



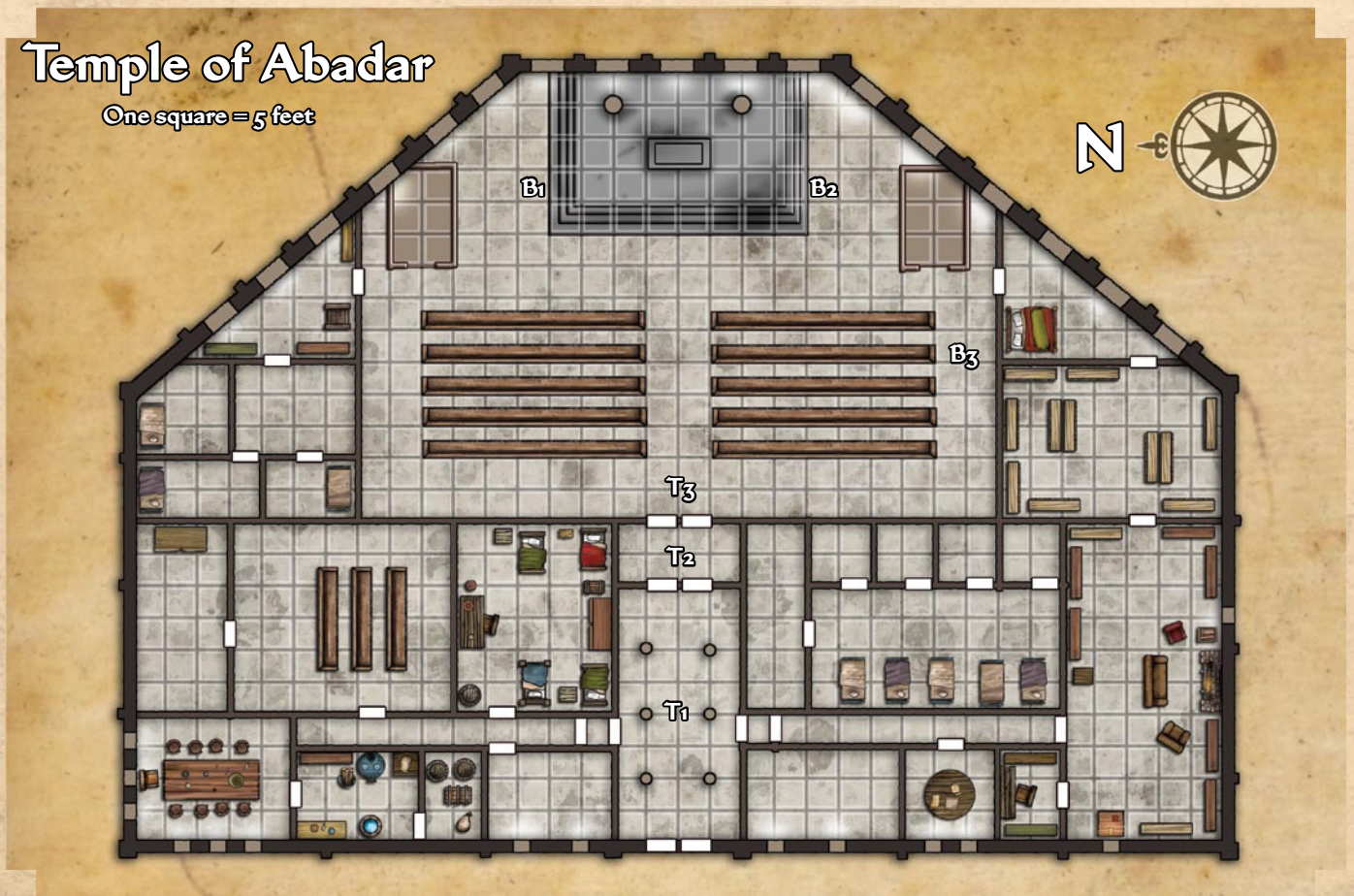
A 3.5/OGL ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 15

E2

Blood of Dragonscar™



PATHFINDER
MODULE





BLOOD OF DRAGONSCAR™

PATHFINDER MODULE E2

A TOWN & DUNGEON ADVENTURE

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E2: Blood of Dragonscar is a Pathfinder Module designed for four 15th-level characters. This module is designed for play in the Pathfinder Chronicles campaign setting, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. This module is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the 3.5 edition of the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game.

The OGL can be found on page 29 of this product.


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BLOOD OF DRAGONSCAR

Proud Taldor has suffered over the last seven centuries. The Even-Tongued Conquest stripped the empire of its holdings and its divine mandate, and much blood was spilled in battle with upstart Cheliox and, later, the Everwar. There are those who say that the worst wounds of these wars came not from Cheliox or Qadira, but from strange things unearthed in the drive to discover something that could turn the tide in these wars. In 4486 AR the mountain called Blackpeak exploded, showering the Taldan city of Talamir with ash and lava. The storytellers say that a dark shape emerged from the clouds of soot: the dragon Horranath. Her flames burned more fiercely than any Chelish hell, and she hungered for souls as well as gold. Some fell to dragonfire, while others were consumed by the molten stone. None survived the doom of Talamir. But if such a terrifying beast lingers in the mountains, why has she never struck Dalaston or Maheto? Surely the story of the dragon is just fancy, flavor added to justify a natural disaster.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Dalassenos family transformed a rough mining outpost into a prosperous village, and that village into a comfortable and wealthy town, gaining a noble title from the crown in appreciation for their efforts. The leaders of the Dalassenos family have always combined the best traits of the Taldan nobility, industrious and devout, bold warriors and canny administrators—until Saleno, the latest head of the family. Sluggish in thought and motion, Saleno is more concerned with satisfying his hedonistic appetites than caring for his town. The Dalassenos family built Dalaston, and it's hard for a citizen of the mountain town to think of turning on the founders, but every thread has a breaking point. The other strong pillar of the town, the Irini family, has drawn attention to the count's selfish, flawed policies. After years of stagnation, a thirst for change has finally come to Dalaston.

But as fortune frowned upon the count, a stranger arrived in town. Eldran Tesh came by night, and paid for an audience with the count using coins forged in fallen Talamir. He explained how fear could bring the people of Dalaston back to Saleno. He offered to raise a dire threat and dismiss it, saying that his aid wouldn't cost a single copper; all it would take was a little blood.

Blinded by fears and Eldran's honeyed words, one week ago Count Saleno agreed to these promises. The first to pay Tesh's blood price were public drunkards, beggars, and other undesirables; their disappearance went unnoticed. Eldran Tesh secretly woke the dragon Horranath slumbering beneath the mountains, and she laid waste to the town's mines to the east. The people turned to the count for salvation. At the advice of Tesh, the count blamed the priests of Abadar for the dragon's attack, claiming that their greed and wickedness woke the sleeping terror. Eldran told the count that he could return the dragon to her slumber, but it would take the blood of two dozen virgins, fair of face and strong of body. Saleno had no choice but to agree. Twenty-four of the town's finest youths were rounded up and taken to the temple of Abadar. On the following night, Horranath came to Dalaston and set a quarter of the town ablaze. Eldran Tesh informed the count that one of the sacrifices was no virgin and that he would need to start again. To make matters worse, Tesh now had followers of his own; 23 of the virgins returned from the grave, pale and cold. These minions now round up new victims, and any who try to flee the town or speak against the count or his advisor are slain.

This is the situation in Dalaston today. Black smoke fills the air above the town, blotting out the sun. Below, the people huddle in their homes, terrified of the bloodless youths and the return of the

dragon. To the northeast, the town still burns. Count Saleno seeks to drown his shame in drink. Eldran Tesh works blood magic in the temple of Abadar. To the north, Horranath lies atop a heap of gold and jewels, dreaming of the destruction of Dalaston.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs have come to Dalaston to attend the wedding of an old friend, and know nothing of its current troubles. When they arrive at the town, they see the devastation of the dragon's initial attack the prior evening. The people won't speak to strangers, and the friend they came to meet has been taken by the bloodless. The PCs must discover what's been going on in Dalaston, identifying the twin threats of the dragon Horranath and the mysterious Eldran Tesh.

Eldran Tesh is a powerful undead being empowered by the furious spirits of those who died in Talamir. In the depths of the temple, Tesh is draining the blood of victims to create new undead minions, and the PCs have to move swiftly if they are to save their friend.

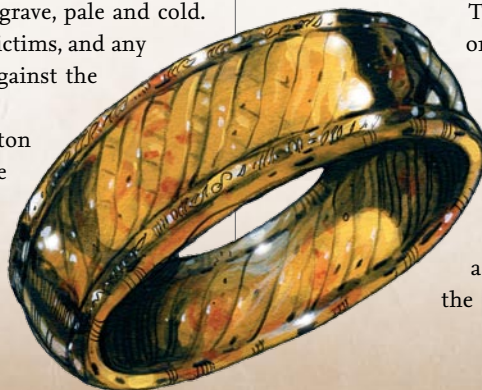
Even as the PCs defeat the undead, Horranath returns to Dalaston and lays waste to the town. She has no interest in fighting adventurers; she is on a mission of destruction. The PCs experience firsthand the terror of the dragon attack as the townsfolk they met during their initial investigation struggle to survive.

Once the dragon departs, the survivors cry out for vengeance. Clues gleaned from Eldran Tesh and other NPCs provide knowledge that could be vital to defeating Horranath. The PCs must travel through the Dragonscar, the wasteland of bygone Talamir, and face the dragon in her lair.

INTRODUCTION

It is day, but the sky above Dalaston is dark as a moonless night. The town is burning—plumes of smoke rise from one quarter of the walled town. Perhaps the strangest thing is the stillness. There are no farmhands in the fields, no other travelers on the road, not even any refugees fleeing from what seems to be a disaster. Dalaston burns, and its citizens remain hidden within its ash-stained walls.

The mining town of Dalaston lies on the eastern border of Taldor, set against the World's Edge Mountains and surrounded by fields of wheat, barley, and strawberries. While people of many races live in the town, it has a high concentration of dwarves. Three industries serve as the pillars of the local economy: the mines, overseen by the Dalassenos



A WEDDING INVITATION

Provide the PCs with the following information, adjusting it as necessary to account for the connection between the PCs and Marita.

In her previous letter, Marita had mentioned that she was settling in eastern Taldor. Last week the following message arrived via magical sending: "Sorry it's been so long. Getting married to Baydon Irini Sunday; please come. Day's End Inn, Dalaston. Bring friends! —Marita." The connection transmitted her presence, her happiness, and her desire to see you again.

family; the Morian Foundry; and the Irini brewery. Each of these central businesses supports a handful of smaller services. The Irini family has a hand in many of the inns and pubs in Dalaston, while many of the smiths in the town have connections to either the Dalassenos or Morian families. The bladesmiths of Maheto rely on Dalaston for ore, and raw and worked steel have long been the lifeblood of the town.

The PCs have come to Dalaston to attend the wedding of a friend who recently moved there. The first step in running the adventure is to identify the bride, the NPC the PCs are searching for. If there's an existing NPC who fits the needs of the story, use her for this role, as someone the PCs already care about is easier to fit into the story. If there is no appropriate choice in the campaign history, work with one of the players and establish a connection to the bride NPC, making clear that while they've never actually met in-game, the two characters have known each other for years. The bride could be sister, niece, friend, or business associate of the PC. For the purpose of this adventure, the bride is a young human named Marita, but her race, age, or specific relationship can change to suit your campaign. Also, consider the role the PC is supposed to play in the wedding, if any.

PART ONE: A TOWN OF ASH

Closer to the town, signs of life emerge. Guards walk the walls, carrying torches to fight the gloom. The open gates reveal a few people hurrying along the street, eyes fixed on the ground. People wear strips of cloth wrapped around their lower faces, protection against the soot and smoke. The light flickering against the clouds and the rising fingers of smoke suggest that parts of the town are burning, but this damage is far from the main gate.

Guided by Eldran Tesh, Count Saleno has put a number of laws into effect—all part of his "bold plan to protect the

town." First, there is a strict curfew. Second, the townsfolk have been ordered not to speak of recent events to any strangers. Finally, nobody is allowed to leave the town until the state of emergency is lifted. In theory, this is because Saleno has the situation well in hand, and doesn't want refugees to flee when order will soon be restored. In practice, Eldran Tesh wants to make certain that none of his potential victims escape his grasp.

The town guard alone could never enforce these laws, but the bloodless—Eldran Tesh's undead minions—are another matter. These pale soldiers terrify the town, both because of their sheer power and because the townsfolk don't know whether these undead are, on some level, still their children. Most of the townsfolk know nothing of Eldran Tesh, but everyone is afraid of the bloodless, and none know if the dragon's attack is somehow responsible for their arrival in the town. It is this fear that keeps them from talking to the PCs.

Once the PCs enter the town, they face two immediate challenges. The bride is supposed to be waiting for them at the Day's End Inn. When the PCs find the inn, they discover that the bride has been taken by the bloodless. The other challenge is to find out just what is going on in Dalaston—drawing out the truth about the problems facing the town. This is discussed in the Uncovering Secrets section below. Eventually they learn about Eldran Tesh, and likely decide to face the necromancer in his temple—at that point, proceed to Part Two of the adventure.

Uncovering Secrets

The people of Dalaston don't want to talk, and most of them are hidden away behind locked doors. As a result, learning about recent events takes more than a simple Diplomacy, Gather Information, or Knowledge (local) check. Much of the challenge of Part One is finding out what's been going on in the town. This is a free-form process; PCs have to decide where to go, who to talk to, and what sort of approach to use. Specific characters are addressed in the encounters, but in general, remember that most NPCs don't have all the information—a random miner may never have seen Eldran Tesh, while the dwarf businessman Gath Morian never saw the dragon during the attack on the town. Gathering information should be an integral part of this phase of the adventure—don't rush through it. In addition to their skills, PCs may bring magic to bear. The Talking Points sidebar on page 8 examines the effects of various skills and abilities. Topics of conversation are described below.

Blackpeak and the Dragon: The Blackpeak volcano has been dormant for centuries. Most people are willing to say this much, but it takes more effort to get them to speak of the dragon that attacked last night. An accurate reporter can describe Horranath's size and color (red, Huge), and the devastation of her fiery breath. A refugee from the

Foundry may even recall strange black energy mixed with the dragonfire, though this detail went mostly unnoticed in the chaos and is more likely to turn up after heavy questioning or the use of magic to learn more.

The townsfolk have never encountered a dragon before. They don't know why it would attack, but they are terrified and certain it will return unless something is done. A PC who makes a successful DC 30 Knowledge (history), Knowledge (geography), or bardic knowledge check (native Taldans get a +10 bonus) recalls stories of a dragon menacing the area about 300 years ago. Learning detailed information about Horranath requires magic.

Count Saleno: The last son of the Dalassenos line, Saleno has been town leader for 10 years and has slid down a darker path with passing each day. He never had much interest in religion, and squandered much of his family fortune on debauchery. His guards and people from the Golden Quarter know that he spends much of his time at the Blind Eye, a house of prostitution. Members of the Irini family despise him, but others in the town still hope that true Dalassenos blood is in his veins and that he may actually rise to this challenge.

Count Saleno's Promises and the Bloodless: Chaos and rioting followed the dragon's attack. The town guard used force to quell the riots, and Saleno addressed the crowds alongside a new advisor. It was this unknown advisor who actually defused the situation by convincing the townsfolk that it was the corrupt priests of Abadar who were responsible for the attack, and that Saleno would soon see the dragon destroyed—but that this would require a sacrifice. Saleno needed to gather a troop of pure-hearted youths to protect the town, and the guard would be visiting households to select appropriate candidates. The temple of Abadar was sealed. Supposedly many of the priests were killed by angry mobs; the PCs can find a sympathetic guardsman who reveals that most were actually killed by the mysterious advisor.

The guards and Eldran Tesh selected two dozen virgins. People don't really understand what happened next, except that the chosen youths returned with fearsome strength and pale skin—they became the bloodless. Saleno put the curfew into effect and ordered the residents to remain in the town and maintain silence; those who resisted were ruthlessly dealt with by the bloodless. Saleno says that he understands the people's fear, but they must have faith—this is all part of the plan to protect the town from the dragon. Today, he informed the people that additional sacrifices are required, but that he's sure everyone is willing to do what is necessary to save Dalaston. There are rumors that the bloodless are visiting homes and taking new prisoners.

Because of their fear, most townsfolk believe Saleno's claims. Between the terror of the attack and the sheer strangeness of the bloodless, many simply want to believe that Saleno has a plan, and that this will all be over soon.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

The PCs can use skills to see what they know about Dalaston. Taldan natives gain a +10 circumstance bonus to these checks.

GATHER INFORMATION OR KNOWLEDGE (GEOGRAPHY)

DC 10: Dalaston is a Taldan town of approximately 1,100 people, located in the foothills of the World's Edge Mountains.

DC 20: Nearly half of the citizens of Dalaston are dwarves, an unusual level for Taldor. The people of Dalaston mine iron, process ore, and provide raw materials for the smiths of Maheto and other cities.

