house:

“Get clear of the rift!”

A red-robed mage stands on the roof and brandishes a long piece of dark crystal. As he begins an incantation, spidery veins of magic begin to arc from the wizard to the rift – but he is cut short as a shower of worms explodes from behind him, consuming his flesh in an instant.

A **star spawn larva mage** steps to the edge of the roof, and a tier 4 **elemental rift** opens up somewhere within 20 feet of one of the characters; they are joined on initiative count 15 by one more **star spawn larva mage**. The mansion cannot be entered by any means until the rift is sealed.

### TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Consider the following guidance:

**Careful Monitoring.** For **very weak** or **weak** parties, consider adding an **archmage** (a red-robed Thayan wizard) to assist the characters.

**Haranguing.** The rift can potentially affect every creature in the area – characters, larva mages, familiars, and so on. The larva mages are focused on the characters and spend no actions on the rift.

## TREASURE

The crystal shard is worth 7,500 gp. It is undoubtedly magical, though its properties are obscured through extremely potent magic. Anyone touching it can feel a rhythmic thumping noise not unlike a heartbeat, and any character that has played through *Window to the Past* (DDAO-01/ DDAL00-01), *Those That Came Before* (DDAO-11/ DDAL00-03), or *Trust & Understanding* (DDAO-21) are absolutely certain that this is but a small piece of a much larger crystalline structure.

The corpse of the Thayan wizard still bears an ivory scroll case, worth 500 gp. Contained inside is a *spell scroll of power word pain*.

## INSIDE THE MANSION

**Estimated Duration:** 90 minutes (1.5 hours)

### Focus, Focus, Focus

This is an Epic event and pacing is key. If the characters are relaxed, ramp up the challenge by calling for additional Perception or Insight checks from time to time as you describe their environment. Experiment with phrasing and words that drive home the terrible reality of what the Thayans have done – and more importantly, what they are planning!

The characters as well as the players should be on-edge for much of this section.

### PROCEEDING THROUGH THE MANSION

Every room that the characters enter requires one roll on each of the three tables:

- Room Construction
- Traps & Hazards
- Encounters

The rooms should convey a sense of displacement and disjunction; the Red Wizards do not maintain this place for comfort but instead as a base of operations. The interlinked demiplanes exist in a manner that defies full description; instead, imagine that this place exists as a nexus of near-infinite demiplanes, planes, and realms best left undescribed in full.

Playing these rooms in a theater of the mind sense is likely best, so as to best support the strange behaviors seen here. Each room should be approximately 40 feet by 40 feet, with 10 foot ceilings.

The characters should encounter the Thayan Agents (or Ongoing Conflict, for combat-centric groups) and Arcane Webs encounters at a minimum, as these are pivotal story points for the adventure and may impact the other tiers of play. Feel free to pre-determine the layout of the rooms, and to populate those rooms with decorations as might befit a group of vile, vicious wizards!

Regardless of where the characters are located in the Thayan mansion, when it is time to proceed to the next part of the adventure they simply do so. The room that they are in ceases to exist as the demiplanes fold in on themselves and collapse into Szass Tam's laboratory. If the characters are in the midst of a combat when this takes place, those foes do not transition with the characters and that previous combat is immediately terminated; up to half experience for those creatures.

## MANSION ROOMS

While the interior of the mansion is very much in a non-linear layout, it should be made clear to the characters that this is the result of the customized spells used in the construction of this place.

When the characters decide to leave the Foyer, any door that they pass through results in a roll on the following tables: Room Construction, Traps & Hazards, and Encounters. Alternately, you can pre-construct the environment if you are in a time-sensitive environment or are uncomfortable with fully-randomized layouts. Furthermore, when all of the characters leave a room, the door slams shut behind them; opening it again requires additional rolls on the tables. Unless explicitly stated, all doors are considered to be closed but not locked or trapped. The walls and doors are constructed of raw planar essence, regardless of their description.

Should the characters decide to investigate the operation of the doors and rooms, allow them to attempt DC 24 Intelligence (Arcana) checks. If successful, the character can spot a series of dozens of nearly-invisible runes inscribed all around the door. These runes are in effect a cipher and not a truly written language; studying them without a key is an impossible task. A *wish* spell cast with the intention of learning the cipher is successful, and requires the caster to succeed on a DC 26 Intelligence saving throw or become afflicted with an incurable, permanent madness determined by the Long-Term Madness table (an abbreviated Long-Term Madness chart is located here, or you can use the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, chapter 8). Once a character is so affected, they are immune to additional cipher effects and can identify either the room type or the trap/hazard in the next room when reading additional ciphers in this place. This usage of the *wish* spell is unique to this adventure and does not run any risk of the caster losing the ability to cast *wish* again at a later time.

Each room in the mansion has but two functional doors – one entrance and one exit. Others may exist, but they are merely well-made decorations and serve no purpose.

### Long-Term Madness

d100	Effect (lasts 1d10 x 10 hours)
01 – 30	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on all ability checks.
31 – 50	The character suffers extreme paranoia and confusion. The character has disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma checks.
51 – 75	The character experiences a powerful delusion. Choose a spell with a range of touch. The character believes that they are under that spell's effect(s).
76 – 95	The character is blinded (25%), deafened (70%), or both (5%).
96 – 100	The character loses the ability to speak.

### FOYER

This entry chamber is well-appointed with mahogany wood paneling, silver and brass candelabras, and a marble-topped storage cabinet. Though currently empty, it likely serves as a place to store small bags, gloves, and other such objects when people enter the building. The far door is closed, and no amount of coercion can force it open while the door to the courtyard is open; when this happens, the interior door can be operated normally. If the courtyard door is re-opened, the inner door slams shut; this may potentially separate the party. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) check relays this to the characters.

When the first character opens the inner door, they catch a brief glimpse of Szass Tam exiting that chamber and heading deeper into the mansion.

