

ELEMENTAL EVIL™



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE™

BLACK HEART OF VENGEANCE

Aleyd Bural, the Risen Hero of Phlan has sounded the call to battle! Intent on retaking her home of Phlan, Aleyd has amassed a surprising amount of support from the citizenry of Phlan, including that of the High Blade himself. But as lofty as her goals might be, the honor-bound warrior seems willing to sacrifice much in her quest—including everything she once stood for. A four-hour adventure for 5th-10th level characters.

Adventure Code: DDEX2-15

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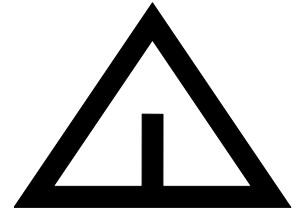
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Black Heart of Vengeance, a D&D Expeditions™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the Elemental Evil™ storyline season.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 8th-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

The adventure is set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms, in the city of Mulmaster.

THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a [DCI number](#). This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the [D&D Adventurers League home](#).

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the [D&D basic rules](#) or the Player's Handbook™.
- 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.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in Dungeon Mastering, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, battlemaps, etc.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information. This includes:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, and so on)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character (if applicable).

Ensure that each player has an [official adventure logsheet](#) for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player will fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for XP, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she will fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide

documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode.

Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this adventure, you may see sidebars to help you make adjustments to this adventure for smaller/larger groups and characters, of higher/lower levels that the optimized group size. Most of the time, this is used for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 8th-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters
- Divide the total by the number of characters
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out 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

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

DUNGEON MASTERING THE ADVENTURE

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

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

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. This is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.

- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since 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. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide*™ has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

DOWNTIME AND LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the [D&D basic rules](#) or the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services (end of the adventure only)
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime

activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services. Alternatively, if the party finishes an adventure, they can be assumed to return to the settlement closest to the adventure location.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2nd level)	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Faiths that can call upon spellcasting services in Mulmaster include the following: Bane, Leira, Loviatar, Mystra, Savras, Tempus, Tymora, Velsharoon, and Waukeen.

CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

DISEASE, POISON, AND OTHER DEBILITATING EFFECTS

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the D&D basic rules).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

DEATH

A character who dies during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a raise dead or revivify spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a raise dead spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after raise dead reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a raise dead spell. A raise dead spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the raise dead spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a raise dead spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all XP and rewards from that session (even those earned prior to death during that session), and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After the fall of Phlan, the body of Aleyd Burrel was secreted away to Mulmaster where her brother, Wylan Burrel (a priest in the temple of Tymora) facilitated a raise dead on her behalf. Since returning to life, Aleyd Burrel has sought the liberation of Phlan above all else. The love she holds for her home burns white-hot in her breast though her obsession with retaking Phlan, coupled with her death and the subtle influences of her brother (a member of the Cult of the Black Earth), has caused this once-noble warrior to shed that which was most important to her—honor, goodness, and mercy.

Through political maneuvering, she steadily garnered the support of commoners and nobles alike, including that of the High Blade. With this support, she has been able to muster a modest host with the hopes that these soldiers would serve as her own private army with which to retake her home and slay Vorgansharax, the Maimed Virulence. Though some have taken issue with the possibility of Mulmaster being drawn into a war that is not their own, these few are careful not to raise their voices such to the point where the High Blade is able to hear them.

At the same time, Aleyd's brother, a ranking member of the Cult of the Blackened Earth in Mulmaster, slowly introduced her to the power available to her from the Cult of the Black Earth. Wholeheartedly devoted to revenge, she has succumbed to her brother's profane seductions, and, while not in name, has become a member of his cult. Through this cult, she harnesses new powers that she has begun using against those of political importance that might threaten her plans for revenge.

She first lashed out against a cell of fire cultists operating out of a firewood shop. Eventually, the acts of her and her Liberators would attract the attention of Ardet Peytir; a wealthy socialite vocally protested against the Liberators's increasing influence in the city. In response, Aleyd hit his home low and took him prisoner.

His abduction, however, attracted further attention from his cousin, Blade Cora Peytir. Demanding that the High Blade look into these recent occurrences, she soon found herself the target. Peytir Lumber, a significant source of revenue for the Peytir family was the latest in Aleyd's attacks. The mill was swallowed nearly in its entirety by a massive sinkhole.

Blade Peytir now has questions, though she may not like the answers.

OVERVIEW

The adventure is divided into an introduction and two subsequent parts.

Part 1. Introduction. The characters are invited to the Tower of Blades to meet with Blade Peytir, who offers a hefty sum for discovering the source of attacks upon her family's holdings. The meeting is interrupted by High Blade Drakehorn.

Part 2. Rubble and Revenge. Here, the characters investigate a number of locations and eventually learn that the unusual quakes that have damaged a number of House Peytir's holdings all appear to be interlinked with one another. And, what's worse, it seems that the Liberators may be involved in them.

Part 3. The Stonevault. In this part, the characters have established that Aleyd's Liberators have some role in the attacks on the Peytir holdings, and have followed clues to (or been provided the location of) their headquarters in a disused guard tower in the Zhent Ghettos. Within, they find a secret passage leading into an underground complex. There, they must face a number of hazards before confronting Aleyd herself who in turn reveals herself to have fallen in with the Cult of the Black Earth—willing to do whatever it takes to reclaim Phlan.

THE QUAKES

The earliest quakes began over a month ago and caused small items to tremble and fall from shelves but they were met with typical Mulmasterite stoicism. The strength of the earthquakes has increased over the course of the month, but their effects have been incredibly localized, often destroying little more than two or three adjacent buildings. Most of the city's residents remain unconcerned unless they have been directly impacted by the damage caused.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The most direct means to involve adventurers is a summons from Blade Cora Peytir. Such an event is significant and refusal to call upon a Blade when requested is a dangerous insult. The Blade may have heard of an adventurer's previous exploits and consider them a suitable fit for her task.

Alternately, members of the party might have friends or relatives who disappeared in one of the quakes and are not satisfied with the investigation performed by the Liberators. As they pursue their investigation, Cora Peytir likely learns of their efforts and is willing to bankroll their search.

Special Mission: Order of the Gauntlet. This adventure contains a special mission for the Order of the Gauntlet. If any of the characters are members of the Order of the Gauntlet and are rank 2 (Marchon) or higher, Cassyt (DDEX1-4 Dues for the Dead, DDEX1-10 Tyranny in Phlan) meets the characters shortly before descending into the Stonevault (see Part 3, below). She requests that she be allowed to accompany the characters in an attempt to confront Aleyd and talk her out of whatever trouble she seems to have gotten herself into.

Special Mission: Lords Alliance. This adventure contains a special mission for the Lord's Alliance. If any of the characters are members of the Lords Alliance and are rank 2 (Marchon) or higher, they find the remains of a battle at Fatell's Firewood. A member of the Soldiery is the sole remaining member of his patrol that ran afoot of a group of members of the Cult of the Eternal Flame. He has captured the leader, but needs to get him to a nearby Soldiery watchtower. He petitions the characters to either escort him and his captive or wait at the firewood depot for reinforcements to arrive.

Special Mission: Harpers. The adventure contains a special mission for the Harpers. If any of the characters are members of the Harpers and are rank 2 (Loremaster) or higher, they are approached by a member of the Harpers after their final meeting with Groshin Lor. This Harper agent reveals that he has been contacted by a member of the Cult of the Black Earth who wishes to leave the cult. This would normally be of little concern, save that this member claims to have valuable information regarding the cult's dealings in other parts of the Moonsea. The characters must find this potential defector and release him to the custody of the Harpers. This is complicated as the Harper has no physical description or clue as to who it might be other than the cultist's assurances that he will provide signs as to his identity. The characters must decide what sort of things to look for.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins after the party receives word that Blade Cora Peytir requests their presence within the Tower of Blades. After she explains that she wants to hire the adventurers to investigate the localized earthquakes, the High Blade interrupts the meeting with Cora with warnings for all involved.

THE TOWER OF BLADES

The Tower of Blades houses the Blades that rule over the city. The Blades and their families live within its walls under the watch of a large contingent of Soldiers and City Watch guards.

GENERAL FEATURES

The interior of the Tower of Blades has the following general features:

Terrain. The interior of the tower consists of 15-foot-wide straight hallways with high-vaulted ceilings. Tapestries and fine furnishings line the walls and floors.

Wards. Invisible wards have been set at regular intervals throughout the tower. Most of these simply alert nearby patrols of intruders, but others are much more nefarious.

Light. The tower is lit with large, glass windows, glowing glass spheres set in sconces of various design, and an occasional sputtering torch.

Smells and Sounds. Perfume and fine cooking. Hushed whispers and scolding shouts.

Guards. At any location in the Tower of Blades, groups of Soldiery guards is close at hand. Should the need arise, a patrol responds to an alarm within 2 rounds with another following every other round thereafter. The typical patrol is a seven **veterans** wielding halberds—dealing 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage—led by a **knight** and accompanied by a **mage**. These Soldiers fight with wicked savagery, but attempt to capture any offending persons alive, if possible. Those captured are taken to cells in the bowels of the Tower of the Blade and, more often than not, forgotten.

Read or paraphrase the following when the party answers the summons to the tower.

The Tower of Blades boasts multiple towers, imposing walls, and a sprawling collection of interconnected stone keeps--each easily a fortress in its own right. Your escorts, garbed in the unmistakable livery of the Soldiery, lead you through locked door after locked door as you proceed deeper into the complex. The large banners of Mulmaster suspended from the high ceilings become less frequent as the crests and colors of the individual blades begin to become more frequent. Nearby--on a forest green background--a black tree struck by a silver axe denotes the halls of the Peytir.

Ever representing privilege and wealth, the Tower of Blades oozes power. An invitation to the tower represents a noteworthy, and extremely uncommon event in the life of a Mulmasterite.

Movement through the Tower of Blades, especially when armed adventurers are involved, is a carefully coordinated affair. As they make their way to Cora Peytir's drawing room, each corridor and section they travel through is sealed off, a fact the guards go out of their way to make apparent to their charges. The characters are closely watched from the moment they enter until they are delivered to Peytir.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that most of the guards escorting the party wear some token that incorporates the one or more of the Blades's colors or seal in some way. A further DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines that a large number of the guards, servants and functionaries throughout the Tower wear such trinkets of similar design and color to that of House Peytir.