DC 30: Though best known for its steel, Dalaston is also home to an excellent brewery. Blackpeak Ale and Dragonscar Whisky are both produced in this town. Dragonscar Whisky takes its name from a barren stretch of blackened earth, leagues in length; this blasted land is said to be the work of a dragon who terrorized the land centuries ago.

KNOWLEDGE (NOBILITY)

DC 15: Dalaston is ruled by Count Saleno Dalassenos, the scion of an old family.

DC 20: The Dalassenos family built Dalaston, transforming it from a mining camp into a thriving community and eventually earning a noble title from the Taldan king. A Dalassenos has ruled the town ever since. There are two other influential families in the town: the Morians, a dwarf clan with strong connections throughout the metalworking industries; and the Irinis, a human family tied to the distillery and service businesses. Despite their influence, neither the Morians nor the Irinis are actually Taldan aristocracy.

DC 30: If someone specifically asks about Baydon Irini, they learn that he is the rising star of the Irini family. Though young, he has proven himself to be a canny and charismatic administrator, and recently settled a labor dispute that had stopped the flow of Blackpeak Ale to the west. Rumors say that he's an accomplished alchemist and has been working on a revolutionary new brewing process, but this may simply be propaganda.

The Day's End: This inn is the largest in the town, and everyone knows where it is.

Eldran Tesh: Most of the common folk don't know anything about Eldran Tesh. He's an advisor, and most people never saw him until the address after the dragon's attack. Certain town guards know more, and if found they reveal that Tesh came to the town about a week before the



Designer Notes

EVENT-BASED ADVENTURES

As an event-based adventure, *Blood of Dragonscar* does not follow a strict linear path. The PCs are entering a town held in the grip of terror, and there are many options. Many of the events in the adventure are location-based and keyed according to the map. For the most part, the adventure assumes the PCs intend to explore the area, but if their intention is to go straight to a specific location, don't force them to stop. There are also a handful of unattached encounters that can occur at any location. These allow the GM to add color to a slow scene or to help the PCs if they are at a loss for what to do. There's a good chance that the PCs won't do everything there is to do in Dalaston—part of the fun of the adventure is that they can choose their own path, unbound by the constrictions of a dungeon map.

THE DARKENED TOWN

Dalaston is hidden beneath a shroud of ash and smoke, which blots out the light of the sun. As a result, without some form of artificial aid, the town is nearly dark. There are *continual flame* lanterns along the major streets and most well-to-do businesses, but more run-down regions are lit with simple torches or not at all. Beyond this, PCs soon find that the ash and smoke in the air results in shortness of breath. Unless the PCs wear some form of protection (such as the damp cloths most citizens wear over nose and mouth), they suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to all Strength- and Dexterity-based skill checks.

attack and had many private conversations with Saleno. Guards who have accompanied him in rounding up virgins have seen him fight those who refused to surrender their children, and know that he is incredibly strong and fast, capable of quickly disabling an opponent with his bare hands, often breaking bones in the process. The guards know that the virgins were taken to the closed temple of Abadar. The guards are either terrified or in awe of Eldran Tesh. Some believe that he has the strength to restore the town; others are afraid that he is some sort of monster.

A PC who forges a strong relationship with a guard (or uses *detect thoughts*) may learn that Tesh bribed a number of guards using strange coins when he originally arrived. Upon

inspection, a DC 25 Appraise or Knowledge (history) check reveals the coins were minted in the ruined city of Talamir.

The Troubles of the Town: Over the last 2 years, morale and prosperity in Dalaston has dropped dramatically. Count Saleno has become ever more hedonistic and frivolous. The Morian clan (owners of the Foundry) are content to maintain the status quo, but a number of other forces—specifically the Irini brewers and the priests of Abadar—have been sowing discontent and questioning Dalassenos rule. This information is most likely to come from commoners or lay priests who have left the church. Town guards are loyal to Saleno. Morian supporters are indifferent, while Irinis are usually be cautious about expressing their doubts.

Trouble at the Gates

The gates of Dalaston are mostly closed. Guards peer down from the ash-stained walls, their faces hidden behind the damp cloths worn to protect against the smoke. The choking smoke blocks out all sunlight, and light comes from torches set along the walls. A brighter light flickers against the sky, its source deep within the town; combined with the columns of smoke rising up behind the walls, it makes it apparent that there are still fires raging within Dalaston.

Three people stand in the arch of the gateway, blocking entry into the town path. Two of them are dwarf soldiers armed with halberds, their faces hidden behind goggles and damp cloth. The guards are flanking a young woman, a human who can't be more than 15 years old. She isn't wearing any sort of facial protection, or any armor of any sort; instead, she is dressed in what was once a fine gown, now spoiled by soot, sweat, and blood. Her skin, clothes, and hair are covered with ash, giving her a ghostly appearance. She holds a long scythe in her hands, and it still drips with the fresh blood of the man lying on the ground before her. Her eyes are pale white, as is her colorless flesh, and her face is completely devoid of emotion.

In addition to the guards on the ground, there are four guards with crossbows watching from the upper walls. If the PCs make a successful DC 20 Search check, they notice a number of crossbow bolts scattered across the plain beyond the wall, along with a few bloodstains half-hidden beneath the shifting ash; it appears that there was some fighting outside the gate. The guards show no immediate signs of hostility. Most watch the PCs, but if the PCs take a moment to observe things, they see that the guards don't look inclined to attack. One of the two halberdiers pulls the peasant's corpse to a cart at the side of the gate; the other stands next to the woman.

If the PCs approach, the woman addresses them, her voice calm and cold.

"Continue on, travelers. Dalaston is no place for strangers."

Diplomacy and Intimidate are equally useless against the bloodless. However, she has no objection to the players entering the town; the count's orders are that no one *leaves*. If questioned politely, she reveals the following points:

- Dalaston is under curfew at the moment, and the citizens are not allowed to leave.
- The PCs may enter, but then they have to remain within the town until the travel restriction is lifted.
- The curfew is in place to avoid panic as a result of the recent volcanic eruption. (This is a lie, but due to her strange body language, it takes a DC 30 Sense Motive check for a PC to be certain of this).
- It is not her place to discuss any further details. She advises the PCs to continue on their travels, but if they insist on entering the town, they are ordered to do so quickly and get off the streets. She says no more.
- If any of the PCs is a virgin, younger than middle age, and has a Charisma of 10 or better, the bloodless woman displays a strange interest. She still shows no emotion, but seems to be studying this person with particular intensity and directs all her comments to them (the PC should not know their virginity is the cause of this scrutiny).

The guards follow the lead of the bloodless woman; they are visibly unnerved by her presence. They do not speak to the PCs; if spoken to, they simply glance nervously at the bloodless woman. The most they do is point the PCs toward the Market if asked about shelter. Diplomacy can be used on the guards, who are initially unfriendly; a guard who becomes friendly may later catch up with the PCs on the streets and try to help.

A DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check gives the PC the suspicion that the bloodless woman is some unfamiliar form of undead. Her body language and the faint chill in the air around her suggest a ghost possessing a living body, but it's hard to be certain.

The dead man is a foundry worker named Jahn who lost his family and home in Horranath's attack and sought to flee. If interrogated with *Speak with Dead*, he has no desire to return from the dead, but can answer other questions. However, the bloodless woman demands that the PCs leave the body alone.

Creatures: The primary threat is the bloodless. There are town guards, but if combat breaks out they simply flee or attempt to raise the alarm. The bloodless does not initiate combat, but defends herself if attacked.

BLOODLESS **CR 12**

hp 157 (Chene Diolane, brawler power set); see page 30.

TACTICS

Before Combat The bloodless has *mage armor* active (AC 28, touch 18, flat-footed 24).

During Combat Chene uses *waves of fatigue* to weaken as many opponents as possible, then charges into melee with her scythe, preferably closing with a lightly-armored spellcaster. She uses *vampiric touch* to harm enemies and

gain temporary hit points.

Morale As the guardian of the gate, Chene attempts to flee if reduced below 25 hit points. If she escapes, a harvester patrol (see *The Harvester's Encounter*) may show up specifically searching for the PCs.

DWARF GUARDS (2)

CR 1

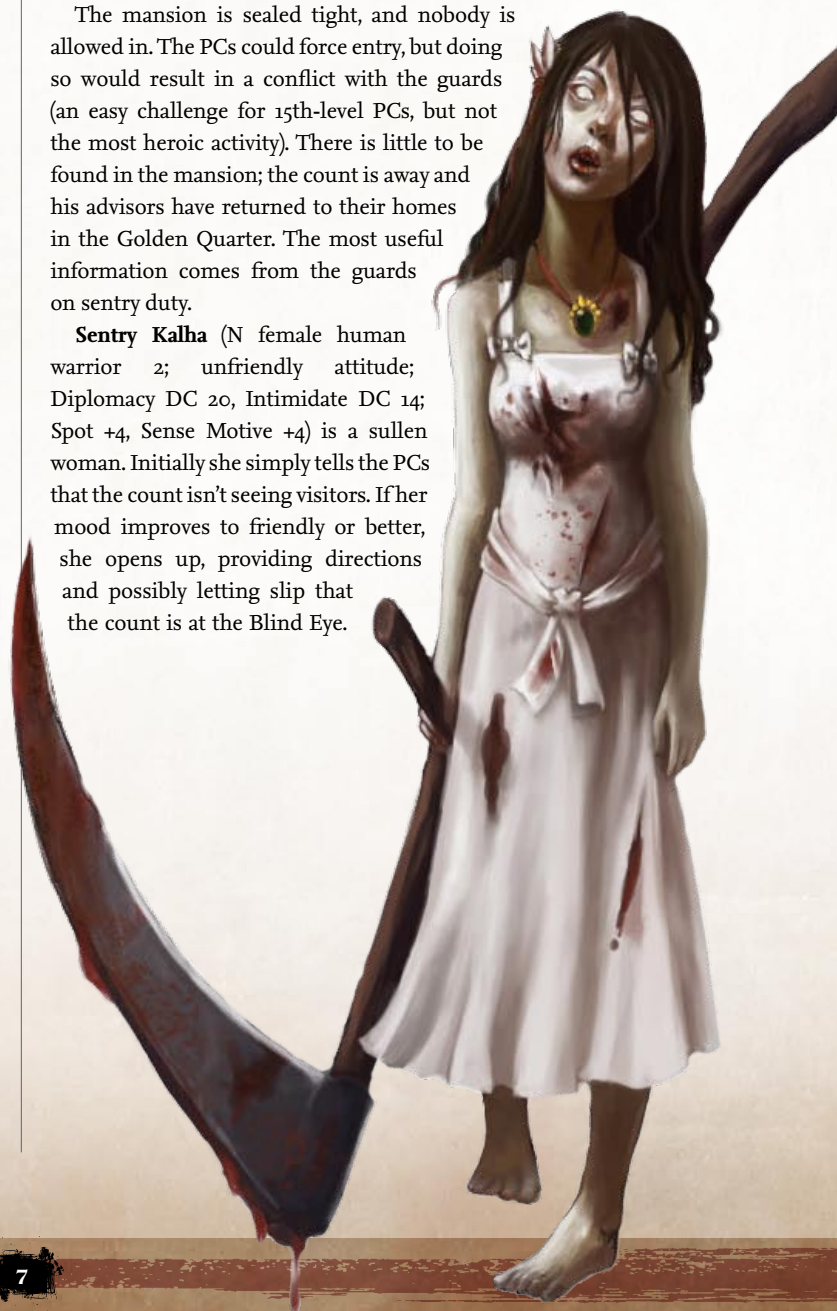
hp 6 (MM 91)

Dalassenos Mansion

The mansion of Dalaston's lord is an austere structure, the work of dwarf masons aiming for stability and strength. While it is hard to tell beneath the ash that stains the town, the building appears to be made from plain white stone. Arrow slits line the round walls. The gates of the mansion are closed. The faces of the sentries are hidden behind cloth, but they don't seem inclined to let anyone in.

The mansion is sealed tight, and nobody is allowed in. The PCs could force entry, but doing so would result in a conflict with the guards (an easy challenge for 15th-level PCs, but not the most heroic activity). There is little to be found in the mansion; the count is away and his advisors have returned to their homes in the Golden Quarter. The most useful information comes from the guards on sentry duty.

Sentry Kalha (N female human warrior 2; unfriendly attitude; Diplomacy DC 20, Intimidate DC 14; Spot +4, Sense Motive +4) is a sullen woman. Initially she simply tells the PCs that the count isn't seeing visitors. If her mood improves to friendly or better, she opens up, providing directions and possibly letting slip that the count is at the Blind Eye.



TALKING POINTS

Acquiring information plays an important role in this adventure. Unless noted otherwise, the town guards use the following statistics: N female or male human or dwarf warrior 1; unfriendly attitude; Diplomacy DC 20, Intimidate DC 20; Spot +4, Sense Motive +4. Some NPCs may have Diplomacy or Intimidate DCs that are different from the normal values for their attitude. A PC cannot improve an attitude by more than two categories with a single check, and the NPC must have an indifferent (or better) attitude to share information. The count has ordered people not to speak about the bloodless or the dragon; treat questions about this as a request for secret knowledge. PCs using Intimidate may cause trouble in town and increase DC for later NPCs.

Discern lies, *zone of truth*, and *detect thoughts* can all prove useful in dealing with the people of Dalaston. However, people may be offended if they realize they are being magically interrogated. *Detect thoughts* only reads surface thoughts, so the target has to be prodded to think about the right subject. At the GM's discretion, *detect thoughts* may reveal details to a PC that the NPC doesn't think are important enough to mention—such as the black energy in the dragon's breath. *Charm person* and similar effects cause an NPC to have a helpful attitude toward the PC. However, when the spell ends, the target likely becomes hostile. There are many corpses suitable for *speak with dead*.

Commune only answers yes-or-no questions. A few things that the spell can reveal: Eldran Tesh was responsible for the dragon's attack; the dragon will attack again within the next 24 hours; Eldran Tesh intends to turn the people he's taken into more bloodless; Eldran Tesh and the bloodless have no intention of saving the town from the dragon; Count Saleno is relying on Tesh to save the town from the dragon.

The long casting time of *legend lore* means Horranath attacks again before the PCs can complete the spell. However, they can use it on the corpse of a defeated bloodless, producing the following result:

Images, vague and unfocused, rise up. A city in flames—Talamir, a Taldan city lost three centuries ago in a volcanic eruption. A wave of terror accompanies the vision—the desperate fear of the citizens. That sense of horror is merged with a desire to cling to life at all costs. Somehow the spirits of the dying were caught and held beyond death... and dozens of these restless spirits were drawn back from darkness and bound into this undead creature.

The dragon's attack and the bloodless are considered "secret information" for the purpose of what she'll reveal.

Sentry Dohgar (LE male dwarf warrior 2; hostile attitude; Diplomacy DC 30, Intimidate DC 16; Spot +3, Sense Motive +1) is loyal to the count and has no desire to talk to strangers. He's angry and annoyed by the soot in his beard. Despite his anger, he does not attack the PCs unless they attack him or try to get into the mansion.

The Commons

Northwestern Dalaston is largely residential. Small homes and apartments line the narrow streets. Doors are shut and windows shuttered; occasionally there is a glimpse of someone watching from a window. The reason for this fear is obvious and more than just the fire in the town—there are three corpses tossed casually in a nearby alley, covered by the falling ash.

The Commons is where most of the ordinary people of Dalaston live. Saleno's edicts state that there is to be no loitering on the streets until the state of emergency is brought to an end. Frightened by the strange events of the last week, most of the citizens of the town have barricaded themselves in their homes and have no intention of opening the doors until they hear that the dragon has been slain. Strangers are viewed with fear and suspicion, as the townsfolk worry what new misfortune may follow them.

The three corpses in the alley are just the first of many scattered about the Commons—victims of the bloodless. Most are refugees who couldn't find shelter, and who were ruthlessly cut down for disobeying the edicts; if *speak with dead* is used, the bodies can talk about the dragon's attack and their encounter with the bloodless (especially their physical strength and eerie powers).

If PCs are determined to speak to the people of the Commons, they can bang on doors and windows or even force entry. Forcing entry is automatically an act of intimidation, and the attitude of the people in the house becomes hostile.

Most of the residents of the Commons are commoners with the following statistics: N female or male human or dwarf commoner 1; unfriendly attitude; Diplomacy DC 20, Intimidate DC 14; Spot +2, Sense Motive +2.

Here are a few specific residents the PCs might encounter.

Jaq: This male human barricaded himself in his house only to realize that he'd forgotten to stockpile food. Now he's starving, but too afraid to leave. If the PCs offer him at least 5 days' worth of food, he becomes friendly toward them. While he didn't actually see the dragon, he can speak generally about recent events.

The Corrodan Family: These lawful neutral dwarves are the miner Caskal (father), Lorala (mother), and their two children (Dursk and Gwalera). Lorala is deeply paranoid, and has a hostile attitude; she is convinced the PCs are part

of a plot. In her ravings, she may mention “the advisor” and his dealings with the count, though in a way that is easy to dismiss.