### THE SPACE BETWEEN THE SPACES

Zulkir Dar'lon Ma took care and spared no expense in the construction of his mansion. Customized versions of *demiplane*, *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*, and other spells. The following rules are in effect while the characters are present in the mansion:

- **Demiplanes & teleportation.** Teleportation effects are limited to the same room only, as each room is in effect its own demiplane. If a door is open and the character can see another room, teleportation effects work within line of sight and all creatures affected by that teleportation effect take 55 (10d10) force damage; a successful DC 20 Constitution saving throw reduces this damage by half.
- **Communication.** Most forms of communication – including telepathy – are restricted to the affected creatures being on the same plane of existence. As the rooms are each a unique demiplane, this may become important!
- **Time is funny here.** The Red Wizards have been experimenting with chronomancy, and now time behaves oddly. Resting and other physical activities take twice the normal amount of time, but magic operates at twice the normal speed. For example, if a spell would last until the caster's next turn, it instead only lasts until the end of the current round; a spell that lasts 1 minute instead lasts 1/2 a minute (5 rounds); and so on. Additionally, all casting times longer than 1 action are doubled (ex: most rituals would take 20 minutes instead of 10, and the effects only persist for half the normal time).
- **Abnormal building materials.** The walls, floors, ceiling, and doors are all constructed of raw planar essence. Even if described as stone, wood, or something else they cannot be affected by *stone shape*, *passwall*, or other similar magics. Their described appearance is akin to an illusion; a true sight spell allows a character to attempt a DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) or DC 26 Wisdom (Perception) check to recognize this, however.

Any character that is proficient with the Arcana skill should be aware of the basic elements of the above points. Feel free to summarize or ask for a skill check to communicate more specific insight as-needed for your game to be enjoyable for all people involved.

## ROOM CONSTRUCTION

d6

1	No traps, hazards, or encounters
2	Another group of adventures can be spied in the next room, but they are hazy and shrouded in fog. Choose another tier 4 table playing this adventure. Each character at this table can immediately choose one of the following: exchange places with a player at that table; or cast a single beneficial spell (with a casting time of one action or less) or use a single effect on a character in that room. The vision fades after a few seconds.
3	Roll once on the Traps & Hazards table
4	Roll once on the Encounters table
5	Roll once on the Traps & Hazards table and once on the Encounters table (ignoring any Encounter result of 5 through 9)
6	As above, but roll twice on the Traps & Hazards table.

## TRAPS & HAZARDS

d6

1	The air is tainted with malice, a vicious inhaled poison that is very hard to detect. Any creature that breathes in this room must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature is blinded. Creatures that hold their breath for the entire duration make this saving throw with advantage, and any creature that seals their ears, nose, and mouth with wax is not required to make this saving throw.
2	Gravity does not work in this space. Any creature without a fly speed treats the entire room as difficult terrain.
3	The walls, floor, and ceiling are all laced with special stone from the elemental plane of earth. These stones are magnetic; any creature that carries at least one item with metal in it treats the entire room as difficult terrain and must succeed on a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check at the start of their turn or be forced to roll a d4. On a 1, they fall prone. On a 2, one of their metal items falls to the floor if it can, ripping free of sheath, belt, or other container. On a 3, the creature is immediately flung to the floor, ceiling, or wall (DM's choice), taking a d6 of magic bludgeoning damage as if falling; this creature is then immobilized until the start of their next turn. On a 4, roll twice and ignore any additional roll of 4 this turn.
4	The walls of this space are covered in exquisite paintings of peaceful farmlands and sunsets. Piles of cushions are scattered around the room, and in the center of the space is a burbling fountain. The water functions a <i>sphere of annihilation</i> (though neither the fountain nor the water can be removed from this space by any means save that known to Szass Tam). Furthermore, it is enchanted with a <i>sympathy</i> spell; any living creature that can see the fountain must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or find themselves compelled to move as quickly as possible to the fountain and take a long drink from its waters; any creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to this effect for 1 hour. Anything that touches the water takes 22 (4d10) force damage, and any creature that comes into contact with the enchanted water must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. All doors leading away from this room are locked save for the door that brought the characters here, and they are only unlocked when six levels of exhaustion have been bestowed to the characters or when all of the enemies have been eliminated.
5	The entire room is affected by a permanent silence aura. It can be temporarily dispelled with a <i>dispel magic</i> spell or similar effect (DC 16), but doing so triggers a <i>contingency</i> : <i>sickening radiance</i> fills the entire room, causing all characters to succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or else take 22 (4d10) radiant damage and gain one level of exhaustion. The light goes away after ten minutes; while the light persists, no creature gains benefit from being invisible. Succeeding on this saving throw results in half damage.
6	A rhythmic thumping eerily similar to a heartbeat can be heard and felt here. This noise prevents any rest from taking place, and for every five rounds that a living creature is in this room they must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or else gain one level of exhaustion as their life energy is sapped away. Creatures immune to necrotic damage have advantage on this saving throw. After the saving throw is attempted, the DC increases by 2 for that character, up to a maximum of 30; this effect resets for a creature when it leaves the room.



## ENCOUNTERS

d12	Effect (lasts 1d10 x 10 hours)
1	4 tier 4 <b>wraiths</b>
2	1 <b>Red Wizard</b> and 2 <b>devourers</b>
3	2 <b>star spawn larva mages</b>
4	1 <b>demilich</b> , and the room is filled with magically animated swirling dust. Anything further than 5 feet away cannot be perceived by sight unless the creature is using truesight.
5 - 9	No meaningful encounter. Describe a plethora of mindless zombie and skeleton minions, the corpses of citizens of Mulmaster, and so on if you wish to impart more flavor to the adventure.
10	<b>Arcane Webs</b> encounter
11	<b>Ongoing Conflict</b> encounter
12	<b>Thayan Agents</b> encounter

### ARCANE WEBS (EXPLORATION OR ROLEPLAYING)

Chains of raw arcane energy criss cross the room, with the barely perceptible outlines of what used to be living people scattered here and there. The characters instinctively know the following:

- This represents Thayan experimentation into not only the fabric of the Weave but also is responsible for the chaotic nature of magic in and around the city of Mulmaster.
- Disrupting or breaking the chains would require a considerable amount of effect, but can be done. An identify spell reveals the following potential resolutions: a legendary, non-consumable permanent magic item can be plunged into the crackling field (this irrevocably destroys the item but does not reduce permanent magic item count); three *wish* spells can be cast to unbind the enchantment's hooks into the weave; or it can be overloaded by raw physical energy (the characters can throw themselves into the field; in so doing, they must spend a 70 hit dice divided from among any of the characters that entered the field).
- Mixing methods of destruction – such as by casting one wish and attempting to use hit dice as well – is not advised. Unknown to the party: doing this results in every arcane caster participating in this epic adventure (at all tiers) loses their highest-level spell slot due to the arcane backlash that travels all across Faerun. Characters that lose a spell slot in this manner take a number of d6 psychic damage equal to the level of the spell slot

lost; ie: if a character loses a 5th level spell slot, that character would take 17 (5d6) psychic damage with no saving throw. One casting of the *wish* spell is equivalent to 20 hit dice.

- Contacting the arcane web requires the creature to succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or else take 55 (10d10) force damage, gain one level of exhaustion, and to become restrained (DC 25). Succeeding on this saving throw prevents the restrain effect from taking hold and no exhaustion level gain.