A HOST OF TROUBLES

Blade Cora Peytir awaits the adventurers in her drawing room. Once the characters arrive, the Blade wastes no time; she details her concerns, petitions their assistance with a sizable reward if they get to the bottom of the quakes and advance her agenda against Aleyd Bural.

Read:

Eventually, you are led to a room that more closely resembles a common tavern than a formal drawing room. A sharp-featured woman sits in an oversized couch and beckons you to sit in one of the many comfortable chairs.

"Drinks first. Then to business," she says flatly.

Blade Peytir's servant unquestioningly attend to the characters's needs while Blade Peytir presses exotic and expensive beverages and food upon them. Once she feels she has provided the courteous amount of attention, she raises a toast; "To the stability and growth of Mulmaster, and to those who hold its best interests at heart."

ROLEPLAYING BLADE CORA PEYTIR

Blade Peytir's family accumulated its sizable fortune through lumber. And although Cora's great-grandfather swung an axe in the forests outside the city, his progeny realized the profitability of hiring large numbers of lumberjacks and teamsters to provide building materials and firewood for large cities like Mulmaster. Over time, they expanded into running lumber yards and mills.

Cora reveres her grandmother, her namesake, who turned financial power into political power in Mulmaster. A combination of ruthlessness and compromise brought the Peytir name into the Tower of Blades and Cora uses those same tools to keep it there. Despite knowing that her hold of the power she possesses is tenuous at best, she enjoys her position of power and she revels in the attention she receives, be it admiration or jealousy. Cora easily sees through raw flattery, but can sometimes overlook the agenda of those who are exceedingly deferential to her status as a Blade. She begins all dealings with reasoned negotiations, but if pressed or insulted Cora does not shy away from threats of financial ruin or implied violence.

Once introductions and toasts have been made, Blade Peytir presents her offer to the party.

In a nutshell, she wishes the adventurers to investigate the source of a particularly strong earthquake that recently struck holdings of House Peytir—specifically a lumber yard inside of the city. She acknowledges mentions of recent cult activity in Mulmaster, but casually dismisses them.

Cora hold her empty glass to the side and her servant steps forward to silently receive it, she then folds her hands in her lap. "Mulmaster is under attack. More importantly, my family is under attack. Conventional efforts, accepted efforts, have proven ineffective at resolving this to my satisfaction. I need unconventional sorts to protect what is mine. And Mulmaster," she adds after a pause.

Peytir tells them about the earthquakes that specifically struck holdings of the Peytir family. Initial quakes only shook their homes and businesses, but recently a lumber yard and mill, the home of her cousin, and a depot of firewood were all three heavily damaged by severe quakes.

She admits that other quakes have struck the city, and that concerns her (although clearly not as much as the damage to the Peytirs), but these disasters have been rather localized and have roused her suspicions.

Peytir initially demanded that the Hawks investigate this, but later learned that Aleyd Burrel, an "up-start do-gooder from the shanty-town across the Moonsea" volunteered her personal agents to look into the matter. When a retinue of Aleyd's Liberators returned after only a day to say that the natural disasters appeared to be nothing more than bad luck and everyone was accounted for, the Blade opted to hire her own investigators.

The Blade offers a reward of 400 gp to the adventurers in exchange for the identities of those responsible for targeting the Peytir family. Once they have done so, they should return to her and she will advise them how to proceed and potentially offer them additional employment.

DEVELOPMENT

Blade Peytir answers whatever questions the characters present, and is able to provide the following information.

- The firewood depot within the city walls was almost entirely swallowed by a sinkhole about two weeks ago.
- Less than a week later, an earthquake leveled the home of Ardet Peytir, Cora's cousin; leaving neighboring buildings untouched.
- Three days ago an even larger earthquake did a great deal of damage to House Peytir's lumberyard. This earthquake struck almost immediately after Peytir demanded an investigation and decried the findings of Aleyd's Liberators.
- Peytir distrusts Aleyd Burrel and feels that Aleyd's efforts to recruit in Mulmaster will weaken the city and pull it into a costly fight. She also thinks that Aleyd has designs on power within Mulmaster that have yet to be revealed.
- Despite this, Blade Peytir does not suspect that Aleyd caused the attacks, but feels that her political rivals refuse to investigate them for personal reasons.
- She refuses to name any enemies among the Blades or offer any idea as to who might otherwise be behind the quakes. She wants the adventurers to find the truth on their own, unbiased by whatever personal grudges that she might have.
- Above all else, Blade Peytir demands discretion. No one should learn of her house's recent troubles lest it be brought down to bear upon her.

SERVING TWO MASTERS

Once Blade Peytir has finished speaking, the High Blade makes a personal appearance. The High Blade arrives with a contingent of bodyguards; even within the Tower of Blades, she demonstrates her distrust in others and the power her position provides.

As the tone of the conversation eases, brisk footsteps and the rattle of armor can be heard on the other side of the door. A heartbeat later, the door swings in and a somewhat short, sharp-featured man strides into the room. He wears fine clothing of black, grays, and reds trimmed with white fur over a red-enameled breastplate. His escorts, a full dozen in number, fan out around the room and stand in silence.

His piercing blue eyes dart quickly around the room, passing over each of you momentarily before stopping on Blade Peytir who immediately stands and issues a curt bow.

Groshin Lor adjusts the fit of his jacket and smoothes out an errant pleat before saying "Thank you, Blade Cora. Now, what was it we were discussing?"

Ever mindful, Rending Talon Groshin Lor has been kept abreast of Cora Peytir's demands for an investigation into the earthquakes. The High Blade suspects that Peytir has somehow made a powerful rival or, more accurately, that one of her rivals has somehow gained considerable power. As such, Lor has been sent to learn more.

ROLEPLAYING RENDING TALON GROSHIN LOR

Thayan torturers maimed Groshin Lor in his youth, making him a living tapestry of scars. Two fingers of his right hand are missing, and he walks with the aid of a cane. The charming spymaster typically masks his injuries behind veils of illusion, but on this occasion he leaves them visible to intimidate others.'

Lor has been featured in DDEX2-4 *Mayhem in the Earthspur Mines* and DDEP2 *Mulmaster Undone*. If any of the characters present participated in the events of those adventures, and encountered the leader of the Hawks, he recalls them and greets them by name. Otherwise, he addresses only Blade Peytir.

DEVELOPMENT

Groshin Lor is well aware that Peytir has been seeking adventurers to pick up where the Aleyd left off, but wants to see if the Blade is willing to lie to him. While Peytir holds a position higher than Lor, she rightfully fears the leader of the Hawks. Ever the servant of the High Blade, Peytir assures Groshin Lor that she hides nothing and looks pleadingly to the characters—declaring with a gesture, "They can confirm this, Rending Talon."

Lor allows them time to explain their mission, but answers no questions in return. If any of the adventurers have made a reputation in Mulmaster, for better or worse, he references at least one incident from their exploits with a knowing nod as he addresses them.

If Aleyd Burrel's name comes up, however, any character with a passive Insight score of 15 or higher notes the slightest hint of curiosity cross Lor's scarred face. He offers only the following information:

- The High Blade knows that Aleyd's loyalties lie with her cause to free Phlan but also suspects that she would violate her promises and deals with Mulmaster without a second thought if it furthered her cause.
- Despite this, she does not, however, believe she is involved with the recent earthquakes.

Groshin Lor's initial interactions with the adventurers should be kept to a minimum before she announces her expectations.

"I'm pleased with your initiative, Blade Peytir;" Groshin smiles widely, "It is a comfort to me that the Blades care for our fair city as much as I do.

The leader of the Hawks turns his direction towards you.

"I will be especially pleased when you return to me your findings. I am sure you won't disappoint me."

Rending Talon Lor turns on his heel to depart and without looking back adds, "Blade Peytir, please have the adventurers delivered to me when they return."

Once Lor departs, the Blade quickly recovers her composure. She makes it adamantly clear that to work against the Hawks is to work against the High Blade, and that the adventurers should do as bid. Peytir does point out that, however, unless circumstances change, her future offer of future employment problem remains on the table.

She encourages them to begin their investigation immediately and has her escorts show the party out of the Tower of Blades. Proceed to Part 2, below.

PART 2: RUBBLE AND REVENGE

This part of the adventure details the various locations that the characters might investigate in pursuit of the truth. Although the sites are listed in the order in which the quakes occurred, the adventurers can visit these locations in any order they choose.

Once they have determined that the quakes and disappearances seem to be linked and that the Liberators, Wylan Burrel, and even Aleyd Burrel could be involved as well, proceed to Part 3, below.

THE LIBERATORS WANT YOU!

At some point, one or more characters may find themselves sympathetic to the Liberator's cause, and wish to join their ranks. This is especially true if the characters visit the Hammer-Felled-Tree sooner rather than later.

Should this happen and should the new recruit proclaim this new-found allegiance in later encounters with non-Liberators, the difficulty of these later encounters should increase. The Liberators are not well-regarded among the common citizens of Mulmaster, and it should show.

1. FATELL'S FIREWOOD

Two weeks ago; shortly after the events of DDEP2 Mulmaster Undone, Fatell's Firewood—a major buyer of Peytir wood and supplier of firewood to a large portion of the city—disappeared into a sinkhole amid the grinding and shaking of the ground several weeks ago.

This adventure contains a special mission for Lord's Alliance characters. Proceed to the Special Mission under this heading, below.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area surrounding Fatell's Firewood has the following general features:

Light. The area is well lit during the day and dimly lit at night.

Pit. The sides of the crater are gently-sloped but strewn with loose wood and stone. Any creature that uses the dash action in the crater must succeed at a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check at the end of the movement or fall prone.

Smells. Burning wood. City smells. Unbeknownst to all but those within the Cult of the Black Earth, Aleyd Burrel destroyed the depot to extinguish a particularly troublesome cell of the Cult of the Eternal Flame that operated out of the basement. Signs of cult activity and elemental evil still remain in the rubble.

A wooden placard that probably once hung above a door sits propped against a heap of rubble at the edge of a gently-sloped crater. Beneath the word "Fatell's" a blazing bonfire is depicted in fading paint.

A man in robes stands overseeing a number of heavily armored men-at-arms with slung weapons, picking their way through the ruins—passing armfuls of wood and stone out of pit.

As you approach, the robed figure issues a quick order to the men in the pit and turns to face you. "Please pardon me if I don't shake your hand," he says, revealing heavily bandaged hands and a face ravaged by burn scars.