Saira: This elderly woman is a scribe and bookkeeper who often volunteered at the temple of Abadar. She begins with an indifferent attitude, but any cleric of a good or neutral god popular in Taldor gets a +5 bonus to Diplomacy checks when dealing with her. She’s worried about the priests; she doesn’t believe Saleno’s accusations and fears that he has imprisoned the priests in the temple. If made friendly toward the PCs, she asks them to find out what’s going on in the temple. She can give them a temple key and even discuss the layout. She knows little about “the advisor.”

The Market

Northeastern Dalaston is home to the town’s marketplace, though it seems to be a bad time for business there. Lights burn in a few windows, but the shops are closed, and doors and windows are barred and shuttered. The open market is a shell of empty carts covered in soot and ash. A ragged tarp flutters in the faint wind, and a cracked wooden sign promises savings on pastries long since gone.

Between the edict banning loitering and the terror gripping the town, the marketplace is almost completely empty. Businesses line the market streets, including the Gorgon’s Gullet, a restaurant apparently specializing in exotic game; Sandria’s Loom, with gowns on display behind a barred window; the Blackpeak Bakery; the Workman’s Wardrobe, offering clothes for a rugged lifestyle; and others. Two stand out as having people inside:

The Blinded Basilisk: This is a tavern; its trade sign depicts the namesake reptile with a cloth bound over its deadly eyes. There are a dozen people inside, but the door is locked. Any effort to enter draws the attention of the bouncer, **Morda** (NE male dwarf warrior; hostile attitude; Diplomacy DC 30, Intimidate DC 16; Spot +3, Sense Motive +3). Morda is a foul-mouthed thug, and uses colorful terms to inform the PCs that it’s a private party, they won’t be allowed in, and that if they’re looking for charity, they should go knocking at the Day’s End. If the PCs force their way in, the other patrons become hostile. They are too frightened to fight the PCs, but insult them and demand that they leave.

Lorman’s General Store: This place is locked up tight, but the Lormans are still doing business, passing goods and coin through a delivery panel in the wall. **Gaz Lorman** (N male human expert 1; indifferent attitude; Diplomacy DC 15, Intimidate DC 13; Spot +4, Sense Motive +4) has a good selection of standard adventuring gear available, but in light of the current troubles he charges triple normal price for his wares. He drops this to double normal price if he’s friendly, or standard prices if helpful. He knows little about the town’s current situation, but can direct PCs to the Day’s End.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Dalaston is a town under siege. There are few people on the streets, and most doors are locked and barred. The regions on the map of Dalaston are keyed to the encounters that follow. However, there are also a few named locations which call out the most important and interesting buildings in the town. The Blackpeak Brewery is locked up tight and doesn’t serve any significant role in the adventure, but it’s nonetheless a prominent feature of the Market Quarter that PCs notice when they approach the Day’s End Inn. The following locations are displayed on the map.

Morian Estate: Black stone with gilded trim, this is the mansion of the powerful Morian family. The Morians maintain the Dalaston foundries, and the clan’s hammer sigil is emblazoned above the door of the manor.

Irini Estate: The Irini manor is painted in red and orange, with the sun-between-the-mountains banner of the house hanging over the door.

Blackpeak Brewery: One of the major industries in Dalaston, the brewery flies the flag of the Irini family next to its own mountain silhouette. The brewery has been shut down for the duration of the current crisis.

The Blind Eye: The finest brothel in Dalaston. (See below.)

The Day’s End Inn: Dalaston’s largest inn, also owned by the Irini family. (See below.)

The Temple of Abadar: Dalaston’s largest temple. Once it was dedicated to the Lord of Laws, but Eldran Tesh has since laid claim to it. (See below.)

The Market: This is where farmers and traveling merchants gather to sell their wares. At the moment, it is abandoned.

Dalassenos Mansion: The seat of Count Saleno. (See below.)

The Morian Foundry: Once this massive foundry was one of the pillars of Dalaston’s economy. However, it was devastated in Horranath’s first attack. The walls are shattered, the tools destroyed, and little of value remains. The hammer sigil of the Morian family is still visible, though it is broken.

The Day’s End Inn

Beneath the omnipresent ash, the walls of this inn are painted red and gold. The trade sign bears the image of a sun setting between two mountains, and the words “Day’s End—Inn and Public House.”

The Day's End is the largest inn in Dalaston, and the PCs easily find it if they wander the Market. The Irini family owns and maintains the inn, and under normal circumstances it is renowned for its fine food and spirits. However, because of the recent tragedies the Irinis opened the doors to the people who lost their homes, and the inn is packed with refugees.

If the PCs open the door, they come into chaos.

The common room is filled with a mass of people, ragged and filthy folk carrying sacks and blankets. It has the feel of a refugee camp—makeshift pallets are laid out in every corner of the room. A young man wearing a green cloak is tending to injuries; many in the crowd bear burns and contusions. A matronly woman in a green gown presses through the mob to the door. "Welcome to the Day's End, travelers. I wish it were under better circumstances. Our resources are sorely limited, but how may I serve you?"

The innkeeper who addresses the players is **Doriana Irini** (NG female human expert 3). Kind by nature, she has a helpful attitude toward the PCs to begin with. Anyone who makes a DC 20 Sense Motive check can see that she's on the edge of shock, taking care of the people around her to avoid facing a personal crisis. She is also the only non-undead person in town who knows the whereabouts of Marita. She tells the PCs that the bloodless came earlier in the day and took her son Baydon and his fiancé Marita. She doesn't know where they have been taken, but she's desperate to have her son back, and horrified at the thought of him becoming a bloodless. She believes the count is the mastermind behind the current dangers, though she doesn't understand how he could have acquired such power. In the past, Baydon had agitated against Saleno's corrupt rule, and she thinks that might be why he was taken away, but Doriana has no one to turn to for help. If the PCs offer their assistance, she begins to cry; she has little to offer, but promises to reward them as best she can.

Most of the people in the inn are dazed, frightened, or in shock. They have little interest in talking with the PCs, and little useful information to provide. However, there are two patrons who stand out from the rest.

Narsinian (CN male halfling bard 3; indifferent attitude; Diplomacy DC 15, Intimidate DC 15; Spot +6, Sense Motive +6) is an entertainer who's performed all over town, including at the Blind Eye and the Dalassenos Mansion. He's surprisingly cheerful and cares little for the suffering around

him. Due to his time as an entertainer for the mansion, he knows that the count is likely at the brothel. He also knows about Eldran Tesh; the bard was there when the stranger first visited the count. He knows that it was Tesh who convinced Saleno to close down the temple of Abadar, and he knows that prior to Tesh's arrival, the count was beginning to worry about a coup in Dalaston. Narsinian says that there was something disturbing about Tesh; any room he was in grew cold, and Narsinian swears he heard whispers in the shadows any time the stranger was about.

Justin Dukas (LN male dwarf commoner 3; indifferent attitude; Diplomacy DC 15, Intimidate DC 15; Spot +2, Sense Motive +2) was a foreman at the foundry. He's got a bad gash on his forehead. Healing his injury automatically shifts him one attitude category toward helpful (but any use of magical healing results in the PCs being deluged by pleas from other refugees). During the dragon's attack, Dukas spent a lot of time helping others rather than fleeing, and he had a good look at Horranath. Anyone who listens to his description and makes a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check can identify her as a mature adult red dragon. He also noticed the black lines of energy in her breath weapon. He is angry and bitter, but his anger is directed at the dragon; he wishes that he had the strength to hunt the beast down and kill it.

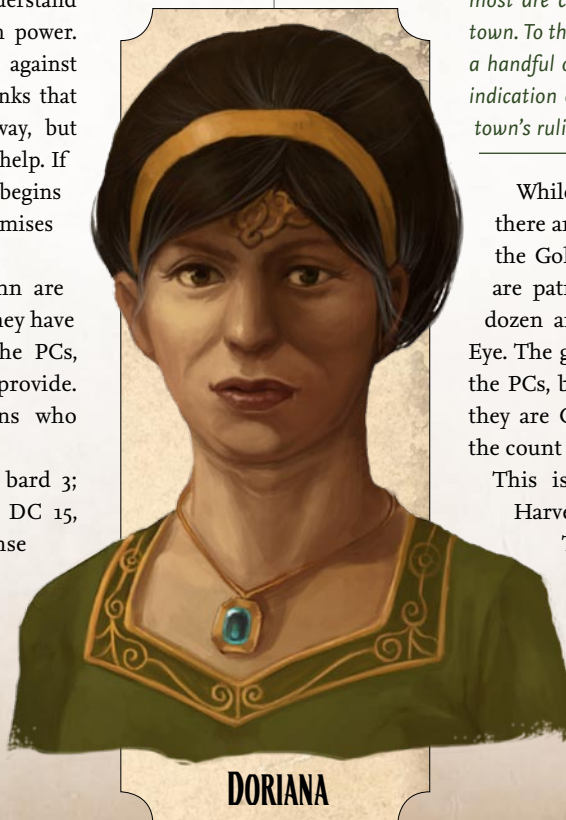
The Golden Quarter

Here are the homes of the town's wealthiest families—vast mansions surrounded by greenery and gilded designs. There are a few fine shops and taverns clearly catering to the elite, though most are closed due to the fear gripping the town. To the south is the temple of Abadar and a handful of warehouses and workshops—an indication of the working-class origins of the town's ruling family.

While the curfew remains in effect, there are more people on the streets of the Golden Quarter. The town guards are patrolling the streets, and a half-dozen are stationed outside the Blind Eye. The guards have no desire to talk to the PCs, but if won over may reveal that they are Count Saleno's escort, and that the count is in the Blind Eye.

This is a possible location for the Harvesters encounter (see below).

The guards won't interfere with the battle—they recognize that if the PCs can take down the bloodless, the watch won't stand a chance against them, and if the PCs can't defeat the bloodless, the



DORIANA

guards aren't strong enough to make a difference. If the PCs defeat the harvesters in the Golden Quarter, Gath Morian hears about it and arranges to meet them (see the Worried Patriarch encounter).

The Temple of Abadar

The walls of the temple of Abadar are covered in gilded images of judges, doctors, and sentinels, now stained gray by ash and dirt. Windows of gold-hued glass line the walls, too narrow for even a halfling to squeeze through. The doors are emblazoned with the sacred key of Abadar; a sheet of parchment is posted on the door.

The paper is a proclamation (bearing Count Saleno's seal) that the temple has been closed until it can be cleansed of the evil done by the false priests who lived there. If a PC makes a successful DC 25 Spot check, he notices bloodstains on the ground beneath the ash—dried, but suggesting a significant battle in the area sometime over the last few days. A successful DC 27 Survival check confirms that three people entered the temple within the last few hours.

The only physical entrance to the temple is through the front door, though there are many small windows as well. The doors and windows are sealed with *arcane lock*. When the PCs enter the temple, continue to Part Two of the adventure.

The Blind Eye

This lovely house lies directly across from the largest manors in the Golden Quarter. It is painted a deep crimson, and red curtains are drawn across the windows. A sign hangs above the door bearing the gilded image of a closed eye.

The Blind Eye is a brothel, and it is doing excellent business. The people of Dalaston are afraid, and a little debauchery is one way to escape that fear. Merchants mingle in the common room, waiting for an opening in the busy schedule.

As soon as the PCs enter, **Lady Black** (NE female human expert 4; indifferent attitude; Spot +8, Sense Motive +9) approaches them. This elderly madam warns the PCs that there is a wait of at least an hour, and inquires as to their preferences. If the PCs want information, they have to change her attitude. Count Saleno is in the grand suite upstairs, and if Lady Black's attitude becomes helpful, she tells them where to find him and allows them to speak to him.

A 5-year-old boy named **Stil** (NG male human commoner 1; friendly attitude; Diplomacy DC 10, Intimidate DC 11; Spot +2, Sense Motive +1) accompanies Lady Black. His parents were killed when the dragon attacked, and he's moved in with "Granny Black." He's scared and confused, but is also fascinated by the exotic PCs. He'll pick the PC who seems most sympathetic and ask if she's "gonna kill

FINDING MARITA

Doriana tells the PCs that Marita has been taken by the bloodless. The PCs can locate Eldran Tesh by talking to Count Saleno or Gath Morian, or by following the bloodless. However, depending on the spells the PCs have prepared, they may have other options. Marita is unconscious, so *sending* won't help, and Eldran Tesh's lair is protected by *mage's private sanctum*, which blocks *screaming*. However, *discern location* reveals that she is in the temple of Abadar, and *locate creature* can detect her.

the dragon." Should the PCs try to take the boy away, he'll be confused and scared; if he can't be with his mother, he at least wants to be with his "granny." If the party is willing to use magic to bring back the boy's parents, there will be a joyous reunion. The parents have no reward to give but their thanks, but Lady Black offers a free hour with any employee of the Eye (gritting her teeth all the while).

Notable prostitutes of the Blind Eye include:

Zoria (N female human commoner 3; indifferent attitude; Diplomacy DC 15, Intimidate DC 14; Bluff +9, Spot +1, Sense Motive +7) is a Varisian immigrant and the count's favorite. She despises Saleno, who regularly abuses her in their sessions, but she is afraid of him. While she tries to hide this, a successful Sense Motive check (opposed by her Bluff) means the PC senses the hatred Zoria feels as she sits next to the count. She charges 1 gp/hour.

Eudokia (N female dwarf commoner 2; indifferent attitude; Diplomacy DC 20, Intimidate DC 13; Bluff +6, Spot +1, Sense Motive +6) is friendly toward any dwarf and asks questions about what's going on in the world beyond Dalaston. She likes jokes, though her humor tends to be ribald. She charges 6 sp/hour.

Galdian (N male half-orc commoner 2; indifferent attitude; Diplomacy DC 20, Intimidate DC 12; Bluff +7, Spot +3, Sense Motive +5) is a muscular and surprisingly handsome half-orc. He is friendly toward any female PC, but he doesn't know much about what's going on outside the Eye. He charges 5 sp/hour.

Should the PCs decide to speak with **Count Saleno Dalassenos** (NE male human aristocrat 4; hostile attitude; Diplomacy DC 25, Intimidate DC 15; Bluff +9, Spot +1, Sense Motive +1), he is resting in the grand suite and accompanied by Zoria, who watches silently from the bed. Saleno is in his early 40s, overweight, and dressed in silks soiled by sweat and wine, his hair lank and unwashed. He is furious when the PCs intrude on his privacy, and it takes swift diplomacy or intimidation to speak with him. He explains that he knows exactly what he's doing, that he has a plan to protect the town from the dragon, and that the bloodless are a part of it. He insists that the bloodless are

still citizens of the town, magically empowered to protect it, and that all of the troubles were due to the excesses of the priests of Abadar, whose greed drew the dragon. All of these things are lies and he knows it, as can be determined with skill or spell. Saleno doesn't know what the bloodless are, where the dragon came from, or how to prevent it from returning. He simply knows that Eldran Tesh has promised to deal with the problem, and he is content to leave it in the hands of his new advisor while he focuses on carousing. He knows that Eldran Tesh is in the temple of Abadar, preparing to create more bloodless; however, it takes *detect thoughts*, *charm person*, or remarkable work with Diplomacy or Intimidate to get him to reveal this. If challenged, he haughtily responds that royal Taldan blood flows through his veins, this town depends on him, and the PCs could certainly kill him, but doing so would doom the town to chaos and anarchy (all of which are lies, though he may believe them to be true). He believes he and Tesh will solve the town's problems, and Dalaston will grow strong again. Saleno has no interest in bartering with the PCs or asking for their help. He has convinced himself that he is doing the right thing by working with Tesh, and cannot let himself think otherwise.

The Ruins

Once this was the industrial center of Dalaston. Now it lies in ruins. Some of the buildings are shattered, scattering chunks of stone across the ruined roads, but it was fire that doomed this place. Everything is scorched and charred, and there are places where stone has melted under severe heat. Ugly black smoke still rises from many buildings. Strangely, the district feels slightly colder than the rest of the town. The blackened stone is chill to the touch. There is a faint, cool breeze, and as it passes through the ruins, it seems to moan.

Once home to the Morian foundry and the town's smithies and ironworks, this area was devastated by Horranath's attack. Anything that could be looted has been already, and the dragon has left little that can be used even as shelter. There are several facts that the PCs can glean using the following skills.

Knowledge (nature) (DC 15): The damage is the work of a powerful dragon, which smashed buildings with claws and tail and set fires with its breath.

Knowledge (nature) (DC 20): The dragon would have to be at least Huge in size.

Knowledge (nature) (DC 25): The damage suggests that the flame was more than just fire, almost like the material was corrupted somehow by pure evil.

Knowledge (religion) (DC 15): There is a distinct charge of negative energy in this area—an unnatural imbalance of forces.

Knowledge (religion) (DC 20): This seems to be strongest in the area where the fire damage is most severe. Assuming the flames and the negative energy are linked, it's possible that the soul of a creature slain by the fire would be tainted, destroyed, or possibly bound by the creature who created the flames.