Breaking the arcane web returns magic to normal across Mulmaster and beyond; no further wild surges take place (save for those caused by practitioners of chaos magic and other normal rules elements). If this happens, inform HQ immediately!

The life forms that are bound into the web are inextricable. They have been consumed and all that remains are their echoes. It should be driven home to the characters that the Thayans have intentionally done this, causing immense pain and suffering in the process. Natives of Mulmaster or characters that claim strong ties to this area may recognize friends, family, and neighbors here.

### INTERACTIVE ELEMENT

When the characters successfully disable the arcane web, notify the epic administrator. When enough tables report their progress, additional rules may come into play.

### ONGOING CONFLICT (COMBAT OR ROLEPLAYING)

The characters walk into an ongoing conflict between three **star spawn larva mages** and two **Red Wizards**. If the characters do not intervene, the star spawn will destroy the archmages in two rounds; if the characters save the archmages by destroying the star spawn, the Thayans grant information as indicated in the Thayan Agents section and die just the same.

### THAYAN AGENTS (ROLEPLAYING STRONGLY ENCOURAGED)

The Thayans are well aware of the events unfolding outside and are desperate to protect their home. This group is comprised of two **Red Wizards** and three **steel predators**. They will attempt to call for aid from any character that has the Ally of Thay story award; if every character in the party has this story award or if the characters stand down, the Thayans tell the characters the following:

- their efforts to control the rifts by using the crystal shards have been ineffective; something lives

within the crystal and is slowly corrupting them despite offering great magical power in exchange

- Zulkir Dar'lon Ma was planning to take on Szass Tam for control of Thay, but the elder lich discovered the plan thanks to the meddling of certain adventures and a few well-timed *speak with dead* spells
- other information from the adventure background as you desire

Once the characters have had a few minutes to speak with the Thayans, a brilliant magical light flares up in their eyes and they slump over, dead. A brief investigation can confirm that the wizards fell victim to *contingency* spells, likely keyed to destroy them if they revealed Thayan secrets to those that were not privy to such information. They cannot be raised (including related spells) and are immune to *speak with dead* spells.

## TREASURE

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The treasures included in this place are not standardized. For each **Red Wizard** that is defeated, add one *spell scroll* of a spell that the Red Wizard has prepared of level 7 or less; feel free to choose from the wizard spells in the Player's Handbook, even if that spell is not currently prepared by the Red Wizard. For each creature (other than Red Wizards) defeated, add 2,500 gp worth of trinkets and gems per character. For every three creatures defeated, add one *potion of supreme healing*.

## WORKSHOP OF HORRORS

**Estimated Duration:** 45 minutes

The final encounter with Szass Tam here in Mulmaster should be terrifying and fraught with danger. Don't be afraid to pull out all the stops; the lich wants everyone and everything in and around the city to be dead – likely so that they can be raised and pressed into immediate, unquestioning service to Thay.

Until the epic administrators call for the beginning of part 3, there is no way for the characters to enter this space as it does not exist in any meaningful way until this time.

### CHARNEL HORRORS

Szass Tam has determined that the adventurers represent a pressing threat, despite his best efforts to use the defenses of the house to whittle them down. He has decided to siphon the magical energies that had previously sustained the Thayan mansion and use them to assault the characters head-on.

The demiplanes that comprise the “interior” of the Thayan mansion fold in upon themselves in a sickening fashion; realities are collapsing into themselves and exploding back outwards. Creatures (other than the characters) that are caught in this transition go through a series of rapid and gruesome changes as their forms change from one species to another, then to a cubist reality, then to a two-dimensional interpretation, and so on until they ultimately collapse under the existential weight of their own existence.

The floors appear to be made of slightly-moving bones, and the ever-present sound of wails and screams fill the place; much of this noisome onslaught is psychic in nature and is not simply auditory. While these effects are not mechanical in nature, they should be used to drive home that Szass Tam is nothing if not resourceful: his terminated test subjects simply serve as ever-present building materials for the expansion of this place.

Szass Tam does not waste time with issuing challenges or monologuing about the benefits of becoming a servant of Thay: the characters have already been deemed as undesirable, and as such will simply be removed from existence.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

Szass Tam's workshop is a place of true terror. It is a metaphysical location and is not anchored in any known reality, and the results of his experiments are easily seen for what they are: abominations and terrors, gruesome reminders of the horrors that he is willing to inflict upon those that are not loyal to him.

**Pocket dimension.** The lich's workshop exists in a private and heavily secured pocket dimension. Any attempt to teleport in automatically fails unless they have been explicitly invited by Szass Tam, and any attempt to transport away from it (including through banishment, summoning, teleporting, and so on) requires a successful DC 20 Wisdom saving throw; failing this saving throw results in the creature being incapacitated for one minute. Regardless of the result, the effect fails and the creature remains in the pocket dimension. **Setting.** The private dimension is composed of a disc approximately 60 feet in diameter. The disc is populated with work benches, bubbling alchemical contraptions, and other such accoutrement. There is no ceiling, and there are no walls. However, any creature that travels more than ten feet away from the disc is immediately subjected to raw planar energy; in addition to that space being an endless vacuum (be sure to review the suffocation rules, and remember that sound does not travel in a vacuum), spells cast outside the disc cannot affect anything on the disc. Any living creature that ends their turn in the vacuum gains one level of exhaustion (no saving throw).

Szass Tam is not subject to these effects.

### TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Consider the following guidance:

**Potent Necromancy.** Szass Tam has all the powers of a necromancer, as per the *Player's Handbook*. These powers are summarized in the sidebar.

**Undead Generation.** On initiation count 15, the pocket dimension spawns undead from the floor. Roll a d20; this represents the total CR of undead creatures that are spawned. For example, if the roll is a 17 the demiplane will generate up to 17 CR worth of undead creatures; this could be a single **death knight**, one tier 4 **wraith**, or any other combination of creatures. Szass Tam can spend one of his legendary actions and expend a spell slot; if he does, add the level of the spell slot the result of the d20 roll. Any unused value is added to his next *Undead Generation* roll.

**Contingency.** The first time that a *counterspell* is cast by someone other than Szass Tam, his *contingency* spell is triggered and the caster is immediately subject to a *banishment* spell (Charisma saving throw DC 22). Due to the nature of the pocket dimension, the victim can re-attempt the saving throw at the end of each of their turns.