Fatell, a **flamewrath**, along with two **eternal flame guardians** and a **razerblast** are all that remains of the cult cell that operated out of the ruined establishment. When the characters arrive, the flamewrath wears the garb of a Cloak while the eternal flame guardians are disguised as members of the Soldiery. The cultists here are excavating the ruined building in search of items that would betray their presence when the characters arrive.

If the characters interact with Fatell, he introduces himself as a member of the Cloaks and informs the characters that he was sent to the ruins by his superiors to investigate rumors of involvement of the Cult of the Eternal Flame. Once here, he and his colleagues ferreted out the cultists and destroyed them. Unfortunately, he was horribly scarred in the process—something even magical healing was unable to completely relieve. He is not concluding his investigations and was preparing to depart when the characters arrived. Just about all of this, of course, is a lie. However, all of the disguised cultists bear burns that could very well have been caused the events in their story. The only nugget of truth the story contains is Fatell's status as a Cloak.

If asked about Aleyd's role in the destruction of the firewood merchant's shop, he initially dismisses such notions, but eventually acquiesces and accepts it as a possibility—though they can't think of how they'd prove it.

ROLEPLAYING FATELL

Fatell is genuinely a lumber merchant. The establishment has been in his family for decades. But he is also a member of the Cult of the Eternal Flame. Unfortunately, his participation in the latter has cost him his birthright. Naturally, he's a bit upset.

Despite being rather temperamental, he's very cunning and gifted with a silver tongue (Charisma (Deception) modifier of +6). He is genuinely also a member of the Cloaks, and is knowledgeable about the inner workings of Mulmaster's political structure.

The shop was located in a relatively busy part of Mulmaster, and the characters may ask nearby residents or owners of nearby homes and businesses. While they offer little insight into the quake, they refer to the "Cloak" as Fatell, and if asked, laugh at his claims of being one.

If the characters detect Fatell's deception or if he otherwise begins to suspect that the tables are turning on him, he casts fireball centered wherever he can target the largest number of characters—even if this means centering it on himself (which does not harm him due to his immunity to fire). At this, the guardians attack, and the razerblast bursts into flame.

The sides of the crater are gently-sloped but strewn with loose wood and stone. Any creature that uses the dash action in the crater must succeed at a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check at the end of its movement or fall prone.

While Fatell was not expecting company so soon, he has already cast mage armor.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove the razerblast
- **Weak party:** Replace razerblast with a veteran
- **Strong party:** Add 1 veteran
- **Very strong party:** Add 1 razerblast

INVESTIGATING THE RUINS

The crater is 50 feet in diameter and the entire area within is considered difficult terrain. If viewed from the upper edge, the only unusual feature of the crater is that appeared to be centered on Fatell's Firewood. This could mean little more than bad luck for Fatell, or good luck for his neighbors depending on one's point of view. To locate any real clues, the party needs to search inside the sinkhole.

Once the majority of the depot has been cleared away, the characters can begin actively investigating the ruins. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the house collapsed as its foundation was undermined. Dwarves and characters proficient with masonry tools make this check with advantage. If the characters have investigated Fatell's Firewood or Peytir Timber already (Encounter 1 or 2, above), they automatically succeed at this check. Just as before, a character investigating the rubble easily realizes that a sinkhole did, in fact open up beneath the building. It appears to have been caused by the passage of a large, burrowing creature. There are no intact tunnels here, however.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check by anyone studying the crumbled stonework of the building notices a layer of soot and ash covering what was once the walls and floors of the building's basement. This soot built up during the Cult of the Eternal Flame's fiery rituals. If the characters haven't revealed his deception yet, this serves as proof of the fire cult's presence.

Further searching in and around the soot-coated rocks turns up several crushed and broken incense burners, braziers. A character succeeding at a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check also locates a small iron statue depicting a fiery creature. A character that succeeds at a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the statue as an icon of Imix, the Prince of Evil Elemental Fire. The statue has two eyes made of black diamonds that can be easily prized out.

DEVELOPMENT

If any of the cultists are spared, they do not say much. If asked about the Aleyd or the Liberators, or if any of the characters have joined the Liberators and openly wear their brassard, the cultist(s) laughs (or points at obvious members) and issues a string of cryptic and foreboding, mocking statements, such as:

- "Ha! You think you are safe. The ground beneath you betrays you!"
- "You put too much faith in those you deem worth of it."
- "Fools—the lot of you. Fire or earth, it makes no difference. In the end, both consume!"

TREASURE

Fatell and the other cultists carry a total of 150 sp between them. If the characters located the statue of Imix, its eyes are a pair of flawless black diamonds, each worth 100 gp.

SPECIAL MISSION: LORDS ALLIANCE

If any of the characters are members of the Lords Alliance, this encounter is run a bit differently. As the characters arrive, read:

A wooden placard that probably once hung above a door sits propped against a heap of rubble at the edge of a gently-sloped crater. Beneath the word "Fatell's" a blazing bonfire is depicted in fading paint.

It appears you have walked in at the conclusion of a fairly pitched battle, however. A half dozen armored humans lay scattered about the area--surrounded by three, 3-foot-wide craters sprayed with blood, scraps of armor, and shards of bone.

On the far side of the ruined building, two figures wrestle with one another. One of them wears the heavy armor of a member of the Soldiery and drives a steel-plated forearm into the neck of the other--a man covered with burns wearing the charred remnants of the uniform of a Cloak.

As the characters arrive, Lieutenant Grady Moll has just subdued **Fatell**; a firewood broker who he just discovered was actually a member of the Cult of the Eternal Flame. Both Moll and Fatell are heavily wounded. Upon noticing the characters, specifically any that are openly members of the Lords Alliance, calls out for their aid. He informs them about what has happened and gives the characters a few minutes to investigate the ruins of the firewood depot, but not much longer because Moll is concerned that word of the fight will reach cult ears.

Once the characters are satisfied with their investigations, Lieutenant Moll informs them that he needs to get Fatell to a nearby Soldiery Watchtower before other cultists arrive. More importantly he needs to deliver him alive. To that end, he asks the characters to either wait for reinforcements to arrive, or to get him to the watchtower.

If awoken, Fatell doesn't say much. If asked about Aleyd or the Liberators, or if any of the characters have joined the Liberators and openly wear their brassard, the cultist laughs and issues a string of cryptic and foreboding, mocking statements, such as:

- "Ha! You think you are safe. The ground beneath you betrays you!"
- "You put too much faith in those you deem worth of it."
- "Fools--the lot of you. Fire or earth, it makes no difference. In the end, both consume!"

Regardless of whether or not the characters choose to wait for backup, or leave straight away for the watchtower, they are beset upon by members of the Cult of the Eternal Flame, set on freeing their captured comrade.

Waiting For Backup. A few minutes after they hunker down, two **razerblasts** and two **eternal flame priests** arrive from nearby alleys and attack the characters. It takes 12 rounds for the Soldiery reinforcements to arrive. At the end of every third round, two **eternal flame guardians** arrive and join the attempt to rescue Fatell. At the end of the twelfth round, a squad of Soldiers and City Watch guards arrives and helps the characters finish off the remaining guards.

Heading to the Watchtower. A few minutes after leaving, they are beset upon by two razerblasts and two eternal flame priests from nearby alleys. If the characters indicate ahead of time that they intend to get to the watchtower using stealth, they do so on a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) group check.

If the characters successfully guard Fatell until reinforcements arrive or if they successfully escort him to the Soldiery watchtower, the group is successful in completing the Lords Alliance special mission. They are thanked for their efforts. If they ask for a reward, Lieutenant Moll grudgingly hands over a pair of black diamonds worth a total of 200 gp.

If the characters have the brassard that they removed from the cultist's body found at Peytir Timber, Lieutenant Moll acknowledges that it is a brassard worn by a Liberator.

TREASURE

The razerblasts and eternal flame priests carry a total of 150 sp between them. If they asked for a reward, Lieutenant Moll gives the characters a pair of black diamonds worth a total of 200 gp.

XP AWARD

If the characters are members of the Lords Alliance and successfully complete their special mission, award each player 100 XP.

2. ARDET PEYTIR'S MANOR

Just over a week ago, a quake struck in the early morning hours and shook the manor to the ground. This encounter is intended to demonstrate that the Liberators are not all that they appear to be.

Ardet Peytir dangled from a branch of the Peytir family tree that most of the family wished would simply fall away. His father's last surviving son, his share of the family fortunes left him with plenty of money and few responsibilities. It is his manor that collapsed. In the chaos that followed he was captured by the Cult of the Black Earth and is currently being held prisoner in the Stonevault (see Part 3, below).

While the Peytir family has begun reconstruction of the manor, a few relatives and a number of the house's servants search the ruins for his body. Most expect him to be dead and few would shed a tear over the fact.

Mules drag debris from what must have been a small, but ornate manor from a mound of fallen walls and folded gables. The sounds of the excavation are accompanied by workers salvaging what they can for a rebuilding effort that has already begun at one corner of a recently reinforced stone foundation.

Servants in the colors of the Peytir household scurry among the workers pluck household items from the debris and place them in trunks nearby.

A woman in nicer garb--but practical for the purpose of scrambling amid the ruins--calls half-heartedly into the gaps of the destroyed building. "Ardet? Ardet?"

As the characters arrive, servitors of House Peytir work to clear the ruined home while Fedosia searches the ruins for signs of Ardet.

ROLEPLAYING FEDOSIA PEYTIR

Fedosia is a young woman who recognizes the powerful place her family holds in Mulmaster and recognizes that her own fortunes rise and fall with the Peytir name. She looks up to Cora Peytir, but she is more interested in growing the family's business interests rather than its political status.

If Ardet is pronounced dead, Fedosia inherits the land and soon to be rebuilt manor of her older cousin. She and her husband, the son of a wealthy shipwright will move in following their wedding and cement an advantageous business alliance for the Peytir family.

If approached by the characters, she stops her search to speak to the adventurers and answer their questions, provided they appear to have her House's interests in mind. She can provide the following information:

- Ardet drinks away his share of the family's wealth, usually at the Hammer-Fell Tree--an outdoor ale garden near the family's lumber mill in Mulmaster.
- He makes a show of inserting himself into politics; his most recent cause--opposing the Liberators; whom he saw as "leeching Mulmaster's strength".
- Ardet spoke out against Aleyd Bural's involvement in Mulmaster's affairs--claiming her efforts drained the city's coffers and could potentially invoke the wrath of the Maimed Virulence, Vorgansharax.
- She mentions the group's name with a scoff--Mulmaster's Preservation Society.
- His protestations went largely unpunished due to his fervent patriotism.
- A week and a half ago, Ardet heckled Aleyd Bural from the crowd outside the Hammer-felled Tree during a speech she gave to encourage the people of Mulmaster to join her in retaking Phlan.
- Ardet was confronted by a pair of Liberators after the event and there was a fight. The Liberators swore to Ardet that he would be sorry what he did.