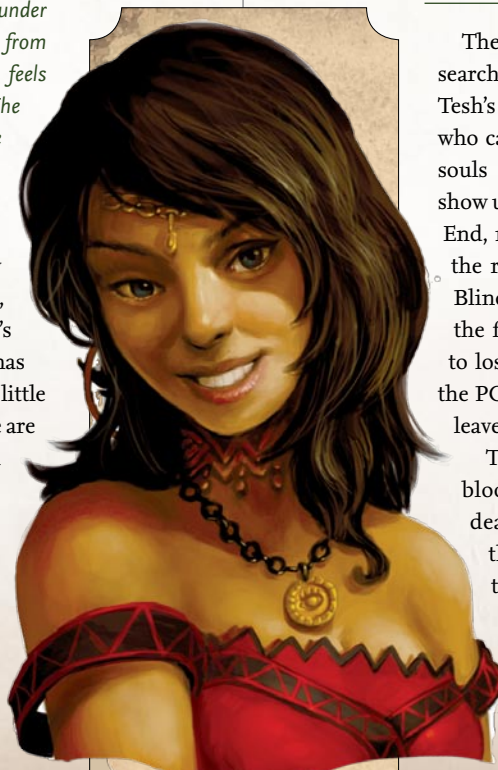
The most useful thing the PCs can do is use *legend lore*. As the dragon was close to this site, the casting time is 1d4×10 minutes. This reveals the Legend of Horranath (see sidebar).

Siteless Encounters

Three encounters in Dalaston aren't keyed to particular locations; they should happen when it's appropriate to advance the story.

The Harvesters (EL 15)

Onlookers falls silent as three people advance. The newcomers are pale, their skin, clothes, and hair covered in ash, and they have done nothing to protect themselves from the choking smog. Even their eyes are blank white. The apparent leader is a dwarf, and he carries a set of manacles linked by a heavy chain. His pale gaze is utterly expressionless.



ZORIA

The bloodless are roaming the town searching for suitable victims for Eldran Tesh's magic—young, physically fit virgins who can serve as vessels for the displaced souls of Talamir. The bloodless might show up in the common room of the Day's End, ready to pick a victim from among the refugees, or follow the PCs into the Blind Eye (where some young noble in the foyer is waiting for the opportunity to lose his virginity), or cross paths with the PCs on the streets or as the PCs try to leave the town.

The townsfolk are terrified of the bloodless, and they have seen the deadly power of these undead child-things brought to bear against those who oppose them. As such, the citizens are paralyzed by fear and do not try to help or hinder the PCs.

In life, the bloodless dwarf was Gorn Morian, scion of the

Morian family. He acts as the spokesman for the group, examining all of the people in the area until he finds a suitable virgin. At this point, he instructs the virgin to submit to being manacled and to accompany the trio, using *charm person* if necessary to enforce his will. If the PCs talk to him, he states that this sacrifice is necessary to protect the town, and that he and his comrades are all that stand between the town and the return of the dragon. He does not explain this reasoning or exactly what fate will befall the virgin, but merely reiterates that the sacrifice is necessary. He will not reveal the fate of Marita or others who have been taken. Gorn's father Gath is searching for him (see the Worried Patriarch encounter), but Gorn doesn't know this, nor would he care if he did.

Gorn has no fear, and cannot be intimidated or bribed. Even if the PCs somehow bring Count Saleno on the scene, the bloodless serve Eldran Tesh, not the count. Should the PCs interfere, the bloodless give one warning before initiating combat. Once combat begins, they are utterly ruthless and strike without mercy.

The other two bloodless include humans Chene Diolane (the girl encountered at the gate, unless she was killed in that encounter, in which case another bloodless takes her place) and Theo Irini. If the encounter takes place in the Day's End, Doriana charges at Theo, begging him to explain what has happened and if her son Baydon is safe; unless someone interferes, Theo knocks her to the ground a casual blow.

Creatures: While they do not seek combat, the three bloodless act with brutal efficiency once the battle begins, and don't negotiate if the PCs take hostages or try to talk their way out of combat.

BLOODLESS (3)

CR 12

hp 137 (Gorn Morian, commander power set), 137 (Theo Irini, terror power set), 157 (Chene Diolane, brawler power set); see page 30

TACTICS

Before Combat Chene has *mage armor* active (AC 28, touch 22, flat-footed 20).

During Combat Chene begins with *waves of exhaustion* to weaken as many foes as possible, then attempts to melee, preferably engaging a lightly armored caster. Gorn and Theo try to step back and fight at range, using *fear* and *confusion* to disrupt enemy actions. Gorn may hold *dispel magic* to counter enemy casters, while Theo uses *feblemind* to cripple anyone who appears capable of channeling positive energy.

Morale The bloodless are fearless and fight to the last man. The last survivor, however, flees if reduced below 25 hit points, and runs for the temple of Abadar to warn Eldran Tesh of the newcomers. This could result in Tesh sending an additional harvester patrol to engage the PCs.

THE LEGEND OF HORRANATH

The city of Talamir was the jewel of eastern Taldor. Talamir's mines reached deep into the World's Edge Mountains, and there the miners found gems of extraordinary quality and size. Greatest of them all was the *Stone of Eternity*, a gem that drew bright souls to it. Some said that there was a paradise within the stone, a heaven for those who could find their way within. The lord of Taldor, Eldran Tesh, took the stone as his own, swearing to find a way to create a paradise for all of his people. But darker powers stirred when the stone was pulled from the mountain, and Blackpeak exploded in flame. The lava swept down onto Talamir, but something came with it—the dragon Horrnanath. She swooped down upon the bright city, spreading darkness before her. No spell could touch her, nor could arrow pierce her hide, and the towers fell before her flames. Finally she faced Eldran Tesh himself, and swallowed prince and stone alike. Tainted by a thousand murders and the heat in her belly, the gem became the *necropyre stone*, and the soul of anyone slain by her fires was drawn into the stone and trapped for eternity. As the lava flowed over Talamir, Horrnanath returned to her lair. Warmed and sustained by the tormented souls within her, she settled down to a sleep of centuries, slowly digesting the tortured dead of Talamir.



COUNT SALENO

If the bloodless are defeated, the humanoid hosts can be restored to life with *resurrection* (*raise dead* is insufficient). Doriana is beside herself if Theo is restored, and inconsolable if he is killed. Gath Morian (see the Worried Patriarch encounter) offers a reward for the return of his son, dead or alive. Chene's parents were killed in the dragon's attack and she has no one waiting for her.

The Mad Priest

A haggard dwarf approaches. His white beard is unkempt, braids half-finished, and his eyes are wild. His robe was once white, and there is a hint of gold trim beneath it, but it's covered with dirt and ash. "Beware!" he rasps. "Fire will cleanse the filth from this town!"

Once the high priest of Abadar, Jolar Loran has been driven mad by his struggle with Eldran Tesh and the death of his fellow priests. Tesh chose to let him live; his crazed antics support Tesh's claim that it was the priests of Abadar who brought doom upon the town. Now he wanders aimlessly.

Anyone who makes a successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes that Jolar is wearing the robes (but not the holy symbol) of a priest of Abadar. His madness is natural, and while a *heal* spell calms him for a short time, he has suffered so much that there is little left to his mind, and he quickly relapses.

Jolar gladly shares his thoughts with the PCs. His words are cryptic, however, as he rambles about fire and doom. If someone asks about Eldran Tesh or what brought the doom to Dalaston, he says:

"Ancient evil came, and ancient evil followed. The victim brought the beast that laid him low. He killed my brethren, and now he resides amid their blood, upon the golden seat itself."

Anyone who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check (followers of Abadar automatically succeed) realizes that this probably refers to the high priest's chair in the temple of Abadar. If people press for information on Eldran himself, the priest adds:

"He came in the shape of a man, but thousands howl within him, the dead thirsting for vengeance and new life. He made me listen... listen to their cries... and I hear them still."

Beyond this, he simply rambles about death and fire until he eventually wanders on his way. A person

using *detect thoughts* on him sees a vision of a Huge red dragon attacking the town, specifically the temple of Abadar, though that building is untouched by dragonfire—clearly this event did not happen.

The Worried Patriarch

This dwarf stands out from the refugees and the frightened townsfolk. He must be employing cosmetic magic, for no soot can find purchase on his fine clothing or oiled hair. His expression is that of a man used to having his way, and his jewels speak of his wealth.

Gath Morian (LN male dwarf aristocrat 6; indifferent attitude; Diplomacy DC 15, Intimidate DC 18; Spot +8, Sense Motive +8) is the patriarch of the Morian family and one of the most powerful men in town. He still has wealth and pride, and intends to rebuild his property and business. If the PCs attract attention (by fighting bloodless or engaging in a similarly dramatic action) he seeks them out; otherwise he may be found walking the streets in search of his son Gorn, or in the Blind Eye trying to forget his troubles.

While the loss of the foundry is a tragedy, Morian is more concerned about his son, who was taken by Eldran Tesh and transformed into a bloodless (see Part Two of this adventure). Morian wants his son back, and he wants Eldran Tesh punished for what he has done. If the PCs claim that they are capable of this, Morian offers them treasures from his ancestral vault, one for each goal they achieve (returning his son's body, returning Gorn to life, and driving Tesh from town). The treasures

he has available include the following: a +2 *throwing warhammer*, a +1 *heavy steel fire resistance shield*, a *belt of giant strength +4*, and a *cape of the mountebank*.

Adjust these treasures to better suit the needs of the PCs; they should be appealing, but not overshadow the treasures to be found in the dragon's hoard.

Gath Morian is a stern and serious man, hard and unforgiving. He wants vengeance, but he is concerned with personal revenge, not restitution for the city.

PART TWO: THE BLOOD CULT

Across Taldor, the priests of Abadar are known as healers and mediators. The temple of Abadar provides far more than religious services; it is a hospice and a courthouse,



THE MAD PRIEST

a place of refuge for those in need. But it seems that a dark power has claimed Dalaston's sanctuary—the place feels tainted.

The temple of Abadar has always been a pillar of Dalaston. In addition to performing religious services, Abadar's priests heal the sick, counsel the troubled, and serve as mediators and judges. In the past, the temple has been both the spiritual center of the city and its courthouse. Now the priests are dead, and the building serves as Eldran Tesh's seat of power. While the temple is a large building, Tesh uses little of it and the other rooms are left as they were when the priests lived here. The priests are dead and the bloodless have no need of beds, food, or other comforts. The map shows the full temple, but this part of the adventure can be resolved with just three encounters. Meanwhile, greater trouble is on its way to Dalaston. The dragon Horranath is already flying toward the town, and as the PCs finish the confrontation with Tesh, she begins to lay waste to the city.

When the PCs open the temple's main door, read the following:

Just beyond the threshold is a dark screen of swirling energy that completely blocks the view of anything beyond it. The room is utterly silent.

The dark barrier is the manifestation of Eldran Tesh's *mage's private sanctum*. It is harmless and intangible, but no sound or sight can penetrate it. PCs can make DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) checks to recognize that it is a manifestation of negative energy; PCs who can channel energy can make Knowledge (religion) checks instead. Despite the disturbing image, it is harmless. As PCs step through the curtain, they feel a slight chill and hear the whispers of babbling voices.

There are no sources of light anywhere in the temple. Unless the PCs produce their own light, all areas are dark.

T1: Entry Hall

The walls of Abadar's temple are covered with mosaic images of the fruits of civilization—law, justice, and commerce. The tall, narrow windows are filled with panes of yellow glass, powdered on the outside with ash. All is silent and still. A set of golden doors at the far end of the hall bears the seal of Abadar, stained with dried blood. Smaller doors stand to either side, unmarked and unstained.

Any PC who examines the area finds old bloodstains along the floor, remnants of the battle when Tesh drove the priests

from the temple. A successful DC 30 Listen check means the PCs can hear very faint chanting coming from beyond the double doors, though the muffled sound suggests the voices are in a room beyond the next.

T2: Antechamber (EL 14)

The golden doors open to reveal a small antechamber, with another pair of doors directly ahead. Chiseled into the floor of the antechamber is a strange magical symbol reminiscent of a skull and dragon.

Voices beyond the doors chant a grim and ominous message. If a significant amount of noise is made in this chamber it alerts the people on the other side, who then have time to prepare and ready themselves to attack the moment the door is opened. The creature living here and the trap on the floor also give those in the next room extra time.

Creatures: As soon as the party enters, the hungry mist rises up out of the skull on the floor and moves onto the space occupied by the nearest PC.

What at first seemed just a shadow now coalesces and surges forward, becoming a coherent mass of dark mist. Its roiling cloud is thick and cloying, like wet smoke, and smells faintly of blood.

HUNGRY MIST

CR 14

NE fine undead (incorporeal, swarm)

Init +5; **Senses** Blindsight 30 ft, Darkvision 60 ft; Listen +26, Spot +26

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 11
(+1 Dex, +4 Deflection)

hp 139 (20d12+9)

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +13

Immune incorporeal immunities, swarm immunities, undead immunities

OFFENSE

Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee swarm (5d6 plus blood drain)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft. (shapeable)

TACTICS

During Combat The hungry mist moves to where it can engulf as many opponents as possible. It has no sense of tactics, and simply seeks to feed its endless appetite.

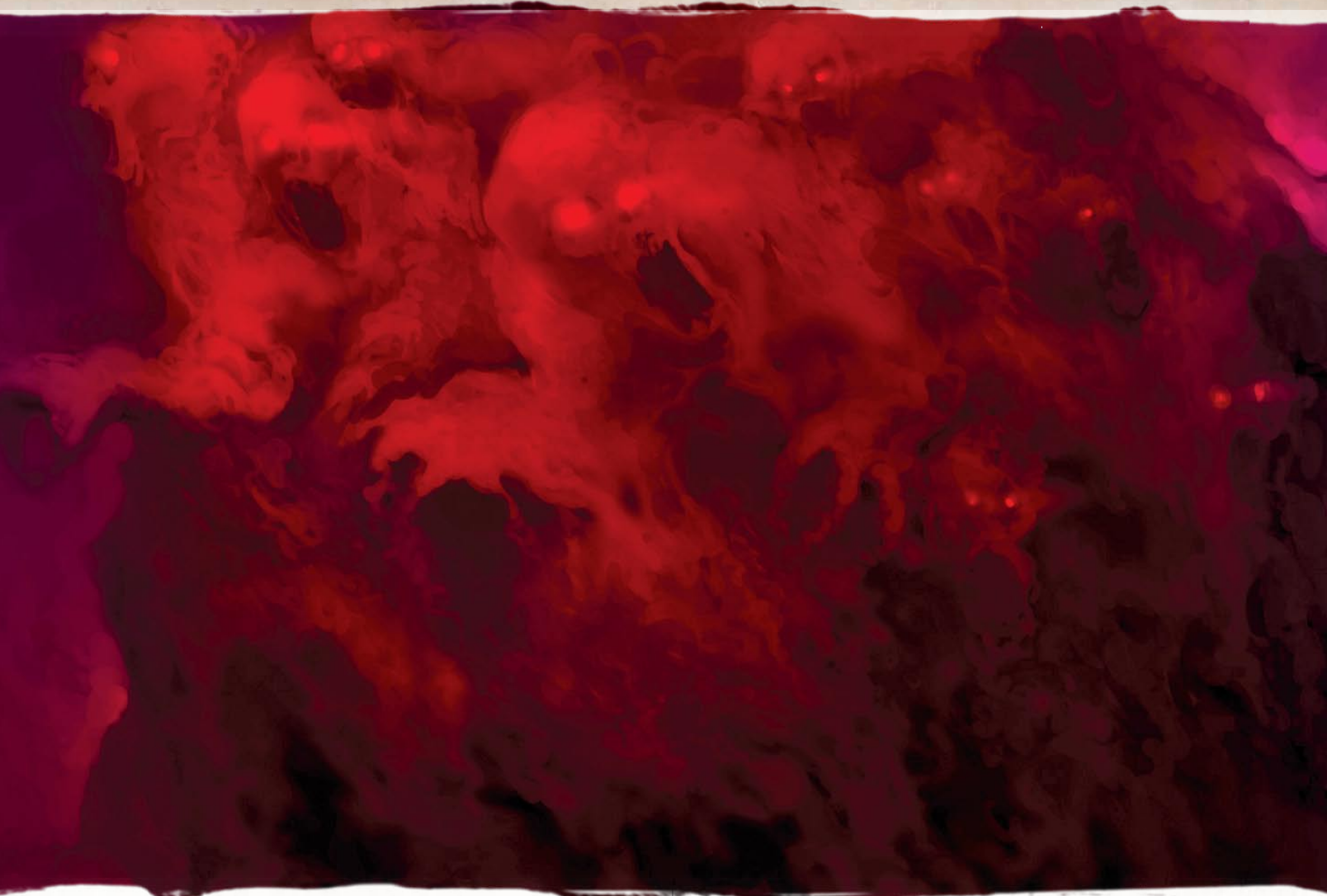
Morale The mist fights until it is destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18



GATH MORIAN



Base Atk +10; **Grp** —

Feats Ability Focus (distraction), Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness (3)

SQ blood drain, distraction, hive mind, immune to weapon damage, scent, swarm traits

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Drain (Ex) Whenever the hungry mist damages a victim with its swarm attack, it inflicts 1 point of Constitution drain. With each such successful attack, it gains 5 temporary hit points.