## NOT YOUR DADDY'S SZASS TAM

Szass Tam as presented here is not the actual lich. It is merely one of his many simulacra, albeit a powerful one, and represents a significant investment of time, energy, magical enchantment. The Thayan lich is angered but is very intelligent and realizes that he is not yet ready to meet the characters in person. That said, this simulacrum has the following changes from the standard lich stat block:

**Ancient Secrets.** Szass Tam has an intelligence score of 24 (+7). Additionally, he is equivalent to a 20th level spell caster; these elements combine to raise the DC of his spells from 20 to 22.

**Grim Harvest.** Once per turn when Szass Tam kills a non-dead, non-construct creature using a spell of 1st level or higher, he gains hit points equal to twice the spell's level or three times if the spell was of the Necromancy school.

**Animate Undead.** At the end of round 1, Szass Tam animates an **adult blue dracolich**. See the **Interactive Element** note below.

**Immunity Through Undeath.** Szass Tam is immune to necrotic damage and cannot have his hit point maximum reduced.

**Improved Command Undead.** As an action, Szass Tam can choose one undead creature anywhere in the pocket dimension. That creature must succeed on a DC 22 Charisma saving throw or become friendly to Szass Tam and is controlled by him. If the creature succeeds on the saving throw, it cannot be targeted a second time. Undead with an intelligence score of 8 or higher have advantage on this saving throw; if it fails and has an intelligence of 12 or higher, it can repeat its saving throw at the end of every hour until it succeeds and breaks free.

**Necrotic Simulacrum.** Szass Tam can regain hit points via his Grim Harvest ability in addition to alchemical restoration. If he drops to 0 hit points, he becomes a foul-smelling pile of meat scraps and coagulated blood.

**Zulkir's Contingency.** The first time that Szass Tam would be reduced to 0 hit points instead triggers a latent enchantment that prevents all of that damage from that source. It is a specially crafted *wish* spell that the real Szass Tam placed upon this simulacrum. Szass Tam is also immediately affected by the *invulnerability* spell and cannot drop below 1 hit point until the spell ends.

*Invulnerability* (information abbreviated from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*)

Abjuration, level 9; concentration

You are immune to all damage until the spell ends.

## INTERACTIVE ELEMENT

The **adult blue dracolich** that has been raised by Szass Tam has its arrival narrated by the DM, but will be 'played' by one of the event administrators. If there are not enough event administrators, the DM may control the creature as if it were a wandering monster under the control of an event administrator. Please note that it is not intended for both the dracolich and Szass Tam to be simultaneously present for the full duration of this combat encounter. If an event administrator is not present, the dracolich should make an appearance every 2-3 rounds, based on the strength of the characters.

## TIME'S PASSAGE

As described in **The Space Between the Spaces**, time passes strangely here. In truth, Szass Tam has accelerated the flow of time here in order to expedite his final rituals: if he cannot have Mulmaster, nobody can. For each hour of resting or exploration that the characters spent in getting here, the following effects apply (each stacking all the previous effects, if any):

- **1 hour or less.** Szass Tam begins combat with 20 points ready for use with his *Undead Generation* trait (see *Tricks of the Trade*).
- **2 hours.** Szass Tam has identified one of the characters as the primary threat. That character has disadvantage on saving throws versus magic and magic effects that Szass Tam uses against them.
- **3 hours.** Szass Tam is joined by one **death knight**.
- **4 or more hours.** As 2 hours, but all characters are so affected.

## DEATH IN THE POCKET DIMENSION

If a character dies here and their body is not recovered during the battle, they can only be returned to life by a *true resurrection* spell.

## CONCLUSION

When Szass Tam and the dracolich are defeated, the pocket dimension unravels in destructive, cinematic fashion. When everything is resolved, the characters find themselves standing in the remains of a stronghold near Zhentil Keep, far to the west of Mulmaster. This is almost certainly due to the relationship that Thay and the Zhentarim once had and may actually be a sign of developments to come.

Attempts to teleport to Mulmaster automatically fail (see the event wrap-up), and by the time the characters return to the City of Danger they find that

it is now firmly under the control of the Thayans. It should be made apparent to the characters that due to the strange behavior of time in the demiplanes, several weeks have passed and the other tiers of play have been long resolved by now.

Any madness that was developed by the characters during this adventure sloughs away with no permanent effect, though interplanar travel may bring to mind the horrors that they witnessed.

## **TREASURE**

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After the simulacrum's body crumbles, two bits of ephemera are all that remain. These mementos can be claimed by the characters: one is *Szass Tam's Arcane Essence*, and the other is *Szass Tam's Planar Essence*.

## REWARDS (TIER 4)

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

### EXPERIENCE (MIN/MAX XP: 30,000/45,000 EACH)

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character.

#### COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Adult blue dracolich	* (interactive foe)
Demilich	20,000
Elemental rift	21,500
Red Wizards (archmages)	8,400
Star spawn larva mage	15,000
Steel predator	15,000
Szass Tam (simulacrum)	50,000
Wraith (tier 4)	13,000

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 30,000 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 45,000 **experience points**.

### TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

#### TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Trinkets & gems (for every non-Red Wizard defeated)	2,500 per character

**Consumable magic items** should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

### POTION OF SUPREME HEALING

*Potion, variable rarity*

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### SPELL SCROLLS

*Scroll, variable rarity*

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### SZASS TAM'S ARCANESSENCE

*Epic boon, unique*

You have wrested away part of Szass Tam's essence. Specifically, this spark of energy was originally wrested from the vile lich himself, and grants one additional 9th level spell slot, provided that you already have one. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* under the entry for *Boon of High Magic*.

### SZASS TAM'S PLANAR ESSENCE

*Epic boon, unique*

You have wrested away part of Szass Tam's essence. Specifically, this spark of energy allowed the lich's simulacrum to navigate the planes – and while you aren't as proficient with this skill, you can retain a small bit of its power. Choose one of the Outer Planes listed in Appendix C of the *Player's Handbook*; once choice is permanent once made. You can use your action to cast *plane shift* on you (targeting yourself only) and travel to the chosen plane, or from that plane back to the Material Plane. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* under the entry for *Boon of Planar Travel*.

### STORY AWARDS

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award.

**Planes in Pockets in Planes.** The Thayan mansion in Mulmaster was comprised of a series of nested demiplanes and pocket dimensions, and you survived the exploration – and brought back lingering traces of that magic. As a result, you always know what plane you are on, and if you find yourself away from your native plane you may excise this magic to return to the Prime Material plane immediately. If you do this, destroy this story award.

## PLAYER REWARDS

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For completing this mission, the characters earn downtime as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG)*.

Any character that was afflicted with any form of madness as a result of attempting to learn the cipher is cured of that malady at the end of their next adventure.

## DM REWARD

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In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide (ALDMG)*.