A character succeeding at a DC 15 Intelligence (History) realizes that Fedosia is among those set to inherit if Ardet is in fact dead--a fact that she freely, and unabashedly, admits. If the characters suggest that she had any part in the events though, she becomes highly offended, refuses to partake in any further discussion with the characters, and asks them to leave her family's property. Should the party refuse, she sends a runner to retrieve a Soldierly patrol of seven **veterans** led by a **knight**, and accompanied by a **mage** who escort the characters from the area.

INVESTIGATING THE RUINS

Anyone investigating the wreckage of the manor may do so if they wish—something that the house servitors genuinely appreciate. It takes a few hours to dig through the rubble, but requires no check.

Once the majority of the home has been cleared away, the characters can begin actively investigating the ruins. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the house collapsed as its foundation was undermined. Dwarves and characters proficient with masonry tools make this check with advantage. If the characters have investigated Fatell's Firewood or Peytir Timber already (Encounter 1 or 2, above), they automatically succeed at this check. Just as before, a character investigating the rubble easily realizes that a sinkhole did, in fact open up beneath the building. It appears to have been caused by the passage of a large, burrowing creature. There are no intact tunnels here, however.

A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check made by someone searching through the items salvaged by the Peytirs's servitors finds Ardet's mostly ruined journal:

- Ink saturates a small clothbound book and shards of a broken inkwell remain impaled in the pages. A shaky hand has penned countless rants and lists of absurdly insignificant social slights.
- The final page, mostly obscured by ink, leaves a small passage legible: "...Burrall and those Liberator thugs cannot silence real Mulmasterites. Like the dirty Zhents, these interlopers only invite ruin into our city with their foreign cults and desires to involve us in their personal agendas and..."

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters find Ardet's journal and show it to Fedosia, she sighs and attempts to assure the characters that Ardet's opinions were his own.

If the characters have the brassard that they removed from the cultist's body found at Peytir Timber, she acknowledges their suspicions that it is a brassard worn by a Liberator.

3. PEYTIR TIMBER

The most recent quake struck the largest blow to the Peytir holdings in Mulmaster. Less than a week ago, a massive sinkhole swallowed the majority of Peytir Timber, a lumber yard that was the source of most of the Peytir family's incomes in Mulmaster. The quake struck at night, but most of the workers have disappeared. Coincidentally, the quake occurred shortly after Blade Peytir voiced her criticisms of the Liberator's "investigations" in the previous incidents.

Peytir Timber sits across the street to the Hammer-felled Tree, a pub-turned-recruitment center for Aleyd's Liberators.

A gaping hole, nearly fifty strides across, swallows long stretches of a wooden fence that must have once surrounded this plot of ground.

A muscular half-elf in workers' clothes walks the ground with a measuring stick and dictates to a teenage girl that hurries behind him—trying not to stumble over the broken ground.

Boisterous laughter carries across the street from an open-air pub where a number of black-armored soldiers sit with feet on table enjoying drink and food. As his rounds take him nearer to the pub, the half-elf with the measuring stick jabs it at them like a spear and shouts, "Thanks for nothing!"

While the half-elf grits his teeth, the armored men and women offer mocking salutes as they continue in their cups.

Edik Brey makes no secret of his distrust of the Liberators and he willingly assists the adventurers if they say they are there on behalf of Blade Peytir. He is able to provide the following information. Provided they treat him with respect, or if the party makes it clear that his answers could lead to finding the missing workers, Edik answers their questions:

- He was not here when the building was destroyed; he returned to work in the morning and found it as such.
- None of his employees returned to work the following morning.
- He is the first to arrive and the last to leave. He has no reason to believe that any of his employees were in the building when it was destroyed.
- The families of all of the missing workers all confirmed that their loved ones did not return home from work the following evening.
- Edik feels guilt for his employees's disappearance and has been paying his workers's families their normal wage—something that is beginning to get quite expensive.

- If asked where he was the night of the quake, Edik becomes evasive. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals he is lying. An appeal to his loyalty to his staff or a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check causes him to confess that he met someone at a local bar the night in question and he did not return home to his spouse. He refuses to expand on this more; assuring the characters only that she had nothing to do with what happened.
- In fact, as sorry as he is for his transgressions, however, he credits his not being home with saving him from being abducted the night of the quake by Aleyd's agents like the rest of the lumber yard's employees.
- He views the Liberators are being worse than the Mulmaster City Watch. When Aleyd Burrel began seeking support, she and her ruffians took over the Hammer-Felled Tree—turning it into a recruitment office. They would regularly try to enlist his workers and, if refused, would demand "shows of support" in the form of strong-armed "donations."
- He's met both Aleyd and Wylan Burrel at the Hammer-Felled Tree and has a keen distrust for the man and those he and his sister have recruited.
- He knew Ardet Peytir and believes that he was killed in the collapse of his home. The foreman found the man's demeanor a refreshing change from the way most nobles carry themselves and often drank with him at the Hammer-felled Tree until the Liberators drove them off.
- He liked Ardet even more after seeing the man argue with Wylan Burrel over the Aleyd's recruitment efforts. Despite their silly name, Edik supported the Mulmaster Preservation Society.

The girl accompanying Edik is an assistant and knows nothing. She arrives at and leaves work with Edik; which likely spared her being taken.

In addition to Edik, a number of other people are here; all family members of the missing workers. They believe that Edik is a good employer, and have been working hard to find the truth of whether or not their loved ones are in fact buried beneath tons of rubble. If asked, they inform the characters that none of their loved ones returned home from work the evening before the accident.

ROLEPLAYING EDIK BREY

An energetic and outspoken young man, Edik Brey is a natural leader who is fiercely loyal to the Peytir family. He cares deeply about his job and the men and women who work for him. Their disappearance has turned his need for action into something more manic and he anxiously wants something, anything, done about it.

INVESTIGATING THE RUINS

The sheer amount of debris in the sinkhole makes investigating the cause of its collapse nigh impossible. cursory investigation, however, uncovers much of what was found at the other two sites, but on a much larger scale. There is no sign of any of the missing workers.

Treasure. If the characters spend more than an hour digging or sifting through the rubble, they find the body of what is no doubt a Black Earth cultist, judging by his garb, crushed beneath what was no doubt tons of earth and debris. Though his body is in rough shape, the characters notice that his teeth have all been replaced by semi-precious stones. If collected, the stones are worth a total of 10 gp—provided the characters clean the blood and dirt off of them. In addition, any character succeeding at a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a secret pocket containing a three-foot length of black cloth. Any characters that have encountered Wylan, Aleyd, or any other member of the Liberators immediately identifies this as one of the brassards that the militia group wears.

If presented to Edik, he acknowledges that the man was not an employee. If shown the brassard, he scowls and says "I knew it!" If not mollified, he grabs an axe and rushes over to the Hammer-Felled-Tree.

4. THE HAMMER-FELLED TREE

Originally, this pub catered to the working class folk from the lumber yard next door and the surrounding businesses until Aleyd Burrel established the Liberators. The group then took over the establishment and drove off those who did not support their cause. The owner, Tareen Kafour, supports their efforts and deals poorly with anyone not sympathetic to their cause.

As you enter the fenced-in ale garden, a woman armed with a thin smile greets you with an undercurrent of menace as she weaves in and around the tables. "We only serve those who support a liberated Phlan."

All around her, men and women in the colors of the Liberators--the colors of Phlan--lounge in the close space tending their weapons and armor. Maps of Phlan and platters of food cover the tables as the customers carry on dozens of different conversations.

A man at a table in the center of the garden stands, wearing robes of blue embroidered in gold and silver, and wearing a holy symbol emblazoned with a large, golden coin.

"Greetings friends," the man says with a wide smile, "I assume you are here to discuss the salvation of Phlan?"

Tareen Kafour, the barkeep, is a refugee from Phlan and fully supports the Aleyd's efforts and sympathetic to Wylan Burrel and the Liberators, though she is completely unaware of their ties to the Cult of the Blackened Earth.

When the characters arrive, **Wylan Burrel** is here along with three **black earth guards**, planning their next "recruitment drive" when the adventurers arrive. Unbeknownst to the characters, a **bulette** and its **burrowshark** rider are nearby and if Wylan is attacked, enter combat three rounds later.

WYLAN BURRAL

Wylan Burrel approaches the characters as they arrive, and attempts to recruit them into the Liberators--stating they'd be an invaluable asset to the cause, and tries to subtly determine what the party's strengths are. He mentions Aleyd Burrel and reveals that she is his sister.

JOINING THE CAUSE!

Wylan is a charming man, and doesn't like taking "No" for an answer. It seems that he punctuates every sentence with an invitation to join the Liberators.

If the characters join, he smiles widely and motions for someone who almost immediately presses a drink into the new inductee's hand. He also whips out a length of black cloth and makes a motion to tie it around the characters' right arm.

If asked about the Liberator's role in the quakes, Wylan denies any part in the earthquakes and dismissing such claims preposterous. However, he openly admits to supporting the Liberators and his sister Aleyd because he wishes to see a freed Phlan. This is not true.

He admits that he had "political differences" with Ardet, but wished the man no harm. Again, this is a lie.

Should Wylan fear the party is closing in on the cult, he attempts to use his sister's name and the threat of her political clout to dissuade the party from further investigation. If they press him further, he tells the characters to run along back to "the Blade", but does not refer to Cora Peytir by name. If all else fails, he attempts to simply get up and leave.

If the characters allow him to go, he heads directly to the Stonevault (see Part 3, below). He moves at a normal speed to avoid arousing suspicion, so he is relatively easy to trail, provided that the characters are able to keep an eye on him.

ROLEPLAYING WYLAN BURRAL

Wylan is jovial and friendly, and enjoys the finer things in life. He is quick to offer a drink, a joke, or (more commonly) both. He hides a secret, though. He is also a ranking member of the Cult of the Black Earth. In that capacity, his cheery disposition melts away and is replaced with determined malice. His passion remains, though, and the combination is truly terrifying.