Distraction (Ex) A creature that begins its turn in the same square as the hungry mist must make a Fortitude save (DC 21) or be nauseated for 1 round. In order to cast a spell while within the hungry mist, a character must succeed on a Spellcraft check (DC 21 + spell level).

Hive Mind (Ex) Any hungry mist with at least 20 hit points forms a hive mind, giving it an Intelligence of 6. When a hungry mist is reduced below this hit point threshold, it becomes mindless.

A hungry mist forms from a host of restless, angry spirits, typically the result of a catastrophe that suddenly killed hundreds. Mindless in its fury, this ghostly swarm seeks to drain the life from any creature it encounters. The mist feeds on blood, drawing it through its victim's skin, leaving oozing purple-black wounds like cracked blisters.

Trap: The seal on the floor sucks life energy out of living creatures and feeds it to the hungry mist. The symbol is obvious to anyone who can see; the Search DC indicates the difficulty of recognizing that it is a trap. The seal covers the floor of the entire antechamber.

MAXIMIZED VAMPIRIC TOUCH TRAP

CR 7

Type Magic; **Search** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (living creatures only); **Reset** automatic (every 1d4+1 rounds, until disarmed).

Effect spell effect (CL 11 *vampiric touch*, 60 damage, damage is given to the hungry mist as temporary hit points).

Door: The double doors on the opposite side of the antechamber are sealed with an *arcane lock* (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 38). There is no physical lock, and a DC 20 Disable Device check breaks the seal. Bashing the door alerts everyone in the next room.

T3: Feast of Blood (EL 16)

The grand hall of the temple was built to serve as a courtroom and place of worship. Today it is a slaughterhouse. Fresh blood covers the floor around the altar, and the stench of blood is heavy in the air. A dwarf lies atop the altar, and a pale man stands over him, a long knife in one hand. This stranger is wreathed in shadowy shapes, and these shadows writhe around him and moan as he raises the knife. He is not alone—three bloodless guards are spread around the room, and the pews are filled with living people who seem drugged or dazed; they stare blankly at the altar, waiting their turn.

If the PCs used especially noisy effects in the battle with the hungry mist, Eldran Tesh is waiting for them, and he and his allies unleash spell-like abilities as soon as the door is opened. Otherwise, the PCs have the element of surprise or a chance to negotiate. If the PCs do not immediately attack, the chanting ceases when they enter the room, and Tesh lowers his arm and addresses them.

“What is this? You are not of this place. Leave now. Leave me to my work. You can still escape your doom.”

Tesh is willing to let them leave; he'd rather avoid a fight. If they demand the release of the prisoners, he shakes his head.

“My people have suffered in ways you cannot understand, and only this virgin blood can ease their suffering and let them walk the world once more. This is destiny, and you will not stand in its way.”

Tesh is willing to bargain. While he doesn't want to lose all of his potential recruits, he is willing to use them as bargaining chips; he could certainly kill many of them in a single burst of negative energy, and if he learns that the PCs are trying to rescue Marita, he can single her out for a necrotic blast. He is not interested in talking at length. He emphasizes that he's doing what's best for his long-suffering people, and he is certain that the PCs cannot help him other than by leaving him to his work. If the PCs try to stall or talk too long, he seizes the initiative and attacks. His initial attitude is hostile; if the PCs can shift his opinion to at least indifferent, he agrees to let Marita and Baydon Irini go—if the PCs are agree to abandon the others in the pews. If the PCs take this offer, Horranath attacks the city as the PCs are leaving the temple (Part Three of this adventure). If the PCs decide to fight, they have to contend with the drugged innocents in the midst

of the battle (all are 1st-level aristocrats or experts) and the bloody floor (see Development).

Development: The pooled blood from the recent victims is charged with negative energy. Any undead standing on the blood gains fast healing 5.

Treasure: The four bloodless each wear 100–400 gp worth of jewelry. As they are family members of people in town, trying to sell this jewelry here is likely to generate ill will.

ELDRAN TESH CR 14

NE Medium unique undead

Init +7; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +19, **Spot** +17.

DEFENSE

AC 27, **touch** 21, **flat-footed** 24

(+4 armor, +4 deflection, +3 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 203 (14d12+112)

Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +17

Defensive Abilities +4 turn resistance; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, polymorph, undead immunities

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee touch +12/+12 **melee touch** (5d6 negative energy damage) or

slam +12/+12 (1d6+7)

Ranged necrotic blast +10/+10 **ranged touch** (5d6 negative energy damage)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 2/day

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)

At will—*blink*, *charm person* (DC 19), *fear* (DC 21)

3/day—*enervation*, *quicken blink*, *vampiric touch* (7d6)

2/day—*greater dispel magic*, *teleport*

1/day—*circle of death* (DC 24), *finger of death* (DC 25), *mage's private sanctum*, *nightmare* (DC 23)

TACTICS

Before Combat If he is aware of the PCs, Tesh has *blink* active when they arrive. Otherwise, he uses it immediately when threatened.

During Combat Tesh attempts to stay out of melee range, striking with necrotic blasts and using *greater dispel magic* to disrupt enemies while bloodless engage the enemy. Once he has had time to evaluate the threat, he closes to melee range and employs *vampiric touch*, *circle of death*, and channel negative energy. He'd rather not kill all the people in the pews (as he still hopes to turn them into bloodless) but he won't let this get in the way of victory.

Morale If brought to fewer than 50 hit points, he attempts to flee, either with *teleport* or using *quicken blink* to pass through a wall.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +5; **Grapple** +10

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will,



Lightning Reflexes, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (*blink*)

Skills Concentration +15, Diplomacy +17, Hide +15, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +13, Listen +19, Move Silently +16, Search +16, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +10, Spot +17

Languages Common

SQ bloodless ritual, spectral aura, undead potency, unnatural speed

Gear *bracers of armor* +4, *cloak of resistance* +2, jewelry worth 10,000 gp. All of Tesh's gear appears very old but well-maintained (it dates back to when he was alive at the fall of Talamir). An appraiser with knowledge of Taldan history can identify the jewelry as belonging to the royal house of Taldor; once identified as such it can be sold to representatives of the crown for 50% above its listed value (this transaction is considered a reward for its return rather than an actual purchase).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bloodless Ritual (Su) Tesh can convert a virgin humanoid that has nearly bled to death (at –1 to –9 hp) into a bloodless vessel. This takes 1 hour and costs him 20 hit points.

Channel Negative Energy (Su) This ability deals 7d6 damage to living creatures in a 30-foot burst (Will half DC 30) and heals undead in the area for 7d6.

Host to Many (Ex) If Tesh is turned by positive energy, he does not flee; instead, the turning drives away some of the many spirits inhabiting his body and protecting him. He loses his spectral aura ability for the duration of the turning. A second successful turn attempt affects him normally. If the first turn attempt would normally destroy him, it instead permanently removes his spectral aura ability (though over time he can acquire more souls and rebuild it). These countless spirits flavor his other powers; for example, when he teleports, he transforms into a cloud of spirits, his necrotic blasts look like ribbons of shadow, and so on.

Spectral Aura (Ex) Tesh is surrounded by a wreath of dark energy made of a host of insubstantial spirits. This provides him with all-around vision and blindsight within 30 feet.

Undead Potency (Ex) Tesh applies his Charisma bonus to each Hit Die to calculate his hit points, in the same way that a

living creature adds its Constitution bonus to each Hit Die.
Unnatural Speed (Ex) When Tesh makes a full attack action, he gets an additional attack at his full attack bonus.
Will of the Multitude (Ex) Once per day, Tesh can convert any failed Will saving throw into an automatic success.

BLOODLESS VESSELS (3) CR 12

hp 123 (1 with terror power set, 2 with brawler power set); see page 30

TACTICS

Before Combat If the bloodless are aware of the threat, the brawlers activate *mage armor* (AC 28, touch 22, flat-footed 24). Otherwise, they do this as soon as possible.
During Combat The brawlers close the distance and use *waves of exhaustion* to weaken as many foes as possible. They then try to keep the PCs away from Tesh and the terror bloodless. The terror bloodless uses *fear* and *feblemind* to disrupt the enemy, then attacks with necrotic blasts.
Morale The bloodless fight until slain.

If Tesh is killed, there is a horrible cry as his body dissolves into dark energy—a massive pillar filled with screaming spectral faces. His bloodless servants jerk, and suddenly dark energy flows out of them and into the central column; they collapse to the ground, dead. Shadows flow through the walls as the essence is drawn from the bloodless all across the city. Then the mass of shadow flows up through the roof and is gone (leaving behind Tesh's items). If Tesh flees by using *teleport*, a similar effect happens, and the bloodless fall dead. Either way, when Tesh leaves, the bloodless are no more—and then the dragon attacks.

PART THREE : THE DRAGON STRIKES

For a moment all is still and peaceful. Then the ceiling above shatters, burning rock smashing down across the floor. A vast shape moves across the sky—a winged beast spitting flames onto the world below—and then it is gone. The dragon has returned.

Eldran Tesh is defeated, but Horranath is attacking the city. The PCs may race to find shelter, try to fight the dragon, or help those in need. Whatever the PCs want to do, the first challenge is dealing with the drugged victims. Assuming they survived the battle with Eldran Tesh, there are 20 innocents in the temple with the PCs, and the flames from the burning remnants of the ceiling soon spread. The victims follow if they are led, but they need to be pushed and prodded. *Delay poison* and *neutralize poison* can counter the effects of the drug.

Maintain the dragon's attack for as long as it is interesting. The goal is not to create a direct encounter but to emphasize the chaos and fear gripping the city and the sheer power of the dragon. What follows are some sample encounters in the town during and after the dragon's

attack. The PCs don't need to see all of these, and they may skip all of them if they choose to follow the dragon to her lair. If they opt to hide and wait out the attack, Horranath eventually leaves, and the adventure moves to Part Four.

The Gates: The great gates of Dalaston are sealed. There are no bloodless here, just guards with crossbows and halberds facing off against a mob of desperate commoners. People are screaming and begging for the soldiers to open the gates, but the guards stand firm; they have strict orders from Count Saleno to keep the gate closed. Even in the face of the dragon, they intend to do their sworn duty. If the PCs wish to fight the guards, they prevail with little difficulty. They can negotiate with the officer in charge, **Sergeant Johgri** (LN female dwarf; hostile attitude; Diplomacy DC 30, Intimidate DC 18; Perception +3, Sense Motive +1; Will Save +5, +2 against spells or spell-like abilities), who is frightened, but reacting to her fear by clinging stubbornly to her orders, convinced that the count has a plan. If they appeal to the commoners, treat the mob as a single creature (unfriendly attitude; Diplomacy DC 20, Intimidate DC 16; Sense Motive +2; Will Save +4). Like a swarm, it is immune to single-target spells such as *charm person*, but Diplomacy or Intimidate can convince the people to disperse.

Dalassenos Mansion: The spire of Dalassenos Mansion is aflame, the gate is broken open, and inside guards struggle with looters in the smoke-filled halls. The mansion is in chaos. If the PCs ask about the count, a sentry screams that he's "Still at his damned brothel!" If the PCs try to help, they can easily bring a close to the looting, or they can grab art objects worth a total of 2d6×100 gp for themselves before the smoke is bad enough to force them to leave.

The Market: The Marketplace hasn't been hit as hard as the Golden Quarter, but there is fire, smoke, crushed buildings, and the stench of burning flesh. People cry for help within burning buildings. The Blinded Basilisk has been smashed, and the bouncer Morda is a mass of burnt flesh. Lorman's General Store is aflame, and Lorman is desperately trying to save his shop.

The Day's End Inn: The front wall of the Day's End has collapsed, and those refugees who remain are huddled in the back peering fearfully at the sky. A number of burned corpses are scattered across the floor of the common room, including the innkeeper, Dorianna. Narsinian's left leg has been crushed, and he's in shock. Justin Dukas is also in shock, holding Dorianna and crying. If the PCs succeeded in rescuing Marita and Baydon Irini, Baydon is devastated by this sight. He pleads with the PCs to restore his mother to life, certain they must have the power to perform such a miracle; unfortunately she was killed by Horranath's breath weapon and the woman's soul is trapped in the dragon's *necropyre crystal*. Depending on the response of the heroes, Baydon reluctantly accepts their answer or becomes furious and orders them to leave



(Marita stands with her fiancé, though they may be able to convince her to come with them).

The Golden Quarter: The dragon seems to concentrate her attacks on the Golden Quarter. Mansions are in flames, and a beautiful house collapses in a burst of smoke as the PCs watch. Merchants and their servants flood the streets, trying to escape with their fine goods. All around are corpses, flesh and finery alike charred and destroyed. This is a likely place for the Flyby Attack encounter.

The Blind Eye: Little is left of this place. The house has collapsed, and only a few pieces of wall are still standing. The scorched corpse of the house madam is barely recognizable in the rubble. A faint cry from within belongs to the prostitute Zoria, who is sitting by the corpse of Count Saleno, dead by her hand. When the disaster struck, all the outrage and hatred within her finally found its outlet; if the world's ending, why not punish the wicked? While Saleno may have had it coming, it means that there is no central authority in Dalaston in this time of crisis. People would listen to Gath Morian or Baydon Irini, but the PCs have to inform them of the count's death and push them to act—and the question is which one of the townsfolk to go to.

The Orphan: This can take place anywhere in town. Stil, the boy from the Blind Eye, hides behind a broken wall, his face stained with soot and tears. His parents were killed the first time the dragon attacked, and this new attack killed his “grandmother,” the brothel's madam. He's nearly mad with fear and begs the PCs to kill the dragon and bring his daddy back.

The Mad Priest Again: This can take place anywhere in town. A figure emerges from a burning building near the PCs—a dwarf wreathed in flames. It seems impossible that he could still be alive, and it quickly becomes clear that he isn't, as his bones are visible beneath the flickering fires. The former priest of Abadar persists beyond death to share the final knowledge he has gained about Horranath. This encounter can occur anywhere. If the PCs attack him, he puts up no resistance. If they listen, he speaks.

“The beast we fight is blessed by air and fire. No flame will touch her, and she cannot be fought in the air. If you would avenge us, you must find her where she goes to ground.”

He can't provide details about Horranath's abilities, and if the PCs try to get too much information, he dies as described below. However, if they ask where she can be found, he answers.

“Horranath slumbers beneath the burning Blackpeak. You may find the path to her lair in the ruins of jeweled Talamir, at the very heart of the Dragonscar. Cut the stone from her gullet... and free those she has taken.”

He has to struggle to get these words out. When he finishes, he transforms into a column of flame and is swept up into the sky, flying northward toward the dragon and the necropyre crystal she carries in her belly.

Gath Morian: This can take place anywhere in town. Surrounded by men who wear his hammer crest on their livery, this wealthy dwarf still appears neat and clean despite the ash and smoke. His house is ablaze and he is furious. He demands that the PCs escort him to safety, promising they will be rewarded for their efforts after the attack passes. The PCs may decide to help him, pass him by, or appeal to his civic duty and ask why he and his men aren't doing more to help the other people of Dalaston. This last option requires a DC 25 Diplomacy check, and the speaking PC gets a +5 to the check if he mentions that the count is dead. If successful, Morian's eyes widen as he sees the possibilities, and he orders his men to help him search for people in need.

Flyby Attack: The dragon passes overhead, breathing fire as she does so, possibly catching the PCs in its area. Horranath won't stop moving, for as long as she remains airborne the *necropyre crystal* gives her extra protection. This encounter is an opportunity for the PCs to see just how powerful she is when flying. Even if the PCs manage to hurt her, she keeps moving; if something down there is capable of harming her, the last thing she wants to do is stop and lose her protection. If necessary, she flees the city and returns to her lair. Otherwise, Horranath uses Flyby Attack and breathes as she passes, enjoying the panic her frightful presence causes the weaklings on the ground.

PART FOUR : THE DRAGONSCAR

Faced with so many deaths and the comprehensive destruction of their town, the surviving community leaders beg the PCs to defeat Horranath, and ask if some of her hoard could be used to help Dalaston. It is clear the townsfolk lack the means to stop her, and once the dragon is done toying with little Dalaston, she is likely to turn her gaze upon Maheto.

Between the clues from the mad priest and other sources (such as *legend lore* and talking with the leaders about their knowledge of the dragon), the PCs should realize that to find the dragon's lair they need to go to the Dragonscar, the burnt and barren wasteland surrounding the ruins of Talamir. Based on the warning from the dead priest and their own encounter with the flying dragon, they should also realize that they must confront her in her lair and on the ground, as she is much more powerful while flying.

The Journey to the Dragonscar

The Dragonscar is 40 miles away—a mere two hours of flying for Horranath, but two days' walk or a day's ride on horseback for the PCs. There once was a well-used road of hard-packed earth that led to Talamir, but since the city's ruin it is now little more than a conspicuous trail abutting the foothills of the World's Edge Mountains, barely enough to allow the party to move at its full overland movement rate.

Given the PCs' level, they may consider using magic to aid their journey.

Broom or Carpet of Flying: Both of these items duplicate the benefits of an *overland flight* spell and in most cases can carry multiple passengers.

Dimension Door: This spell's limited range makes it nearly useless for the purpose of crossing overland distances. However, calling (with *planar ally* or the like) a creature that can use this ability at will (such as an avoral

or marut) can lend the party great speed by teleporting the maximum distance each round.

Limited Wish or Wish: Either of these spells can duplicate *greater teleport* or *shadow walk*.

Greater Teleport: This acts as *teleport*, except without risk of failure.

Overland Flight: The ability to hustle using this spell without taking nonlethal damage means a party of fliers can reach the Dragonscar in under 8 hours.

Scrying: The PCs can attempt to scry on Horranath, though her Will save of +18 (or +23 if flying) makes success uncertain. Depending on when they attempt this, she may be flying, crawling through the Deep Tunnel, or resting in her lair. Success means the scryer can view her current area and memorize enough details to make teleportation at least somewhat safe—casting *teleport* while the scrying is ongoing counts as “studied carefully,” otherwise viewing the area for several minutes is enough to qualify as “seen casually.” The PCs might want to wait until she leaves before teleporting—as she plans to come back to Dalaston every day until it is completely destroyed, this gives the PCs several opportunities to approach while she is away and create an ambush in her lair.

Shadow Walk: The rapid speed of this spell means the PCs might be able to arrive at the Dragonscar before Horranath does, though they'd still need to find the Deep Tunnel to reach her actual lair, as the blurred borders between planes make it impossible



to search for her underground lair while in the Shadow-Material border.

Teleport: Even the best description of the Dragonscar from the few surviving townsfolk is barely enough to qualify as “viewed once” for the purpose of this spell, making using it a risky endeavor without other magical aid (such as scrying).

Teleportation Circle: As *teleport*, except capable of transporting nearly limitless material (if the PCs want to evacuate Dalaston, this is fast and easy).

Transport Via Plants: A 15th-level druid can easily transport 5 additional Medium creatures with this spell, and the unlimited distance and error-free travel make it a very appealing solution. Based on descriptions from the people of Dalaston, a druid can get a reasonable sense of the Dragonscar’s location and arrive within 500 feet of its edge.

Tree Stride: While there are many trees suitable for long-range transport in eastern Taldor, even the 3,000-foot maximum distance of the spell means it is impractical for reaching the Dragonscar unless the caster has multiple uses prepared, a wand, etc. Furthermore, the spell only affects the caster, so moving all the PCs requires another method.

Encounters

The land near Dalaston is relatively safe; bears, mountain lions, and other animals are the only real threats, and most of them prefer deer and other safe prey rather than humanoids. The trip to the Dragonscar should pass quickly, though you may want to insert plot hooks for later adventures (such as a long-abandoned outpost at the foot of a trail leading over the mountains) or a minor random encounter (such as a wyvern fleeing its roost in the Dragonscar because of the dragon).

The Dragonscar

Talamir is a wasteland. Once a proud and prosperous city, it had many of its buildings buried by the extensive lava flows from Blackpeak’s eruption. A few lava bombs demolished other structures, and thick ash coated the entire city. Lava and toxic gas erupted from fumaroles and vents all over, poisoning those who survived the other hazards. As the citizens fled or cowered, the dragon burned them alive or consumed them whole, then torched the remaining structures. Now, rivers of cooled lava cover much of the town, leaving a few ruined homes and watchtowers poking toward the sky like skeletons erupting from a grave. Lava tubes (see sidebar) snake across the flat areas, with cracks or collapsed areas creating tunnels and shelter for the creatures living here. Wreckage from the buildings and shattered lava bombs (once as big as horses, now scattered over house-sized areas) cover much of the remaining surface, and the various streets and piles of rubble spout faint plumes of smoke or volcanic gases. Originally painted

green and blue to match its country’s flag, most of Talamir is now shades of deathly white and barren gray.

Natural Hazards

Though Blackpeak hasn’t erupted in centuries and the surface lava in the Dragonscar has long since cooled, other side effects of the sleeping volcano are still very dangerous and have left the place empty of most life.

Sulfur Vent: These pale or bright yellow patches of crystal or powder surround volcanic gas vents. Sometimes they have a small blue flame flickering above them (from the burning volcanic gas), and these burning patches also have bright red, blood-like fluid (melted sulfur). Some may contain large crystals of gold (actually worthless “fool’s gold,” but easy to mistake for the real thing unless a character succeeds on a DC 10 Appraise check). Easily recognizable by their rotten-egg smell, these vents are the least dangerous of the Dragonscar’s unique features—harmless other than the bad smell. PCs with the Craft (alchemy) skill recognize that these nearly pure accretions of brimstone are useful in alchemy (particularly in making smokesticks, tanglefoot bags, and tindertwigs); an alchemist can harvest 1d10 pounds of sulfur from a particular vent (worth 50 gp per pound), taking 1 minute per pound harvested. Roughly 20% of the sulfur vents also share the features of one of the other hazards described in this section.

Carbaxine Vent: Colorless and odorless, this gas isn’t toxic in its own right, but is quite flammable. The PCs may discover a vent with a consistent flame burning above it, or may pass near a flameless vent unawares. In the Darklands, carbaxine tends to collect in contained spaces and cause large explosions, but on the surface the concentrations are much lower and the resulting detonation is much smaller; open flame or electricity near one of these vents causes an explosion dealing 3d6 fire damage to everyone within 20 feet of the vent (Reflex half DC 15).

Dead Air Vent: Colorless and odorless, this is simply a collection of gases incapable of supporting life. In enclosed spaces filled with dead air, breathing creatures must each secretly make a Fortitude save (DC 15 +1 per previous check) each hour or become fatigued. After a creature becomes fatigued, slow suffocation sets in. On the surface the only risk of this is if the PCs camp next to a vent leaking this gas, and the concentration is low enough at distances of 10 feet or more that suffocation is rarely a problem (start the DC at 5 rather than 15). The Dragonscar varieties of brown mold, green slime, and yellow mold can’t survive on dead air vents.

Acid Vent: The fumes from this vent are acidic. Any creature within 10 feet of an acidic vent must make a Fort save (DC 10) or take 1d6 hit points of damage and have blurry vision (–2 to attacks, saves, and checks) for 1 hour. Blurred vision can be cured with *remove blindness*,



bypassed with non-visual senses such as blindsight, and so on.

Green Slime: Patches of this living goo sometimes overlap and digest patches of sulfur or fungus (DMG 76).

Yellow Mold: This adaptable fungus feeds on strange chemicals growing from vents of any type. It is especially dangerous on sulfur vents, as the colors are very similar. (DMG 76).

Brown Mold: This simple fungus usually gathers around warm volcanic vents (DMG 76).

Poisonous Vent: Some volcanic gases are toxic, though vents of this material are rare in the Dragonscar. Most are only enough to make a character nauseated for 1 hour (DC 15), but some duplicate the effects of insanity mist or burnt ungol dust (DMG 297). Any creature within 10 feet of a poisonous vent must save against its poison.

Mud Pots: Very rare in the Dragonscar, these patches of quicksand-like mud form when volcanic gases bubble through mud or a water-ash mixture like that found in the city's wells or fountains. In addition to the effects of quicksand, a mud pot includes the effects of one other vent described here, and 25% of mud pots are hot enough to deal 1d6 hit points of fire damage per round of contact (double that for immersion) or are infested with green slime or brown mold.

LAVA TUBES

Sometimes the outer surface of a fast-running lava flow cools while the interior remains molten. Eventually the molten lava drains out, leaving a hollow tube of cooled lava. If pressure builds up while the lava is still flowing, the shell may break open and create a second flow, which in turn may cool and form a tube, then have its own breakout areas. The end result is a web-like series of connected branching tubes, some sealed, some broken open, often extending for miles. Lava tubes have flat bottoms and are natural places for dungeon-style adventures to occur.

Monster Threats

The harsh environment of the Dragonscar means that only unnatural creatures and things used to scratching out a living are able to survive here. Most of these creatures aren't a significant threat to PCs, but might force the players to expend resources dealing with them. The PCs should have few encounters in the city to preserve the sense of lifelessness, especially as the scarcity of prey other

LET SLEEPING DRAGONS LIE

Horrnath is generally a lethargic dragon; she had been sleeping for over a decade when Blackpeak's eruption woke her, and has slept for 300 years since that burst of activity. However, she is about to enter a new dragon age category, which means a growth spurt (from Huge to Gargantuan) and the resulting need to consume a lot of food. Her hunger drives her to eat the people of Dalaston and whatever wildlife she encounters on her way to and from her lair. After her most recent attack on the town, she ate her fill of farm animals and deer, and when she returns to her lair she's ready for a brief nap before heading out to forage and destroy once again. If the PCs arrive after her (which is likely unless they use teleportation magic) there is a 20% chance that she is sleeping for 1d6 hours. If they are careful and don't make any noise (including discussing attack plans within the nearby tunnels), they may be able to start combat while she's asleep, or at least begin in good tactical positions. Make Listen checks for the dragon based on the party's activities, noting DC modifiers for distance (+1 per 10 feet) and modifiers to Horrnanath's check based on her status (-10 if she is sleeping).

than insects and rats makes it hard for Medium and larger predators to survive.

Necropyres: These burning undead spirits wander the city. Most are necropyre shadows, but a few are necropyre greater shadows, spectres, wraiths, or dread wraiths (the spectres and wraiths never come out during the day). If one of these is killed, shadowy energy trails away toward the dragon's lair through one of the lava tubes, giving the PCs a clue as to Horrnanath's location.

NECROPYRE DREAD WRAITH (1-3) **CR 11**
hp 104; see page 30

NECROPYRE GREATER SHADOW (2-5) **CR 8**
hp 58; MM 221 (with necropyre template, see page 31)

OFFENSE

Melee incorporeal touch +6 (1d8 Str plus 1d6 fire)

DEFENSE

Fiery Shroud A creature striking the necropyre greater shadow suffers 1d6 fire damage.

NECROPYRE SHADOW (2-8) **CR 3**
hp 19; MM 221 (with necropyre template, see page 31)

OFFENSE

Melee incorporeal touch +6 (1d8 Str plus 1d6 fire)

DEFENSE

Fiery Shroud A creature striking the necropyre greater shadow suffers 1d6 fire damage.

NECROPYRE SPECTRE (2-5) **CR 7**
hp 45; MM 232 (with necropyre template, see page 31)

OFFENSE

Melee incorporeal touch +6 (1d8 plus energy drain plus 1d6 fire)

DEFENSE

Fiery Shroud A creature striking the necropyre spectre suffers 1d6 fire damage.

NECROPYRE WRAITH (2-8) **CR 5**
hp 32; MM 258 (with necropyre template, see page 31)

OFFENSE

Melee incorporeal touch +5 (1d4 plus 1d6 Con plus 1d6 fire)

DEFENSE

Fiery Shroud A creature striking the necropyre wraith suffers 1d6 fire damage.

Ooze: A few black puddings and gray oozes wander the Dragonscar, blending into shadows or the omnipresent gray terrain. As their sticky bodies pick up ash and other tiny bits of debris, a clever tracker can easily recognize a somewhat-cleaned path (+5 to Survival checks to notice or follow these "tracks").

Rock Lizard: These gray-brown reptiles are the top land predators in the Dragonscar. While they aren't likely to attack Medium creatures, they might snap at an unsuspecting familiar or pet. Use monitor lizard statistics, except their Hide bonus is in rocky terrain rather than forests.

Small or Tiny Vermin: Whether monstrous centipedes, scorpions, or spiders, individual vermin usually retreat from man-sized creatures but tend to attack if in groups.

Wyvern: A few wyverns roost in the highest parts of the destroyed city, hunting outside the Dragonscar and returning here so they can eat unmolested. Most have fled now that Horrnanath is awake, but a stubborn few still remain.

If the PCs search the Dragonscar looking for something large enough to be a dragon's lair, they don't find anything, for Horrnanath's lair is underground, deep in the mountain. To reach her lair the PCs must find one of the surface lava tubes that connect to the Deep Tunnel, a broad and mighty tunnel that climbs upward within Blackpeak for nearly a mile before reaching the dragon's lair. As most of the lava tubes in the Dragonscar originate from the Deep Tunnel, the PCs should be able to follow a branch back to its source with only a few collapsed parts requiring backtracking; eventually they reach the place where the 15-foot-wide Deep Tunnel emerges from the mountainside above the city; if they travel through the Dragonscar via a lava tube they can proceed immediately into the Deep Tunnel, otherwise they have to break through the hard stone crust (anywhere from 1 to 3 feet

thick) before they can proceed. Should they not enter the Deep Tunnel, they can climb to the top of Blackpeak and enter Horranath's lair from the crater (though the path is more difficult and she is more likely to notice their approach from that direction).

The Deep Tunnel

For most of its length, the Deep Tunnel is 15 feet wide, though it sometimes widens to nearly 25 feet. It is generally 20–30 feet below the surface of the mountain, paralleling the slope of the surface with a slightly gentler incline. It is mostly straight but sometimes bends to the east or west for a few hundred feet. The floor and ceiling are smooth and the climb is gentle enough to not require Climb checks. The tunnel is haunted by the lost dead of Talamir; thousands of harmless burning shades no larger than a halfling wander back and forth, silently screaming. These lost souls are bound to the dragon's *necropyre crystal*, and there is no way to help them except to kill the dragon and destroy the crystal; for the purpose of this adventure they are here to set the mood, barely lighting the Deep Tunnel with shadowy illumination.

Some of the more powerful residents of Talamir have transformed into necropyres just like on the surface of the city (greater shadows, specters, wraiths, and dread wraiths) and wander these halls, providing an occasional random encounter; as with the surface undead, if one is killed a shadowy burst of energy travels back to Horranath. The tunnels also have the occasional dangerous vent, but the Deep Tunnel is free of other hazards and creatures of the Dragonscar.

After about a mile of elevation gain (approximately 2 miles of lateral travel), the Deep Tunnel levels out and reaches an intersection after about 50 feet. One path is smooth and continues in the same general direction for another 100 feet; this leads to Horranath's lair. The other is rough, as if dug out of the stone with powerful claws, and creates a steeper path (Climb DC 0) that after 100 feet leads to the crater at the top of the mountain. Horranath dug the second tunnel shortly after her rampage across Talamir, as the eruption collapsed her old entrance and she wanted an easier way to exit her lair than the Deep Tunnel; it's obvious (based on positioning of the rubble, the lack of smaller debris that rain would wash away, and so on) that this digging is old rather than recent. Most of the rubble is scattered downhill into the Deep Tunnel, as Horranath wanted it out of the way if she ever needed to exit in a hurry. A successful Spot check (DC 10) lets a PC recognize that fresher air comes from the rough tunnel and that it must connect to the surface nearby.

The Crater

The top of Blackpeak is a crater about 300 feet across and 90 feet deep. The bottom is filled with mud and dirty

DRAGON CRs

Unlike all other CRs in the game, a dragon's CR assumes the PCs know about the dragon and have planned to battle it. This means that a "random" encounter with a dragon is more difficult than its CR indicates (and is why encounters with bigger dragons shouldn't be random). As the PCs saw Horranath in Dalaston and perhaps fought with her a bit, they should be fully aware that she is a red dragon and have made appropriate preparations (defending against fire, preparing cold attacks, and so on), so her CR 18 accurately reflects the challenge of battling her—a difficult fight for the PCs, but not impossible. The EL 19 for her lair includes a +1 modifier for the powers of the *necropyre crystal*.



water, cool to the touch but contaminated by seepage from various gas vents. Despite the muddy pool and its vents, the winds at the mountaintop mean the air in the crater is safe (except in the immediate vicinity of the vents) and only slightly unpleasant.

About 50 feet above the waterline is a 20-foot-wide hole or cave leading into the mountain; there is no ledge in front of the cave, nor a path leading to it, but the surface of the crater is fairly rough and not a difficult climb even

A GLOWING HINT

The *necropyre crystal* glows with violet energy whenever it is used, both when its defensive abilities are active (such as when Horranath is flying) or when it interacts with the dead souls bound within it (such as by creating or absorbing a necropyre creature). This glow is bright enough to create a shining area inside her belly on the left side, and her eyes show an identical shine. This glow doesn't harm her or negatively affect her in any way, but is another clue for the PCs. Though it's nearly impossible to remove the *necropyre crystal* from her while she is still alive, clever or resourceful heroes might find a way to do it (such as by using *limited wish* to forcibly teleport it out of her body), negating the advantages it gives her. This tactic does not destroy the crystal or free the souls trapped in it, nor does it allow the PCs to tap its powers (something requiring lengthy experimentation and study)

FIGHT OR FLIGHT?

Horranath doesn't want to fight in her lair, mainly because there is little room for her to fly. Her magical defenses are greater in the open air, she can make better use of her breath weapon and full use of her Flyby Attack feat, and she has the option to flee and rest if the encounter turns against her. Smart PCs will try to keep her in this room, using wall magic or other barricades to prevent her from leaving, *slow* spells, tanglefoot bags while she's on the ground, and so on. Horranath may be groggy, but she's still incredibly intelligent, and knows that getting trapped in her lair means she's as good as dead, and does whatever it takes to escape. If she has the opportunity to grab a PC on the way out so she can dispose of an enemy outside (perhaps by dropping him from a great height), she does so, but her primary goal is to get out.

without gear (Climb DC 5). The cave is obviously artificial, with large claw marks visible all over and a small pile of rubble forming a jetty-like area on the edge of the mud pool. This tunnel runs downward 100 feet to connect with the Deep Tunnel at the intersection explained above. The dragon uses this tunnel for easy access to her lair, as she'd rather not have to traverse a mile of the Deep Tunnel to enter or exit her home. There is enough loose material in the carved tunnel that every climbing PC must make



TOME OF CLEAR THOUGHT

three Move Silently checks (DC 15) or disturb some of it, creating a harmless but noisy cascade of pebbles—loud enough that Horranath can hear it from her lair (DC 20, with a –10 penalty to her check if she is asleep at the time), which alerts her to the presence of intruders and puts her on her guard.

The connecting tunnel means the air in Horranath's lair and the nearby parts of the Deep Tunnel are safe to breathe. Some of the burning spirits and necropyres wander here, flitting from the cave entrance to the mud pit and back, but there are no other creatures.

Horranath's Lair (EL 19)

The dragon's lair is the remnant of an ancient lava bubble that drained to form a cavern. She expanded upon this over the years and then hibernated until the eruption 300 years ago, which destroyed her original exit but created the Deep Tunnel. After destroying Talamir, she shaped her lair slowly with claw and fire until it was something she felt was suitable for a mighty dragon. Now the place appears almost liquid, with cooled lava forming the floor, and carved pillars and walls melted smooth like eroding ice sculptures. The place stinks of sulfur, smoke, and dragon.

Burning spirits and necropyres drift mindlessly throughout the lair, sometimes getting absorbed by the *necropyre crystal* within the dragon's belly, sometimes pulling free again in the midst of battle. Due to the proximity of the crystal and the dragon that killed them, all of the spirits are confused, only reacting to PCs that are adjacent to them (they ignore or flee from the dragon and other necropyres, and ignore any other creatures more than 5 feet away).

Pillar Chamber

This large chamber (and the broad end of the Deep Tunnel leading up to it) has a 40-foot-high ceiling with several large stone pillars supporting it. The ceiling is high enough here that the dragon can fly, though her

poor maneuverability limits how effective she is in the air. If forced to fight in this area, she tries to fly or jump to one of the balconies so she can use her breath weapon and keep grounded opponents at a distance (or at least delay them while they climb onto the balcony or run up the stairs).

Flowing lava created the small tunnels to the east and west, and the dragon is too large to fit into them, but she left them intact in case she decides to bring slaves here someday or learn magic to shrink herself. She has them “blocked” with *illusory wall* spells; the heroes might use them as a temporary haven from a breath weapon attack if they see through the illusion (though if she puts her head into a tunnel entrance she can fill part of it with flame).

The Pit

This 30-foot-deep pit was formed by flowing lava. Rubble from Horranath’s excavations cover the bottom, as well as a few large bones long ago picked clean of meat. The dragon doesn’t want to fight here, and if forced into this area she climbs, jumps, or flies out as soon as possible, preferably to the north balcony. If she is near the pit she may attempt to bull rush opponents into it, drop grappled opponents here as she flies or jumps over it, and so on.

East Balcony

Because of the elevation of this balcony, Horranath likes attacking from this area, as it gives her a height advantage over the entire lair, allows her to keep her hoard in view (while protecting it from collateral damage stemming from attacks made against her), and lets her reach most parts of the room with her breath weapon. She has the north end of the tunnel-ramp to this area “blocked” with an *illusory wall*.

West Balcony

The dragon prefers the east balcony to this one, but if the PCs approach from the narrow tunnel, she might use her breath weapon on them (as it’s a straight shot south) or block the north entrance so they are forced to fight single-file. Under no circumstances does she voluntarily enter the small room at the bottom of the stairs, as it is too easy for her to be flanked or trapped there. She has the north end of the tunnel-ramp to this balcony “blocked” with an *illusory wall*.

North Balcony

Two large pits of everburning magical fire provide shadowy illumination for this entire area, enough to make the dragon’s heap of treasure sparkle. The fires are hot (4d6 fire damage for entering the fire, Reflex DC 15 or catch on fire for 1d6 fire damage per round thereafter). Other than the items she wears, all of Horranath’s hoard is in the treasure pile. Horranath preferentially attacks targets on this balcony, especially if they dare to touch

UNEXPECTED ASSISTANCE

If Eldran Tesh survived his encounter with the PCs in Dalaston, he might show up here during the battle with the dragon. If the PCs reached this area by mundane means or flight, Tesh has plenty of time to catch up and follow them to Horranath’s lair (he can sense the presence of the *necropyre crystal* and knows where the dragon is at all times, but also knows he can’t defeat her on his own). If the PCs used teleportation or some other form of rapid travel, Tesh’s arrival during this fight is only possible if he has his teleport spell-like ability available (if he didn’t use it to escape the PCs) or if the assault on the dragon’s lair takes place on a different day than the temple fight. His goal is the destruction of the *necropyre crystal*, and he neither helps nor harms the PCs, though he curses them if they attack him and tells them to focus on the real threat. His assistance may turn the tide if things are going against the PCs, or even give them a chance to escape—not on purpose or out of any sense of altruism on his part, but the heroes should have few moral qualms about letting an evil undead necromancer take the brunt of the dragon’s attacks while they run for their lives. If Horranath dies, Tesh cuts open her belly with his necrotic blast and tries to destroy the crystal; he attacks the PCs if they try to stop him and chooses to fight to the death rather than surrender the crystal to someone else.

her hoard, but she is hesitant to use her breath weapon on her treasure for fear of ruining it, and so resorts to melee attacks and bull rushes to move her opponents away from the treasure before using her breath weapon. If she fears for her life and using her breath weapon might save her (especially if there are multiple enemies in the cone’s area), she breathes even if it would affect her hoard.

Treasure: +1 arrows (89); +1 battleaxe (5); +1 chainmail (8); +3 large steel arrow deflection shield; +1 longsword (5); *pearl of power* (3rd level); *strand of prayer beads*; *tome of clear thought* +1; *wand of cure moderate wounds* (34 charges); 4,181 gp; 46,368 sp; 75,025 cp; 2,584 gp worth of gems (amethyst, diamond, and obsidian).

HORRANATH

CR 18

Female mature adult red dragon

CE Huge dragon (fire)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft. low-light vision (4× human normal), blindsense 60 ft.; Listen +32, Spot +32

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 10, flat-footed 34

(+2 deflection, +24 natural, -2 size)
hp 312 (25d12+150); fast healing 10 (if flying)
Fort +20 (+25 if flying), **Ref** +14 (+19 if flying), **Will** +18 (+23 if flying)
Defensive Abilities evasion; **DR** 10/magic (15/— if flying);
Immune fire, paralysis, sleep; **SR** 23 (30 if flying);
Weakness cold vulnerability (+50% fire damage)

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor)
Melee bite +34 (2d8+11) and
 2 claws +32 (2d6+5) and
 2 wings +32 (1d8+5) and
 tail slap +32 (2d6+16) or
 crush +34 (2d8+16 plus Reflex DC 28 or pinned), only
 against Small or smaller targets
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Special Attacks breath weapon (50-ft. cone, 14d10 fire plus
 special, DC 28), frightful presence
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)
 7/day—*locate object*
Spells Known (CL 9th)
 4th (5/day)—*fire shield, illusory wall*
 3rd (7/day)—*displacement, haste, protection from
 energy*
 2nd (6/day)—*desecrate**, *invisibility, protection
 from arrows, resist energy*
 1st (7/day)—*disguise self, expeditious retreat,
 magic missile, shield, silent image*
 0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, dancing lights,
 detect magic, mage hand, mending, open/
 close, prestidigitation, read magic*
 *Cast every day in her lair.

TACTICS

Before Combat Horranath prepares for combat
 by casting *protection from energy* (cold), *resist
 energy* (cold), *greater invisibility* (from her wand),
protection from arrows, fire shield (cold flames),
displacement, shield, and *haste*, in that order. She
 casts *desecrate* every day in the center of the pillars
 area to make the undead more powerful (though they do
 not obey her, their presence deters intruders).

During Combat Horranath knows the *necropyre crystal's*
 powers only work while she isn't touching the ground,
 and she tries to attack from the air if at all possible. Her
 specific tactics in various parts of her lair are included in
 the room descriptions.

Morale If brought below 100 hp, Horranath desperately
 tries to flee, using *haste* and *expeditious retreat* to speed
 her escape.

STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 10, **Con** 23, **Int** 18, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 18
Base Atk +25; **Grp** +44
Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Improved Bull
 Rush, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack,

Snatch, Wingover
Skills Appraise +18, Bluff +18, Concentration +34, Diplomacy
 +22, Escape Artist +14, Intimidate +34, Knowledge
 (dungeoneering) +18, Knowledge (geography) +18, Jump
 +39, Search +32, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft+18

Languages Common, Draconic

Combat Gear *necropyre crystal* (automatic when flying),
wand of greater invisibility (10 charges); **Other Gear** *ring of
 evasion, ring of protection* +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Frightful Presence (Ex) This ability takes effect when the
 dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead, affecting
 creatures within 210 feet. Creatures up to 4 HD are
 panicked for 4d6 rounds, and those with 5–12 HD are
 shaken for 4d6 rounds (DC 26 Will save negates, successful
 save means the creature is immune for 24 hours).

Breath Weapon (Ex) While in the air, Horranath's breath
 weapon is half fire and half negative energy (similar to how
flame strike is half fire and half holy power). Fire resistance
 or immunity only applies to half the damage from her
 breath weapon.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the dragon dead, there are still some
 issues in town the PCs may wish to address.
 Count Saleno is dead, and the Irini and
 Morian families have to figure out how to
 share power in the shattered town. Marita
 and her fiancé may stay or leave. If Eldran
 Tesh is still alive, his role in the future
 of Dalaston depends entirely on what the
 PCs decide to do. Much of the magic in
 Horranath's hoard is useless for rebuilding
 a town, but the low-level armor and weapons
 could help fortify its defenses—or give the PCs
 a head start on equipping their followers. The
 gold and gems from the hoard are easily portable,
 but the tens of thousands of silver and copper are
 not, and these small coins are just the thing to help the
 town start rebuilding. Depending on how involved the
 PCs want to be, they could invest in the construction, use
 magic to repair and build, or hire others to do this work for
 them. Religious characters (especially those who worship
 Abadar) may want to send representatives of their faith
 to the town. If the PCs don't offer any help, the town gets
 by and eventually recovers, and the people are thankful
 toward the PCs but not to the extent of hero worship.
 If the PCs take an active involvement in the future of
 Dalaston, however, they can make a legacy for themselves
 here. If a character is retiring or the campaign is ending,
 this could be a good place for the PCs to settle down—a
 safe home, close to adventure in the future, where they
 can be recognized as the heroes they are.



APPENDIX 1: NEW MAGIC ITEM

NECROPYRE CRYSTAL (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong necromancy and abjuration (evil); **CL** 20th
Slot none; **Price** —; **Weight** 10 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This shining violet crystal is as large as a grapefruit. In its depths swirl spectral shapes and glimpses of a strange landscape. When activated it grows as bright as a *daylight* spell, but this light is not harmful to any creature, even undead or those sensitive to light. Corrupted by proximity to a thousand murders and tempered in the fires of a dragon's belly, the *necropyre crystal* is no longer the benign item it was before the destruction of Talamir. The earth itself has rejected the corrupted crystal, and the crystal's powers do not function while you or it are in contact with the ground.

Any creature you kill while bearing the crystal has its soul absorbed into the crystal (preventing anyone from raising them from the dead), granting you powers while you carry it. After 10 kills, you gain fast healing 10. After 30, you gain spell resistance 30. After 60, you gain damage reduction 15/—. After 100, you gain a +5 profane bonus to all saving throws and a unique negative energy power related to your other abilities (a fighter's melee attacks may gain the *unholy* property, a dragon's breath weapon may become infused with negative energy, and so on). These kills are attuned to you; another

person carrying the crystal gains no benefit unless they have slain the appropriate number of people while bearing it. It is possible for different people to have different levels of power from the crystal depending on how many they have killed while holding it.

The crystal tends to spontaneously create necropyre creatures from the tortured souls within it and sometimes reabsorbs these creatures into itself if they are nearby. The necropyres never harm you, nor are they under your command.

The crystal bestows one negative level on any non-evil creature touching or carrying it. The negative level remains as long as the crystal is touched, held, or carried, and disappears when the weapon is no longer wielded. This negative level never results in actual level loss, but it cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while you possess the crystal. The crystal is semi-sentient and hungry for souls. Over time it corrupts you, turning you chaotic evil and eventually forcing you to murder others to sate the crystal's craving for life energy (friends, family, and innocents are the crystal's favorite targets).

Destroying the crystal requires physical or magical force (hardness 8, hp 100). When the crystal is destroyed, all the spirits trapped within it (as well as any necropyre creatures created by it) are freed and escape to their reward in the afterlife (after the crystal's destruction, these victims can be raised from the dead normally).

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BLOODLESS VESSEL

This pale youth's wispy beard does little to make him look older. He stares with misty white eyes, and there is something unnatural about the way he stands, blank-faced and emotionless. He moves like a puppet, a thing guided by unseen hands. He holds a scythe that should be too heavy for his spry arms, but the weight doesn't seem to bother him.



BLOODLESS VESSEL (CR 12)

NE Medium undead

Init +8; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft; Listen +12, Spot +18

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 18, flat-footed 20 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 123 (18d12+6)

Fort +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14

Immune undead immunities

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee scythe +19 (2d4+13/19–20/x4) or slam +18 (1d6+9)

Ranged necrotic blast +14 ranged touch (5d6 negative energy damage)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th) varies

TACTICS

Before Combat A bloodless vessel with the *mage armor* spell-like ability keeps it active as much as possible (AC 28, touch 22, flat-footed 24).

During Combat The tactics of the bloodless vary based on their spell-like abilities. A brawler closes to melee as quickly as possible, using *waves of fatigue* to weaken enemies and *vampiric touch* when its hit points are low. A commander remains invisible while studying the enemy, using *dispel magic* to handicap spellcasters or *dominate person* to seize control of a key opponent. A terror tries to stay at range, using its powers to sow fear and striking down enemies with its necrotic blast.

Morale A bloodless fights to the finish, unless it has specific orders to the contrary. A bloodless seeking to escape takes advantage of *invisibility* or *gaseous form* if it has those powers.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +18

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (scythe), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scythe)

Skills Climb +16, Concentration +14, Intimidate +18, Jump +19, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (religion) +10, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +10, Tumble +15

SQ host to many

Languages Common and 1d4 other languages

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Host to Many (Ex) A bloodless vessel is an undead creature, but it is host to many spirits. As such, it responds to turn attempts in an unusual manner. A successful turn attempt against the vessel drives away some of the inhabiting spirits for 1 minute (these flee visibly in the form of flying shadows, returning when the turn effect expires). This negates the vessel's deflection bonus to armor class for the duration of the turning.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp) Between its undead nature and the diverse backgrounds of the spirits that comprise a vessel's collective soul, a vessel has an unpredictable set of spell-like abilities. Some spread fear and disease, others focus on weakness and despair. Some have more in common with vampires, while others are more like ghouls. Choose one spell-like ability at each spell level from the following list; the vessel can cast up to 14 spell levels' worth of these abilities per day.

1st level (save DC 15) *cause fear, charm person, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement*

2nd level (save DC 16) *blindness/deafness, command undead, ghoul touch, invisibility*

3rd level (save DC 17) *dispel magic, gaseous form, ray of exhaustion, vampiric touch*

4th level (save DC 18) *confusion, contagion, crushing despair, enervation, fear*

5th level (save DC 19) *dominate person, feeblemind, nightmare, waves of fatigue*

Here are a few common combinations of powers.

Commander: *charm person, confusion, dispel magic, dominate person, invisibility*

Brawler: *enervation, ghoul touch, mage armor, vampiric touch, waves of fatigue*

Terror: *blindness/deafness, cause fear, fear, feeblemind, gaseous form*

Quickness (Su) A vessel is supernaturally quick. It can take an extra standard action or move action during its turn each round. In combat, it normally uses this ability to make a second attack.

Necrotic Blast (Su) A vessel can fire a blast of negative energy once per round as a ranged touch attack (100-ft. range, 5d6 negative energy damage).

A bloodless vessel is an undead creature formed when agents of the dark powers infuse the prepared body of a virgin humanoid with the essence of multiple restless spirits. The vessel is physically and mentally empowered by the host of spirits possessing it, giving it surprising speed, deadly strength, and strange magic. While quite intelligent, bloodless vessels rarely speak or show signs of emotion. The spirits that are sharing the body have lost touch with their humanity due to the horrors they have suffered, and have difficulty summoning any strong emotion; their individual memories are remote, though the memories of things they have in common (such as historical events) remain quite strong.

As the vessel suffers damage, flesh is cut away and bones may be broken, revealing pulsing threads of spectral energy running through its veins instead of blood. This is the concentrated essence of the spirits empowering the vessel, which can keep the vessel moving even after ghastly injuries. The necrotic blast attack used by a vessel draws on this same energy, literally hurling angry spirits at its victims.

NECROPYRE

A crackling fire burns with no sign of fuel, and deep within the heart of the flame shadows flicker, forming a vaguely human face that howls in anguish and stretches out to engulf its surroundings in supernatural flame.

A necropyre is a form of undead created when the *necropyre crystal's* bearer slays a living creature. With his soul tied to the *necropyre crystal*, the victim is reborn as a burning spirit in perpetual agony. Necropyres are not under the control of the crystal's bearer, but they cannot harm him. Most are dangerously insane and immediately attack any other living creature they encounter. Destroying them or the crystal is the only way to end their torment.

Creating a Necropyre

“Necropyre” is an acquired template that can be applied to any incorporeal undead creature that does not possess the cold subtype. A necropyre uses all of the base creature's statistics except where noted below.

Size and Type: The creature's size and type remain unchanged, but it gains the fire subtype.

Special Attacks: A necropyre retains the base creature's special attacks and gains the following.

Blazing Touch (Ex): A necropyre's natural attacks, plus any weapons it wields, deal an additional 1d6 fire damage (or 2d6 if the base creature has 10 or more hit dice).

Defensive Abilities: A necropyre retains the base creature's defensive abilities and gains the following.

Fiery Shroud (Ex): Any creature that strikes a necropyre with a melee attack suffers 1d6 fire damage (or 2d6 if the base creature has 10 or more hit dice).

Challenge Rating: +0

Sample Necropyre

Many heroes died in the destruction of Talamir. One famous group was the Brotherhood of the Cleaving Axe, dwarven champions loyal to Taldor who bravely faced lava and dragonfire in the last hours of the city. Now they wander the ruins as burning wraiths, unable to end their pain and driven insane by centuries of torment in undeath. Among the necropyres of Talamir, they are easily recognized by their large, vaguely dwarf-like shapes and incorporeal axes.

CLEAVING AXE SHADE

CR 11

Necropyre dread wraith

LE Large undead (fire, incorporeal)

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifestense 60 ft.; **Listen** +25, **Spot** +25

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 25, flat-footed 16

(–1 size, +9 Dex, +7 deflection)

hp 104 (16d12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities fiery shroud (2d6), incorporeal traits;

Immune undead immunities; **Weakness** daylight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Spd fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee incorporeal touch +16 (2d6 plus 2d6 fire plus 1d8

Constitution drain)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks Constitution drain, create spawn

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 28, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +8; **Grp** —

Feats Alertness^B, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (incorporeal touch), Mobility, Spring Attack

Skills Diplomacy +9, Hide +24, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (religion) +22, Search +22, Sense Motive +23, Spot +25, Survival +4 (+6 following tracks)

SQ unnatural aura

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Constitution Drain (Su) 1d8 points of Constitution drain (DC 25 Fortitude save). The save DC is Charisma-based.

The wraith heals 5 hit points if the target fails its save.

Create Spawn (Su) Any humanoid the necropyre dread wraith slays becomes a necropyre wraith in 1d4 rounds. Its body remains intact and inanimate, but its spirit is torn free from its corpse and transformed. Spawn are under the command of the necropyre wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Lifestense (Su) A necropyre dread wraith notices and locates living creatures within 60 feet, just as if it possessed the blindsight ability. It also senses the strength of their life force automatically, as if it had cast *deathwatch*.



Harsk

MALE DWARF RANGER 15 OF TORAG

ALIGN LN INIT +9 SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

14	STR
20	DEX
16	CON
10	INT
13	WIS
6	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 116
AC 29 (+4 against giants) touch 18, flat-footed 24
Fort +12, Ref +14, Will +6 +2 against poison and spells; evasion
Animal Companion Biter (dire badger, MM 268)

OFFENSE
Melee +2 greataxe +19/+14/+9 (1d12+5/x3)
Ranged +3 flaming burst giant bane heavy crossbow +23/+18 (1d10+3 plus 1d6 fire/17–20)
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +17
Special Attacks favored enemy (giants +8, undead +6, dragons +4, demons +2), +1 on attack rolls vs. orcs and goblinoids
Spells Prepared (CL 7th):
 4th—*animal growth*
 3rd—*cure moderate wounds*
 2nd—*bear's endurance*
 1st—*entangle* (DC 12), *longstrider*, *resist energy*
Special Qualities darkvision 60 ft., stability, stonecunning, swift tracker, woodland stride

SKILLS

Heal	+18
Hide	+28
Listen	+20
Move Silently	+28
Spot	+24
Survival	+19
Wild Empathy	+13

FEATS

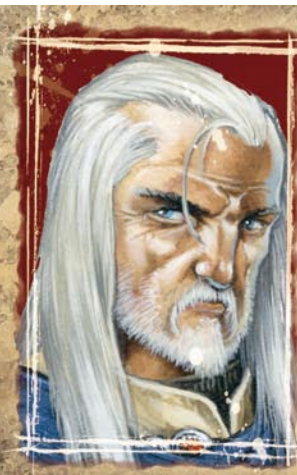
Combat Mastery, Endurance, Far Shot, Imp. Crit. (h. crossbow), Imp. Initiative, Imp. Prec. Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (h. crossbow), Rapid Shot, Track

SPECIAL QUALITIES

camouflage, darkvision 60 ft., stability, stonucunning, swift tracker, woodland stride



Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (6), 30 bolts, +2 frost bolts (8), screaming bolt (3), wand of cure serious wounds (9 charges); **Other Gear** +5 studded leather armor, mwk silver dagger, amulet of natural armor +3, bag of holding (type III), boots of elvenkind, eyes of the eagle, gloves of Dexterity +4, lens of detection, ring of protection +3, cloak of elvenkind, backpack, rations (7), signal whistle, teapot, 40 pp



Ezren

MALE HUMAN WIZARD 15

ALIGN NG INIT +3 SPEED 30 ft.

ABILITIES

11	STR
9	DEX
12	CON
25	INT
15	WIS
9	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 69
AC 17 touch 11, flat-footed 17
Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +14; Special Qualities 250 XP set aside for item creation
Familiar Sneak (weasel, MM 282)

SPELLS
Spells Prepared (CL 15th, +7 ranged touch with ray):
 8th—*polar ray*
 7th—*limited wish*, *prismatic spray* (DC 25),
project image
 6th—*disintegrate* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic*,
mislead, *stone to flesh*
 5th—*cone of cold* (2, DC 23), *dismissal*, *teleport*,
wall of force
 4th—*dimension door*, *enervation*, *ice storm*,
stoneskin, *wall of fire*
 3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *fireball* (DC 21), *fly*, *haste*,
ray of exhaustion
 2nd—*bull's strength*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*,
scorching ray (2), *web* (DC 19)
 1st—*alarm*, *magic missile* (3), *ray of*
enfeeblement, *shield*
 0—*daze* (DC 15), *detect magic* (2), *light*

OFFENSE
Melee staff of evocation +7/+2 (1d6)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +7

SKILLS

Appraise	+11
Concentration	+19
Knowledge (arcana)	+25
Knowledge (dungeoneering)	+8
Knowledge (geography)	+25
Knowledge (history)	+25
Knowledge (the planes)	+22
Spellcraft	+27

FEATS

Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (ray)



Combat Gear lesser quicken metamagic rod, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, staff of evocation (50 charges); **Other Gear** dagger, light crossbow with 20 bolts, amulet of health +2, bracers of armor +4, cloak of resistance +3, headband of intellect +6, ring of protection +2, ring of force shield, blessed book, rations (12), scroll case, diamond dust (500 gp), 100 gp pearls (4), 1,100 gp; **Scrolls** chain lightning, legend lore, mnemonic enhancer, passwall, teleport



Seelah

FEMALE HUMAN PALADIN 15 OF IOMEDAE

ALIGN LG INIT +4 SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

20	STR
12	DEX
18	CON
8	INT
14	WIS
17	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 147
AC 31 touch 13, flat-footed 30
Fort +16, Ref +9, Will +10 SQ aura of courage, <i>detect evil</i> , divine grace, divine health, 25% fortification, <i>remove</i> <i>disease</i> 4/week, special mount

OFFENSE
Melee +2 holy cold iron longsword
 +23/+18/+13 (1d8+7/17–20)
Ranged +1 holy comp. longbow (+5 Str)
 +17/+12/+7 (1d8+6/x3)
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +20
Special Attacks lay on hands (45 hp/day,
 smite evil 4/day, turn undead 6/day (+3,
 2d6+15, 12th)
Spells Prepared (CL 7th)
 4th—*dispel evil*
 3rd—*dispel magic*
 2nd—*resist energy*, *remove paralysis*
 1st—*bless*, *bless weapon*, *divine favor*

SKILLS

Concentration	+7
Heal	+7
Knowledge (religion)	+6
Ride	+10
Sense Motive	+10

FEATS

Cleave, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (longsword)

MOUNT

Aristide (heavy warhorse, MM 273)



Combat Gear arrows (20), arrows of evil outsider slaying (2), *potion of fly*; **Other Gear** amulet of health +4, cloak of Charisma +4, belt of giant strength +4, +5 full plate, +2 gloves of Dexterity, +3 light fortification heavy steel shield, phylactery of faithfulness, ring of feather falling, ring of protection +2, backpack, rations (10), gold holy symbol, 91 gp



Kyra

FEMALE HUMAN CLERIC 15 OF SARENRAE

ALIGN NG INIT +0 SPEED 20 ft.

ABILITIES

13	STR
10	DEX
14	CON
10	INT
24	WIS
12	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 101
AC 27 touch 12, flat-footed 26
Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +21
Special Attacks greater turning 1/day, turn undead 8/day (+1, 2d6+16)

SPELLS
Spells Prepared (CL 15th, +11 ranged touch)
 8th—*antimagic field*, *mass cure critical wounds*^S,
 7th—*destruction* (DC 24), *quicken dispel magic*,
sunbeam^S (DC 24)
 6th—*blade barrier* (DC 23), *heal*^P (2), *greater dispel*
magic, *heroes' feast*
 5th—*flame strike*^P (DC 22), *righteous might*, *slay*
living (DC 22), *spell resistance*, *summon monster*
V (2)
 4th—*air walk*, *divine power* (2), *fire shield*^P, *freedom*
of movement, *restoration*
 3rd—*daylight*, *dispel magic* (3), *prayer* (2), *remove*
disease, *searing light*^P
 2nd—*aid*, *bull's strength*, *heat metal*^P (DC 19),
resist energy (3), *spiritual weap.* (2)
 1st—*bless* (2), *cure light wounds*^S, *divine favor* (2),
sanctuary (DC 18), *shield of faith* (2)
 0—*detect magic* (2), *light*, *mending* (3)
 D domain spell; **Domains** healing, sun

OFFENSE
Melee +2 holy scimitar +15/+10
 (1d6+3/18–20)
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +12

SKILLS

Concentration	+20
Heal	+23
Knowledge (religion)	+18

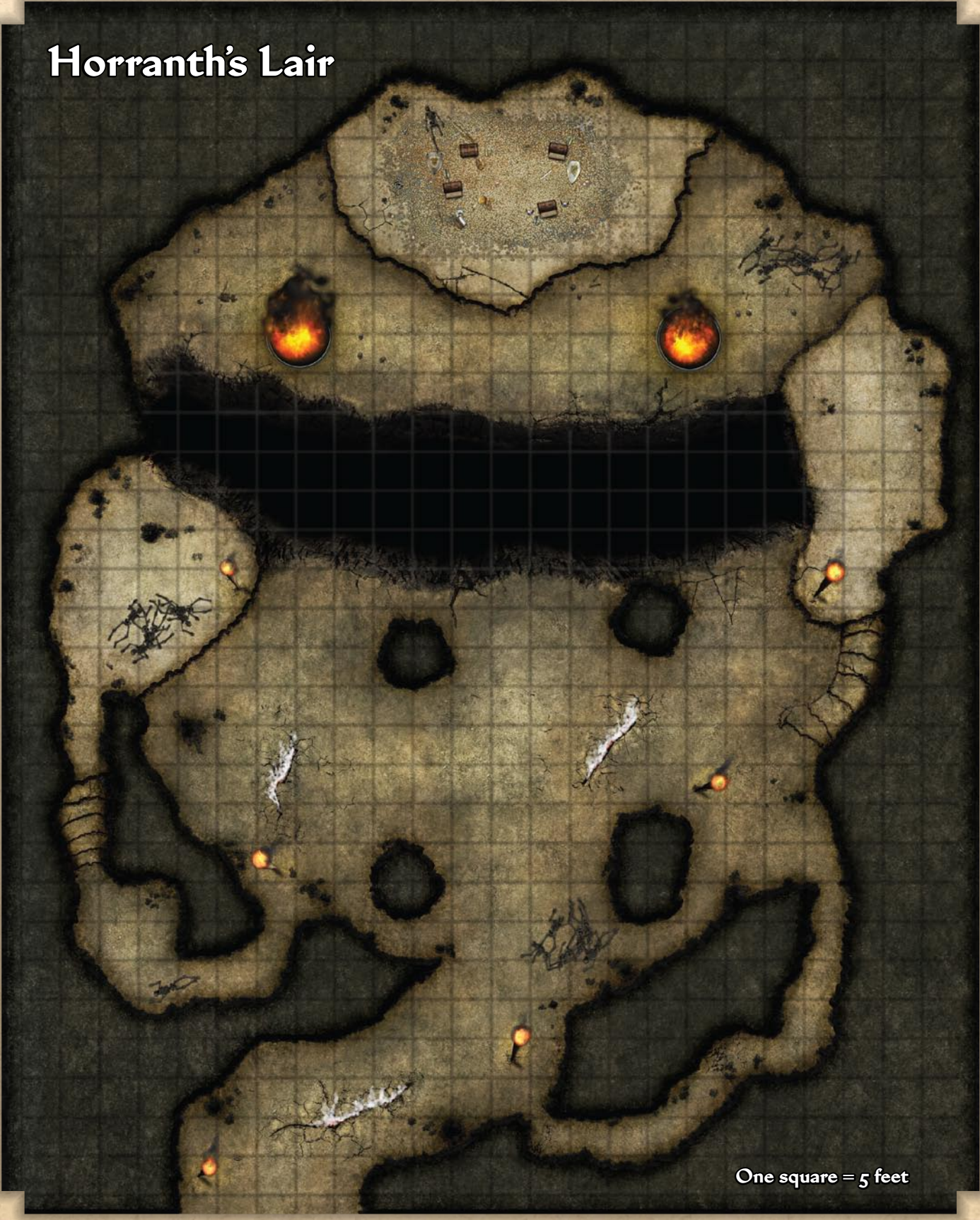
FEATS

Combat Casting, Extra Turning, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar), Quicken Spell, Weapon Focus (scimitar)



Combat Gear holy water (3), *potion of fly*, scroll of resurrection, wand of cure critical wounds (25 charges), wand of restoration (25 charges); **Other Gear** +5 chainmail, +4 heavy steel shield, cloak of resistance +3, gloves of Dexterity +2, incense of meditation, periapt of Wisdom +6, ring of protection +2, backpack, gold holy symbol (with continual flame), rations (10), 42 pp, 105 gp

Horranth's Lair



One square = 5 feet

FIGHT EVIL WITH EVIL

Pathfinder Module

E2: Blood of Dragonscar

In rural Dalaston, a quiet wedding festival is ruined when a rampaging dragon descends from its mountain aerie to rain fire and destruction on the peaceful celebration. In desperation, the town's leader turns to a mysterious stranger who promises protection from the dragon—in exchange for a few sacrifices. Now the children of Dalaston rise from the dead as ghastly abominations to enforce martial law and kidnap people for their mysterious master... including the blushing bride herself. With time quickly slipping away, can the PCs break the undead curse on the town and stop the dragon from destroying what remains?

Blood of Dragonscar is a dragon-slaying city adventure for 15th-level characters, compatible with the 3.5 edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game. Within you'll find information on the mining and brewing town of Dalaston, new monsters, a draconic lair deep inside an active volcano, and the fire-breathing dragon itself.

This adventure takes place in the decadent nation of Taldor in the *Pathfinder Chronicles* campaign setting, but can easily be adapted for any game world.

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