## APPENDIX. MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

### ADULT BLUE DRACOLICH

*Huge undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 225 (18d12 + 108)

**Speed** 40 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	10 (+0)	23 (+6)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

---

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Con +11, Wis +7, Cha +9

**Skills** Perception +12, Stealth +5

**Damage Immunities** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** lightning, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 17 (18,000 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the dracolich fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** The dracolich has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

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**Multiattack.** The dracolich can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) fire damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature of the dracolich's choice that is within 120 feet of the dracolich and aware of it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dracolich's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

**Lightning Breath (Recharge 5–6).** The dracolich exhales lightning in a 90-foot line. Each creature in that area must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 66 (12d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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The dracolich can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dracolich regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- **Detect.** The dracolich makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.
- **Tail Attack.** The dracolich makes a tail attack.
- **Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions).** The dracolich beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (2d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dracolich can then fly up to half its flying speed.



## ARCHMAGE (RED WIZARD)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 99 (18d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

---

**Saving Throws** Int +9, Wis +6

**Skills** Arcana +13, History +13

**Damage Resistance** damage from spells; nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from *stoneskin*)

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** any six languages

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** The archmagi has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Spellcasting.** The archmage is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The archmage can cast *disguise self* and *invisibility* at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *identify*, *mage armor*\*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *fire shield*, *stoneskin*\*

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold*, *scrying*, *wall of force*

6th level (1 slots): *globe of invulnerability*

7th level (1 slots): *teleport*

8th level (1 slots): *mind blank*\*

9th level (1 slots): *time stop*

\*: *The archmage casts these spells on itself before combat*

## ACTIONS

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**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## DEMILICH

*Tiny undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 80 (20d4)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)

---

**Saving Throws** Con +6, Int +11, Wis +9, Cha +11

**Skills** Arcana +18, History +12, Insight +9, Perception +9

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from magical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Thayan, Ancient Netherese, Elven, Dwarven

**Challenge** 18 (20,000 XP)

**Avoidance.** If the Demilich is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half if it fails.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the demilich fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Turn Immunity.** The Demilich is immune to effects that turn undead.

### ACTIONS

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**Howl (Recharge 5 – 6).** The Demilich emits a bloodcurdling howl. Each creature within 30 feet of the Demilich that can hear the howl must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or drop to 0 hit points. On a successful save, the creature is frightened until the end of its next turn.

**Life Drain.** The Demilich targets up to three creatures that it can see within 10 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 21 (6d6) necrotic damage, and the demilich regains hit points equal to the total damage dealt to all targets.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

---

The demilich can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of

another creature's turn. The demilich regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- **Flight.** The demilich flies up to half its flying speed.
- **Cloud of Dust.** The demilich magically swirls its dusty remains. Each creature within 10 feet of the demilich, including around a corner, must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of the demilich's next turn. A creature that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to this effect until the end of the demilich's next turn.
- **Energy Drain (Costs 2 Actions).** Each creature within 30 feet of the demilich must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's hit point maximum is magically reduced by 10 (3d6). If a creature's hit point maximum is reduced to 0 by this effect, the creature dies. A creature's hit point maximum can be restored with the greater restoration spell or similar magic.
- **Vile Curse (Costs 3 Actions).** The demilich targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be magically cursed. Until the curse ends, the target has disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the curse on a success.

## STAR SPAWN LARVA MAGE

*Medium aberration, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 168 (16d8 + 96)

**Speed** 30 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	23 (+6)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

---

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Wis +9, Cha +8

**Skills** Perception +6

**Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Deep Speech

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The larva mage's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *eldritch blast* (3 beams, +3 bonus to each damage roll)

3/day: *dominate monster*

1/day: *circle of death*

**Return to Worms.** When the larva mage is reduced to 0 hit points, it breaks apart into a **swarm of insects** in the same space. Unless the swarm is destroyed, the larva mage reforms from it 24 hours later. (NOTE: the swarm's stat block is not included in this adventure)

## ACTIONS

---

**Slam.** Melee weapon attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of its next turn.

**Plague of Worms (Recharge 6).** Each creature other than a star spawn within 10 feet of the larva mage must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (5d8) necrotic damage and be blinded and restrained by masses of swarming worms. The affected creature takes 22 (5d8) necrotic damage at the start of each of the larva mage's turns. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## REACTIONS

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**Feed on Weakness.** When a creature within 20 feet of the larva mage fails a saving throw, the larva mage gains 10 temporary hit points.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

---

The larva mage can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The larva mage regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- **Cantrip.** The lich casts one cantrip.
- **Slam (Costs 2 Actions).** The larva mage makes one slam attack.
- **Feed (Costs 3 Actions).** Each creature restrained by the larva mage's Plague of Worms takes 13 (3d8) necrotic damage, and the larva mage gains 6 temporary hit points.

## STEEL PREDATOR

*Large construct, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 207 (18d10 + 108)

**Speed** 40 ft.

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	17 (+3)	22 (+6)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

---

**Skills** Perception +7, Stealth +8, Survival +7

**Damage Resistances** cold, lightning, necrotic, thunder

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** understands Modron and Common but can't speak

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The steel predator's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *dimension door* (self only), *plane shift* (self only)

**Magic Resistance.** The steel predator has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The steel predator's weapon attacks are magical.

### ACTIONS

---

**Multiattack.** The steel predator makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claw.

**Bite.** Melee Spell Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 14 (2d6 + 7) piercing damage.

**Claw.** Melee Spell Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 16 (2d8 + 7) slashing damage.

**Stunning Roar (Recharge 5 – 6).** The steel predator emits a roar in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 27 (5d10) thunder damage, drops everything it's holding, and is stunned for 1 minute. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage. The stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## SZASS TAM (SIMULACRUM; LICH)

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 135 (18d8 + 54)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Con +10, Int +12, Wis +9

**Skills** Arcana +18, History +12, Insight +9, Perception +9

**Damage Resistances** cold, lightning, necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

**Languages** Common plus up to five other languages

**Challenge** 21 (33,000 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the lich fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Rejuvenation.** If it has a phylactery, a destroyed lich gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all its hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the phylactery.