Wylan wears a holy symbol of Tymora and encourages bold action as one would expect of a cleric of Tymora. In particular, he encourages this bold action in favor of his sister's cause while also trying to sway individuals towards efforts to assist the Cult of the Blackened Earth.

He is currently concerned that if Cora Peytir continues her efforts she may uncover his efforts in Mulmaster and his role in Aleyd's efforts to muster an army.

IS IT A FIGHT YOU WANT?

If the party threatens Wylan or any of the Liberators with violence, or if they accuse Wylan of cult ties, both he and the Liberators attack. Wylan focuses his attacks on divine spellcasters, if any are present.

At the end of the third round, the bulette and burrowshark erupt from the ground and enter initiative normally. A tunnel remains in the 10-foot-by-10-foot area that the bulette emerges from. This tunnel winds for miles before ending up in the Stonevault (see Part 4, below).

If the fight seems to be going against Wylan, he fights until reduced to 20 hit points before he attempts to flee. Wylan is quite fast, and it won't take him long to outstrip the characters in the narrow, winding streets of Mulmaster.

Any characters reduced to 0 hit points by the cultists are instead knocked unconscious and taken to the Stonevault.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove burrowshark
- **Weak party:** Remove 2 black earth guards
- **Strong party:** Replace black earth guards with veterans
- **Very strong party:** Add 1 stonemelder

TREASURE

The black earth guards carry a total of 150 gp between them. Wylan carries a purse containing 50 gp and an elemental gem (yellow diamond).

NOT ENOUGH CLUES

If the party has missed clues that would have cast suspicion on Wylan and Aleyd Burrel, seed those same clues at the sites of other quakes that occurred. In each case, the sinkhole seems to have formed unnaturally beneath the destroyed building and people have gone missing, presumed lost in the rubble, but no bodies are located. Furthermore, the missing victims were outspoken opponents to involvement in the liberation of Phlan.

If all else fails, Cora Peytir summons the party back to the Tower of Blades after learning from other agents the Aleyd has been taking captives to a disused underground prison in Mulmaster. Adjust the events in Part 3 accordingly. Cora may also choose to withhold half of the party's reward because of their failure.

REPORTING IN

Once their investigations are complete, the party may return to the Tower of the Blades as instructed. If they already learned about the Stonevault (either by following the tunnel left by the bulette or by trailing Wylan as he left the Hammer-Felled Tree), proceed to Part 2, below.

Otherwise, the characters are once again escorted into the Tower of Blades, with even more security precautions than their first visit. Instead of the Soldiery that clearly serves Blade Peytir, their escorts are high-ranking Hawks.

You enter the sitting room of Blade Peytir as she personally carries a drink to Rending Talon Lor who sits in a high-backed, wooden chair. Lor dismisses your escorts with a casual wave of his hand, and asks, "What news of the cause of these earthquakes? Have you located the cause?"

Cora Peytir lingers at the edge of the room, eager for answers but unwilling to speak before Groshin Lor is already satisfied with your answers.

Lor and Peytir listen intently to what the party tells them, and Lor questions anything in their report that he believes might be falsehood or half-truths. Assuming the characters tell him what they've learned, he is convinced that the Liberators are behind the attacks and demand that the characters find Aleyd, petition to her sense of honor and bring her in for further questioning.

Groshin Lor informs the characters that Aleyd was granted use of a disused guard tower in the Zhent Ghettos by the High Blade and suggests that they begin their search for the "Risen Hero" (a term he uses with a touch of contempt in his voice) there.

Rather than directly involve himself and send his own troops, Lor decides to send the adventurers. This way he can preserve the tenuous trust with Aleyd if the party's hunch is wrong. He would obviously prefer that Aleyd be brought in alive. After this decree, he departs without further word.

Peytir pays the characters their agreed-upon reward for their work so far, and asks that the characters personally stop Aleyd Burrel. She proceeds to mention that Groshin Lor has offered a similar (another 400 gp) from the city's coffers to retrieve her, if possible and secure whatever it is that she has hidden in the dark beneath the city.

This is an appropriate time for a short or long rest.

TREASURE

Regardless of whether or not they attribute them to the Liberators or not, the characters receive a purse containing 400 gp.

SPECIAL MISSION: HARPERS

Moments after Rending Talon Lor leaves Blade Peytir's chambers, Olisara Nightsong—the leader of the Harpers in the Moonsea region—arrives. Peytir bids her enter and she reveals the purpose behind his unannounced visit.

Olisara has received word from a disavowed member of the Cult of the Black Earth in service to the Black Knight (the cultist didn't identify who the Black Knight actually was). This normally would not concern the Harpers, but the cultist mentions knowledge of the cult's activities in other regions of the Moonsea. This concerns the Harpers.

Olisara would like any Harper members amongst the adventurers to keep a careful eye open for any overt—and likely very, very subtle—signals revealing this defector's identity. Once identified, he should be spared and released to leave the Stonevault where a group of Harpers will be waiting to take him into their protective custody.

Olisara is not sure what the cultist's signals might be. They could be sly winks, pulled punches or even a piece of garb that might be out of place. The characters should use their skills to figure out who the traitor is and bring the defector to the Harpers. They should find out quickly, though; if he is hurt too extensively, he may rescind his offer. Additionally, if the other cultists learn of his betrayal, they may turn on him and slay him before he is able to help us.

PART 3: THE STONEVAULT

The guard post to which Groshin Lor directs the party is empty and left unsecured when the party arrives. Lor has ordered the local City Watch patrols to stand down, and the party accesses the building without issue.

The entrance to the Stonevault is concealed by a sliding weapon rack that can be revealed by a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigate) check. Behind it, a short, finished corridor leads to a split in the stonework with metal rungs secured into the natural stone that descend over a hundred feet into the cavern below.

SPECIAL MISSION: ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET

Shortly before entering the guard post, the characters are approached by someone who they may recognize—Cassyt. For those characters that participated in the events of DDEX1-4 Dues for the Dead or DDEX1-10 Tyranny in Phlan, she is easily recognizable, but it seems the events that led to her arrival in Mulmaster have left her a bit colder and jaded. Her sunny disposition is still there, but is overcast with clouds.

ROLEPLAYING CASSYT

Cassyt is a young Kelemvorite who has spent more time in her books than in the catacombs of the graveyard. Her once sunny disposition and incessant chattering has been replaced with grim determination. Her dry, albeit slightly warped, sense of humor is as prevalent as always, though.

Cassyt informs the characters that she was informed of the characters's goals by Rending Talon Lor and thinks she may be able to talk some sense into Aleyd. She asks that the characters to allow her to accompany them into the Stonevault and confront her friend. She is happy if the characters agree, but disappointed if they do not. If they do not agree, she waits for them to enter before following.

GENERAL FEATURES

The Stonevault, a series of natural caverns augmented with several finished areas, held political enemies of the Hawks that were too valuable to simply put to death.

When Aleyd requested a base of operations in exchange for dealing with "loose ends" that called for deniability on the part of the High Blade, she was granted use of this place—not aware that its subterranean nature was perfect for what she would require.

Ceilings. Unless otherwise mentioned, the high vaulted caverns and passages rise to twenty feet above the floor. In some areas they reach even higher as noted.

Light. Unless otherwise noted, most areas are lit by torches or lanterns set into the walls with iron mounts. The Liberators regularly check to make sure these remain lit.

Sound. A constant, low rumble pervades the caverns. This sound grows louder closer to the Black Heart of Vengeance.

1. ENTRY AND LADDER

The iron rungs set in the wall from the tower above lead down to this chamber. The cultists rely on the guards that are normally stationed above to ward off intruders.

The cold metal rungs end in a natural cave illuminated by torches set in aging wall sconces. A barely perceptible trembling can be felt throughout the stones beneath your feet. The cave continues east and disappears into darkness.

A narrow opening to the south leads into another, smaller lit chamber and an overpowering odor of rotten meat from that direction competes with the smoking torches.

There is little of note here but a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines that there has been traffic to both the south and the east.

2. STOREROOM

Originally used as a guard post, the cultists now store supplies here, including the rancid meat they use to feed the piercers in Area 3 so they can safely pass through the area.

Several barrels against the chamber's walls are filled with unused torches. A ramshackle table is littered with bits of flint and steel, a pair of rusting meat cleavers, carved wooden whistles, and other odds and ends.

Several open crates are surrounded by a cloud of flies and the stench of rot.

The crates contain cheap, castoff meat from butcher shops that the cultists regularly buy to keep the piercers in Area 3 fed.

The whistles emit an extremely high-pitched tone and are used to calm the shriekers in the same area. While loud, the sound doesn't carry nearly as far. If used, only the gargoyles in Area 4 can hear it.

3. PIERCER HALL

The cultists harvested piercers and shriekers from other subterranean locations and transplanted them here as a natural warning system and trap.

Ceiling. The ceiling is 40 feet high in this area. A number of stalactites hang from the ceiling here.

Terrain. The ground is covered in a thick growth of fungus. Any creature using the dash action must succeed at a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check at the end of the movement or slip on the fungi and fall prone. Additionally, the middle of the room is in a 10-foot-deep depression with a steep ledge at either exit. The stone is rough and relatively easy to climb, requiring only a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Light. If the torches in Area 1 are lit, the room is lit to the edge of the western-most ledge. Otherwise, the light that the characters brought with them is the only light present.

The passageway widens into a small, vaguely oval space with dozens upon dozens of stalactites hanging from the vaulted ceiling.

Below, the floor is speckled with a number of strange fungi, some pale white and others shimmering with vivid colors.

The air here is stagnant and fetid; it smells faintly of rot.

Six **piercers** (P) cling to the roof of this area. Additionally, three **shriekers** (S) have grown among the other fungi in the room.

The piercers attack the first person that passes beneath them—moving if necessary. Due to their height, they deal 14 (4d6) piercing damage. Only characters that specifically mention that they are watching the ceiling are entitled to the Wisdom (Perception) check necessary to notice a hiding piercer.

A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies the shriekers among the other, more typical, fungi.

The noise of the shriekers is audible to the occupants of Area 4 and Area 5. Those creatures prepare for intruders as discussed in the appropriate section.

Beyond the southern ledge, the corridor splits and heads east toward Area 4 and south up a narrow passage of steep natural steps toward Area 5.

TREASURE

A cultist killed by one of the piercers dropped two potions of greater healing when she was killed and the item was overlooked by those who reclaimed her body. A character searching the area near the corpse that also makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers the vial hidden in a nearby patch of fungus.

OF MEAT AND MUSIC

Before entering the area, the cultists use the wooden whistles. If sounded, the whistle's tunes carry to Area 4, but calm the shriekers for 1 minute. If any creature remains in the area after that, the shriekers make noise as normal.

The cultists have "trained" the piercers by feeding them the meat stored in Area 2 and Area 4. Typically, they toss the meat into the room, wait for the piercers to fall, and then pass through the room as they feed.

4. LOWER LANDING

The cultists use this area to keep additional meat for when they need to exit the caverns and pass beneath the piercers. Its distance from their living quarters makes the smell easier to tolerate.

Smell. The odor of rotting meat is apparent as the adventurers approach this area.

The floor of this chamber is littered with small stones and there are two crates here with several chunks of maggot-riddled meat in them.

Near the western entrance to this chamber, two carved wooden whistles are hung from a thin outcrop of stone by leather cords.

At that entrance and the descent to the east, torches are wedged into crevices in the walls.

The room contains the same meat and whistles as those found in Area 2. If the **Wylan Burreal** and his contingent of three **black earth guards** were not slain at the Hammer-Felled Tree (see Part 2, above.), then they are both in this room. Similarly, the **burrowshark** and its **bulette mount** are also in the area. Roll a die at the end of each round after the first. If the result is even, the bound pair "hear" the characters in the room with their blindsight. They move towards the characters and emerge at the beginning of the following round, entering initiative as normal.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove burrowshark
- **Weak party:** Remove 2 black earth guards
- **Strong party:** Replace black earth guards with veterans
- **Very strong party:** Add 1 stonemelder

SPECIAL MISSION: HARPERS

At the beginning of this encounter, roll a die. On an even result, one of the black earth guards in this area is the defector. On an odd result, the defector is instead one of the stonemelders in Area 5, below. If the characters fought Wylan and his entourage at the Hammer-Felled Tree, this room is empty and the defector is in Area 5, below. Throughout the encounter, this cultist provides subtle that clever characters are able to recognize.

As an action, a character may attempt a DC 15 skill check in order to notice a clue. The skill that a given character uses for this skill check is up to that characters, provided they can properly describe how it aids in noticing the clue. The same skill may not be used twice. Success indicates that a character notices something that may be a clue. Once the characters notice three clues, the identity of the defector is confirmed and the characters are successful in completing their special mission.

The defector fights normally. However, in the event that the defector reduces a character to 0 hit points, that character is knocked unconscious instead.

If the cultist is reduced to 0 hit points before his identity is confirmed, he willingly goes into custody, but refuses to provide any assistance to the Harpers; eventually escaping and rejoining the cult. In this case, the characters are unsuccessful in completing their special mission.

TREASURE

If Wylan and his retinue is present, the black earth guards carry a total of 150 gp between them while Wylan carries a purse containing 50 gp and an elemental gem (yellow diamond).

The room is otherwise empty—save for the meat and whistles.

XP AWARD

If any of the characters are members of the Harpers and successfully complete their special mission, award each character 100 XP.

5. CULTISTS' RESPITE

This lofty, 80-foot-high ledge has been converted into sparse living spaces by the most devoted cultists. These zealots are charged with watching over the Black Heart of Vengeance and care little for the comforts they left behind on the surface world.

A narrow ledge follows the southern edge of a grand chamber. Grime-streaked men and women make their way among a number of straw pallets.

Three **stonemelders** are here along with a **black earth priest**.

The ledge is forty feet above the open area, below. The cultists minimal possessions are here, along with mining tools, and collections of random rocks arranged in nonsensical patterns on the floor.

If the cultists here hear combat in Area 6, they spend ten rounds equipping themselves and moving to Area 6 via the tunnel to Area 4. If Aleyd is slain by the time they arrive, they flee.

SPECIAL MISSION: HARPERS

If the characters did not encounter the cult turn-coat in Area 4, above, he is one of the stonemelders found in this area. Throughout the encounter, this cultist provides subtle that clever characters are able to recognize.

As an action, a character may attempt a DC 15 skill check in order to notice a clue. The skill that a given character uses for this skill check is up to that characters, provided they can properly describe how it aids in noticing the clue. The same skill may not be used twice. Success indicates that a character notices something that may be a clue. Once the characters notice three clues, the identity of the defector is confirmed and the characters are successful in completing their special mission.

The defector fights normally. However, in the event that the defector reduces a character to 0 hit points, that character is knocked unconscious instead.

If the cultist is reduced to 0 hit points before his identity is confirmed, he willingly goes into custody, but refuses to provide any assistance to the Harpers; eventually escaping and rejoining the cult. In this case, the characters are unsuccessful in completing their special mission.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove 1 stonemelder
- **Weak party:** Remove black earth priest
- **Strong party:** Add 1 stonemelder
- **Very strong party:** Replace 1 stonemelder with a burrowshark, add 1 bulette

TREASURE

The cultists here carry a combined total of 40 gp among them. The black earth priest also carries a key that opens all of the cells in the Stonevault.

XP AWARD

If any of the characters are members of the Harpers and successfully complete their special mission, award each character 100 XP.

6. BLACK HEART OF VENGEANCE

This central chamber holds the Black Heart of Vengeance. Aleyd is contemplating it as the party arrives.

Ceiling. The ceiling of this chamber rises a hundred feet into the air.

Light. Motes of elemental energy flit through the air in and pass through the stone walls here. Treat the entire area as dimly lit.

Chasms. A number of narrow chasms are spread throughout the chamber; most are about 2-3 feet wide. Though narrow, the chasms are imperceptibly deep. Anyone gazing into a chasm is unable to see the bottom. Lights dropped down fade from view as they bounce and ricochet off the edges into the crushing darkness.

This huge vault is large enough to accommodate a giant upon another's shoulders. Thick columns where stalactite met stalagmite long ago create curtains of stone, but do not obstruct your view of a coal black shard, the height of a grown human, jutting from the floor. Rubble and mining tools around it reveals where it has been steadily cut free of the surrounding rock--emanating a deep, resonating thrum. A number of narrow chasms.

Aleyd Burreal stands near the thrumming black stone, her jaw set in rigid determination. Beyond her, four iron-barred cells are set into the north and east walls.

Aleyd Burreal is here, beside the Black Heart of Vengeance, staring into its depths. A pair of **gorgons** rest near the cells.

Aleyd is aware that the party has entered the Stonevault and has been watching them through artifact in front of her. She begins the encounter with stonemelder.

Aleyd has no hope or plan to conceal what has transpired thus far; though she has made pacts with infernal creatures to obtain her power, she believes she is close to achieving her goals. She also knows that her defeat leaves no one to take up her cause, and that her aspirations of reclaiming Phlan die with her. The notion fill her with enough bitterness that she opted to use the black heart of vengeance to wreak havoc on Mulmaster--the city that she feels has sat by the wayside.

ROLEPLAYING KNIGHT ALEYD BURRAL

Knight Aleyd Burreal is a formidable warrior with a keen mind, but the soft-heart she once possessed has grown calloused and tinged with darkness. Her stern frown that once prevented her advancement in the Knights of the Black Fist remains, however.

In her late 40s with grey-streaked blonde hair, she has become completely consumed with retaking Phlan from the Maimed Virulence and is willing to sacrifice anything--her life included--to do so.

Aleyd was encountered in *DDEX1-3 Shadows Over the Moonsea* where she was looking for help investigating a mystery and protecting the city. She was also seen in *DDEX1-6 The Scroll Thief* where she hired the characters to look into a series of thefts. Finally, she was slain in the events of *DDEX1-10 Tyranny in Phlan*.

If the characters attempt to treat with her, she assures them that she has no alternative but to proceed with her current plan. Attempts to persuade or intimidate her simply do not work.

She coldly informs the characters that a life of honorable and ethical conduct has seen her home razed and both herself and someone she was sworn to protect (Lord Regent Brahm) slain. Her brother has taught her that morals are what the weak use to justify their own failings and she has accepted his promise of true power in order to do what she was unable to do before.

If the cultists in Area 5 have not been killed or otherwise driven off, they arrive at the end of the seventh round. If Aleyd is slain, they immediately attempt to flee.

REINFORCEMENTS

If the characters engage Aleyd in combat, but have not yet encountered **Wylan Burreal**, he arrives six rounds after combat begins, along with his retinue (described in Area 4, above). If Aleyd has been slain when they arrive, her brother flies into a rage and attacks. Wylan's retinue, however, flees.

Similarly, if the characters did not encounter the cultists in Area 5, above, they arrive ten rounds after combat begins. If Aleyd has been slain when they arrive, they all flee.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove 1 gorgon; increase gorgon hit points to 133
- **Weak party:** Replace 2 gorgons with 1 stonemelder and 1 black earth priest
- **Strong party:** Replace 1 gorgon with 1 stonemelder
- **Very strong party:** Add 1 gorgon

SPECIAL MISSION: ORDER OF THE GAUNTLET

If the characters did not bring Cassyt with them, she shows up at this point.

As above, add the following to this encounter's boxed text:

Upon seeing the young priest, Aleyd's grim face brightens a bit.

"As much as it pleases me to see you, Cassyt, it pains me more," Aleyd says. "I assume by your company, that you've forgotten where you have come from and the importance of what I'm trying to do."

The light and joy from Cassyt's face vanishes as if struck.

"I haven't forgotten, Aleyd. You have."

If the characters attempt to treat with Aleyd, she engages in discourse, as above. When the discussion culminates or if the characters move to attack, read:

"Enough of this, Aleyd," Cassyt shouts, tears streaming down her face.

The young priest moves to embrace Aleyd; a move that older knight reciprocates. For a moment, all is still.

A sudden, jerking movement and a choking gasp shatters the silence as Cassyt stumbles backwards, clutching at her stomach.

Aleyd looks up--her face twisted into a rictus of furious anger--clutches a dagger in her hand, its blade stained with dark blood.

"Look what your lack of vision has done!"

Cassyt slumps to the ground, dead. Enraged by this, Aleyd attacks the party, as above. For the duration of the encounter, add the following to Aleyd's stat block:

Reckless. At the start of her turn, Aleyd can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against her have advantage until the start of her next turn.

DEVELOPMENT

Anyone that studies the black heart of vengeance and succeeds at a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check realizes that it is an unstable shard of pure elemental energy. Its power can be harnessed by creatures of Elemental Earth, such as members of the Cult of the Black Earth, but only barely. If Aleyd is slain, control is lost, and the black heart of vengeance causes untold destruction unless appropriate methods are used to contain it. Upon Aleyd's demise, the characters have ten rounds to contain the artifact.

Creatures that successfully identified the black heart of vengeance also know that if it is surrounded by stone again, it stabilizes. There will still be tremendous tremors, but the city will be spared from a majority of the damage. The following means are suitable for minimizing the effects of the Black Heart, but are simply examples--reward player creativity above all else:

- The stalagmites and stalactites can be broken and collapsed onto the Black Heart of Vengeance. A DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check collapses one of the curtains onto the dangerous object and buries part of it. The characters must succeed in three such checks to bury it completely.
- A powerful blow can snap the Black Heart from the floor, specifically, a successful attack (AC 18; immune to poison and psychic damage) that deals more than 15 hit points of damage on a single hit or a critical hit. It can then be thrown down into one of the chasms with a successful DC 15 Strength check.
- The Black Heart can be magically enclosed by magical means such as a wall of stone, move earth, or similar effect.

If the party succeeds in dampening the black heart's power, the city of Mulmaster is affected by a slightly stronger than normal earthquake but damage is minimal and it presents no danger to the party.

If they fail, the characters find themselves in a series of rapidly collapsing caverns. Unless they have a means of instantaneous transportation to the surface available, such as teleportation, each adventurer must make a DC 15 saving throw. The ability score that they use for this saving throw is up to them, provided they can properly describe how it aids in their escape from the collapsing cavern. The DM is the final arbiter on this. Any creature that fail the saving throw takes 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage in the collapse, and half damage on a successful save. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by this damage are buried beneath tons of rubble and die. Their bodies are eventually dug out by representatives of their factions.

See Concluding the Adventure for more on the effects of the quake on Mulmaster.

TREASURE

In addition to her sword of wounding, Aleyd carries 225 gp and wears a fine silver chain with a jet pendant worth 250 gp. Aleyd also carries a key that opens all of the cells in the Stonevault.

XP AWARD

If the characters successfully destroy or stabilize the black heart of vengeance award each character 200 XP.

If any of the characters are members of the Order of the Gauntlet and successfully complete their special mission, award each character an additional 100 XP.

7. PRISONERS' CELLS

These cells still serve something close to their original purpose. Captives gathered by the Liberators are housed here.

Four doors of iron bars ring the northern edge of the room, each secured with a sturdy padlock. Weary folk stare through three sets of the bars with hollow eyes.

Through the fourth set of bars you can see a stout chest secured by another padlock.

Along with Ardet, there are 12 other prisoners here—all employees of Peytir Timber. They gave up on the hope of rescue early in their captivity and are shocked and emboldened by the arrival of rescuers.

The locks containing the prisoners can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check, opened with one of the keys recovered from Aleyd or the black earth priest, or bashed open (albeit noisily) with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

The prisoners are weak from their ordeal and refuse to leave their cell so long as there are still foes to be defeated. Convincing them requires a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check.

TREASURE

The easternmost cell houses Aleyd's war chest. It is secured with a complex combination lock (to which only Aleyd knew the combination) rather than a key, but it can be picked by someone with thieves' tools that succeeds on a subsequent DC 20 Dexterity check. Alternatively, it can be bashed open (AC 17; 50 hit points; immune to poison and psychic damage). Once opened, the chest contains 650 gp worth of mixed coins and two amethysts worth 100 gp each.

XP AWARD

If the characters successfully rescue all of the prisoners (including Ardet Peytir), award each character 200 XP.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Assuming the party emerges from the Stonevault alive, they are met outside the watchtower by Blade Peytir, Rending Talon Groshin Lor, and two dozen members of the Hawks. Lor demands an immediate report and is particularly concerned with the whereabouts of the black heart of vengeance. If it was destroyed he is disappointed, but if it was only buried he immediately sends his soldiers down to secure it.

If the effects of the black heart of vengeance were contained, Lor awards the party a pouch containing 40 pp for their service to Mulmaster.

If the black heart of vengeance unleashed its full power, the party emerges to find toppled buildings and the smoke of raging fires blazing through parts of the city. The damage is extensive, but not catastrophic. In time, the city recovers.

If the characters defeated Aleyd, Blade Peytir gives them their promised sum of 400 gp.

REWARDS

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

EXPERIENCE

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. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Eternal Flame Guardian	450
Eternal Flame Priest	700
Razerblast	1,800
Flamewrath	2,300
Black Earth Guard	450
Knight	700
Veteran	700
Burrowshark	1,100
Stonemelder	1,100
Bulette	1,800
Wylan Burrall	1,800
Shrieker	10
Piercer	100
Gargoyle	450
Galeb duhr	2,300
Black Earth Priest	700
Aleyd Burrall	1,800
Gorgon	1,800

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Fatell successfully escorted	100
Cult defector successfully identified	100
Cassyt escorted to Aleyd	100
Artifact stabilized/destroyed	200
All prisoners returned alive	200

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **4,500 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **6,000 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

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.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Black diamonds	200
Fatell's cultists's coin purses	15
Wylan's retinue	150
Wylan's coin purse	50
Aleyd's escorts's coins	25
Blade Peytir's first reward	400
Coins from cultists (Area 5)	40
Aleyd's war chest (Area 7)	850
Aleyd's coin purse	225
Aleyd's silver chain with jet pendant	250
Blade Peytir's final reward	400
High Blade's reward	400

ELEMENTAL GEM (YELLOW DIAMOND)

Wondrous item, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the Dungeon Master's Guide.

POTION OF GREATER HEALING

Potion, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the Dungeon Master's Guide.

SWORD OF WOUNDING

Weapon (greatsword), Rare (requires attunement)

This sword's blade is serrated along the back edge with a single, deep fuller running the length of its blade, bifurcating the point. The sharkskin-wrapped hilt ends in a pommel fashioned of a large, unfinished gemstone. This sword, however, has a tragic history. Anyone familiar with Aleyd Burrall and her fall from grace recognizes the weapon and treat the wielder with suspicion. A description of this item can be found in the Dungeon Master's Guide.

PERMANENT MAGIC ITEM DISTRIBUTION

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **ten downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

REOWN

All faction members earn **one renown point** for participating in this adventure.

Harper characters of Rank 2 (Harpshadow) or higher who complete their special mission earn **one additional renown point** and should note the **completion of a special mission** on their adventure logsheet.

Lords Alliance characters of Rank 2 (Redknife) or higher who complete their special mission earn **one additional renown point** and should note the **completion of a special mission** on their adventure logsheet.

Order of the Gauntlet characters of Rank 2 (Marchon) or higher who complete their special mission earn **one additional renown point** and should note the **completion of a special mission** on their adventure logsheet.

DM REWARDS

You receive **300 XP**, **100 gp**, and **ten downtime days** for running this session.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brave. The knight has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the knight can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight is incapacitated.

REACTIONS

Parry. The knight adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

MAGE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any four languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *frostbite*, *light*, *prestidigitation*, *thunderclap*
1st level (4 slots): *ice knife*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *Maximilian's earthen grasp*, *misty step*
3rd level (3 slots): *fireball*, *haste*, *Melf's minute meteors*
4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *phantasmal killer*
5th level (1 slot): *dominate person*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 - 1) bludgeoning damage.

ETERNAL FLAME GUARDIAN

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (breastplate, shield; 15 while using a crossbow)

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +2

Damage Resistances fire

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Flaming Weapon (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the guard can wreath one melee weapon it is wielding in flame. The guard is unharmed by this fire, which lasts until the end of the guard's next turn. While wreathed in flame, the weapon deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage on a hit.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guard makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

ETERNAL FLAME PRIEST

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Religion +2

Damage Resistances fire

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Ignan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *control flames*,* *create bonfire*,* *fire bolt*, *light*, *minor illusion*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *scorching ray*

3rd level (2 slots): *fireball*

ACTIONS

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

FLAMEWRATH

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Arcana +3, Religion +3

Damage Immunities fire

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Ignan

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The flamewrath is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *control flames*,* *fire bolt*, *friends*, *light*, *minor illusion*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *color spray*, *mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *scorching ray*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball*, *hypnotic pattern*

4th level (1 slot): *fire shield* (see *Wreathed in Flame*)

Wreathed in Flame. For the flamewrath, the warm version of the *fire shield* spell has a duration of "until dispelled." The *fire shield* burns for 10 minutes after the flamewrath dies, consuming its body.

ACTIONS

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

RAZERBLAST

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 75)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +4, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Damage Immunities fire

Languages Common, Ignan

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Searing Armor. The razerblast's armor is hot. Any creature grappling the razerblast or grappled by it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the end of that creature's turn.

Shrapnel Explosion. When the razerblast drops to 0 hit points, a flaming orb in its chest explodes, destroying the razerblast's body and scattering its armor as shrapnel. Creatures within 10 feet of the razerblast when it explodes must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The razerblast makes three melee attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

BLACK EARTH GUARD

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Intimidation +1, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guard makes two melee attacks.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Unyielding. When the guard is subjected to an effect that would move it, knock it prone, or both, it can use its reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.

BURROWSHARK

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Animal Handling +2, Athletics +6, Intimidation +3, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Bond of the Black Earth. The burrowshark is magically bound to a bulette trained to serve as its mount. While mounted on its bulette, the burrowshark shares the bulette's senses and can ride the bulette while it burrows. The bonded bulette obeys the burrowshark's commands. If its mount dies, the burrowshark can train a new bulette to serve as its bonded mount, a process requiring a month.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The burrowshark makes three melee attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

REACTIONS

Unyielding. When the burrowshark is subjected to an effect that would move it, knock it prone, or both, it can use its reaction to be neither moved nor knocked prone.

BULETTE

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 94 (9d10 + 45)
Speed 40 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Standing Leap. The bulette's long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d12 + 4) piercing damage.

Deadly Leap. If the bulette jumps at least 15 feet as part of its movement, it can then use this action to land on its feet in a space that contains one or more other creatures. Each of those creatures must succeed on a DC 16 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone and take 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (3d6 + 4) slashing damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, isn't knocked prone, and is pushed 5 feet out of the bulette's space into an unoccupied space of the creature's choice. If no

unoccupied space is within range, the creature instead falls prone in the bulette's space.

WYLAN BURRAL

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +4, Deception +5, Insight +5, Perception +5

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Terran

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Evasion. If Wylan is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on his saving throw and half damage if he fails.

Unarmored Defense. When Wylan is wearing no armor and wielding no shield his AC includes his Wisdom modifier (included in his AC, above).

Unarmored Movement. When Wylan is wearing no armor and wielding no shield his speed increases by 10 feet (included in his speed above).

Spellcasting. Wylan is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following cleric spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B of the *Elemental Evil Player's Companion*):

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *sacred flame*, *spare the dying*

1st level (4 slots): *bles*, *cure wounds*, *sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *mass healing word*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Wylan makes three melee attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Parry and Counter. Wylan adds 2 to his AC against one melee or ranged attack that would hit him. If the attack misses, Wylan can make one melee attack against the attacker if it is within his reach.

CASSYT

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Terran

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Devotion of the Grave. Cassyt has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. Cassyt is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Cassyt has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bles*, *cure wounds*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cassyt makes two melee attacks.

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

PIERCER

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

Skills Stealth +5

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

False Appearance. While the piercer remains motionless on the ceiling, it is indistinguishable from a normal stalactite.

Spider Climb. The piercer can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Drop. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, one creature directly underneath the piercer. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage per 10 feet

fallen, up to 21 (6d6). *Miss*: The piercer takes half the normal falling damage for the distance fallen.

SHRIEKER

Medium plant, unaligned

Armor Class 5

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, frightened

Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

False Appearance. While the shrieker remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary fungus.

REACTIONS

Shriek. When bright light or a creature is within 30 feet of the shrieker, it emits a shriek audible within 300 feet of it. The shrieker continues to shriek until the disturbance moves out of range and for 1d4 of the shrieker's turns afterward.

STONEMELDER

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +2

Senses tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Terran

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Death Burst. When the stonemelder dies, it turns to stone and explodes in a burst of rock shards, becoming a smoking pile of rubble. Each creature within 10 feet of the exploding stonemelder must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Earth Walk. The stonemelder can move across difficult terrain made of earth or stone without expending extra movement.

Merge with Stone. The stonemelder can cast *pass without trace*, requiring no material components, once per day. It regains this ability after a short rest. Constitution is the spellcasting ability for this spell.

Spellcasting. The stonemelder is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *blade ward*, *light*, *mending*, *mold earth**

1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat*, *false life*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *Maximilian's earthen grasp**, *shatter*

3rd level (3 slots): *erupting earth**, *meld into stone*

4th level (1 slot): *stoneskin*

ACTIONS

Black Earth Rod. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. The stonemelder can also expend a spell slot to deal extra damage, dealing 2d8 bludgeoning damage for a 1st level slot, plus an additional 1d8 for each level of the slot above 1st.

ALEYD BURRAL

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +2

Senses tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Terran

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Death Burst. When Aleyd dies, she turns in to stone and explodes in a burst of rock shards becoming a smoking pile of rubble. Each creature within 10 feet of Aleyd when she explodes must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage, half on a successful save.

Earth Walk. Aleyd can move across difficult terrain made of earth or stone without expending extra movement.

Merge with Stone. Aleyd can cast *pass without trace*, requiring no material components, once per day. She regains this ability after a short rest. Constitution is the spellcasting ability for this spell.

Special Equipment (Greatsword of Wounding). Once per turn, when Aleyd hits a creature with an attack using this weapon, she can wound the target. At the start of each of the wounded creature's turns, it takes 1d4 necrotic damage for each time she's wounded it, and it can then make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, ending the effect of all such wounds on itself on a success. Alternatively, the wounded creature, or a creature within 5 feet of it, can use an action to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, ending the effect of such wounds on it on a success.

Spellcasting. Aleyd is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She knows the following sorcerer spells (an asterisked spell is from appendix B):

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, blade ward, light, mending, mold earth**

1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat, false life, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *Maximilian's earthen grasp,* shatter*

3rd level (3 slots): *erupting earth,* meld into stone*

4th level (1 slot): *stoneskin*

ACTIONS

Greatsword of Wounding. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage. Aleyd can also expend a spell slot to deal extra damage, dealing 2d8 slashing damage for a 1st level slot, plus an extra additional 1d8 for every level of the slot above first.

GORGON

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +4

Condition Immunities petrified

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the gorgon moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the gorgon can make one attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

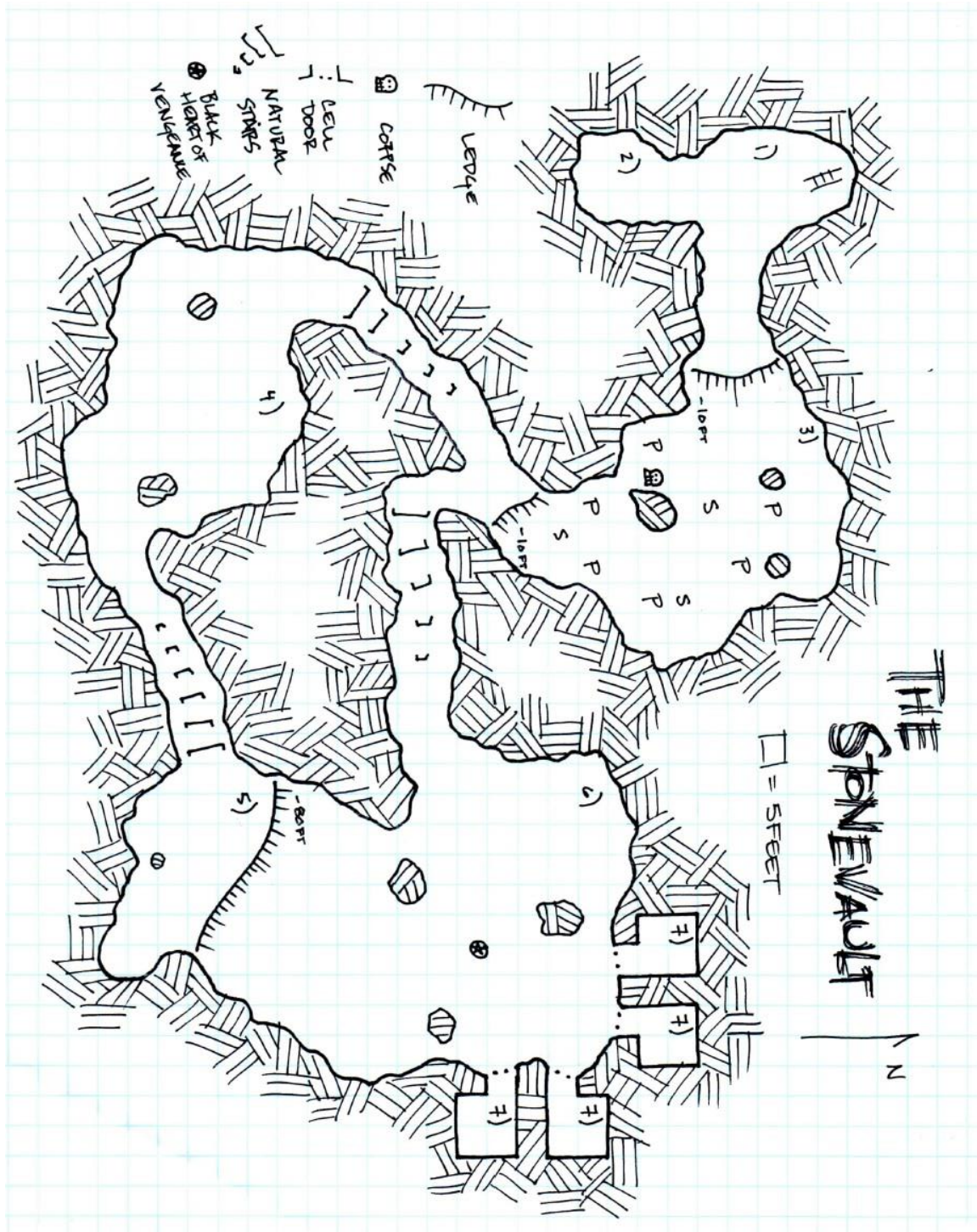
ACTIONS

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) piercing damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Petrifying Breath (Recharge 5–6). The gorgon exhales petrifying gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends on the target. On a failure, the target is petrified until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

MAP: THE STONEVAULT



DM APPENDIX: NPC SUMMARY

This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

Blade Cora Peytir (CORE-uh pie-TEER). Human female Blade. Matron of House Peytir, she petitions the characters's assistance in unveiling the source behind recent attacks on her family's holdings.

High Blade Jaseen Drakehorn (juh-ZEEN). Human female. The High Blade and ruler of Mulmaster. She is highly distrustful of all beneath her—which happens to be everyone.

Ardet Peytir (ARE-det pie-TEER). Human male. Distant cousin to Blade Cora Peytir. Scion of a wealthy family, he was captured when his home was destroyed by the Cult of the Black Earth. Critical of the Liberators and Aleyd Burrel.

Fedosia Peytir (FAY-doh-juh pie-TEER). Human female. Cousin of Ardet Peytir and heir to his estate. Critical of the Liberators and Aleyd Burrel.

Edik Brey (ED-ick BRAY). Male half-elf. Brash and energetic foreman of Peytir Timber. Critical of the Liberators and Aleyd Burrel.

Tareen Kafour (tuh-REEN KAY-fur). Female Human. Refugee from Phlan and bartender at the Hammer-Felled Tree. Sympathetic towards the Liberators and Aleyd Burrel.

Lieutenant Grady Moll (GREY-dee MOLE). Male dwarf. Soldierly officer and Lords Alliance contact.

Olisara Lightsong (OH-lih-SARR-uh). Female moon elf. Leader of the Harpers in the Moonsea region. Charming, cunning, and two steps ahead of everyone.

Cassyt (kah-SEAT). Female human. Young priest of Kelemvor. Former resident of Phlan and once close friend of Aleyd Burrel. She escaped Phlan during the events of 1-10 Tyranny in Phlan. Currently the highest ranking member of the clergy of Kelemvor in the Moonsea region.

Wylan Burrel (WHY-lin BUR-uhl). Male human. Brother to Aleyd Burrel and low-ranking member of Tymora's faithful in Mulmaster. Secretly a high-ranking member of the Cult of the Black Earth.

RESULTS CODE: JULY-AUGUST 2015

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of July or August 2015, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to dndadventurersleague.org/results to enter their results.