**Spellcasting.** The lich is an 18th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). The lich has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, magic missile, shield, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, counterspell, dispel magic, fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *blight, dimension door*

5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill, scrying*

6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate, globe of invulnerability*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death, plane shift*

8th level (1 slot): *dominate monster, power word stun*

9th level (1 slot): *power word kill*

**Turn Resistance.** The lich has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

## ACTIONS

**Paralyzing Touch.** Melee Spell Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 10 (3d6) cold damage. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The lich can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The lich regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- **Cantrip.** The lich casts a cantrip.
- **Paralyzing Touch (Costs 2 Actions).** The lich uses its Paralyzing Touch.
- **Frightening Gaze (Costs 2 Actions).** The lich fixes its gaze on one creature it can see within 10 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened for 1 minute. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the lich's gaze for the next 24 hours.
- **Disrupt Life (Costs 3 Actions).** Each living creature within 20 feet of the lich must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## WRAITH

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 67 (9d8 + 27)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

---

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** the languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 5 (1800 XP)

**Incorporeal Movement.** The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the wraith has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Create Specter.** The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

## SCALING THE WRAITH

The wraith can be adjusted to tier 4 with the following changes:

- Hit points 158 (19d8 + 78)
- Dexterity is 20 (+5)
- Immune to non-magical weapons and the frightened condition
- Resistant to fire, cold, acid, lightning, thunder
- Has advantage on saving throws versus magic and magic effects
- Life Drain's DC becomes 18, and the attack is now +10 to the attack roll and deals 31 (6d8 + 5) necrotic damage

## PLAYER APPENDIX: MAGIC ITEMS & AWARDS

### PERMANENT MAGIC ITEMS

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#### SZASS TAM'S ARCANESSENCE

*Epic boon, unique*

You have wrested away part of Szass Tam's essence. Specifically, this spark of energy was originally wrested from the vile lich himself, and grants one additional 9th level spell slot, provided that you already have one. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* under the entry for *Boon of High Magic*.

#### SZASS TAM'S PLANAR ESSENCE

*Epic boon, unique*

You have wrested away part of Szass Tam's essence. Specifically, this spark of energy allowed the lich's simulacrum to navigate the planes – and while you aren't as proficient with this skill, you can retain a small bit of its power. Choose one of the Outer Planes listed in Appendix C of the *Player's Handbook*; once choice is permanent once made. You can use your action to cast *plane shift* on you (targeting yourself only) and travel to the chosen plane, or from that plane back to the Material Plane. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* under the entry for *Boon of Planar Travel*.

### STORY AWARDS

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#### PLANES IN POCKETS IN PLANES

The Thayan mansion in Mulmaster was comprised of a series of nested demiplanes and pocket dimensions, and you survived the exploration – and brought back lingering traces of that magic. As a result, you always know what plane you are on, and if you find yourself away from your native plane you may excise this magic to return to the Prime Material plane immediately. If you do this, destroy this story award.

## DM APPENDIX: ELEMENTAL RIFTS

Thanks to the events of DDEP2 Mulmaster Undone, there are a significant number of elemental rifts open throughout the trade city of Mulmaster. These rifts were, for the most part, under control; although the Red Wizards of Thay were unable to close them entirely, they were able to keep them from expanding and from spewing their deadly energies out. Now that the Red Wizards have abandoned this theoretically magnanimous course of action, the rifts have grown unstable and now pose a serious threat to the adventurers and residents!

makes thematic sense and use the save DCs, attack bonus, and damage severity as listed above.

Rifts are complex traps, as presented in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

### RIFT SAVE DCs AND ATTACK BONUSES

Tier	Save DC	Attack Bonus
1	11	+5
2	13	+8
3	15	+12
4	17	+15

### DAMAGE SEVERITY BY LEVEL (SINGLE TARGET)

Tier	Moderate	Dangerous	Deadly
1	5 (1d10)	11 (2d10)	22 (4d10)
2	11 (2d10)	22 (4d10)	55 (10d10)
3	22 (4d10)	55 (10d10)	99 (18d10)
4	55 (10d10)	99 (18d10)	132 (24d10)

### DAMAGE SEVERITY BY LEVEL (MULTIPLE TARGETS)

Tier	Moderate	Dangerous	Deadly
1	3 (1d6)	7 (2d6)	14 (4d6)
2	7 (2d6)	14 (4d6)	35 (10d6)
3	14 (4d6)	35 (10d6)	63 (18d6)
4	35 (10d6)	63 (18d6)	84 (24d6)

### RIFT XP AWARDS

Tier	Experience Points
1	650
2	3,850
3	11,100
4	21,500

## USING AN ELEMENTAL RIFT IN AN ENCOUNTER

An elemental rift can be substituted for any creature or combination of creatures in a combat encounter – be sure to review the experience value(s) of the creature to that of the rift. There should not be more than two rifts in any individual encounter, as it may become too much to track and take away from the running of the game. Simply choose an element that



## AIR RIFT

*Complex trap, levels 1-20 dangerous threat*

A two-dimensional, angry slash in reality is here. Gale-force winds scream out of it and peals of thunder reverberate around this space.

**Trigger.** The rift has already been triggered.

**Initiative.** The rift acts on initiative count 20 and on initiative count 10, losing ties.

**Active Elements.** The air rift includes supernaturally strong winds, peals of deafening thunder, and lightning bolts.

**Gale Force Winds (Initiative 20).** The rift emits a blast of wind that slams into everything within 50 feet. Creatures must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is thrown 20 feet away and is knocked prone; on a successful save, the creature is thrown half as far. If a creature is thrown into a hard surface, it takes **moderate (multiple targets)** bludgeoning damage, or half as much damage on a successful save.

**Deafening Thunder (Initiative 10).** Each creature within 20 feet of the rift must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or else be deafened for one minute.

**Arc Lightning (Initiative 10).** Roll a d6. Lightning arcs out and strikes that many random targets within 50 feet of the rift, inflicting **dangerous** lightning damage; a creature struck in this manner takes half damage if they succeed on a Dexterity saving throw. A creature can only be hit once per turn by Arc Lightning.

**Dynamic Elements.** The longer the rift is open, the more dangerous it becomes. The broken magic of the insane elemental cults has been further corrupted by the meddling of the Thayans.

**Winds Intensify.** The DC to resist being thrown and knocked prone increases by +1 for each round that the rift is open.

**Elemental Fury.** For each successful Arcana check made to seal the rift, the DC of all saving throws caused by the rift increases by +1, and Arc Lightning can target one additional creature.

**Constant Elements.** This rift is created of equal parts pure elemental power and raw hatred. The air around it seethes with these energies. Gale Force Winds, Deafening Thunder, and Arc Lightning affect each creature that ends its turn in an area affected by these elements.

**Gale Force Winds.** Any creature that ends its turn within 20 feet of the rift must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) check or be pushed 10 feet away. Ranged attacks that use ammunition

made against a creature that is within 10 feet of an air rift automatically miss.

**Deafening Thunder.** Once a creature is deafened, they gain a level of exhaustion for each additional Deafening Thunder saving throws that they fail.

**Arc Lightning.** A creature wearing heavy metal armor or wielding a two-handed metal weapon is automatically targeted by Arc Lightning.

**Countermeasures.** The rift's active elements can be deterred or delayed, and the rift can be sealed with specific countermeasures. One countermeasure can be determined if a character spends their action to make a Moderate DC skill check.

**Gale Force Winds (Arcana).** A *wall of force* or similar effect will provide temporary respite. After three rounds, the spell or effect fails as if it were subjected to a *disintegrate* spell.

**Deafening Thunder (Arcana, Medicine, Insight).** A carefully placed *silence* spell will grant advantage on the saving throw, as will stuffing one's ears with wax or some similar substance.

**Arc Lightning (Arcana, Nature).** Planting a large metal rod or object into the ground within 5 feet of a creature and stationed between the creature and the rift will grant advantage on that character's saving throw against the arc lightning. The rod must be at least as tall as the creature.

**Sealing the Rift (Arcana).** As an action, a creature within 10 feet of the rift can attempt to seal the rift. Sealing the rift requires several successful Intelligence (Arcana) checks equal to the number of characters in the group. Casting *dispel magic* (DC 15) counts as one success. Once sealed, the rift disappears in a blast of force; any creature within 10 feet of the rift must make a DC Constitution saving throw or else take **dangerous (multiple targets)** force damage and be knocked prone.

## EARTH RIFT

*Complex trap, levels 1-20 dangerous threat*

A hovering chunk of multi-colored quartz, humming with earthshaking intensity. As it hovers the facets vibrate and shift with eye-watering speed.

**Trigger.** The rift has already been triggered.

**Initiative.** The rift acts on initiative count 20 and on initiative count 10, losing ties.

**Active Elements.** The earth detonates metronomic peals of deafening thunder.

**Sonic Maelstrom (Initiative 20).** The rift emits a shockwave of force that slams into everything within 50 feet. Creatures must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is thrown 20 feet away and is knocked prone; on a successful save, the creature is thrown half as far. If a creature is thrown into a hard surface, it takes **moderate (multiple targets)** bludgeoning damage, or half as much damage on a successful save.

**Deafening Thunder (Initiative 10).** Each creature within 20 feet of the rift must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or else be deafened for one minute.

**Shard Blast (Initiative 10).** Roll a d10. Razor sharp shards of quartz fly out and strike that many random targets within 50 feet of the rift, inflicting **moderate** force damage; a creature struck in this manner takes half damage if they succeed on a Dexterity saving throw. A creature can only be hit once per turn by Shard Blast.

**Dynamic Elements.** The longer the rift is open, the more dangerous it becomes. The broken magic of the insane elemental cults has been further corrupted by the meddling of the Thayans.

**Maximum Force** The DC of Constitution saving throws increases by +1 for each round that the rift is open.

**Elemental Fury.** For each successful Arcana check made to seal the rift, the DC of all saving throws caused by the rift increases by +1, and Shard Blast targets an additional creature.

**Constant Elements.** This rift is created of equal parts pure elemental earth and thundering malice. The earth around the rift cracks and shudders under its fury. Each creature that ends its turn in the rift's area of effects suffers from Deafening Thunder and Rippling Earth.

**Deafening Thunder.** Once a creature is deafened, they gain a level of exhaustion for each additional Deafening Thunder saving throws that they fail.

**Rippling Earth.** Each creature within 20 feet of the rift is knocked prone and takes **dangerous** thunder damage, or half as much and is not knocked prone on a successful Constitution saving throw.

**Countermeasures.** The rift's active elements can be deterred or delayed, and the rift can be sealed with specific countermeasures. One countermeasure can be determined if a character spends their action to make a Moderate DC skill check.

**Shard Blast (Insight, Acrobatics).** Creatures can leap out of the way of the shard as a reaction—falling prone but taking no damage.

**Deafening Thunder (Arcana, Medicine, Insight).** A carefully placed *silence* spell will grant advantage on the saving throw, as will stuffing one's ears with wax or some similar substance.

**Rippling Earth (Acrobatics, Athletics).** With well-timed maneuvering a creature can avoid the worst of the earth's violent rumbling granting advantage on the Constitution save required for this element.

**Sealing the Rift (Arcana).** As an action, a creature within 10 feet of the rift can attempt to seal the rift. Sealing the rift requires several successful Intelligence (Arcana) checks equal to the number of characters in the group. Casting *dispel magic* (DC 15) counts as one success. Once sealed, the rift disappears in a blast of force; any creature within 10 feet of the rift must make a DC Constitution saving throw or else take **dangerous (multiple targets)** force damage and be knocked prone.

## FIRE RIFT

*Complex trap, levels 1-20 dangerous threat*

An orb of flame the size of a large dog darts unpredictably around the area—pulsing with occasional goutts of fire and oily black smoke.

**Trigger.** The rift has already been triggered.

**Initiative.** The rift acts on initiative count 20 and on initiative count 10, losing ties.

**Active Elements.** The fire rift includes waves of hellish fire, clouds of choking black smoke, and unpredictable bursts of speed.

**Fiery Dash (Initiative 20).** The rift moves 30 feet, moving through spaces occupied by creatures. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes **moderate (multiple targets)** fire damage and catches fire; until someone takes an action to douse the fire, the creature takes **moderate** fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

**Flame Lash (Initiative 10).** The rift emits a 30-foot tendril of elemental fire that attacks a single creature. On a hit, the target takes **dangerous (single target)** fire damage.

**Choking Smoke (Initiative 10).** A 20-foot radius cloud of toxic smoke forms spot within 120 feet of the rift. Creatures within the smoke are heavily obscured and must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The cloud disappears on this initiative count on the following round.

**Dynamic Elements.** The longer the rift is open, the more dangerous it becomes. The broken magic of the insane elemental cults has been further corrupted by the meddling of the Thayans.

**Angry Flames!** The DC of fire-based effects increases by +1 for each round that the rift is open.

**Elemental Fury.** For each successful Arcana check made to seal the rift, the DC of all saving throws caused by the rift increases by +1, and Flame Gout targets an additional creature.

**Constant Elements.** This rift is created of equal parts pure elemental power and raw hatred. The fire around it seethes with these energies. Hellish heat and choking smoke affect each creature that ends its turn in an area affected by these elements.

**Hellish Heat.** The first time a creature approaches closer than 10 feet of the rift or starts its turn within 10 feet of the rift must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take **moderate**

**(multiple targets)** fire damage and gain a level of exhaustion.

**Choking Smoke.** Each creature that starts its turn within 20 feet of the rift it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or takes **dangerous (multiple targets)** poison damage. A successful save reduces this damage by half.

**Countermeasures.** The rift's active elements can be deterred or delayed, and the rift can be sealed with specific countermeasures. One countermeasure can be determined if a character spends their action to make a Moderate DC skill check.

**Fiery Dash (Insight).** Characters may use their reaction to leap out of the way of the rift. They take no damage but fall prone.

**Choking Smoke (Arcana, Nature).** The smoke is blown away with a *gust of wind* or other similar effect. The smoke reforms at the end of the second round after being dispelled in this way.

**Sealing the Rift (Arcana).** As an action, a creature within 10 feet of the rift can attempt to seal the rift. Sealing the rift requires several successful Intelligence (Arcana) checks equal to the number of characters in the group. Casting *dispel magic* (DC 15) counts as one success. Once sealed, the rift disappears in a blast of force; any creature within 10 feet of the rift must make a DC Constitution saving throw or else take **dangerous (multiple targets)** force damage and be knocked prone.

## WATER RIFT

*Complex trap, levels 1-20 dangerous threat*

A roiling mass of water brimming with chunks of ice ripples chaotically to and fro in a serpentine fashion.

**Trigger.** The rift has already been triggered.

**Initiative.** The rift acts on initiative count 20 and on initiative count 10, losing ties.

**Active Elements.** The water rift includes pulses of numbing cold, jets of icy water, and patches of freezing ground.

**Tsunami (Initiative 20).** The rift moves 30 feet, moving through spaces occupied by creatures. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes **moderate (multiple targets)** cold damage and is restrained until someone takes an action to break the coating of ice.

**Ice Bolt (Initiative 10).** The rift emits a 30-foot bolt of elemental ice at a creature who takes **dangerous (single target)** cold damage. On a successful save, the target takes only half damage.

**Drowning (Initiative 10).** A 20-foot radius sphere of frigid water forms in a spot within 120 feet of the rift. Creatures within the sphere that lack a swim speed are in difficult terrain, have disadvantage on melee and ranged attacks, and resistance to fire damage. An unconscious creature in the sphere begins to suffocate in a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round).

**Dynamic Elements.** The longer the rift is open, the more dangerous it becomes. The broken magic of the insane elemental cults has been further corrupted by the meddling of the Thayans.

**Chill of Death** The DC of cold-based effects increases by +1 for each round that the rift is open.

**Elemental Fury.** For each successful Arcana check made to seal the rift, the DC of all saving throws caused by the rift increases by +1, and Ice Bolt targets an additional creature.

**Constant Elements.** This rift is created of equal parts pure elemental power and raw hatred and the area around it seethes with these energies. Stygian cold and a corrosive salt spray affect each creature that ends its turn in an area affected by these elements.

**Endless Chill.** The first time a creature approaches closer than 10 feet of the rift or starts its turn within 10 feet of the rift must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take

**moderate (multiple targets)** cold damage and gain a level of exhaustion.

**Sea Spray.** Each creature within 20 feet of the rift takes **dangerous** acid damage, or half as much on a successful Constitution saving throw.

**Countermeasures.** The rift's active elements can be deterred or delayed, and the rift can be sealed with specific countermeasures. One countermeasure can be determined if a character spends their action to make a Moderate DC skill check.

**Tsunami (Insight, Acrobatics).** Characters may use their reaction to leap out of the way of the rift. They take no damage but fall prone.

**Drowning (Arcana, Nature).** The water sphere can be disincorporated with a *thunderwave* or other similar effect. The sphere reforms at the end of the third round after being dispelled in this way.

**Sealing the Rift (Arcana).** As an action, a creature within 10 feet of the rift can attempt to seal the rift. Sealing the rift requires several successful Intelligence (Arcana) checks equal to the number of characters in the group. Casting *dispel magic* (DC 15) counts as one success. Once sealed, the rift disappears in a blast of force; any creature within 10 feet of the rift must make a DC Constitution saving throw or else take **dangerous (multiple targets)** force damage and be knocked prone.

## TIER 4 GUIDANCE

The events of the tier 4 game potentially impact all tiers of play.

### DEMIPLANE DOORWAYS

Every room in the mansion is actually its own demiplane. There is a chance that one table may open a doorway and briefly see another tier 4 table; if this happens, one character at each table may immediately leave their group and switch with the other. This should happen expediently and with minimal play interruption. If this cannot happen (perhaps due to distance, mobility, or certain facility factors), the characters that opened the door may instead use one action to aid the table that they are seeing. After this character exchange or action use, the vision fades and play returns to normal.

### ARCANE WEBS

There is an encounter inside the mansion that may potentially strip all casters present in this Epic adventure (not just at tier 4) of their highest-level spell slot. Should this occur, be sure to note that this spell slot is returned to the character at the end of the adventure.

- If half or fewer of the tier 4 tables report that they have disabled the arcane webs, all characters present in this Epic lose the disadvantage trait of **Cancerous Magic** (see “Guidance for all Tiers”).
- If more than half of the tier 4 tables report that they have disabled the arcane webs, the **Cancerous Magic** effect is entirely dispelled.

### ADULT BLUE DRACOLICH

If there are not enough Epic administrators or event volunteers available that wish to play the role of the wandering dracolich for the tier 4 tables, there is guidance on how to run this creature as an interstitial event every few rounds using just the DM and the players. If there are very few tier 4 tables, consider limiting the dracolich’s arrival to a maximum of two visits, and keeping at least one round of normal combat in between those visits. The dracolich’s stat block is located with the rest of the monster stat blocks. When the dracolich is used as a wandering monster, feel free to use some or all of the following elements based on overall party strength:

- **Aura of Dread.** The dracolich exudes an aura of dread so palpable that it causes fear in even the hardest of foes. Its bones are laced with runes of

necromancy and abjuration. All living creatures within 40 ft. of the dracolich are potentially terrified: while inside the aura, an immunity to fear becomes resistance instead, a resistance to fear is negated, and if a creature is not already resistant they are instead vulnerable to fear and make their saving throws versus fear effects at disadvantage.

- **Unholy Gifts.** The dracolich’s melee weapons count as magical weapons, and its scales are treated as adamantine (it is not subject to critical hits).
- **Quickened Breath Weapon.** If the dragon successfully bites a living creature, it siphons some of that creature’s essence and can use its breath weapon as a bonus action. If it does, the creature that was bitten must be included as a target for the breath weapon attack.
- **Enervating Breath Weapon.** Any living creature that takes damage from the dracolich’s breath weapon must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or else that creature’s hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken.