

BEST DEFENSE

ROUND 1

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING* *FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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There has long been a fragile peace between the shadowy forces of Netheril on one side and the Forest Kingdom of Cormyr and its eladrin allies on the other. The Shade Princes, War Wizards, and High Mages have studied each other's strengths and weaknesses for thousands of years. The only thing that has kept the sides from each other's throats is fear of the utter devastation that an all-out war between such magical giants would cause. Now something has disturbed the precarious balance. The power of Shade Enclave is growing; not even the greatest heroes could prevent the fall of Elturel. If the forces of light don't strike back now, it may soon be too late...

This is Round 1 of a two-round continuous-play *Living Forgotten Realms* battle interactive set in Netheril for characters of the Heroic and Paragon tiers (levels 1 - 20). This adventure is part of the *Desolation* series.

Battle Interactives are combat-intensive. Players who do not enjoy combat encounters are less likely to enjoy this adventure. We recommend that event organizers try to run at least five tables of this event, and that at least three of the characters at each table be members of the same Adventuring Company. This adventure may only be run at Wizards Play Network (WPN) Public Play events. It may not be sanctioned for Private Play.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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THE WIZARDS PLAY NETWORK

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

If you want to organize LFR games at home, you don't need to be associated with the Wizards Play Network. You don't need to report your event to anyone, and neither the DM nor the players need to have DCI/RPGA membership numbers. Just find the adventure you want to play, download it, and have fun! Be sure to keep up with the LFR Community at our campaign website: <http://community.wizards.com/lfr>.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the D&D 4th Edition core rulebooks. These are the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, or the corresponding D&D Essentials products. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in **bold italics** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information about nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appears in the full stat-block format with each combat encounter. For non-combat encounters, this information appears in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of a WPN event (see above), complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. Auras are designated with the O symbol, as well as the aura keyword.

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

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule:

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

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

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and to make decisions about how the group interacts with the world.** This is especially important during non-combat encounters, but you may also need to adjust the combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time with the adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or just ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each player the experience they're after when they play D&D. Everyone at the table should get a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game moving to ensure you finish on time.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played in about 4 hours; be very aware of running long or short, and adjust the pacing accordingly. If that means you need to "call" a combat encounter when it is obvious that the PCs are going to win, then feel free to do so.
- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with the environment.** Players should always know when enemies are bloodied or affected by conditions. Give them clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting frustrated by a lack of information. Encourage immersion in the adventure and give the players "little victories" for figuring out a good choice from your clues.

In summary, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is written to support the entire Heroic and Paragon tiers of play (levels 1-20).

Any character of the appropriate tier may play the adventure, but the highest-level character in the party must be within three (3) levels of the lowest-level character in the party.

Living Forgotten Realms defines five adventure levels within each tier. The choice of adventure level affects the difficulty of most obstacles (particularly combat encounters and skill challenges) the PCs will face during the adventure, and also determines the rewards available to the PCs for successfully overcoming those obstacles. The players must decide as a group which adventure level they want to play, and inform you of their decision before beginning the adventure. We recommend that you calculate the average character level and use that as a starting point, but a group of experienced players might choose to "play up" for a greater challenge, while a group of less-experienced players might choose to "play down" while they're learning the ropes.

The group may not choose an adventure level that is more than three levels above the lowest-level character in the party. For example, a group with a level 2, level 3, and four level 5 characters may not choose to play the level 6 version of an adventure because level 6 is more than three levels above the 2nd-level character. This group could choose to face the adventure at either level 2 or level 4, but they will probably choose level 4 because that's the best fit for the group (the average character level is $25/6 =$ approximately 4).

If (and only if) the group can't agree on an adventure level, the DM may cast a tiebreaking vote.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

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

In the Rewards section, there is a baseline XP award (the minimum amount a PC can earn). There are also one or more XP awards available for completing specific objectives as outlined by the adventure. Part of the DM's job is to decide if and when the PCs have fulfilled each objective, even if they failed at some of the individual encounters along the way.

CHARACTER DEATH

When a character dies during the course of an adventure, the player always has at least one option (Death Charity) and might have additional options (such as the Raise Dead ritual). Most importantly, the DM must decide if the rest of the group has access to the dead character's body.

- **Pay for the Raise Dead ritual.** If the group has access to the body and chooses this option, the component cost is usually divided evenly amongst the group (although this is not required, it is generally considered good form to share the costs). The component cost is 500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). If a PC can cast the ritual, then the component cost is the only cost. If the group must locate an NPC to cast the ritual, that NPC charges a fee equal to 20% of the component cost.
- **Use a power that returns dead characters to life.** Certain characters gain powers that allow them to restore life without using the Raise Dead ritual or paying a component cost. For example, the warpriest (a cleric build from *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*) gains the resurrection daily utility power at 8th level. NPCs may not be used for this option unless an adventure specifically says so; a player character with the appropriate power must be at the table (assuming he or she isn't the dead character) and all other conditions for using the power must be met. For example, resurrection may only be used at the end of an extended rest, and the character must have died within the last 24 hours.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group doesn't have access to the dead character's body, or if they have the body but cannot afford (or are unwilling) to pay for a ritual, the player can choose to return the PC back to life at the end of the adventure, exactly as if the Raise Dead ritual had been used on the dead character. The details of exactly how the character's body made its way back to civilization are up to the player, or this can be left deliberately vague. There is no direct cost for accepting Death Charity, but the character

forfeits all non-XP rewards for the adventure (including gold, Story Awards). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

Regardless of which option is chosen, any character who dies during an adventure gains 20% less XP from that adventure. In other words, characters that died during the adventure earn 80% of the amount earned by those characters that did not die during the adventure (for example, if the rest of the party earned 500 XP, the characters who died only earn 400 XP).

If a character is killed in the final encounter, but the rest of the party prevails, then the DM may choose to waive the 20% XP penalty if he or she believes that the group as a whole would not have succeeded without the dead character's sacrifice. The 20% penalty also does not apply in the event of a TPK (Total Party Kill), because the DM should reduce the entire group's XP award to reflect the fact that the party as a whole failed to complete some or all of the adventure's objectives.

Sometimes, invoking the Death Charity clause is the only option to return a dead PC to life. For example, if the group suffers a TPK and no friendly NPCs know where to find them, then it's unlikely that their bodies can be recovered. The DM is the final arbiter of whether or not a dead character's body can be recovered. Remember, the Death Charity clause is always an option, no matter what happened to the PC. Returning from the dead (by whatever means) is optional and up to the player, but the decision must be made at the table and recorded on the character's Adventure Log. Any character who chooses not to return from the dead is permanently retired from play.

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

COMING BACK FROM THE DEAD

This adventure has special rules for PCs coming back from the dead. The standard boilerplate is included here for reference. Characters who die during a mission rejoin the fight on their table's next mission (without having to wait for an extended rest or the end of the adventure). They still suffer the usual 20% XP penalty.

Because of the participants in this battle (both powerful NPCs and high-level PCs), gaining access to a caster for the Raise Dead ritual is easy. The ritual normally takes 8 hours to cast, but a particular artifact is borrowed to Cormyr for the coming battle from Eltugard. It is called *Loyalty's Sacrifice*. This item, sacred to Torm, first appeared in the adventure *SPEC2-1 (H3) The Morninglord's Laughter*

where it was recovered by a group of adventurers from the cursed fortress called Fort Morninglord, and subsequently played a significant role in helping the heroes of Elturel during the Battle Interactive *ADCP2-1 The Paladins' Plague* and *ADCP5-1 Home's Last Light*.

If a character dies during the adventure, the artifact can raise that PC from the dead during a short rest (not in the middle of a battle). The dead character finds him or herself standing on a featureless gray plane, infinite in all directions, facing a knight clad in full plate (including a visor, so the knight's face cannot be seen). The holy symbol of Torm is prominent on the knight's breastplate. The PC hears a deep, masculine voice asking if he or she wishes to return to the battle. If the PC says yes, the knight asks why. As long as the PC mentions something about loyalty, justice, sacrifice, or vengeance, that's good enough; the PC returns to life. To the other characters, this all happens in an instant; one moment the dead character is a corpse, the next moment he or she lurches back to life. The PC still suffers the death penalty for the next three milestones, but does not have to pay any component or spellcasting cost.

MILESTONES

Whether the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they generally reach a milestone after every second encounter following the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Some encounters do not count toward a milestone, usually because they are pure roleplaying encounters or do not pose a meaningful challenge to the party. If an encounter is not intended to count toward a milestone, it will say so. In particular, you should not deny the players a milestone just because they are having an easy time with the combat encounters. After each encounter, inform the players whether that encounter counted toward the next milestone. Reaching a milestone gives each PC another action point and affects some magic item powers.

LASTING EFFECTS

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

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

has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, the death penalty ends.

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

Diseases: A disease lasts until it is cured or it reaches its final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of an adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cured or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

Other Lasting Effects: Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Effects that last for a well-defined period of time (those that end after a certain number of days or extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified, such as by a Story Award). Effects that use a benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's Adventure Log and tracked across adventures.

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

WHAT'S AN ADVENTURING COMPANY?

In the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting, groups of adventurers often band together under a common cause or motivation. These groups are collectively referred to as "adventuring companies." A "company" is an organized group of adventurers that has taken on a specific name, heraldry or other identifying characteristic, regardless of whether their fundamental motive is one of profit. For example, an adventuring company could be part of an extended family or clan, a small religious sect, or a special team in a military

organization. In the *Living Forgotten Realms* campaign, adventuring companies are player-created and player administered organizations. They are a fun, but completely optional, component of the organized-play experience.

To learn more about the rules and guidelines for creating an adventuring company in *Living Forgotten Realms*, please see the *LFR Meta-Organization Guide*, which can be downloaded from the campaign website at <http://livingforgottenrealms.com>.

This adventure, like all DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventures, assumes that the player characters will be working together to achieve their goals. Any elements of competition between adventuring companies are intended to occur in a larger story context rather than taking place at the table. For example, an adventure might include a tournament or other contest in which the PCs score points for their adventuring company, with the company that scores the most points "winning" the overall competition. That's great, but it only works if the PCs at each individual table are working together instead of trying to undermine one another. Therefore, you may not run this adventure for a group of PCs that does not include at least four characters who are members of the same adventuring company, and it is recommended that all of the PCs be members of the same adventuring company.

If there are players whose characters are not members of any existing adventuring company when they sit down at the table, that's fine. They can organize a new company on the spot, so long as the rules in the *LFR Campaign Guide* are followed (most notably, the restriction that a character may not change his or her adventuring company membership more than once per character level).

ORGANIZER INFORMATION

Adventuring company adventures are only available for sanctioned Wizards Play Network (WPN) Public Play events. These adventures are designed to incorporate some meta-game elements (such as an overall scoring system for the participating adventuring companies). These make the most sense and are the most fun when there are a large number of tables all playing the adventure. Public Play events, especially conventions, are the biggest WPN events, draw the most players, and run the most tables, giving them the greatest opportunity to have participants from a variety of different adventuring companies.

Tables of an adventuring company adventure should be treated the same as any other event, including adherence to the General Rules. Each table must

include 4-6 players and a DM. In other words, the core D&D experience must be the same, even though there might be some elements that extend beyond an individual table (the interactive elements). Each table DM must complete a Session Tracking Form and turn it in to the Senior DM or event organizer, who is responsible for making sure that the results are reported to the WPN in a timely fashion.

ADCP5-2 First Strike works best with five or more tables. Due to the setup, if you run the event with less than five tables, chances are high the group will fail to achieve a victory. It is certainly not as much fun.

WHAT'S A BATTLE INTERACTIVE?

The term "Battle Interactive" (BI) is used to denote an adventure where the player characters are taking part in a mass combat environment (such as a war, although formally-declared wars between sovereign nations are rare in the *Forgotten Realms*). The PCs are fighting as part of a much larger force, typically an army. They might have different roles depending on their level (lower level PCs are likely to be treated more like common soldiers, slugging it out against a horde of foes on the front lines, while higher-level PCs are generally regarded as valuable assets, asked to join war councils and engage in special missions to strike directly at enemy leaders). Regardless of the details, the basic idea behind a BI is that it represents a clash of two or more opposing forces on a larger scale than would typically be depicted in a normal *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure.

Because it is plausible for a large number of PCs to be fighting at the same time as part of the same army, a BI makes an excellent fit for a convention or game day that can run a large number of tables at the same time. In the *Living Forgotten Realms* campaign we have chosen to present Battle Interactives as Adventuring Company adventures (using the ADCP designation) because it makes sense for factions to recruit large numbers of characters through their adventuring companies, rather than trying to recruit each individual PC one by one.

Organizers are encouraged to set the event up so that all the tables go through each mission of the BI together. Special rules might allow tables to assist or affect one another in ways that are not possible in a normal adventure. For example, if Table #1 is overrun by monsters and forced to retreat, the BI organizer might rule that Table #2 can try to take on the extra monsters in addition to the ones they are already fighting, in hopes of saving Table #1 and closing the gap.

The overall success or failure of a BI is often based on the collective outcomes of all the tables playing. For example, if five tables are playing, the story would

change depending on the majority outcome (if three tables failed a mission and two tables succeeded at the same mission, then the official result of that mission would be a failure).

Because a BI is focused on the battlefield, it features more and harder combat encounters than a typical LFR adventure. The XP budget is higher, and the adventure is designed to push PCs to their limits, using up all their resources. Character deaths are more common. Players who enjoy the tactical combat aspect of D&D are more likely to enjoy this adventure than those who don't.

To help run a battle interactive, there should be at least one Senior DM who does not run a regular table. The Senior DM collects and reports the results of the individual tables, deals with the complications and any potential questions/complaints the players and DMs might have during the event. Each table of players should pick a spokesperson to deliver table reports to the Senior DM and to announce their intentions for the next mission. The spokesperson does not have to be the same person all the time.

ROUND 1

This is the first round of the 2-round battle interactive *ADCP5-2 Best Defense*. The second part can be found in the document *ADCP5-2 R2*. You run this part with the same group of people as the second part during the same event (preferably on the same day).

DCs BY ADVENTURE LEVEL

This adventure uses the terms Easy, Moderate, and Hard to refer to the Difficulty Class (DC) of most checks. If a DC is given as a static number (such as DC 15 or DC 25 instead of Easy DC, Moderate DC, or Hard DC) then that number is the same regardless of Adventure Level (this applies to certain skill checks whose difficulty is specifically set by the core rules, such as monster knowledge checks, jumping and swimming checks, etc.)

Should you need to improvise a DC during the adventure, use the following table. (Adjust numbers below to fit the tier and delete this sentence.)

Adventure Level	Easy DC	Moderate DC	Hard DC
2	9	13	20
4	10	14	21
6	11	15	23
8	12	16	24
10	13	18	26

Adventure Level	Easy DC	Moderate DC	Hard DC
12	14	20	28
14	15	21	29
16	16	22	31
18	17	23	32
20	18	25	34

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Since the return of the Shade Enclave to Faerûn over hundred years ago tension between Netheril on one hand and Cormyr and its allies on the other have been high. Netheril sees itself as the rightful rulers of mankind on this side of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Its worship of the evil goddess Shar does not endear itself to others either. In general good-aligned nations like Cormyr, Evereska, Myth Drannor and the Dalelands are not ones to sit by idly under such circumstances.

The threat of powerful destructive magic on both sides has kept a direct conflict to a minimum, most of the time anyway. The last few years though Netheril became an ever increasing shadow across the land. First the Maelstrom in Sembia unexpectedly expanded, consuming not just parts of Sembia but the Dalelands as well. Attacks from monsters from the Shadowfell increased in frequency and intensity. The fall of the free Sembian city Urmlaspyr and the theology of Eltugard earlier this year was the last straw. Neither Cormyr nor Myth Drannor felt they could sit by and do nothing. They had to act before it was too late.

After much secret debate the two nations decided to strike now. After all, the best defense is a good offense. The target of the first attack is the flying fortress of Sakkors. After all, it is that city that poses the biggest direct military threat to Netheril's enemies. Cormyr promised to deliver most of the armed forces, including the necessary airships for both transport and assault. The elf High Mages provide the much needed protection against the powerful magic of the Netherese as well as the means to permanently destroy Sakkors.

In *SPEC5-3 What Distant Skies* and *SPEC5-4 Sly's Favor* adventurers helped Cormyr with gathering a fleet of airships. In *PREQ5-1 Edge of Justice* hopefully information was gathered to know where to strike. Now all Cormyr and her allies can do, is set sail and attack as quickly as possible before Netheril realizes what is going on.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

The battle interactive consists of two distinct parts. The first part, covered in the first round of the event, is about the air battle between Cormyr and Netheril. The second part (and second round) deals with the invasion of Sakkors itself. There is an extended rest between both parts. Since the characters are well aware of this, tell the players about it too. There is no need to be overly conservative with their resources beyond what the players can expect in any other combat intensive 1-round adventure.

This particular section only covers round 1. Round 2 is detailed in a separate document *ADCP5-2 First Strike Round 2*. Hopefully this makes it easier for you to keep the papers organized while running the adventure. You find the stat blocks in separate documents sorted by AL as well to ease with printing if you know in advance which AL you are going to run.

Once the tables have been mustered and DMs assigned. You first need to determine whether the PCs board a greatship or a yacht as discussed in the Player's Introduction below. Yachts are fast maneuverable small ships. The greatships are bigger and slower, but more heavily armed. It has an impact on the fights during Encounter 1. Afterward the PCs can transfer. Some PCs might have their own yachts as discussed in **COREXX** from *SPEC5-3 What Distant Skies*. These are likely more powerful than the regular yachts. See Handout 1 and 2, which you should provide to the players for ease of reference. Note that the ship maps that print 1:1 on grid are included with the adventure.

Encounter 1: Shortly before arriving at Sakkors a small force of Netherese soldiers on flying mounts attack in an attempt to delay the Cormyrian forces. It is a simple quick combat in which the PCs need to kill as many opponents as possible within 30 minutes.

Encounter 2: Once the initial blow has been dealt, the Netherese airships have been maneuvered into position. Before the two forces can close in, they first slug it out with their catapults and ballistae. How many ships are shot out of the sky on both sides is at least partially up to the players.

Once the artillery part of the battle has been resolved, the ships engage in close combat. At this point each table must pick a part of the battlefield where they think they can do the most good. The area chosen dictates what set of encounters that table faces for the remainder of the round. Most of these encounter sets consist of two fights and a skill challenge that all need to be finished before the end of the round for maximum benefit. Failing to do so has unfortunate consequences

depending on the area. Some of the sets include more fights, allowing the tables to pick one after the other.

Of course, the players as a group should try and coordinate which table picks what area since all regions should be covered (with the possible exception of the ground). Once the regions have been picked, they cannot be changed and there is no need to report the results of individual encounters to the Senior DM until the end of this part.

Each table must pick one of the following areas:

- **AB1. Dreadnaught** (2 tables minimum, 3 tables per dreadnought maximum; 1 dreadnaught per 10 tables (rounded up)): There are one or more particularly dangerous Netherese ships present. These dreadnoughts pose a serious threat to the Cormyrian forces and need to be dealt with either by destroying or conquering them.
- **AB2. Taking Point:** One group of characters is asked to take point in the battle. They must rush forward, open a way for those attacking the dreadnoughts and in general fight the Netherese in the thick of the battle.
- **AB3. Holding Back:** Any good general holds some of his forces in reserve to deal with unexpected situations. In this case most notably attacks on the Cormyrian greatships by the Netherese or the arrival of enemy reinforcements. At first it might not appear to be the most glorious position, but it is vital and is ultimately just as important.
- **AB4. Grounded:** Some PCs might have lost their ships in Encounter 2, forcing them to make an emergency landing below. Cormyrian and Netherese ships have most definitely crashed in the long distance battle. PCs on the ground need to defend themselves. Otherwise some tables might decide to help those below in an attempt to minimize casualties.

At the end of the round, the results are reported to the Senior DM who uses it to determine the starting position of the Netherese during round 2.

STORY AWARDS

The adventures *SPEC5-3 What Distant Skies* and *SPEC5-4 Sky's Favor* have a direct impact on the battle interactive. Check below for the consequences.

SPEC5~3

The overall results of *SPEC5-3* are determined by the Senior DM beforehand by consolidating the event summaries for the adventure run earlier at the convention and announced at the start of the event. It

determines the strength and power of the yachts. Use the following handout for the yacht stats:

- Handout 1A if the result is “Right into the Danger Zone”
- Handout 1B if the result is “Battle-Ready and Skyship-Shape”
- Handout 1C if the result is “Wind-Sail and a Prayer”

Check **SPEC70** at your table, if the majority at your table has a better result, you use the better version for your table.

SPEC5~4

The overall results of *SPEC5-4* are determined by the Senior DM beforehand by consolidating the event summaries for the adventure run earlier at the convention and announced at the start of the event. It determines the availability of the boons described in Handout 4.

Check **SPEC71** for each PC. PCs who are allied with those captains that joined the fight gain access to the boons of said captains. The powers of the captains not present are obviously not available to the players.

COMPLICATIONS AND AIDING ONE ANOTHER

During the Air Battle there are complication triggered after about every 30 minutes of gaming. The complications are described in Appendix 1. The senior DM can copy-paste these and print them on cards, ready to be handed out and returned when triggered and once resolved.

When a complication happens at a specific table is determined by the Senior DM. The tables should be picked at random, although care should be taken that all tables are affected at least once. Per event 25% of the tables should be affected, rounded down. A table can be affected by two complications at the same time. If that happens though the table should get rid of one effect as quickly as possible. The tables affected should be announced for all tables to be heard.

The exact complication can either be determined by the Senior DM or the DM of the affected table. Ask the Senior DM at the start of the event. If you can select the complication, pick one that is particular nasty to your table.

Each complication consists of two effects, one for the individual PCs and one for the table as a whole. These effects come into play immediately if the PCs are currently involved in a fight or at the start of the first round in a fight when currently selecting a new mission.

The effects for the whole table only stop when the individual effects have been removed on ALL PCs. When that happens the complication has been resolved and the effects are removed.

There is a second method for a table to remove a complication. Another table can volunteer to take the complication instead of the original table. If that happens, all effects instantly end on your table. They come into effect on the new table as normal. Obviously, both tables must agree to the swap of the complication.

BATTLE STANCES

In previous battle interactives, the players could select a battle stance at the start of an encounter, choosing whether they wanted an easy or challenging encounter. There is no such official scaling during this round.

Obviously, if the players really want to be challenged and tell you so at the start of an encounter, feel free to make things more challenging. Remind them (and players who are having a difficult time or want an easier challenge) that they can aid other tables by taking over monsters and complication cards from other tables. Remind them that the goal is to complete as many encounters as possible within the time available. Tables who want more of a challenge should try to complete 4 or more encounters before time runs out. This also allows them to have more of an impact on the overall outcome of the battle.

RETREAT

During any encounter, the PCs may decide to retreat. All the players of currently active PCs (i.e. not dead, and not unconscious) must agree. The decision can be made at any time, but the retreat takes effect at the end of the current combat round. It does not matter where the PCs or monsters are located on the battle map at the end of the round. The encounter ends immediately, as other allied forces cover the PCs' withdrawal. Once a warband retreats from an encounter, that encounter is over for that table (they cannot return).

PACING: TABLE DMs

In order to keep all of the tables playing the same encounter at the same time (or finish their storyline on time), it is important that every table begins and ends each encounter (or later one storyline) at the same time. This real-time limitation can be difficult for some tables. Here are some tips for speeding up play.

- Display skill DC numbers for Easy, Moderate, and Hard skill checks for the players to reference.
- Display the "highest" and "lowest" defense values in the encounter. (If the players know that the defenses in the encounter range from 20-25, they can quickly determine if they hit, miss, or need to ask.)
- Encourage players to roll their attack and damage dice simultaneously (using different colored sets of dice for multiple attacks that deal different damage).
- Do the same for your monsters.
- As one player is totaling damage (or healing), if that is the last action of the player's turn, allow the next player to go ahead and start their turn.
- Make decisions for the monsters' turns quickly, and encourage players to do the same. Often, using a suboptimal tactic quickly is a better road to finishing the encounter on time than losing precious minutes analyzing optimal use of resources.

PACING: SENIOR DM

If you are organizing this event for multiple tables, you should keep a close eye on pacing so that the entire event finishes on time. The following pacing guide assumes that you run round 1 over one four-hour sessions. Round 2 also takes one four-hour session, more information on the pacing of round 2 can be found in *ADCP5-2 First Strike Round 2*.

- Introduction and Mustering: 15 minutes
- Encounter 1: 30 minutes
- Encounter 2: 30 minutes
- The Air Battle (AB1: Dreadnaught, AB2: Taking Point, AB3: Holding Back or AB4: On the Ground): 150 minutes
- Conclusion: 15 minutes

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

The PCs start in Cormyr where they have been hired to aid the nation in an unknown upcoming battle. The pay is good, as is the chance to do well, be a hero or to simply fight. There are many soldiers (mostly Cormyrian, but there is a sizable group of elves and eladrin), mercenaries, adventurers and flying ships gathered together when a general finally tells them their goal. Wait for a signal from the Senior DM to start, most likely in the form of the speech below.

A stern faced old veteran, face lined with the wear and tear of both age and enemy blades saunters to the makeshift scaffolding erected at the edge of the gathering square. The slightest of hand signals and the entire Cormyrian army goes silent.

"Men, friends and allies. It is with great pride that I take stock in the troops gathered before me today. Of course, as a general I already knew Cormyr has the best troops."

The Cormyrian troops jeer and holler at this statement and the general pauses, then another small signal and silence returns.

"But now I know that Cormyr has more than that. Cormyr has the best friends!"

With a respectful nod the general acknowledges you and your fellow adventurers. Another nod towards the female elf dressed in high mage garb, standing just to the side of his platform greets the Myth Drannor delegation.

"I have waited long for this day. But I knew the time would come when our dealings with Netheril would go beyond the mewling of politicians and diplomats. I have waited long for this day. But I knew when it came we would be bold. We would be fearless. We would be the hand to slap down this threat of shadowy daggers at our throats. So let us wait no longer. Let us find this flying hive of shade, this cesspool of betrayal and darkness, this Sakkors. And..."

The general pauses.

"TAKE IT FROM THEM."

At this point the PCs can board a ship, either a big greatship or a quick yacht. Give them Player Handout 1, and 2 to help facilitate the choice, although PCs with their own ship are likely to pick it. Don't spend too much time on though. It has an impact on Encounter 1, but afterwards PCs can transfer to new ships based on the missions they pick.

At some point shortly after the above speech the forces set sail for Sakkors. The trip is short and uneventful, although magical communications are

hindered and a close watch is paid to prevent spies from alerting Netheril to the approaching army. After a few days Sakkors comes within few. Proceed with Encounter 1 after the signal from the Senior DM. It is a timed event that also ends by a signal from the Senior DM.

ENCOUNTER 1: THREE IF BY AIR?

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- 3 **midnight arrow** (A)
- 3 **shadar-kai blacksoul** (B)
- 6 **ghost talon thug** (T)
- 12 **veserab** (V)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 shadar-kai blacksoul and 1 veserab.

Six PCs: Add 1 midnight arrow and 1 veserab.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Give the players Handout 5 at the start of the encounter. Make sure the players are well aware that the goal of the encounter is to kill as many Netherese as possible and that they only have a limited time (30 minutes). Do not start with the fight until the Senior DM gives the signal to all the tables to do so!

SETUP

As the PCs prepare for battle, Netherese troops leave the sphere of impenetrable darkness surrounding the city and attack the PCs' yachts.

As you board your yacht awaiting your Cormyrian allies, Netherese troops mounted on veserabs leave the barrier of darkness surrounding the city, intent on eliminating some of your forces before the battle has truly begun. If you can eliminate these attackers quickly, you will surely hurt the morale of the Netherese.

The characters start the fight on the ship they boarded during the Player's Introduction. The characters have time to position themselves as they wish before the Netherese are within range.

The fight starts with the Netherese within 10 squares of the ship of the PCs. The Netherese fighting the characters has survived the approach and is the faction specifically targeting the PCs. More have been shot down on their approach by the characters and the Cormyreans, but that has no impact on the encounter.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Yacht / Greatship: See Handout 1 and 2. Do **not** forget the ranged weapons of the ships.

FALLING

One of the greatest risks in a fight high in the air is falling. A fall from this height is automatically lethal, and even if the creatures recover before hitting the ground it takes several rounds to return to the fight. Hence the powerful mages on both sides took precautions to limit the risks of falling.

Railings provide a +5 bonus on saving throws when forced over the side.

Creatures falling are suspended in the air for 1 round. A falling creature may spend 1 move action on their next turn to get back on board a ship or get on a mount. They are considered prone. If they start their turn falling and end their turn falling (i.e. did not spend the move action or otherwise address the situation), they fall and are killed.

Flying creatures knocked prone have 1 round to stand up before falling down. Riders are not automatically knocked off prone mounts. If the flying creature does not rise before the end of their next turn, they are killed.

Stunned: A creature that is falling (or flying and prone) that is also stunned or otherwise unable to take actions cannot take the move action required to avoid falling. They fall to their death at the end of their stunned turn.

TACTICS

The Netherese shock troops attack with the intent of killing as many PCs as possible.

All the humanoid opponents are mounted on veserabs. The veserabs are used only as mounts, and do not attack the PCs. If a veserab is slain, its rider falls. If a rider is slain, the veserab retreats back into the sphere of darkness surrounding Sakkors.

The midnight arrows and shadar-kai blacksouls try to stay as far away from the PCs as possible while keeping them within range of their abilities.

The ghost talon thugs fly to the PCs' yacht and focus their attacks on PCs who are using ranged attacks.

If the characters are in trouble due to area attacks, remind them that they can go below deck.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

End the encounter when the time limit is announced. Which is after about 30 minutes.

The remaining Netherese forces withdraw to the relative safety of Sakkors' sphere of darkness.

If the PCs kill more than 75% of the monsters, the Netherese take a penalty to their morale in future encounters. If the PCs fail to kill at least 50% of the monsters, the Netherese gain a bonus to their morale. Let the players fill in Handout 5 and let the table spokesperson deliver it to the Senior DM.

The Cormyrian fleet has arrived near Sakkors, and they are about to face the Netherese fleet. **Wait for the Senior DM before proceeding with Encounter 3.**

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ENCOUNTER 1: THREE IF BY AIR STATS

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 3.

Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 4.

Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 5.

Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 6.

Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 7.

Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 8.

Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 9.

Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 10.

Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 11.

Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 12.

ENCOUNTER 1: THREE IF BY AIR? MAP

The PCs may place themselves on their ship in any way they wish.
The Netherese approach the ship from the bow (top of the map)

See Player's Handout 1, 2 and 3

ENCOUNTER 2A: SHIP TO SHIP

ENCOUNTER LEVELS: ALL

This is an interactive encounter aimed at providing a massive air combat experience. It pits the PC's ships together with their Cormyrian allies against the defensive fleet of the Netherese city of Sakkors.

FAST PLAY OPTIONS

At large conventions, **such as Origins**, the rules can create a really slow game. As such we have designed a faster method that only involves individual tables instead of the whole convention. It is up to the Senior DM to decide which method to use. If the event does use the second method, use Encounter 2B instead of 2A.

SETUP

There should be a visual representation of the air battle. This can be a large battlemat with tokens for all the ships, but as more tables are involved we suggest using either a large poster on a wall or alternatively a beamer setup.

Count the number of PC ships present and use the table in Appendix 2 to determine the number of allied ships as well as the amount of Netherese ships.

Ships come in 2 categories with a different amount of hit points.

Type	Hit Points
Yacht	300
Greatship	450

PC tables that have their own ship are on a yacht, groups without a ship of their own may be on either type. On any ship that holds a group of PC's they determine the stance and targeting. All other Cormyrian ships will be handled by the high command.

PC ships may not be in full repair and thus may have a different amount of hit points at the time of combat.

Off in the distance floats your target in implacable stony silence. Sakkors is within reach, but between you and the city a line of netherese ships has formed in an attempt to hold you off. All around you ballista's are being loaded, arbalest arrows set aflame and on the wind you can hear orders being barked by both the netherese and cormyrean commanders. Slowly drifting out of the darkness surrounding Sakkors is a ship's hull (adjust for 2 dreadnaughts if there are 11+ tables), the

size of its bow alone dwarfing all other ships in the air. Your crew looks at you expectantly as they make ready to load the weapons and pick a target for what is going to be one big shootout.

GOALS OF THE BATTLE

The PCs goal in this combat is to down as many enemy ships as possible while keeping as many of their and their allies ships in the air. Sakkors is a floating city and losing a flying ship will seriously hinder the effort of taking it. Not to mention the possible repercussions to life and limb that comes with crashing from this height.

DAMAGING THE SHIPS

Attacking a vessel is as simple as choosing a target and making d20 roll. The result of the roll is listed in the following table:

Attack result	Damage to ship
1 to 5	0
6 to 9	25
10 to 15	50
16 to 19	100
20 to 25	150
26+	200

The attack roll is modified by the chosen stance and the ship type. Greatships provide a more stable platform for shooting and carry bigger arms, but also provide a bigger target. Shooting from a greatship provides a +2 bonus to the attack roll versus enemies, but enemies also gain a +2 bonus when attacking a greatship.

ROUND SEQUENCE

Each round of aerial combat consists of the following steps:

Choose a stance for the next round: The table must decide in what way to approach the combat in the next round. They have the following options:

Stance	Effect
Cautious	Enemies gain -2 penalty to attack you You gain a -2 penalty to attack enemies
Aggressive	Enemies gain a +2 bonus to attack you You gain +2 bonus to attack enemies
Scared	Enemies gain -5 penalty to attack you You gain a -5 penalty to attack enemies
Suicidal	Enemies gain a +5 bonus to attack you You gain +5 bonus to attack enemies

Choose a target for this round: Each table determines their tactical preferences and sends their table captain forward to the tactical area to pick their next target. Tactical debate amongst captains is encouraged. Cormyrian high command ensures their targeting array is clear before the captains have to make their decision. See Appendix 1 for targeting rules for Cormyrian and Netherese ships.

Attack!: The captain proceeds to combat processing and makes their attack. The result is noted and the captain gets informed if their ship is targeted and by how many ships.

Defense: the captain returns to their table where PCs and DM resolve the attacks made against their ship.

Results: Tables and the organizers announce the result of the shooting round. The visual representation of the combat is updated and we move on to the next round.

CRASHING

A ship at 0 or below hit points spins out of control and then crashes to the ground. The effects of this are handled in Encounter 19. However should a PC ship go down in the second round they have the option to attempt a controlled crash, otherwise known as ramming the enemy.

Such an attack has negative consequences, as it becomes a lot harder to put the ship on the ground without casualties (i.e. -5 to skill checks in the crashing skill challenge). If the PCs want to attempt such an attack, they have to first succeed at a group skill check to manipulate the ship into a controlled dive. PCs can use either one of Athletics, Arcana or Thievery. Endurance may also be used, but anyone doing so takes their healing surge value in damage as they fight the ship while enduring the pain. If the check is successful the PCs may make an attack against a Netherese vessel of their choice, but with a -5 to the roll. Process the result of the roll like normal with one exception: if the PCs manage to roll a natural 20, the enemy ship is destroyed.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends after 3 rounds of aerial combat. By that time the Netherese dreadnaughts have closed and continuing to engage in a shootout does end well for the PCs. The fight should last about 30 minutes real time. At the end of the fight, proceed with the Air Battle. Note that at that time all the tables have to make a choice. See Air Battle: Introduction for details.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

ENCOUNTER 2B: SHIP TO SHIP FAST PLAY

ENCOUNTER LEVELS: ALL

This is an interactive encounter aimed at providing a massive air combat experience. It pits the PC's ships together with their Cormyrean allies against the defensive fleet of the Netherese city of Sakkors.

FAST PLAY OPTIONS

At large conventions, such as Origins, the rules in Encounter 2A can create a really slow game. As such we have designed a faster method that only involves individual tables instead of the whole convention. It is up to the Senior DM to decide which method to use. If the event chooses not to use the fast play option, use Encounter 2A instead of 2B.

SETUP

For this encounter you need to know the statistics for the ship the players are on. The ship's hit points determine when/if their ship goes down. Count the number of Cormyrean and Netherese ships present and use the table in Appendix 2 to determine the number of allied ships as well as the number of Netherese ships.

Off in the distance floats your target in implacable stony silence. Sakkors is within reach, but between you and the city a line of Netherese ships has formed in an attempt to hold you off. All around you ballista's are being loaded, arbalest arrows set aflame and on the wind you can hear orders being barked by both the Netherese and Cormyrean commanders. Slowly drifting out of the darkness surrounding Sakkors is a ship's hull (adjust for 2 dreadnaughts if there are 11+ tables), the size of its bow alone dwarfing all other ships in the air. Your crew looks at you expectantly as they make ready to load the weapons and pick a target for what is going to be one big shootout as soon as you manage to close.

This combat takes place in 3 scenes, each consisting of individual skill checks for each player, to control the ship and avoid damage, and one table D20 roll to determine damage to the Netherese fleet.

Give the players Handout 6 and 7.

GOALS OF THE BATTLE

The PCs' goal in this combat is to down as many enemy ships as possible while keeping as many of their and their allies ships in the air. Sakkors is a floating city and losing a flying ship seriously hinders the effort of taking it. Not to mention the possible repercussions to life and limb that comes with crashing from this height.

CONTROLLING THE SHIP

Before getting to make an attack on the enemy the PCs will have to keep the ship controlled while avoiding enemy fire. To do this each player must make an individual skill check.

There are 3 roles available on the ship. One PC may aid in steering the ship and make an Arcana check. One PC may assist in aiming the armaments with an Intelligence or Wisdom check at a +5 bonus. All other PCs must make either an Athletics or Acrobatics check.

Determine if any PCs are steering and/or aiming then proceed with the appropriate skill check per PC.

Check result	Effect
High DC	The PCs ship takes no damage
Moderate DC	The PCs ship takes damage (30 hit points on a 4 player table, 25 hit points on 5 player table and 20 hit points on a 6 player table).
Easy DC	The PCs ship takes damage (40 hit points on a 4 player table, 35 hit points on 5 player table and 30 hit points on a 6 player table).
Less than easy DC	Like easy DC, but additionally the table takes a cumulative -1 penalty to the next ship D20 roll.

PCs trying to control a greatship get a -5 penalty to their skill checks.

Please note!! Each PC makes an individual check and damage is done to the ship after each check. As a DM total the damage to the ship and report the total of all individual results after all players have made their check

ATTACKING THE ENEMY

After making individual skill challenges to determine damage to the ship, the PCs get to make one D20 roll per round, one D20 roll total, not after each individual skill check. The result of their roll is listed in the following table:

Modified D20 result	Netherese ships destroyed
1 to 11	No ships hit
12 to 20	1 enemy yacht destroyed
21 to 24	1 enemy greatship destroyed
25+	1 enemy yacht and 1 enemy greatship destroyed

* Regardless of the total end value, a natural 20 always destroys a greatship.

Make sure to describe their successes in grandiose fashion. It should be raining flaming ships on either side.

The D20 roll is modified by the chosen stance and the ship type. Greatships provide a more stable platform for shooting and carry bigger arms, but also provide a bigger target. Shooting from a greatship provides a +2 bonus to the D20 roll versus enemies, but PCs also gain a -5 penalty to their skill checks.

STANCES

In round 2 and 3 the players may select one of the following stances that will affect both their skill checks and their D20 roll.

Stance	Effect
Cautious	PCs get a +2 bonus to skill checks for the round and the table has a -2 penalty to the next ship D20 roll.
Aggressive	PCs get a -2 penalty to skill checks for the round and the table has a +2 bonus to the next ship D20 roll.
Tactical retreat	PCs get a +5 bonus to skill checks for the round and the table has a -5 penalty to the next ship D20 roll.
Suicidal / Sacrifice	PCs get a -5 penalty to skill checks for the round and the table has a +5 bonus to the next ship D20 roll.

Note: A greatship is too cumbersome to attempt a suicidal stance. A greatship can however be used in a sacrificial manner in round 3.

CRASHING

A ship at 0 or below hit points spins out of control and then crashes to the ground. The effects of this are handled in Encounter 19. However should a PC ship go down in the second round they have the option to attempt a controlled crash, otherwise known as ramming the enemy.

Such an attack has negative consequences, as it becomes a lot harder to put the ship on the ground

without casualties (i.e. -5 to skill checks in the crashing skill challenge). If the PCs want to attempt such an attack, they have to succeed at a group skill check to manipulate the ship into a controlled dive. PCs can use either one of Athletics, Arcana or Thievery. Endurance may also be used, but anyone doing so takes their healing surge value in damage as they fight the ship while enduring the pain. If the check is successful the PCs may make a D20 roll against the Netherese vessel of their choice, but with a -5 penalty to the roll.

ROUNDS

1st round: PCs try to control the ship, shoot and choose a stance for round 2.

2nd round: PCs try to control the ship, shoot and choose a stance for round 3. Additionally they have the option to sacrifice themselves to try and keep a Cormyrean / other PC ship flying. This has the same effects as a suicidal stance, but make sure the players realize that this means they are going down.

3d round: PCs try to control the ship, shoot and hope to stay airborne.

Resolution of the sacrifice option is handled by HQ. If players choose the sacrifice option do not report damage to their ship for round 3, but describe their ship taking lots of damage. HQ decides if their ship ends up going down.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends after 3 rounds of aerial combat. By that time the Netherese dreadnaughts have closed and continuing to engage in a shootout does end well for the PCs. The fight should last about 30 minutes real time. At the end of the fight, report the results to the Senior DM by filling in Handout 5 and delivering it to HQ.

Note that at that time all the tables have to make a choice. See Air Battle: Introduction for details. Do not proceed with the next part, including Encounter 19 if the PCs crash, until the Senior DM gives the signal to do so.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

AIR BATTLE: INTRODUCTION

With Encounter 2 finished, the ships have closed in and the battle turns into more of a melee fight. At this point each table has to make a decision, preferably in consultation with the other tables.

There are four general areas for the tables to fight in. All the areas include fights for ALL ALs. It is mostly a role-play choice after interacting with other tables.

- **Attack the Dreadnought(s):** Unlike the other areas there is a maximum of three tables per dreadnought.
- **Take point in the battle in the most dangerous area of the battle.**
- **Holding back in reserve and to protect the larger Cormyrian ships.**
- **Survive on the ground, or if the PCs did not crash, help the survivors of those that did crash.**

#Tables at Event	#Tables at Area
5-10	Maximum 2-3 at the dreadnought (if 2 remove main deck encounters)
	1 - 2 Taking Point
	1 - 2 Holding Back
	0 - 1 Grounded
11-15	Maximum 6 at the dreadnought (minimum 2 required for success)
	2 - 3 Taking Point
	2 - 3 Holding Back
	1 - 2 Grounded
16-20	Maximum 6 at the dreadnought (minimum 2 required for success)
	3 - 5 Taking Point
	3 - 5 Holding Back
	3 - 4 Grounded

Tables have about 10 minutes to make a choice. The choice should be reported by the spokesperson to the Senior DM who should have a method to show how many tables are in what area so that tables can change their choice.

Once an area is picked, with the exception of the AB1. Dreadnought and AB4. Grounded, there are several encounters. PCs can pick and play these as they wish. There is no need to report to the Senior DM until ***after*** the air battle, and to report the result of all. It is expected that the PCs can finish two encounters. If they manage to finish the third that is a bonus. More details on the Dreadnought encounter can be found in Encounter 3. More details on Grounded can be found in Encounter 19A and 19B.

Important: Without the minimum of tables in an area the one fight is considered lost per table that is missing.

CONSEQUENCES

Round 2 is about conquering Sakkors. To make it clear to the players how far along the group is in that goal, the Netherese army has five traits. More details on this can be found in ADCP5-2 R2.

The results of the area decrease on of these traits. If results are really bad, the trait is not decreased at all and starts at 4. If the result is bad, it is decreased to 3. If the results are good, it is lowered to 2. The Senior DM should use his judgment. In general having one or two traits at 3 and the rest at 2 is best.

- **Dreadnought:** Influences the Offense Trait.
- **Taking Point:** Influences the Defense Trait.
- **Holding Back:** Influences the Maneuverability Trait.
- **Grounded:** Influences Morale.

AREA ENCOUNTER SUMMARY

See Appendix 13 for ease of reference.

AB1: DREADNOUGHT

Encounter 3: The attack on the dreadnought consists of three storylines, one for each table attacking the dreadnought. There is an assault on the main, aft and front deck. The tables must decide together which tables attacks which area.

Quickly run Encounter 3 with the three tables present so that they can choose which area to attack. The Senior DM or the DMs for each dreadnought (two to three tables) can take the players of all the involved tables aside for the briefing. Keep it short though!

Main Deck:

Encounter 4A and 5: The PCs take and defend the main deck

Shields:

Encounter 4B and 4C: The PCs try to take down the shields hampering their allies attack.

Poop Deck:

Encounter 6, 7 and 8: The PCs try and take the helm and wrest control of the ships “engines.”

Aft Deck:

Encounter 9, 10 and 11: The PCs try and take the forward deck and stop the self destruct mechanism.

AB2: TAKING POINT

The PCs are assumed to have their own yacht.

Encounter 12: Destroy a Netherese yacht.

Encounter 13: Deal with artillery at Sakkors, and more importantly a large group of opponents.

Encounter 14: A large group of wraiths descends upon the PCs.

AB3: HOLDING BACK

The PCs are assumed to be attached to a Cormyrian greatship.

Encounter 15 (AL 2 to 14 only): The Cormyrian ship is attacked by flying opponents.

Encounter 16 (AL16 to 20 only): A huge shadow dragon descends upon the PCs ship.

Encounter 17: A Cormyrian ship is boarded and nearly overrun unless the PCs help.

Encounter 18: A large group of flying opponents descends upon the Cormyrians, luckily they are just recruits. Maybe the PCs can scare them away?

AB4: GROUNDED

Encounter 19A: Going down in an uncontrolled descent is dangerous and potentially lethal.

Encounter 19B: Even if the PCs do not crash, others did. They could use help.

Encounter 20: A group of Netherese has bunkered down. Killing them, especially the officers, is good for the coming battle.

Encounter 21: The Cormyrians on the ground are attacked and need cover before they are airlifted.

FALLING (APPLIES IN ALL AREAS)

FALLING

One of the greatest risks in a fight high in the air is falling. A fall from this height is automatically lethal, and even if the creatures recover before hitting the ground it takes several rounds to return to the fight. Hence the powerful mages on both sides took precautions to limit the risks of falling.

Railings provide a +5 bonus on saving throws when forced over the side.

Creatures falling are suspended in the air for 1 round. A falling creature may spend 1 move action on their next turn to get back on board a ship or get on a mount. They are considered prone. If they start their turn falling and end their turn falling (i.e. did not spend the move action or otherwise address the situation), they fall and are killed.

Flying creatures knocked prone have 1 round to stand up before falling down. Riders are not automatically knocked off prone mounts. If the flying creature does not rise before the end of their next turn, they are killed.

Stunned: A creature that is falling (or flying and prone) that is also stunned or otherwise unable to take actions cannot take the move action required to avoid falling. They fall to their death at the end of their stunned turn.

ABL ENCOUNTER 3: SKYJACK

Important NPC:

Captain Cyril Trueheart, human male, commander of the Cormyr squadron and captain of the *Mandalay Rain*.

When the PCs decide to take on the mission to commandeer one of the Netheril dreadnaughts, they rendezvous with the *Mandalay Rain* captained by Cyril Trueheart.

Welcome aboard the Mandalay Rain. I am Captain Cyril Trueheart. We have a very important mission that if we pull off will definitely give us an advantage in our assault on Sakkors.

The captain relays the following information:

- The assault group is divided into three separate teams. Each team land on different parts of the ship.
- The first team assaults the main deck. They secure that area and prevent any enemies from retaking the area.
- The second team lands on the poopdeck and gain control of the helm then find the control room as well.
- Intelligent reports have the uncovered that the Netheril airships have a self-destruct mechanism aboard. The third team is inserted at the forecandle for quick entry to locate where the bomb is located and defuse it.
- The plan is to drop down from above the Netheril airship in its blind spot and attach grappling hooks to their ship and have the PCs slide down to their target deck. As the PCs are dropped off, the *Mandalay Rain* provides cover fire for their descent.
- You are also provided sending stones to keep in communication with us and the other groups as well.

After the briefing, the teams can return to their yachts and prepare for the assault.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs are on the mission Assault on the Main Deck, proceed to Encounter 2. If they are on the mission Wrestling Control (poopdeck), go to Encounter 6. And if they are on the Defuse the Situation mission, proceed to Encounter 9.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

ABL ENCOUNTER 4: ATTACK ON THE MAIN

CREATURES

At heroic, this encounter includes the following:

- 1 sergeant at arms (T)
- 1 hunting lightdrinker (H)
- 2 Netherese striker (K)
- 4 Netherese sailor (R)

At paragon, this encounter includes the following:

- 1 sergeant at arms (T)
- 1 starspawned lightdrinker (S)
- 2 Netherese knight (K)
- 4 Netherese sailors (R)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 Netherese striker at heroic or one Netherese knight at paragon.

Six PCs: Add 1 Netherese striker at heroic or one Netherese knight at paragon.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The PCs need to defeat the Netherese soldiers on the maindeck before they can proceed to the next encounters (Encounter 5). If the PCs do not manage to do so before the end of the air battle they automatically loose Encounter 5.

Keep an eye on the clock. If the PCs have 60 minutes left before the end of the air battle, feel free to remind them that they can ask for aid from the other tables. If another table offers to help, remove a number of monsters agreed upon by the players on both tables and add them to the aiding table at the proper AL.

SETUP

The flight to the Netheril dreadnaught takes around ten more minutes. The PCs are able to make any preparations such as rituals during that time.

As the PCs descend above the larger Netherese dreadnaught, read the following:

As the dreadnaught comes into view, you see how massive a vessel it is and how much of a prize it would be have one on your side. There are no sails on the ship, but a trail of shadowy energy propels it forward.

As the grappling hooks are thrown towards the dreadnaught, they secure to the rails of the enemy ship. An alarm sounds that echoes throughout the airship as Netheril defenders rush to their posts to repel the invaders.

All of a sudden some sort of shadowy shield starts to envelope the ship emanating from below. As it hits the grappling hooks, the lines break. The captain of your yacht, tells you to go now.

Every PC must make an Acrobatics or Athletics check to slide down rope to the dreadnaught.

- If the PC makes the Hard DC, then land on an open square near the rail and can shift one square as a free action.
- If the PC makes the Moderate DC, then they land on any open square adjacent to the rail.
- If the PC make the Easy DC, then they land prone on any open square adjacent to the rail.
- If the PC fails the Easy DC check, then they slam into the deck take AL damage and are prone on any open square adjacent to the rail.

After all the PCs are on the map, place the enemies on the map then read the following:

Looking around you see a shadowy humanoid accompanied by a large feral dog with tentacles protruding from its head and back; light dripping from his mouth. His master barks out orders to other shadowy humanoids and points in your direction. Shadow weapons form in their hands as they approach.

The PCs now roll Initiative as the defenders attack immediately. If the characters are all using something like *arcane gate*, have the PCs roll Initiative after the first one reaches the main deck.

After the end of round 1, the *shadow shield* completely surrounds the ship and now effects the PCs inside if they do not have the shadow origin. Read the following:

As the shadow shield closes, all lines to your yacht have been severed and you see the attacks from the yachts dissipating as they reach the shield.

Then the shadows from the shield start to affect you. Your skin turns pale and sensitive to the touch, your vision is blurred, your strength is diminished and your head throbs with pain.

The affected PCs suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, and vulnerable 2 at heroic; -2 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, and

vulnerable 5 all at paragon while the shield is operational.

After 45 minutes of real time (HQ will remind you), the PCs receive a message from the yachts, read the following:

That shadow shield has made us ineffective against their ship. Our ritualists have found that the shields are being generated from an elemental source located in the center of the bottom deck.

One team needs to go now to take down the shields, otherwise we need to retreat and you are on your own.

Under most circumstances your table should be the one targeting the shield. The other teams have their own important tasks. Only when there are two tables on the dreadnought should it be a free choice. Ask the Senior DM whether it is a free choice or not!

If one team decides to go for the shields, any remaining monsters have to be dispersed to the other teams on the deck. They appear at the AL of the table at either full or bloodied value of hit points. The new monsters appear and act at the end of the current round.

The team that decides to go after the shields immediately goes to Encounter 4B with no short rest as they are racing to the shield generator.

The PCs can decide to ignore the shields and deal with the effects for the rest of the dreadnaught encounter or to a later time.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The deck is dimly lit due to the shadow shield. No light source can make it brighter until the shield is dropped.

Barrels and boxes: They contain mundane supplies and but make it difficult terrain.

Ballistae: They are blocking terrain, but can be used to fire on creatures on the dreadnaught as well as attacking ships. They are essentially a crossbow. Two characters can operate it at the same time (one loading, the other firing). Everybody is proficient with ballista.

Ballista	Mounted crossbow
R Regular Ammo • Recharge reload	
Requires one adjacent character to spend their standard action.	
Attack: Ranged 30/60 (one creature); highest ability +2 (+4 at paragon) vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + level of the person firing in damage.	
Reload	
Requires one adjacent character to spend their move action.	
Effect: regular ammo recharges.	

Grate: This provides ventilation for those on the lower deck. It is currently slippery because it has just

been cleaned. To move or charge at more than half your speed requires a DC Moderate Acrobatics check.

Railing: The railing gives a +2 bonus on saves to prevent from being forced off the ship. But if someone fails the save, they can attempt a DC Moderate Acrobatics check to grab onto the railing as a free action and end up prone off the edge of the ship hanging on (move action to get back aboard). Additionally, someone else adjacent to the creature's path off the ship can spend an immediate interrupt to grab the person with a DC Moderate Athletics check.

If a person falls off the ship, one of the Cormyrian ships swoop them up after they fall 20 feet. That person will have to come spend a move action to come back to the fight as their ship gets into position for them to jump back in.

Shadow Shield: The protective shield prevents any damaging effect to pass through and is 20 feet around the airship. Anyone not of shadow origin on the ship suffers the following effects:

At heroic, they are:

- -1 penalty to attack rolls
- -1 penalty to defenses
- -1 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 2 all

At paragon, they are:

- -2 penalty to attack rolls
- -2 penalty to defenses
- -2 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 5 all

In addition, those attuned to the ship (all enemies, none of the PCs) cannot be force moved off the ship. If they fail their save, they fall prone before the railing. If they make their save, they don't fall prone.

TACTICS

The goal of the defenders of the main deck is to clear the deck of enemies, so they can help the other defenders in different parts of the ship.

The sergeant at arms tries to stay centrally located to affect as many PCs as possible in his aura. At heroic, the lightdrinker stays near the sergeant to coordinate attacks using its *dark fangs* to blind the enemies. At paragon, the lightdrinker moves around the battlefield using *night's maw* and *inhale light* to hinder the vision of the PCs.

The armiger charges at every opportunity to push PCs off the ship using *charging rebuke*. The sailors stay

near the sergeant and strikers planning to sacrifice themselves with *shielding martyr* for their superiors.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs successfully defeat the defenders, they can take a short rest and position themselves in defensive positions around the main deck before proceeding to Encounter 5 (alternatively, if nobody has done the shadow shields yet they can do Encounter 4B and 4C now).

If the PCs are defeated, the other teams that are on the ship rescue them. But the other teams are delayed from their objective, so in their haste the rescuing PCs each lose a healing surge hustling to their next scene.

MILESTONE

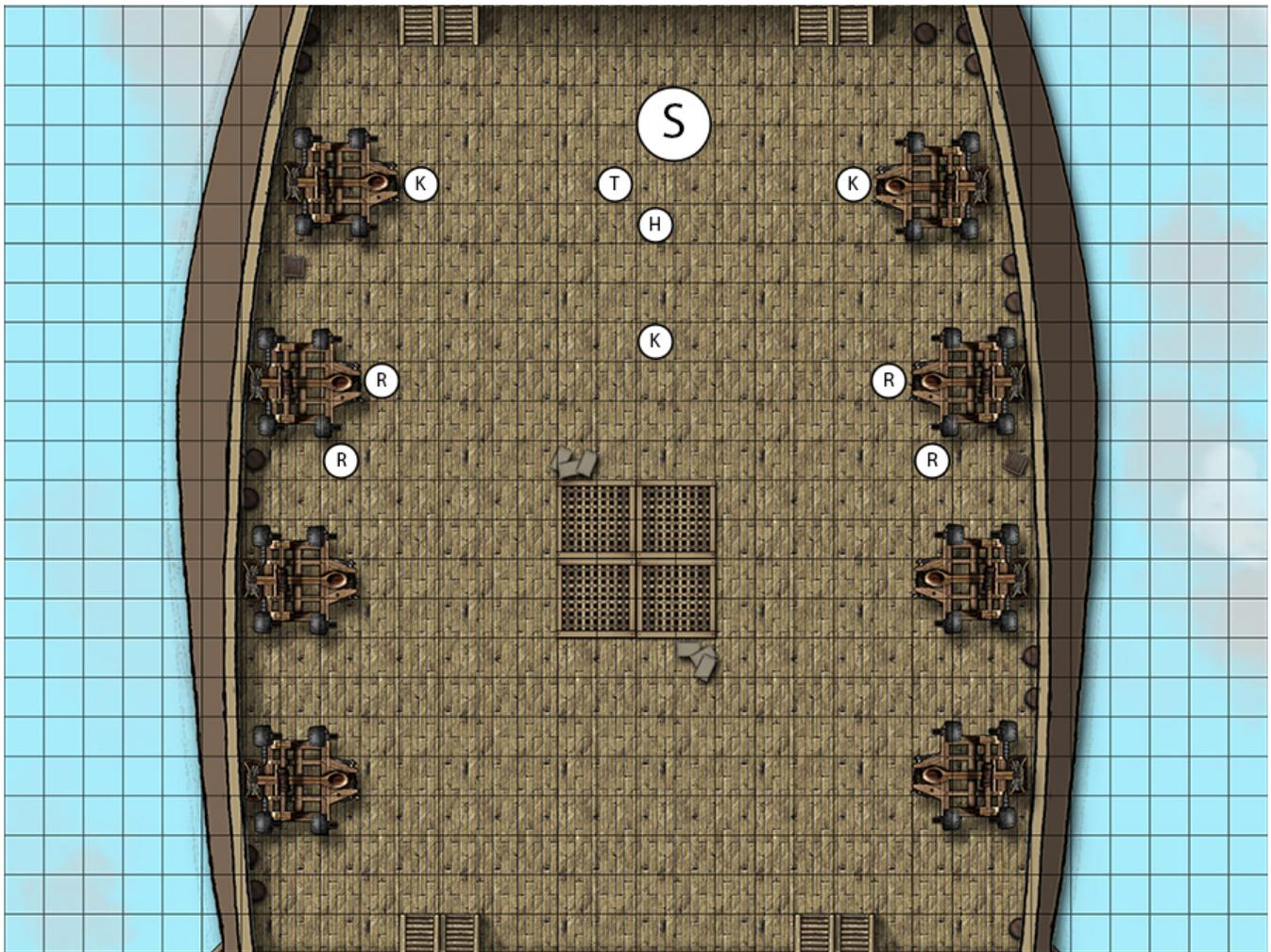
This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ABL ENCOUNTER 4: ATTACK OF THE MAIN STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ABL ENCOUNTER 4: ATTACK ON THE MAIN MAP

Custom map



- S= starspawnd lightdrinker (at paragon)
- K= Netherese striker (heroic) or Knight (paragon)
- R= Netherese sailor
- H= hunting lightdrinker (at heroic)
- T= sergeant at arms

ABL ENCOUNTER 4B: GET TO THE SHIELD GENERATOR

SETUP

Now that the PCs have made their way inside the ship, the Netherese are everywhere. Read or paraphrase the following:

The curses of the Netherese sailors ring in your ears as they chase you through the passageways of the ship. You head to the shield generator while avoiding the dozens of Netherese trying desperately trying to stop you.

Every PC needs to make the following check:

Endurance [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC's training has paid off and makes this par for the course. On a failure, there is a -1 penalty on all attack rolls and skill checks for that PCs in the next encounter.

Then each PC needs to deal with the Netherese. On a failure, the PC loses a healing surge.

Acrobatics [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC dodges the Netherese swinging from the rafters and avoiding their arrows.

Athletics [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC increases his speed to run past the Netherese pursuers.

Endurance [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC bulldozes through the Netherese rolling with each hit glancing off him causing no real damage.

Any attack power [Special] (individual check)

The PC makes an attack against AC: AL+14 or other defenses: AL + 12. Encounter powers are considered spent for the next encounter. If the power attacks multiple creatures or is an area effect, still roll once and on success, allows another PC to not have to make a check in this scene.

Any utility power [Special] (individual check)

Powers such as *arcane gate* allow all the PCs to automatically bypass the monsters. No other PC needs to make a check for the scene.

Stealth [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC ducks into a closet until the threat has passed.

Thievery [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC sets up traps that hinders the Netherese pursuit.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

At the end of this encounter, the PCs arrive at the shield generator on the lower deck. Proceed with Encounter 4C.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

ABL ENCOUNTER 4C: GREEN GLOBES

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following:

1 shield room supervisor (S)

10 shield operators (O)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 2 shield operators.

Six PCs: Add 2 shield operators.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The goal of the encounter is to shut down the shadow shield. At the start of the encounter provide the players with Handout 9 so that the players know what is important and what the Senior DM want to know at the end of the Air Battle.

SETUP

The PCs take stairs to the shield generator room, when they arrive, roll initiative and read the following:

You reached the area where the shields are generated. Green globes float in the air all around with Netherese personnel near many of them. Underneath each globe is a large lever on the ground. They look up from what they are doing surprised to see you.

The PCs have a surprise round. They must exit the down the steps to the left of the map when entering the room.

PCs without the shadow origin suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, and vulnerable 2 at heroic; -2 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, and vulnerable 5 all at paragon while the shield are operational (unless this encounter is successful).

SKILL CHALLENGE: DEACTIVATING THE SHIELDS

Goal: Turn off the shadow shield.

Complexity: Special

Primary Skills: Athletics and Thievery

Victory: The PCs deactivate the shield.

Defeat: The PCs are unable to lower the shields.

The PCs need to pull down 8 of the levers to shut off the shadow shield (6 with 4 players and 10 with 6 players). When the players pull the lever, the globes turn red.

Pull the Lever (minor action)

Any adjacent creature can pull the lever to deactivate or activate the globes unless countermeasures are done.

In order to lock the lever in a position, the following skills are suggestions of what can be done.

Arcana [Moderate DC] (standard action)

The PC deciphers the arcane signature that powers the globes and counters it with magic that permanently turns it off.

Athletics [Moderate DC] (standard action)

The lever is set in the desired position and the PC breaks off the handle, so it can't be changed.

Thievery [Moderate DC] (standard action)

The lever is set in the desired position and the PC uses their knowledge of mechanisms to disable the movement of the handle.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The below deck is dimly lit. No light source can make it brighter until the shield is dropped.

Ceiling: The ceiling height is 10 feet high.

Green Globes: The globes form a grid of arcane energy that powers the shield that protects the ship.

Lever: The levers are under the green globes on the map. They are blocking terrain.

Pillars: The black filled areas are support pillars that go to the ceiling counting as blocking terrain.

Shadow Shield: The protective shield prevents any damaging effect to pass through and is 20 feet around the airship. Anyone that is not of shadow origin suffers the following effects:

At heroic, they are:

- -1 penalty to attack rolls
- -1 penalty to defenses
- -1 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 2 all

At paragon, they are:

- -2 penalty to attack rolls
- -2 penalty to defenses
- -2 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 5 all

TACTICS

The shield operators' goal is to keep the shield operational. They always use a minor action to flip a lever to activate a globe. They **never** use countermeasures to break a lever.

The supervisor opens with *command of doom* to catch as many PCs as possible then *punch and grab* to drag a PC away from the lever.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs shut off the enough globes to take down the shield, the encounter is over as the Netherese retreat. Notify all the tables on **this** dreadnaught that the shield is down and that the PCs no longer suffer the penalties. Also fill in the results on Handout 9, but note that since the air battle is not yet over, the spokesperson should **not** deliver it to the Senior DM just yet.

The PCs then proceed to the next encounter on their mission: Encounter 5, Encounter 7 or Encounter 10 depending on the original mission of the table.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

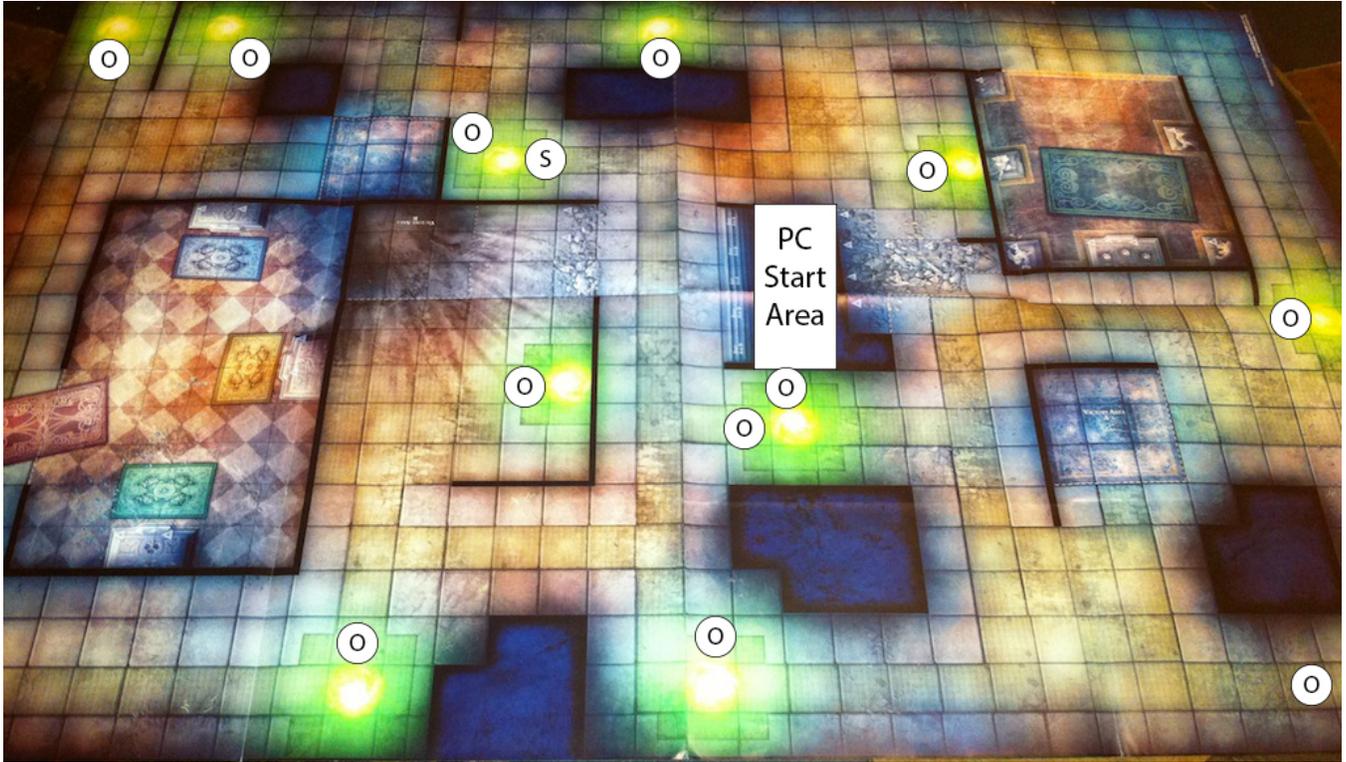
ABL ENCOUNTER 4C: GREEN GLOBES STATS

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 3.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 4.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 5.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 6.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 12.

ABL ENCOUNTER 4C: GREEN GLOBES MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

War Drums Starter Set poster map



O= Shield Operator
S= Shield Room Supervisor

ABL ENCOUNTER 5: DEFENDING THE MAIN

CREATURES

At Heroic tier, this encounter includes the following:

- 1 Netherese raid leader (L)
- 1 enigma of Shar (E)
- 2 Netherese slayer (S)

At Paragon tier, this encounter includes the following:

- 1 Netherese raid leader (L)
- 1 master enigma of Shar (E)
- 2 Netherese master slayer (S)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 Netherese slayer at Heroic or 1 Netherese master slayer at Paragon.

Six PCs: Add 1 Netherese slayer at Heroic or 1 Netherese master slayer at Paragon.

VICTORY CONDITION

The PCs need to defeat the Netherese soldiers on the maindeck. Give Handout 9 so the PCs are aware of the goal. Note that if the PCs give up, or otherwise flee, the remaining monsters attack one of the other tables on the dreadnought.

Keep an eye on the clock. If the PCs have 30 minutes left before the end of the air battle, feel free to remind them that they can ask for aid from the other tables. If another table offers to help, remove a number of monsters agreed upon by the players on both tables and add them to the aiding table at the proper AL.

SETUP

After the PCs have taken one short rest from the previous encounter, they can place themselves anywhere on the main deck to take up defensive positions.

No sooner after the previous battle ended, reinforcements are approaching. A squad of Netherese riding disks of shadow arise from below the ship. They close on the main deck, looking to take back what is rightfully theirs.

Unless the shield is down, the PCs still suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws,

vulnerable 3 all and a -2 penalty to damage rolls at heroic; -2 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, vulnerable 5 all and a -4 penalty to damage rolls at paragon while the shield is operational.

Roll Initiative and place the Netherese on the map.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The deck is dimly lit due to the shadow shield. No light source can make it brighter until the shield is dropped.

Grate: This provides ventilation for those on the lower deck. It is currently slippery because it has just been cleaned. To move or charge at more than half your speed requires a Moderate DC Acrobatics check.

Railing: The railing gives a +2 bonus on saves to prevent from being forced off the ship. But if someone fails the save, they can attempt a DC Moderate Acrobatics check to grab onto the railing as a free action and end up prone off the edge of the ship hanging on. Additionally, someone else adjacent to the creature's path off the ship can spend an immediate interrupt to grab the person with a DC Moderate Athletics check.

If a person falls off the ship, one of the Cormyrian ships swoop them up after they fall 30 feet. That person has to come spend a move action to come back to the fight as their ship gets into position for them to jump back in.

Shadow Shield: The protective shield prevents any damaging effect to pass through and is 20 feet around the airship. Anyone that is not attuned to the ship suffers the following effects:

At heroic, they are:

- -1 penalty to attack rolls
- -1 penalty to defenses
- -1 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 3 all

At paragon, they are:

- -2 penalty to attack rolls
- -2 penalty to defenses
- -2 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 5 all

In addition, those attuned to the ship (all enemies) cannot be force moved off the ship. If they fail their save, they fall prone before the railing. If they make their save, they don't fall prone.

Barrels and boxes: They contain mundane supplies and but make it difficult terrain.

Ballistae: They are blocking terrain, but can be used to fire on creatures on the dreadnaught as well as attacking ships. They are essentially a crossbow. Two

characters can operate it at the same time (one loading, the other firing). Everybody is proficient with ballista.

Ballista	Mounted crossbow
R Regular Ammo • Recharge reload	
Requires one adjacent character to spend their standard action.	
Attack: Ranged 30/60 (one creature); highest ability +2 (+4 at paragon) vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + level of the person firing in damage.	
Reload	
Requires one adjacent character to spend their move action.	
Effect: regular ammo recharges.	

Shadow Sleds: These sleds are 1x1 square and can carry a medium creature. The rider needs to be attuned with the sled which takes a move action Moderate DC Arcana check. It cannot be unattended while the rider is alive. Another person can make the attuning check for you. On a failure, you cannot be attuned to the sled ever. Creatures with the shadow keyword do not need to make the check.

SHADOW SLED
This 5 foot long sled is made of shadow energies.
Wondrous Item (special)
Power • (Move Action)
A creature can mentally command the sled to move its speed. If the creature is knocked prone, it is inverted on the sled and must spend a move action to right itself. A creature cannot be unwilling moved off its sled once attuned. It takes a move action to dismount a sled. While dismounted, the sled hovers near its rider.

TACTICS

The goal of the sailors is to recapture the ship. They open up with their range attacks if they have them then board the ship on the next round.

The slayers immediately board the ship and charge the nearest PC. They use *slayer's frenzy* whenever it is available and position themselves to include as many PCs as possible in their aura.

The raid leader opens up with *unholy shadows* to find out who has good basic attacks then uses *savage shadows* on those PCs. PCs dealing lots of damage are targeted with its *wrap around attack* to weaken them.

The enigma attempts to hover out of melee range and use *memory ripper* until bloodied.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs successfully defeat the defenders, they have successfully aided in capturing the dreadnaught. The results of the other two teams determine if the dreadnaught was captured successfully and to what degree.

If there is still more then 30 minutes left for the air battle, your table can elect to do an encounter from AB2

(Encounter 12 being appropriate) or aid another table. Otherwise they can take an early break.

MILESTONE

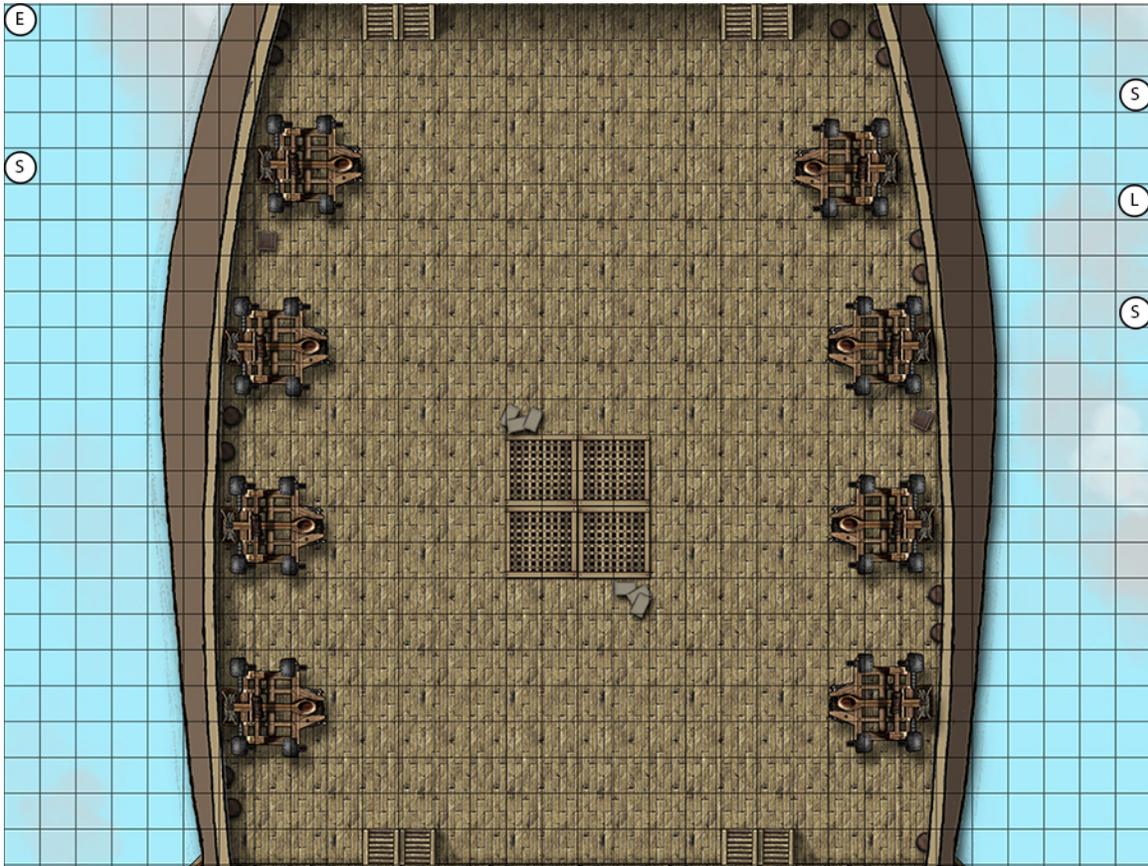
This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ABL ENCOUNTER 5: DEFENDING THE MAIN STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ABL ENCOUNTER 5: DEFENDING THE MAIN MAP

Custom map



- L= Netherese raid leader
- E= enigma of Shar
- S= Netherese slayer

ABL ENCOUNTER 6: CLEANING OUT THE POOP

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following at heroic tier:

Netherese sky captain (C)

Netherese striker (K)

2 engulfing shadows (E)

4 Netherese sailors (R)

This encounter includes the following at paragon tier:

Netherese sky commander (C)

Netherese striker (K)

2 oblivion wraiths (E)

4 Netherese sailors (R)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 engulfing shadow at Heroic or 1 wraith at Paragon.

Six PCs: Add 1 engulfing shadow at Heroic or 1 wraith at Paragon.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The PCs need to defeat the Netherese soldiers on the poopdeck before they can proceed to the next encounters (Encounter 7 and 8). If the PCs do not manage to do so before the end of the air battle they automatically lose Encounter 8, failing to take control of the dreadnought.

Keep an eye on the clock. If the PCs have 60 minutes left before the end of the air battle, feel free to remind them that they can ask for aid from the other tables. If another table offers to help, remove a number of monsters agreed upon by the players on both tables and add them to the aiding table at the proper AL.

SETUP

The flight to the Netheril dreadnought takes around ten more minutes. The PCs are able to make any preparations such as rituals during that time.

As the PCs descend above the larger Netherese dreadnought, read the following:

As the dreadnought comes into view, you see how massive a vessel it is and how much of a prize it would be have one on your side. There are no sails on the ship, but a trail of shadowy energy propels it forward.

As the grappling hooks are thrown towards the dreadnought, they secure to the rails of the enemy ship. An alarm sounds that echoes throughout the airship as Netheril defenders rush to their posts to repel the invaders.

All of a sudden some sort of shadowy shield starts to envelope the ship emanating from below. As it hits the grappling hooks, the lines break. The captain of your yacht, tells you to go now.

Every PC must make an Acrobatics or Athletics check to slide down rope to the dreadnought.

- If the PC makes the Hard DC, then land on an open square near the rail and can shift one square as a free action.
- If the PC makes the Moderate DC, then they land on any open square adjacent to the rail.
- If the PC make the Easy DC, then they land prone on any open square adjacent to the rail.
- If the PC fails the Easy DC check, then they slam into the deck take AL damage and are prone on any open square adjacent to the rail.

After all the PCs are on the map, place the enemies (not the engulfing shadows/oblivion wraiths) unless a PC has a passive Perception equivalent to the Hard DC) on the map then read the following:

The shadow shield spreads shadows everywhere. Looking around you see an imposing figure at the helm of the ship directing others towards your location. He presses something on his chest and lets go of the wheel. The ship seems to steer itself as the imposing figure leads his men against you.

The PCs now roll Initiative as the defenders attack immediately. If the characters are all using something like *arcane gate*, have the PCs roll Initiative after the first one reaches the main deck.

After the end of round 1, the *shadow shield* completely surrounds the ship and now effects the PCs inside if they do not have the shadow origin. Read the following:

As the shadow shield closes, all lines to your yacht have been severed and you see the attacks from the yachts dissipating as they reach the shield.

Then the shadows from the shield start to affect you. Your skin turns pale and sensitive to the touch, your vision is blurred, your strength is diminished and your head throbs with pain.

The affected PCs suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, and vulnerable 2 at heroic; -2 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, and vulnerable 5 all at paragon while the shield is operational.

After 45 minutes of real time (HQ will remind you), the PCs receive a message from the yachts, read the following:

That shadow shield has made us ineffective against their ship. Our ritualists have found that the shields are being generated from an elemental source located in the center of the bottom deck.

One team needs to go now to take down the shields, otherwise we need to retreat and you are on your own.

Under most circumstances the team that elected to do the Main Deck should be the one targeting the shield. The other teams have their own important tasks. Only when there are two tables on the dreadnought should it be a free choice. Ask the Senior DM whether it is a free choice or not!

If one team decides to go for the shields, any remaining monsters have to be dispersed to the other teams on the deck. They appear at the AL of the table at either full or bloodied value of hit points. The new monsters appear and act at the end of the current round.

The team that decides to go after the shields immediately goes to Encounter 4B with no short rest as they are racing to the shield generator.

The PCs can decide to ignore the shields and deal with the effects for the rest of the dreadnaught encounter or to a later time. If they do so, they have no support from the Cormyrian yachts if they

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The deck is dimly lit due to the shadow shield. No light source can make it brighter until the shield is dropped.

Helm: The wheel is blocking terrain and can only be controlled by the captain at this point.

Railing: The railing gives a +2 bonus on saves to prevent from being forced off the ship. But if someone fails the save, they can attempt a DC Moderate Acrobatics check to grab onto the railing as a free action and end up prone off the edge of the ship hanging on. Additionally, someone else adjacent to the creature's path off the ship can spend an immediate interrupt to grab the person with a DC Moderate Athletics check.

If a person falls off the ship, one of the Cormyrian ships swoop them up after they fall 30 feet. That person

has to spend a move action to come back to the fight as their ship gets into position for them to jump back in.

Shadow Shield: The protective shield prevents any damaging effect to pass through and is 20 feet around the airship. Anyone that is not of shadow origin suffers the following effects:

At heroic, they are:

- -1 penalty to attack rolls
- -1 penalty to defenses
- -1 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 2 all

At paragon, they are:

- -2 penalty to attack rolls
- -2 penalty to defenses
- -2 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 5 all

In addition, those attuned to the ship (all enemies and none of the PCs) cannot be force moved off the ship. If they fail their save, they fall prone before the railing. If they make their save, they don't fall prone.

TACTICS

The goal of the defenders of the poop deck is to clear the deck of enemies, so they can remain in control of the ship and help the other defenders in different parts of the ship.

The engulfing shadows/oblivion wraiths are tasked with keeping enemies off of the poop deck. Engulfing shadows move to the nearest PC and use their *grasping shadows*. The oblivion wraith uses *shadow glide* to move to a PC then *obliterate*.

The sailors stay near the captain and the striker planning to sacrifice themselves with *shielding martyr* for their superiors.

The striker uses his *force rebuke* to push PCs over the side or his *furios sweep* attack to cut through as many PCs as he can at one time.

The captain uses the nearby sailors to set up combat advantage allowing him to use his *swiftshadow strike*.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs successfully defeat the defenders, they find the pendant of Shar on the chest of the captain. They realize the captain put the ship on autopilot and discover a journal of his notes about the power source of the ship in the control room inside the ship. The detail notes explain what needs to be done to control the shadow elemental that powers the dreadnaught. The

PCs may take a short rest before proceeding to Encounter 7.

If the PCs are defeated, the other teams that are on the ship rescue them. In the tough fought battle, every PC on the other teams loses a healing surge. They now can take a short rest before proceeding to their next encounter.

MILESTONE

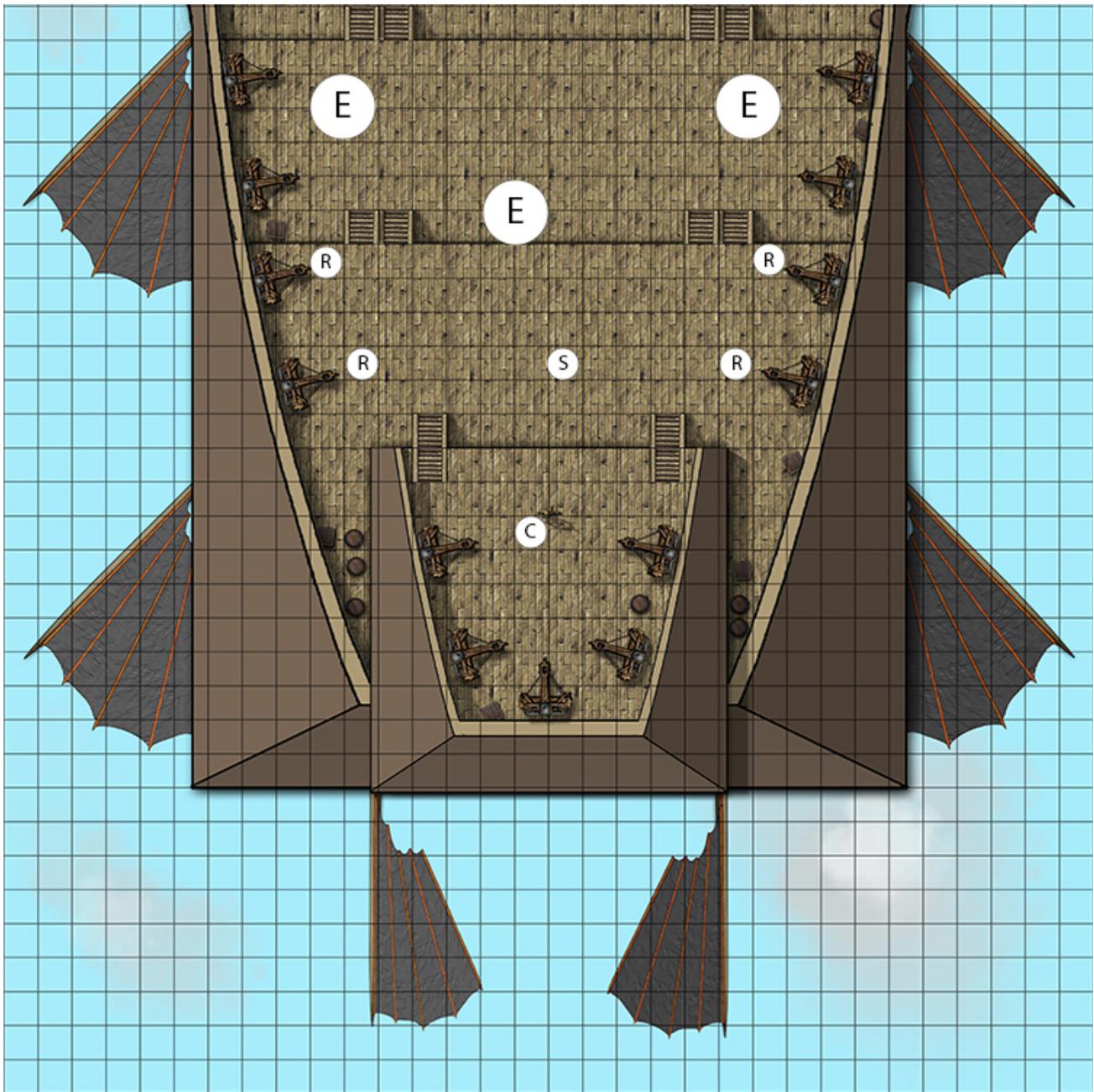
This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ABL ENCOUNTER 6: CLEANING OUT THE POOP STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ABL ENCOUNTER 6: CLEANING OUT THE POOP MAP

Custom map



C= Netherese sky captain/commander
E= engulfing shadows/oblivion wraith
S= Netherese striker
R= Netherese sailors

ABL ENCOUNTER 7: WHERE IS THE CONTROL ROOM?

SKILL CHALLENGE, COMPLEXITY 1

SETUP

Now that the PCs have made their way inside the ship, they can search for the control room while avoiding pursuing Netherese. Read or paraphrase the following:

The curses of the Netherese sailors ring in your ears as they chase you through the passageways of the ship. You look for the control room while avoiding the dozens of Netherese trying desperately trying to stop you.

SKILL CHALLENGE: GETTING TO THE CONTROL ROOM

Goal: Find the control room as quickly as possible.

Complexity: 1

Primary Skills: Special

Victory: The PCs arrive at the control room without the alerting the occupants.

Defeat: The PCs arrive at the control room, but are tired.

Any PC that speaks Netherese can automatically follow the markings on the ship and leads the PCs to the control. Run Scene 1 and 2 once only as they make their way there. Do not run Scene 3.

If the PCs do not speak Netherese (there is no time to perform any ritual unless the casting time is 1 round), the PCs need 4 successes in Scene 3 before arriving at the ammunition depot.

SCENE 1: WHY IS THERE ALWAYS RUNNING INVOLVED?

Running is a tiring affair.

Endurance [Moderate DC] (individual check)

Your training has paid off and makes this par for the course. On a failure, there is a cumulative -1 penalty on all attack rolls and skill checks for that PC. Please note this penalty DOES stack with any existing penalties, including those imposed by the shield.

SCENE 2: NETHERESE EVERYWHERE

The enemy is everywhere and something must be done to get pass them.

On a failure the PC loses a healing surge.

Acrobatics [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC dodges the Netherese swinging from the rafters and avoiding their arrows.

Athletics [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC increases his speed to run pass the Netherese pursuers.

Endurance [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC bulldozes through the Netherese rolling with each hit glancing off him causing no real damage.

Any attack power [Special] (individual check)

The PC makes an attack against AC: AL+14 or other defenses: AL + 12. Encounter powers are considered spent for the next encounter. If the power attacks multiple creatures or is an area effect, still roll once and on success, allows another PC to not have to make a check in this scene.

Any utility power [Special] (individual check)

Powers such as Arcane Gate allow all the PCs to automatically bypass the monsters. No other PC needs to make a check for the scene.

Stealth [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC ducks into a closet until the threat has passed.

Thievery [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC sets up traps that hinders the Netherese pursuit.

SCENE 3: WHICH WAY TO GO (1 SUCCESS PER ROUND MAX)

The dreadnaught is huge and finding your way around is not an easy task.

Only one success is possible per round. On a failure, The DC increases by 1 cumulatively for the next check. Multiple checks by different PCs can be made each round.

On the third failure, they stumble their way to control room but tired.

Dungeoneering [Moderate DC]

The PC takes note of the ship design and deduces where the best place the control room would be.

History [Moderate DC]

The PC recalls the layouts of other Netherese airships and where their control rooms would be located. Then points the PCs in the right direction.

Perception [Moderate DC]

The PC searches a room to see if it is the right one.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

At the end of the skill challenge, whether or not the PCs are successful, the PCs arrive in the control room on the lower deck. Proceed to Encounter 8.

If they succeeded in the skill challenge, they gain a surprise round.

If they failed, the PCs start the combat tired and out of breathe. They are slowed (save ends).

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ABL ENCOUNTER 8: OUT OF CONTROL

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following:

1 colossus of Shar (C)

5 shadows of themselves (F)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one shadow of themselves. In addition, it only takes 10 successes in the skill challenge.

Six PCs: Add one shadow of themselves. In addition, it takes 14 successes in the skill challenge.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The goal of the encounter is to gain control over the colossus of Shar and with the dreadnought. At the start of the encounter provide the players with Handout 8 and 9 so that the players know what is important and what the Senior DM want to know at the end of the Air Battle.

SETUP

After the PCs have found the control room, they enter the control room through the opening on the right of the map and see the following:

True darkness is in the center of this circular chamber as it whips it tendrils all through the room as its main form is contain between 4 pillars. Shadowy versions of each one of you are created by the tendrils, but their red eyes drip with malice as they stare at you.

The PCs can place themselves anywhere on the map to start.

Unless the shield is down, the PCs still suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, and vulnerable 2 all at heroic; -2 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws and vulnerable 5 all while the shield is operational.

The PCs have the captain/commander's journal that details what they need to do to control the elemental to work for them. Give them Player's Handout 9.

Roll initiative and place the colossus and the corresponding shadows of themselves adjacent to each PC. The shadow PCs act directly after the PC of which they are a copy.

The PCs can exit the room at any time. But if they return, they need to wait a round before participating again in this skill challenge/combat.

The PC with the pendant of Shar gets a +2 bonus to all skill checks and attack rolls. The colossus also takes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls and does only half damage against that PC.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The deck is dimly lit due to the shadow elemental. No light source can make it brighter until half of the needed successes are scored.

Shadows of Themselves: These are exact copies of the PCs (same defenses) except they are minions and can only use the at-will powers of the PC. They attack the PC with their best at-will or basic attack using all the bonuses the PC would. Shadows of themselves that survive their PC's round take opportunity attacks when it is not their turn. If the PCs have moved and the shadows of themselves have not been destroyed that round, they teleport and attack at the end of the PCs turn.

If they are destroyed by the PCs, they are reformed by the colossus at the end of the round.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 20 feet high at the highest part of the dome in the center.

Pillars of Shar: They surround the colossus in the center of the room and help bind the colossus in its place. They are blocking terrain. They each have 40 hit points and resist all 10 at heroic and 75 hit points and resist all 15 at paragon. Reducing a pillar to 0 hit points contributes one success to the skill challenge. As long as the PC does not roll a 1, it hits the pillar. The pillars are immune to Will attacks.

The pillars near the chairs in the back are just decorative and are blocking terrain.

Chairs of Tithing: The chairs in the back of the room are places where the PCs can sit to donate healing surges to contribute towards the skill challenge. Anybody sitting in the chair grants combat advantage.

One surge at heroic and two surges at paragon adds one to the number of successes.

Altars of Offerings: Any PC adjacent to one of the two altars adjacent to the colossus may expend their highest remaining daily attack power as a standard action once per round to contribute towards the success in the skill challenge.

Shadow Shield (if still active): The protective shield prevents any damaging effect to pass through and is 20 feet around the airship. Anyone that is not attuned to the ship suffers the following effects:

At heroic, they are:

- -1 penalty to attack rolls
- -1 penalty to defenses
- -1 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 3 all

At paragon, they are:

- -2 penalty to attack rolls
- -2 penalty to defenses
- -2 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 5 all

In addition, those attuned to the ship (all enemies) cannot be force moved off the ship. If they fail their save, they fall prone before the railing. If they make their save, they don't fall prone.

Colossus of Shar: The blackness in the center of the room is the colossus. It is the embodiment of all that is dark and evil. It is immune to all damage and forced movement and all conditions have little effect on it. It is also blocking terrain.

Colossus of Shar	
Gargantuan shadow elemental	
HP infinite	Initiative special
Speed 0	Tuesight 10
Action Points 2	
TRAITS	
Legion Mind	
The colossus acts after each opponent.	
Indomitable	
The colossus ignores all damage. If an effect can end with a save, the colossus does not suffer from it. The colossus is immune to all forced movement including removed from play. If it suffers an effect that ends at the end of a creatures turn, the effect ends at the end of the colossus' next turn.	
Spell Eater	
The colossus destroys any zone or conjuration in the control room at the end of its turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadow Fist (force, necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 10 (one creature); AL +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 25 (heroic)/ 40 (paragon) force and necrotic damage and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. Add 10 (heroic)/ 20 (paragon) force and necrotic damage for a critical hit.	
Miss: 10 (heroic)/ 20 (paragon) force and necrotic damage.	
C Tendrils for Everyone (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Close burst 10 (enemies in the burst); AL + 8 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 15 (heroic)/ 25 (paragon) fire and necrotic damage and the target hurts to move until the end of its next turn. Add 5(heroic)/ 10 (paragon) fire and necrotic damage for a critical hit. While it hurts to move, the target takes 5 (heroic)/ 10 (paragon) damage for each square it moves. This doesn't affect teleportation.	
Miss: 5 (heroic)/ 10 (paragon) fire and necrotic damage.	

TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Raging Tendrils • At-Will	
Trigger: The skill challenge is halfway completed.	
Effect (No Action): The colossus uses tendrils for everyone.	
Summoning Shadows • At-Will	
Trigger: End of the round.	
Effect: The colossus creates a shadow of themselves for every PC that doesn't have one. They appear adjacent to the PC.	
Alignment evil	Languages -
Simplified colossus of Laarn from <i>Dungeon Magazine</i> 173.	

SKILL CHALLENGE: TAMING THE COLOSSUS

Goal: Find the control room as quickly as possible.

Complexity: 12 successes need (6 PCs - 14 successes, 4 PCs - 10 successes) (if this group went on the shield mission, add 1 more success needed).

Primary Skills: Special

Victory: The PCs have bent the colossus to do their bidding.

Defeat: The PCs are unable to control the colossus.

Any PC of shadow origin gets a +2 bonus to attack and skill rolls. Any PC who drank the *liquid darkness* (Story Award **ADCP18** from *ADCP3-2 From Dawn Till Dusk*) gets a +1 bonus to attack and skill rolls. The PC with the pendant of Shar gets a +2 bonus to attack and skill rolls. The bonuses are cumulative.

All skill checks are **STANDARD ACTIONS** at the **Hard DC** and must be made adjacent to the area.

The final skill check must be made by the PC wearing the pendant of Shar (see Final Area).

AREA 1: PILLARS (4 SUCCESSES MAXIMUM)

All checks must be made adjacent to a pillar. Once there is a success at a pillar, the pillar is deactivated and can't be used for any more successes.

Arcane [Hard DC]

The PC channels massive amounts of arcane energy to break Shar's pillar of control.

Religion [Hard DC]

The PC infuses the pillar with his or her faith to break Shar's pillar of control.

Any attack power [Special] (individual check)

The pillars each have 40 hit points and resist all 10 at heroic and 75 hit points and resist all 15 at paragon. Reducing a pillar to 0 hit points contributes one success to the skill challenge. As long as the PC does not roll a 1, it hits the pillar. The pillars are immune to Will attacks.

AREA 2: ALTARS OF OFFERINGS (2 MAXIMUM PER PC)

No one said it could be done without sacrifice.

The PC must be adjacent to an altar.

Altar (special)

The PC must expend his highest level daily attack power remaining as a standard action granting an automatic success.

AREA 3: CHAIRS OF TITHING (2 MAXIMUM PER PC)

Give up your life energy to exert control over the colossus is.

The PC must be sitting in a chair. In the chair, the PC grants combat advantage.

Chair (special)

The PC must expend one healing surge (heroic) or two healing surges (paragon) as a standard action to get one success.

AREA 4: COLOSSUS (NO MAXIMUM)

Colossus is an unstoppable force of darkness. It won't be easy getting it under control.

Athletics [Hard DC]

The PC wrestles with the colossus and puts it in a submissive position.

Acrobatics [Hard DC]

The PC dodges all the colossus' attacks and gets it tired.

Insight [Hard DC] (no success)

The PC studies the fighting stance of the colossus and can give the next PC a +5 bonus to their next Athletics or Acrobatics check against the colossus.

Perception [Hard DC] (no success)

The PC notices a chink in the armor of the of the colossus and can give the next PC a +5 bonus to their next Athletics or Acrobatics check against the colossus.

FINAL AREA: BOW TO ME!

The colossus is on the ropes and ready to submit to you.

This can only be done by a PC wearing the pendant of Shar and adjacent to the colossus

Diplomacy [Hard DC]

The PC makes a case of how working for him is not a bad idea as you can get revenge on the people who trapped you here in the first place.

ADCP5-2 *The Best Defense*

Intimidate [Hard DC]

The PC orders the colossus to stand down or the beat down will continue unless it submits.

TACTICS

The colossus of Shar is does not want to be controlled especially by non-shadow creatures. It will use its tendrils for everyone to damage and hinder the PCs movement. If one particular PC is especially effective in the skill challenge, it will target him with his shadow fist attack.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs successfully complete the skill challenge, the colossus is tamed and this counts towards the success of capturing the dreadnaught.

If the PCs are defeated, they are rescued by another team and it counts as a failure towards the capturing the dreadnaught.

Regardless of the results, fill the appropriate section of Handout 9 and let the spokesperson of the table deliver it to the Senior DM. If you have 30 or more minutes left, allow the PCs to face an encounter from AB2 on the poopdeck (Encounter 12 being a good choice) or aid other tables. Otherwise they have an early break.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ABL ENCOUNTER 8: OUT OF CONTROL MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Map Pack: Haunted Temples



ABL ENCOUNTER 9: WHAT THE HECK IS A FO'C'SLE?

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- 1 shadow strangler (T)
- 1 master chief (M)
- 2 Netherese petty officers (P)
- 1 Netherese strikers (S)
- 1 ammo loader (A)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 Netherese petty officer.

Six PCs: Add 1 Netherese petty officers.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The PCs need to defeat the Netherese soldiers on the forecastle before they can proceed to the next encounters (Encounter 10 and 11). If the PCs do not manage to do so before the end of the air battle they automatically lose Encounter 11 and the ammunition chamber explodes in a rain of fire.

Keep an eye on the clock. If the PCs have 60 minutes left before the end of the air battle, feel free to remind them that they can ask for aid from the other tables. If another table offers to help, remove a number of monsters agreed upon by the players on both tables and add them to the aiding table at the proper AL.

SETUP

The flight to the Netheril dreadnaught takes around ten more minutes. The PCs are able to make any preparations such as rituals during that time.

As the PCs descend above the larger Netherese dreadnaught, read the following:

As the dreadnaught comes into view, you see how massive a vessel it is and how much of a prize it would be have one on your side. There are no sails on the ship, but a trail of shadowy energy propels it forward.

As the grappling hooks are thrown towards the dreadnaught, they secure to the rails of the enemy ship. An alarm sounds that echoes throughout the airship as Netheril defenders rush to their posts to repel the invaders.

All of a sudden some sort of shadowy shield starts to envelope the ship emanating from below. As it hits the

grappling hooks, the lines break. The captain of your yacht, tells you to go now.

Every PC must make an Acrobatics or Athletics check to slide down rope to the dreadnaught.

- If the PC makes the Hard DC, then land on an open square near the rail and can shift one square as a free action.
- If the PC makes the Moderate DC, then they land on any open square adjacent to the rail.
- If the PC make the Easy DC, then they land prone on any open square adjacent to the rail.
- If the PC fails the Easy DC check, then they slam into the deck take AL damage and are prone on any open square adjacent to the rail.

After all the PCs are on the map, place the enemies on the map then read the following:

Looking around you see a shadowy humanoid accompanied by a large feral dog with tentacles protruding from its head and back; light dripping from his mouth. His master barks out orders to other shadowy humanoids and points in your direction. Shadow weapons form in their hands as they approach.

The PCs now roll Initiative as the defenders attack immediately. If they are all using something like *arcane gate*, have the PCs roll initiative after the first one reaches the deck.

After the end of round 1, the shadow shield completely surrounds the ship and now affects the PCs inside if they do not have the shadow origin. Read the following:

As the shadow shield closes, all lines to your yacht have been severed and you see the attacks from the yachts dissipating as they reach the shield.

Then the shadows from the shield start to affect you. Your skin turns pale and sensitive to the touch, your vision is blurred, your strength is diminished and your head throbs with pain.

The PCs suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, vulnerable 2 all and a -2 penalty to damage rolls at heroic; -2 penalty to attack rolls, defenses and saving throws, vulnerable 5 all and a -4 penalty to damage rolls at paragon while the shield is operational. See Terrain Features for details.

After 45 minutes of real time (HQ will remind you), the PCs receive a message from the yachts, read the following:

That shadow shield has made us ineffective against their ship. Our ritualists have found that the shields are being generated from an elemental source located in the center of the bottom deck.

One team needs to go now to take down the shields, otherwise we need to retreat and you are on your own.

Under most circumstances the team that elected to do the Main Deck should be the one targeting the shield. The other teams have their own important tasks. Only when there are two tables on the dreadnought should it be a free choice. Ask the Senior DM whether it is a free choice or not!

If one team decides to go for the shields, any remaining monsters have to be dispersed to the other teams on the deck. They appear at the AL of the table at either full or bloodied value of hit points. The new monsters appear and act at the end of the current round.

The team that decides to go after the shields immediately goes to Encounter 4B with no short rest as they are racing to the shield generator.

The PCs can decide to ignore the shields and deal with the effects for the rest of the dreadnaught encounter or to a later time. If they do so, they have no support from the Cormyrian yachts if they fall.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The deck is dimly lit due to the shadow shield. No light source can make it brighter until the shield is dropped.

Ladder: The ladder (stairs) is difficult terrain going up, and normal terrain moving laterally or climbing down.

Barrels and boxes: They contain mundane supplies and but they are difficult terrain.

Ballistae: They are blocking terrain, but can be used to fire on creatures on the dreadnaught as well as attacking ships. They are essentially a crossbow. Two characters can operate it at the same time (one loading, the other firing). Everybody is proficient with ballista.

Ballista	Mounted crossbow
R Regular Ammo • Recharge reload	
Requires one adjacent character to spend their standard action.	
Attack: Ranged 30/60 (one creature); highest ability +2 (+4 at paragon) vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + level of the person firing in damage.	
Reload	
Requires one adjacent character to spend their move action.	
Effect: regular ammo recharges.	

Railing: The railing gives a +2 bonus on saves to prevent from being forced off the ship. But if someone fails the save, they can attempt a DC Moderate

Acrobatics check to grab onto the railing as a free action and end up prone of the edge of the ship hanging on. Additionally, someone else adjacent to the creature's path off the ship can spend an immediate interrupt to grab the person with a DC Moderate Athletics check.

If a person falls off the ship, one of the Cormyrian yachts swoop them up after they fall 20 feet. That person will have to come spend a move action to come back to the fight as their ship gets into position for them to jump back in.

Shadow Shield: The protective shield prevents any damaging effect to pass through and is 20 feet around the airship. Anyone that is NOT of shadow origin to the ship suffers the following effects:

At heroic, they are:

- -1 penalty to attack rolls
- -1 penalty to defenses
- -1 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 2 all

At paragon, they are:

- -2 penalty to attack rolls
- -2 penalty to defenses
- -2 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 5 all

In addition, those attuned to the ship (all enemies and none of the PCs) cannot be force moved off the ship. If they fail their save, they fall prone before the railing. If they make their save, they don't fall prone.

Self Destruct Klaxon: As the last defender falls, a loud klaxon starts sounding throughout the ship. An announcement is made in Netherese, stating

The ship's self-destruct sequence has been initiated.

The PCs were told that when they hear the klaxon, the self-destruct sequence has been initiated.

TACTICS

The goal of the Netherese sailors is to prevent the PCs from taking the ship. At first, the sailors work to repel the boarders. After the self-destruct claxon sounds, however, the Netherese fight a more delaying action; they just want to prevent as many PCs from moving into the ship as possible.

The shadow strangler starts atop the superstructure with cover; he should make a Stealth roll before he rolls for initiate, and only place him if someone's passive perception is high enough to notice him.

The master chief starts near the Fo'c'sle, close to at least 2 Netherese sailors of some sort. He prefers to stay

at range, but he has zero issues getting up close if necessary, and does so if he can close with a melee striker.

The petty officers and striker work to secure one side of the ship if possible, generally letting the ammo loader deal with the other. They try to stay within the aura of the Master Chief to take advantage of any crits, and they want to stay close enough to benefit from *comrade under arms*.

The ammo loader moves to the closest intruders and tries to draw them close, moving away with grabbed figures to prevent them from heading below deck.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have managed to defeat the defenders and make their way to the Tween deck below the Fo'c'sle, they can begin to search for the ammunition store in earnest.

Now that you have made your way below deck, you need to quickly find the ammunition store before the ship self-destructs and scatters your carcasses from Netheril to Longsaddle.

The PCs proceed to Encounter 10, the chase from the Tween Deck to the ammunition store.

If the PCs are defeated, one of the other teams on the ship rescues them. But both teams are delayed, so the mission to defuse the bomb loses two rounds.

MILESTONE

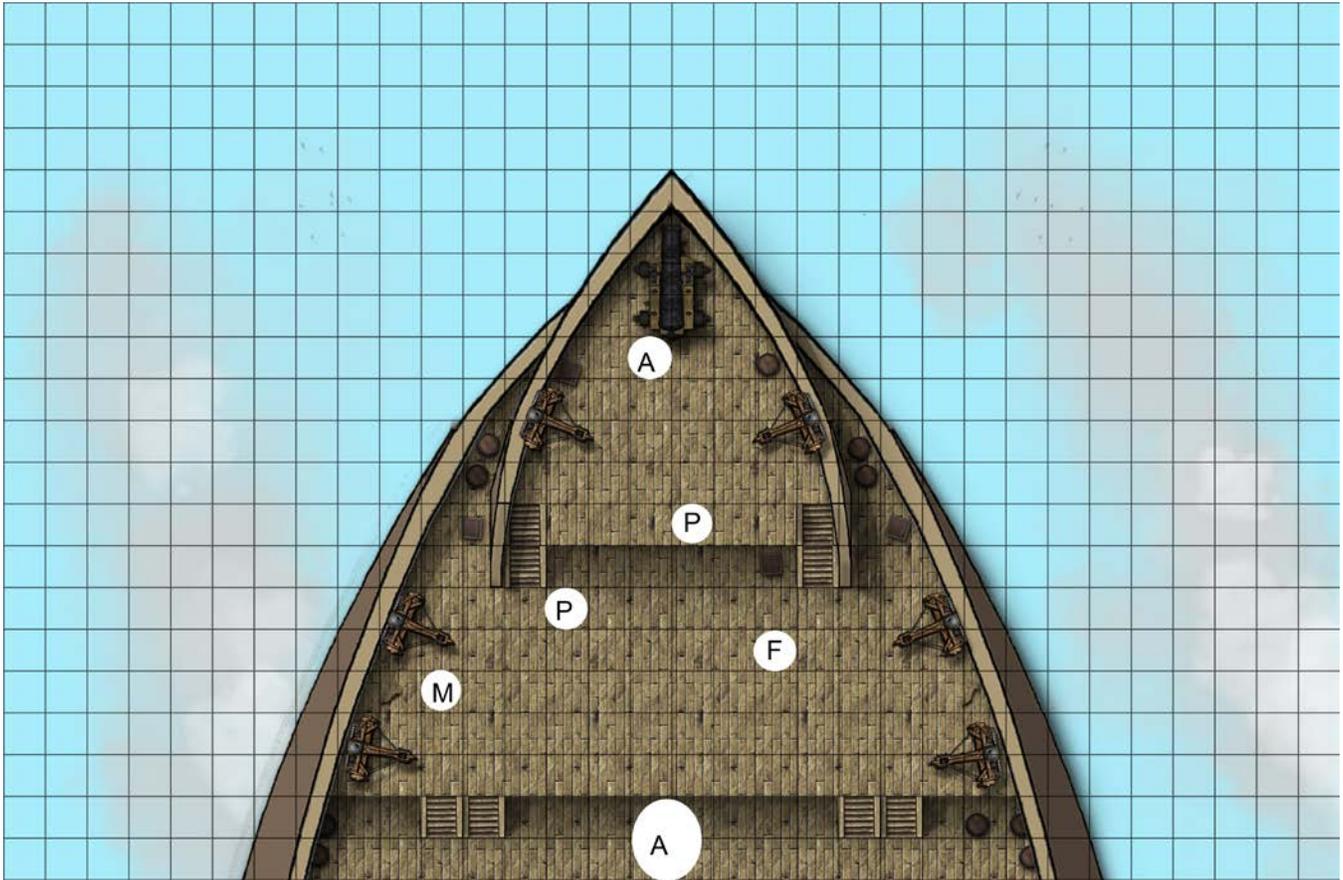
This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ABL ENCOUNTER 9: WHAT THE HECK IS A FO'C'SLE? STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ABL ENCOUNTER 9: WHAT THE HECK IS A FO'C'SLE?

Custom map



- A = ammo loader
- M = master chief
- P = Netherese petty officer
- S = Netherese striker
- T = Shadow strangler

ABL ENCOUNTER 10: WHERE THE HECK DO THEY KEEP THE AMMO?

SKILL CHALLENGE, COMPLEXITY 1

ENCOUNTER LEVEL AL

SETUP

Now that the PCs have made their way inside the ship, they can search for the ammunition storage while avoiding pursuing Netherese. Read or paraphrase the following:

The curses of the Netherese sailors ring in your ears as they chase you through the passageways of the ship. You look for the ammunition depot while avoiding the dozens of Netherese trying desperately trying to stop you.

SKILL CHALLENGE: GETTING TO THE AMMUNITION DEPOT

Goal: Find the ammunition depot as quickly as possible.

Complexity: Special

Primary Skills: Special

Victory: The PCs arrive at the ammunition depot without the alerting the occupants.

Defeat: The PCs arrive at the ammunition depot, but are tired. Failures also impact the amount of time the PCs have in disabling the self-destruct mechanism in Encounter 11.

Any PC that speaks Netherese can automatically follow the markings on the ship and leads the PCs to the ammunition depot. Run Scene 1 and 2 once only as they make their way there. Obviously the PCs lose very little time and have the full 6 rounds to disable the self-destruct mechanism in Encounter 11.

If the PCs do not speak Netherese (there is no time to perform any ritual unless the casting time is 1 round), the PCs need 4 successes in Scene 3 before arriving at the ammunition depot. Each failure in Scene 3 results in the number of rounds in Encounter 11 before self-destruct to be reduced by 1.

SCENE 1: WHY IS THERE ALWAYS RUNNING INVOLVED?

Running is a tiring affair.

Endurance [Moderate DC] (individual check)

ADCP5-2 The Best Defense

The PCs training has paid off and makes this par for the course. On a failure, there is a cumulative -1 penalty on all attack rolls and skill checks for that PC in this encounter and Encounter 11. Please note this penalty DOES stack with any existing penalties, including those imposed by the shield.

SCENE 2: NETHERESE EVERYWHERE

The enemy is everywhere and something must be done to get pass them.

On a failure the PC loses a healing surge.

Acrobatics [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC dodges the Netherese swinging from the rafters and avoiding their arrows.

Athletics [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC increases his speed to run pass the Netherese pursuers.

Endurance [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC bulldozes through the Netherese rolling with each hit glancing off him causing no real damage.

Any attack power [Special] (individual check)

The PC makes an attack against AC: AL +14 or other defenses: AL +12. Encounter powers are considered spent for the next encounter. If the power attacks multiple creatures or is an area effect, still roll once and on success, allows another PC to not have to make a check in this scene.

Any utility power [Special] (individual check)

Powers such as *arcane gate* allow all the PCs to automatically bypass the monsters. No other PC needs to make a check for the scene.

Stealth [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC ducks into a closet until the threat has passed.

Thievery [Moderate DC] (individual check)

The PC sets up traps that hinder the Netherese pursuit.

SCENE 3: WHICH WAY TO GO

The dreadnaught is huge and finding your way around is not an easy task.

Each check represents about 1 round of activity. Due to the haste, aiding one another is not possible. The PCs need to pick a leader each round to follow. On a failure, The DC increases by 1 cumulatively for the next check.

On the third failure, they stumble their way to ammunition depot but tired. Otherwise they enter the ammunition room after the 3rd success, much less tired and able to surprise the occupants.

Dungeoneering [Moderate DC]

The PC takes note of the ship design and deduces where the best place the ammunition depot would be.

History [Moderate DC]

The PC recalls the layouts of other Netherese airships and where their ammunition depots would be located. Then points the PCs in the right direction.

Intimidate [Moderate DC]

The PC catches a Netherese sailor and forces some useful information out of the poor sod.

Perception [Moderate DC]

The PC searches a room to see if it is the right one.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

At the end of the skill challenge, whether or not the PCs are successful, the PCs arrive in the ammunition storage on the lower deck. Proceed with Encounter 11.

If they succeeded in the skill challenge, they gain a surprise round.

If they failed, the PCs start the combat tired and out of breathe. They are slowed (save ends).

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ABL ENCOUNTER II: WE HAVE HOW LONG TO STOP THAT THING?

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 Arturas shadowghast (A)

4 Netherese firemen (F)

1 shadar-kai weaponmaster (W)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Arturas takes a -2 penalty to attacks, all defenses and damage and subtract 25 / 30 / 40 / 50 / 60 / 65 / 75 / 80 / 90 / 100 hit points from his hit point total.

Six PCs: Add 4 Netherese firemen.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The goal of the encounter is to stop the self-destruct mechanism of the dreadnought from triggering. At the start of the encounter provide the players with Handout 9 so that the players know what is important and what the Senior DM want to know at the end of the Air Battle.

SETUP

The PCs have made their way to ammo stores and now need to deactivate the self-destruct mechanism before it detonates! Read or paraphrase the following:

Bursting through a door, you come to a sudden halt in a room packed from deck to overhead with racks of alchemicals, hoses, pumps, piles of large metal slugs and the conveyors to move them about. There is no doubt you have found the weapons store.

The self-destruct klaxon is deafening here, and it's no wonder; valves on a multitude of storage tanks are slowly opening, preparing to mix dozens of liquids together in a vat that appears to be getting hotter by the moment.

A hulking figure, shouts over the noise of the klaxon and the discord caused by your arrival: "Stop them! Stop them in the name of Netheril!"

This encounter starts with a maximum of six (6) rounds before the ship self-destructs. For every round the PCs failed during the chase (Encounter 10), subtract one round from the remaining total. If the PCs needed to be

rescued from Encounter 9, subtract two rounds from the remaining total. This leads to the encounter having between one (1) and six (6) rounds before the ship self-destructs.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Stairs: These stairs are steep and are difficult terrain regardless of direction of travel.

Ceiling Height: The ceilings in the ammunition store are vaulted, and are 30 feet tall.

Energy Conduits: There are 12 floor-to-ceiling energy conduits in the center of the room. If the pillars take (AL x 2) from area attacks, they burst and make the following attack:

C Rupture (necrotic) • At-Will

Trigger: Pillar takes (ALx2) hit point damage from an area attack.

Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 2 (creatures in burst); AL +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: AL + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Instrumentation: There are three complex instrument panels in the room (marked x, y, and z). These devices control the flow of energy throughout the weapons store, including into the containment cell.

Shadow Shield (if still active): The protective shield prevents any damaging effect to pass through and is 20 feet around the airship. Anyone that is not attuned to the ship suffers the following effects:

At heroic, they are:

- -1 penalty to attack rolls
- -1 penalty to defenses
- -1 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 3 all

At paragon, they are:

- -2 penalty to attack rolls
- -2 penalty to defenses
- -2 penalty to saving throws
- vulnerable 5 all

In addition, those attuned to the ship (all enemies) cannot be force moved off the ship. If they fail their save, they fall prone before the railing. If they make their save, they don't fall prone.

TACTICS

Every Netherese in the room tries to attack the PCs working on the self-destruct mechanism, provoking opportunity attacks if necessary and including allies in unfriendly bursts. The Netherese firemen try to pile on

any prone PCs, making it harder to get up. The sailors are desperate to stop the PCs, and it should show.

The weaponsmaster verbally harangues any PCs trying to disarm the self-destruct mechanism.

SKILL CHALLENGE: SHUT IT DOWN!

Goal: The PCs must deactivate the self-destruct mechanism before it detonates.

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before the completion of x rounds - x is determined below).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Insight, Thievery.

Victory: The PCs prevent the detonation of the self-destruct mechanism. They are able to fully utilize the ship on future missions.

Defeat: The PCs fail to deactivate the self-destruction mechanism and it detonates. This severely damages the dreadnaught and impacts its ability to participate in further missions. All creatures in the room take AL x2 fire damage.

The challenge consists of three locations:

- Each location allows PCs to attempt the same set of skills.
- A PC may attempt a skill as a standard action against the Hard DC or as a minor action against the Hard DC +5. There is NO limit to the number of success a PC may earn in a turn or in a round.
- A failed check results in AL lightning damage.
- This encounter starts with SIX rounds. For each failure during Encounter 10, subtract one round. If the PCs failed Encounter 9, subtract two rounds. The remaining total is the total number of rounds (a minimum of 1 round) the PCs have to complete the skill challenge. The PCs always have at least one round to attempt this.
- If the characters fail the skill challenge, all creatures in the room take AL x2 fire damage when the self-destruct is triggered. The characters manage to flee before the truly big explosion that quickly follows afterwards.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have deactivated the self-destruct mechanism or failed to do so, they can seek to rejoin some of their fellow boarders and attempt to take control of the ship. If there are any Netherese opponents left, they quickly surrender or flee. End the encounter. Fill in Handout 9 and let the spokesperson deliver it to the Senior DM. If you have 30 minutes or more left, they can run Encounter 12, starting at the forecastle of the dreadnought or help one of the other teams on board of the dreadnought. Otherwise they have an early break.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

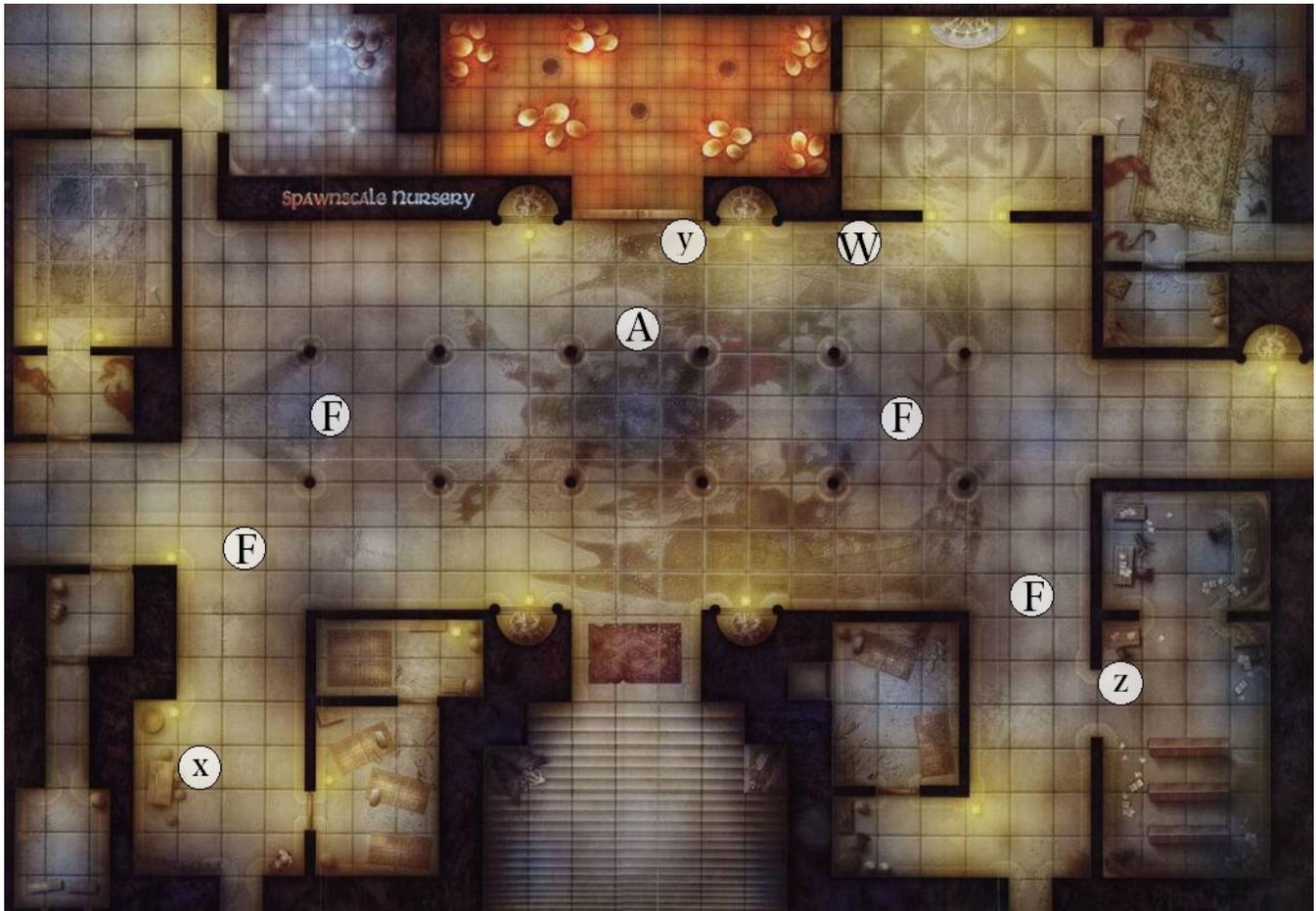
ABL ENCOUNTER 11: WE HAVE HOW LONG TO STOP THAT THING? STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ABL ENCOUNTER 11: WE HAVE HOW LONG TO STOP THAT THING? MAP

TILE SETS USED

Fantastic Location: Dragondown Grotto - Spawnscale Nursery



A= Arturas Shadwghast; F=Netherese fireman; W= shadar-kai weaponmaster

Instrument panels are marked x, y and z.

AB2. ENCOUNTER 12: ENEMY YACHTS

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 2 to 6:

- 1 Raven Roost grenadier (C)
- 2 Raven Roost highwaymen (S)
- 2 Raven Roost sharpshooters (A)
- 1 Raven Roost outlaw veterans (B)

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 8 to 14:

- 2 deathless blademasters (S)
- 2 deathless snipers (A)
- 1 deathless berserker (B)
- 1 deathless mage (C)

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 16 to 20:

- 1 shadovar shadow captain (B)
- 2 ebony raven speakers (A)
- 2 shadow giants (S)
- 1 Netherese inquisitor (C)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one soldier.

Six PCs: Add one controller.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The goal of the encounter is to destroy the Netherese yacht. At the start of the encounter provide the players with Handout 10 for the mechanics on how to do so. Also provide Handout 12 so that the players know what is important and what the Senior DM wants to know at the end of the Air Battle.

Kill the Netherese: If all the monsters on the ship are defeated, the PCs face no more resistance on the yacht. They can easily destroy the yacht afterward.

Destroy the Yacht: If the PCs can do enough damage to the yacht to reduce it to 0 hit points, the yacht is no longer able to stay airborne. At the end of the next turn of the creature that reduced the yacht to 0 hit points, the yacht crashes. This leaves any PC left on the ship till the end of their next turn to abandon ship.

Disable the Yacht: 8/10/12 successful Thievery checks (Moderate DC as a standard action and Hard DC as a minor action) while adjacent to the rigging disables

the yacht entirely. The PC who completed the final check can decide whether to send the yacht into a controlled descent (PCs have plenty of time to abandon ship), rapid descent (PCs have one round to abandon ship), or nosedive (the ship immediately crashes). When the ship crashes, all creatures still on the yacht take damage equal to the ALd10.

SETUP

Use a yacht as the enemy ship. As the PCs approach the enemy yacht have them position themselves as they wish on their own ship. After they have done so, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the Netherese vessels, the darkness and chaos of the battle appears to have allowed you to escape notice. As you approach within 100 feet of your target, however, the ship fires a ballista bolt at you, narrowly missing. You have been noticed.

At the start of the turn the two yachts are 80 feet apart from one another. The goal is to destroy the Netherese yacht. The PCs can choose to have a shoot-out, but that is likely slow and boring. Remember that the ships have a separate initiative and they can move closer while the PCs act. The map provides the likely location the Netherese are standing. How the PCs' yacht approaches the Netherese is up to the players.

Ramming speed: As the PCs ship and the Netherese ship meet both parties have to decide whether to try and ram the other ship. Doing so deals 50 points of damage to both ships. The side deciding to do the ramming (can be both) gains a +5 bonus to their Acrobatics check to stay on their feet. The Netherese do not attempt to ram the PCs if their ship has already taken damage.

Going down: If a ship crashes anyone left on the ship has until the end of their next turn to make it off the ship. Any PC still on the Netherese ship when it crashes dies (unless they have a fly speed or *feather fall* or a similar option).

Should their ship be destroyed the PCs can either go down with it or attempt to take over the Netherese ship by killing all enemies (the characters' crew is smart enough to follow their lead). If they decide to go down with their ship inform the Senior DM and move to encounter 19A.

If instead the PCs succeed in taking over the Netherese ship inform them of the ship's current hit points and status. Since the Netherese ship is at optimum condition (Handout 1A), this might be an improvement to the ship the PCs have.

If all PCs die in a heroic attempt to take over the Netherese ship, describe the many statues to be built in their honor. Then send the table captain to the Senior DM.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Yacht: See Handout 1, 2 and 3. Do **not** forget the ranged weapons of the ships.

Ship to ship artillery: Once per round a PC can use a standard action to order their crew to fire a missile at the Netherese ship. Roll a d20. On a result of 8+ the attack deals 50 damage to the ship, on a result of 16+ the damage is 75. The Netherese can and will do the same, but any Netherese creature that has been engaged ((has a PC next to them or has been attacked by a PC) is unable to take this action.

Moving from ship to ship: As long as the two ships are adjacent, moving from ship to ship is easy. It requires 2 extra squares of movement. Otherwise the PCs need a method to overcome the distance, whether flying, teleporting or jumping.

Damage to the ship: if one of the ships is damaged for 50 hit points or more, any creature on its decks must make an easy DC acrobatics check or fall prone. Anyone in the rigging or on the sails must make a moderate DC check or fall prone. Creatures with a climb speed are immune to this effect.

TACTICS

The Netherese soldiers who possess at-will ranged attacks use these attacks against PCs who are using their own ranged powers against the Netherese vessel. Their objective is to incapacitate as many attackers as possible to allow their “obviously superior” firepower to do its job.

The Netherese soldiers who do not possess at-will ranged attacks man the ballistae until the ballistae are destroyed or until PCs board the yacht. Each ballista is manned by at least two Netherese soldiers or not at all.

The Netherese do not take prisoners. If all PCs are incapacitated, they are thrown overboard and killed.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the Netherese yacht has been destroyed or its occupants have been defeated or the PCs retreated. The PCs must fill in Handout 12 If it is the last encounter of the Air Battle they can deliver the report together with the other reports to the Senior DM. If the Air Battle is still going on, and the PCs have not picked all the AB3 encounters, they should pick one of the other AB3 fights (Encounter 13 or Encounter 14). If

everything has been done, and there is still 60 minutes left of the slot, you can allow them to help the Cormyreans on the ground (AB4. Encounter 19 to 21).

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

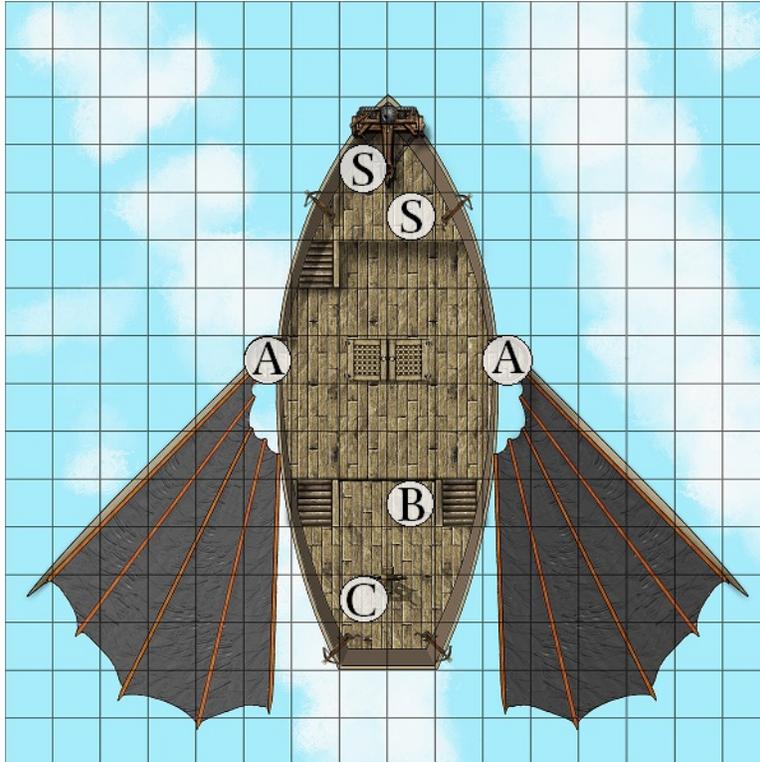
ENCOUNTER 12: ENEMY YACHTS STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

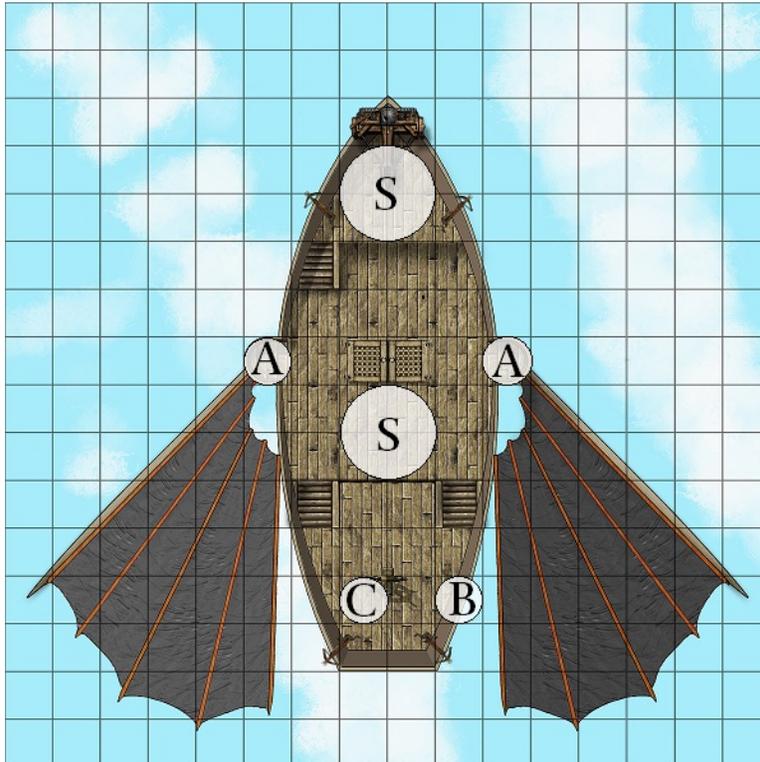
ENCOUNTER 12: ENEMY YACHTS MAP

Custom map

AL 2 to 14:



AL16 to 20:



AB2. ENCOUNTER 13: AHEAD OF THE TROOPS

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 2 to 10 at the start of the fight:

5 horned kir-lanans (H)*

5 kir-lanan shadow hurlers (S)*

2 Netherese artillery

(During the fight only a number of kir-lanans equal to the PCs present at the table are active. The rest are reinforcements, replacing fallen kir-lanans.)

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 12 to 20 at the start of the fight:

5 ironwing kir-lanans (H)*

5 kir-lanan shadow hurlers (S)*

2 Netherese artillery

(During the fight only a number of kir-lanans equal to the PCs present at the table are active. The rest are reinforcements, replacing fallen kir-lanans.)

This encounter includes the following additional creatures at al ALs:

99 Recruits on clumsy veserabs (R)*

* These creatures are not all in the combat at once. Check the setup and developments

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: remove 1 horned/ironwing kir-lanan and one shadow hurler kir-lanan. There are 4 kir-lanan active in the fight at a time.

Six PCs: add 1 horned/ironwing kir-lanan and one shadow hurler kir-lanan. There are 6 kir-lanan active in the fight at a time.

Glory Tier: add a Netherese artillery, double the damage the PCs can receive at the end of their turn, increase all skill check DC's by 5 and add 2 of each kir-lanan to the encounter. There are 6/7/8 kir-lanan active in the fight at a time.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The goal of the encounter is to disperse the Netherese defenses. At the start of the encounter provide the players with Handout 11 for the mechanics on how to do so. Also provide Handout 13 so that the players know

what is important and what the Senior DM wants to know at the end of the Air Battle.

In order to defeat the encounter, the PCs have to disperse the Netherese defenses. This can be accomplished by either killing all kir-lanan sergeants and destroying the artillery, which causes the recruits to run in fear, or causing the recruits to flee before the kir-lanans die and the artillery is destroyed through the use of skill checks (in which case the kir-lanans flee as they are experienced veterans and they do not want to die).

SETUP

The PCs have taken "taking point" slightly too literally and find themselves dangerously close to the walls of Sakkors. Sakkors last line of defense before these walls is made up of a battalion of very fresh recruits. These troops were sent into the skies on barely trained veserabs with only their kir-lanan sergeants for support while the command cadre is researching "other venues of defense".

Place the PC's ship on the battle map, with the horde of recruits at the bow of the ship. Place as many large minions as you can fit, along with 4/5/6 of the kir-lanans. The other 4/5/6 are holding at the back of the reinforcements, ready to move in if needed (see developments). The included map provides an example setup.

Rushing towards Sakkors your ship is repeatedly caught in clouds of oppressive darkness. Sakkors magical defenses must be in working order still. Slowly you make your way through one of the clouds, its shady fabric actively fighting the ship as it tries to cut through.

"TURN BACK, TURN BAAAACK!"

A loud, somewhat panicky, yell from one of the lookouts calls your attention to the front of the ship. As your ship starts to move out of the darkness you are greeted by a veritable swarm of veserabs hovering in front of what must be Sakkors walls. Mounted on their backs are soldiers clad in the black of Netheril. Weaving through the troops is a group of gargoyles shouting orders. Up on the walls you spot several artillery stations burst into frantic activity, its gunners pointing at you and gesturing wildly.

Give the PCs a moment to process this information and ask them to place themselves on their ship.

As the Netherese battle wing moves to block you there are many near collisions between the mounted veserabs

and some of the soldiers fumble their throwing spears as they attempt to move into formation. The gargoyles bark out harsh rumbling orders, but an organized defensive line fails to materialize. The stares of the young soldiers widen in alarm as they see you prepare for attack. As your ship moves closer, the darkness closing behind you, the gargoyles shifts their focus towards you. From the back of the Netherese formation you can hear more rumbling orders being given, urging the soldiers to stand strong and to defend the glory of Netheril.

If it is not instantly clear to the PCs, any PC that has Insight trained spots the extreme nervousness of these soldiers. They seem scared and unwilling to press the fight. PC's trained in Nature or Heal notice that but a few of the soldiers look to be older than about 16.

The large amount of recruits on veserabs make it near impossible for the PCs to maneuver. They could flee, but tactical flight is going to be out.

Make sure the PCs understand their options (see Defeating the encounter and give them handout 11) before starting the combat

In order to scare away the recruits, the PCs need a total of 2 successful skill checks per PC at the table.

Checks that can be made:

- **Intimidate or Bluff:** Threaten or Lie.
- **Nature:** Influence the veserabs.
- **Athletics:** Intimidation through a feat of strength.
- **Endurance:** Intimidation through ignoring damage.
- **Arcana:** A dazzling display of illusionary magic.

Each PC may attempt one check per round against the moderate DC as a standard action or the high DC as a move action. Any PC failing the skill check immediately takes AL damage as a few emboldened recruits fire spears at them.

All skill checks are aimed at getting the recruits to lose their morale and flee. Feel free to reward good roleplay aimed at this goal with a +2 discretionary bonus to the skill check.

Any PC that kills one of the kir-lanans or destroys a piece of artillery gains a +4 reputation bonus to their next skill check.

Any PC that kills one of the recruits gains a +1 reputation bonus to their next skill check.

The Kir-Lanans: The kir-lanans do not all join the fight at once, several of them hang back to prod the recruits into attacking. As one of the kir-lanans up front dies, move one of the reserves to the front, arriving at the start of its initiative.

Number of PCs	4	5	6
Successful checks	□□□□□□□□	□□	□□

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Yacht / Greatship: See Handout 1, 2 and 3. Do not forget the ranged weapons of the ships.

Damage to the ship: if one of the ships is damaged for 50 hitpoints or more, any creature on its decks must make a DC Easy Acrobatics check or fall prone. Anyone in the rigging or on the sails must make a DC Moderate check instead. Creatures with a climb speed are immune to this effect.

Sails, mast and rigging: The sails, mast or rigging can be traversed with a DC 15 Athletics check. Any creature standing on the sails or climbing the mast or rigging must make a DC Moderate Acrobatics check whenever they take damage or fall prone, unless they have a climb speed.

The Recruits: The recruits are scared, bad at controlling their mounts and not well trained. But, there are a lot of them and they are throwing spears. At the end of each round any PC that has not either made a successful skill check or killed one of the recruits takes AL damage to represent the deluge of spears aimed their way.

If one of the recruits gets killed its place is taken by another.

TACTICS

The Kir-Lanan shadow hurlers attempt to stay at range, but they realize that the ship provides the PCs with cover. The artillery tries to catch as many PCs as possible in its bursts

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the Netherese recruits flee or the PCs retreated. The PCs must fill in Handout 13. If it is the last encounter of the Air Battle they can deliver the report together with the other reports to the Senior DM. If the Air Battle is still going on, and the PCs have not picked all the AB3 encounters, they should pick one of the other AB3 fights (Encounter 12 or Encounter 14). If everything has been done, and there is still 60 minutes left of the slot, you can allow them to help the Cormyreans on the ground (AB4. Encounter 19 to 21).

MILESTONE

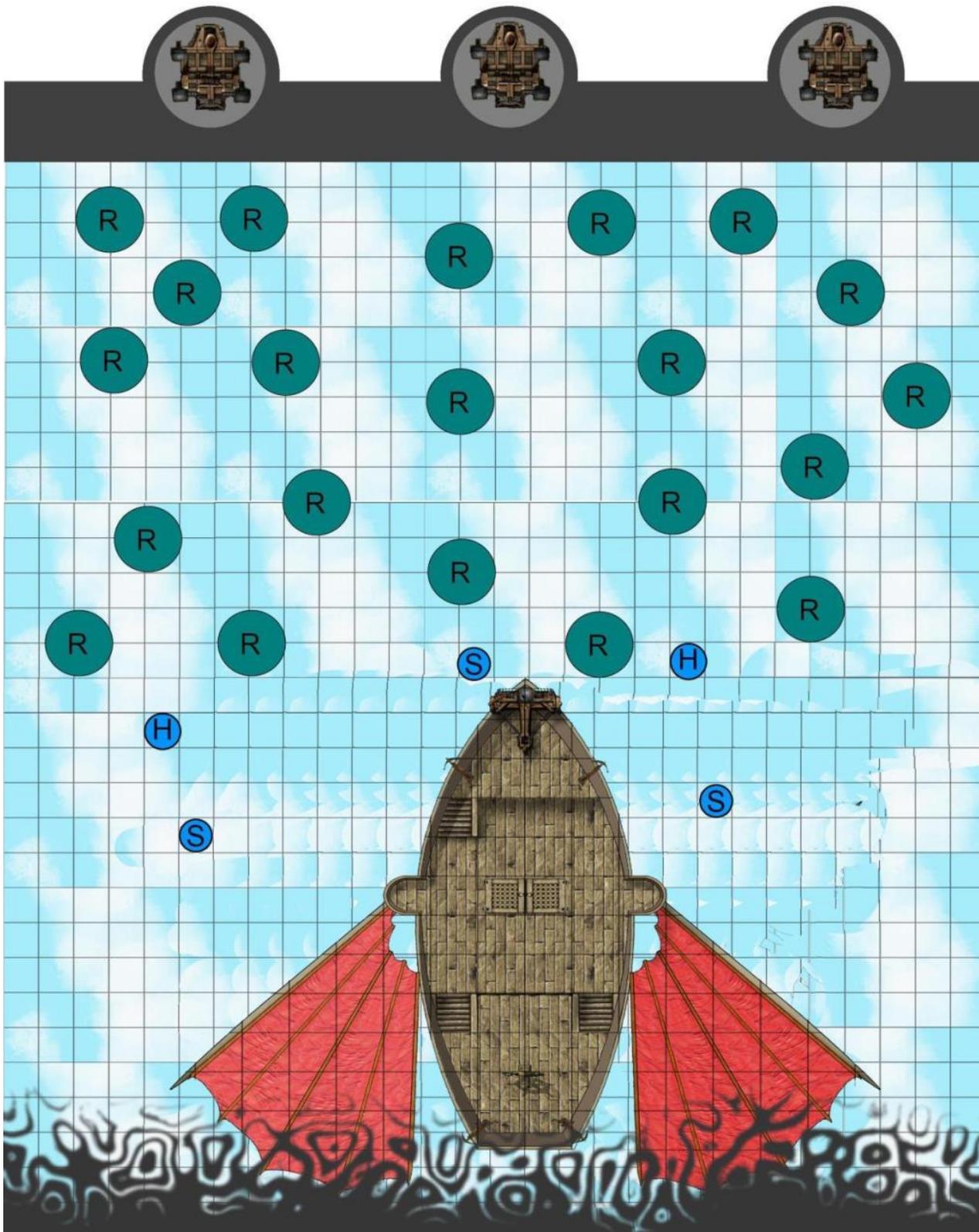
This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ENCOUNTER 13: AHEAD OF THE TROOPS STATS

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 3.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 4.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 5.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 6.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 12.

ENCOUNTER 13: AHEAD OF THE TROOPS MAP

Custom map



AB2. ENCOUNTER 14: SWARMS OF DARKNESS

CREATURES

This encounter includes these creatures at AL 2-10:

3 wraith

1 mad wraith

2 vortex wraith

6 wraith figment*

* The number might increase if crew members die.

This encounter includes these creatures at AL 12-20:

2 sword wraith

2 oblivion wraith

6 shattered wraith*

1 black cloud

* The number might increase if crew members die.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one wraith and three wraith figments (AL 2-10) or one sword wraith and three shattered wraiths (AL 12-20).

Six PCs: Add one vortex wraith (AL 2-10) or oblivion wraith (AL 12-20).

Glory Tier: Check at the end of each round whether a wraith has died.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The goal of the encounter is to kill the wraiths and keep their crew alive. At the start of the encounter provide the players with Handout 14 so that the players know what is important and what the Senior DM wants to know at the end of the Air Battle. Alert them to the risk of crew members dying and the importance of killing the normal wraiths or the sword wraiths.

SETUP

In this encounter, the PCs seek to destroy Netheril's swarms of shadowy servants. The shadows, of course, seek to destroy the PCs.

As you approach the churning swarm of shadows, a number of the shadows peel off from the main swarm to engage your party. You must dispatch them quickly, or you will soon be overwhelmed.

At the end of each odd round check if at least one non-minion wraith was killed. If not, 3 (4 if on a great ship) of the PCs crewmembers die and 2 (3 with 6 PCs) are raised as wraith figments (AL 2-10) or shattered wraiths (AL 12-20). Make sure to describe the new wraiths in such a way that it is clear to the PCs that their crewmembers are dying.

If all PC crewmembers are dead their ship spins out of control. Unless the PCs can recover and have one of their own take the wheel (takes all their actions for a round) they crash. If they (opt to) crash, move to Encounter 19A. The wraiths do not pursue an out of control ship as they have plenty of other targets nearby.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Yacht / Greatship: See Handout 1, 2 and 3. Do **not** forget the ranged weapons of the ships.

Damage to the ship: if one of the ships is damaged for 50 hitpoints or more, any creature on its decks must make a DC Easy Acrobatics check or fall prone. Anyone in the rigging or on the sails must make a DC Moderate check instead. Creatures with a climb speed are immune to this effect.

Sails, mast and rigging: The sails, mast or rigging can be traversed with a DC 15 Athletics check. Any creature standing on the sails or climbing the mast or rigging must make a DC Moderate Acrobatics check whenever they take damage or fall prone, unless they have a climb speed.

TACTICS

The wraiths attack the nearest PC, attempting to surround and slay one before moving on to the next.

At ALs 12-20, the black cloud stays out of melee range while focusing fire on the wraiths' target.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the wraiths have been destroyed, or all PC crewmembers are dead and the ship is crashing, or if the PCs retreat. Fill in Handout 14. If this is the last encounter of the Air Battle they can deliver the report together with the other reports to the Senior DM. If the Air Battle is still going on, and the PCs have not picked all the AB3 encounters, they should pick one of the other AB3 fights (Encounter 12 or Encounter 13). If everything has been done, and there is still 60+ minutes left, you can allow them to help the Cormyreans on the ground (AB4. Encounter 19 to 21).

MILESTONE

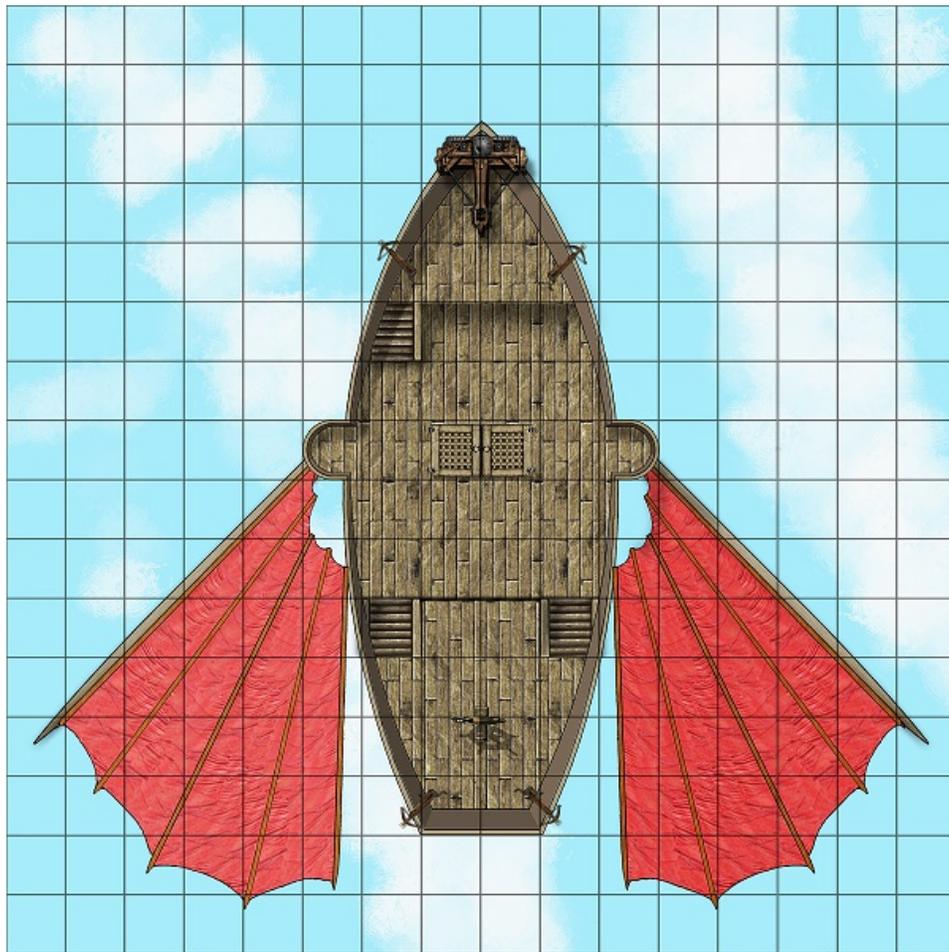
This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ENCOUNTER 14: SWARMS OF DARKNESS STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ENCOUNTER 14: SWARMS OF DARKNESS MAP

Custom map



(The ship might differ if the PCs are on another yacht.)

PCs start on a spot of their choice on the ship.
The monsters come from all directions, starting about 3 squares from the deck.

AB3. ENCOUNTER 15: SHADY HARRIERS

AL 2 TO 16 ONLY

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

AL 2-6:

2 shadow bats (W)

1 shadowskull (S)

1 shadow drakeling swarm (D)

AL 8-10:

2 winged shadow hound (W)

1 winged shadow strangler (S)

1 shadow drake flight (D)

AL 12-14:

2 brutal darkbleeders (W)

1 manticores death hurler (S)

1 shadow raven swarm (D)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 shadow bat / 1 winged shadow hound / 1 brutal darkbleeder.

Six PCs: Add 1 shadowskull / 1 winged shadow strangler / 1 manticores death hurler. Shadows darken, and the whole ship below the rigging is covered in dim light.

Glory tier: Disregard the author note. Add one swarm, anyone not in full daylight takes 5 + AL damage at the start of their turn. Shadows darken, and the whole ship is covered in dim light.

AUTHOR NOTE

Make sure to not use flying creatures too optimally. It is no fun if there is no way to reach a flying creature that can pick you off with impunity. If you have to invent a Myth Dranor high mage casting a spell to give the whole party a one round fly at the cost of someone spending a surge. Do so if that keeps it fun.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Provide the players with Handout 17. The goal of the encounter is to simply kill all monsters.

SETUP

The PCs are targeted with a selection of Netherese harriers. The PCs can place themselves where they would like on their ship. Combat begins once the monsters are within 6 squares (they fly erratically up till that point to avoid fire).

In the distance Netherese forces bring several large cages on deck and release a flight of darkness that makes it way towards you. Making mad turns to avoid enemy fire the creatures come ever closer till finally they are upon you.

It is assumed the PCs are on a great ship (see the map). If they are on a yacht, let it hover within close distance. On the PCs' turn it can fly closer so the PCs can move onto the great ship to help the crew.

The characters and the crew of the great ship have shot down some opponents before the monsters get close to the ship. The numbers provided above are the ones that get close enough to get into a fight.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

See Handout 1, 2 and 3 for the features of the ships.

Illumination: It is broad daylight, but remember the shadow hounds' aura *shroud of night*. If there are six PCs at the table, or the players choose to run a challenging flight magic of the Netherese darkens all shadows around the ship. Effectively changing the light condition below the rigging into dim light.

Crew: The crew is ill-suited to fight the shadow monsters. For the first 2 rounds they are fleeing in panic below deck. The deck is considered difficult terrain unless a character succeeds in a DC Moderate Acrobatics, Athletics or Intimidate check as part of the move action. Failure results in half AL damage. After 2 rounds the deck is clear.

TACTICS

AL 2-6: The swarm attempts to get into the middle of the fight, trying to force an advantage from the limited mobility the ship allows while putting PCs into dim light for the bats to exploit. The shadowskull attempts to stay at range (but not if no PCs can deal with that at all).

AL 8-10: The hounds attempt to get onto the ship a.s.a.p. as they cannot fly too well. The swarm attempts to get into the middle of the fight, trying to force an advantage from the limited mobility the ship allows. The strangler attempts to stay at range (but not so far that he cannot be affected).

AL 12-14: Both the swarm and the darkbleeders attempt to get into the middle of the fight, trying to force an advantage from the limited mobility the ship allows. Catching people in multiple aura's is preferred. The darkbleeders attempt to focus on people that are granting combat advantage so they can make 3 attacks without penalties. The manticore attempts to stay at range.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when all monsters are defeated. The PCs must fill in Handout 17. If it is the last encounter of the Air Battle they can deliver the report together with the other reports to the Senior DM. If the Air Battle is still going on, and the PCs have not picked all the AB3 encounters, they should pick one of the other AB3 fights (Encounter 17 or Encounter 18). If everything has been done, and there is still 60 minutes left of the slot, you can allow them to help the Cormyreans on the ground (AB4. Encounter 19 to 21).

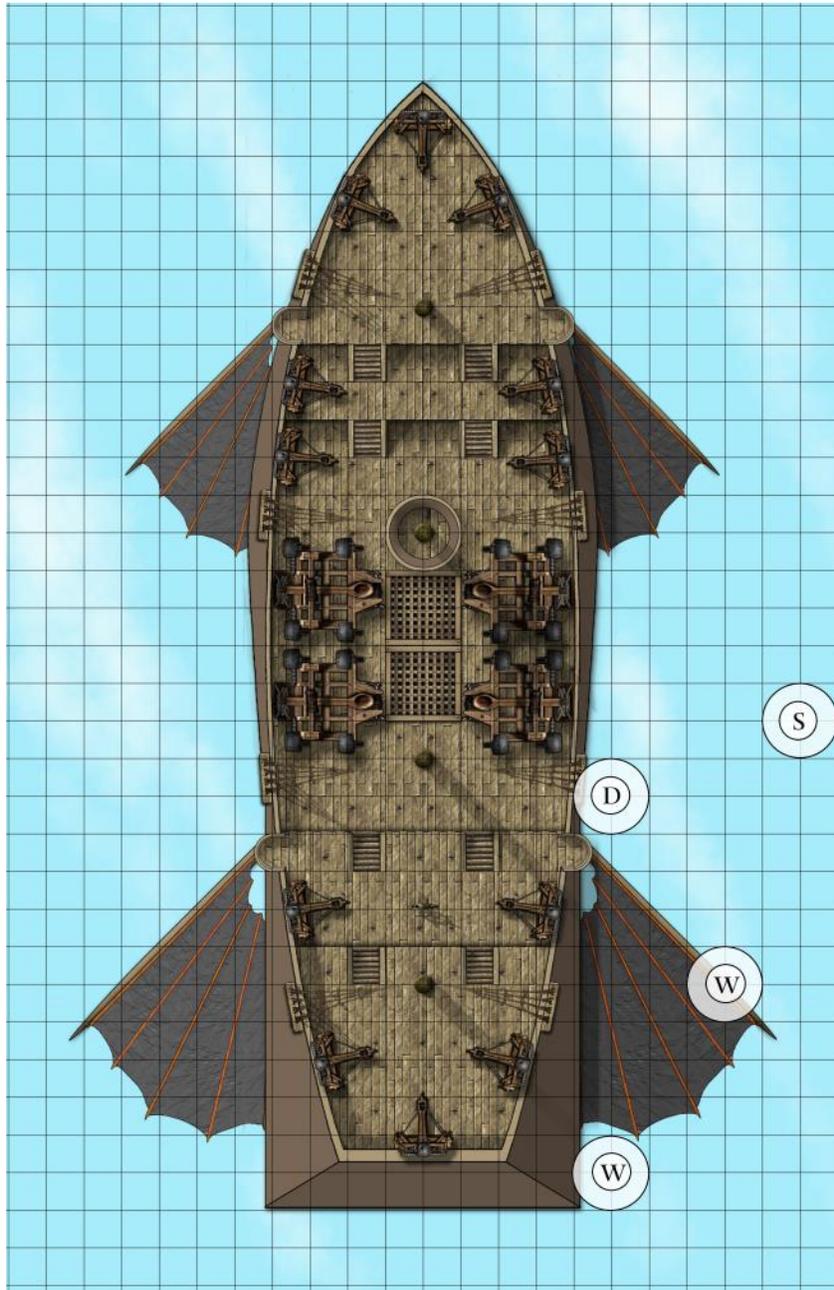
MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ENCOUNTER 15: SHADY HARRIERS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.

ENCOUNTER 15: SHADY HARRIERS



PCs start somewhere on the deck on a spot of their choice.
(If the PCs are on a yacht, it is hovering nearby on a side of the players' choice.)

AB3. ENCOUNTER 16: NETHERESE SHADOW DRAGON

AL 16~ 20 ONLY

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creature:

1 Netherese Shadow Dragon

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Lower the dragon's defenses by 1 and its hitpoints by 90 / 100 / 125. In addition it does not have the *afterthought* trait.

Six PCs: Increase the dragon's attack rolls by 2 and its hitpoints by 100 / 100 / 125.

Glory Tier: increase the globes of darkness to a burst 2 and add 100 / 150 / 200 hit points to the dragons maximum hit points.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Provide the players with Handout 18. The goal of the encounter is to simply kill the shadow dragon. A lesser goal is to remove at least 50% of its hit points.

SETUP

The PCs have managed to upset some major magical players amongst the Netherese casting cadre and they have decided to send their pet to convey their displeasure.

Dark clouds gather off your port bow. Swirling streaks of darkness taking on the shape of a featureless face. Mouth agape the form seems to cough towards you spitting out a black vapor in the shape of a huge dragon. The winds fail to disperse this cloud as the dragon spears towards you.

Allow the PCs to place themselves on their ship wherever they like. Combat starts with the shadow dragon right on top of their port bow.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

See Handout 1, 2 and 3.

Crew: The crew is ill-suited to fight the shadow monsters. For the first 2 rounds they are fleeing in panic below deck. The deck is considered difficult terrain unless a character succeeds in a DC Moderate

Acrobatics, Athletics or Intimidate check as part of the move action. Failure results in half AL damage. After 2 rounds the deck is clear.

TACTICS

The dragon will attempt to gain combat advantage against as many creatures as possible before using its breath to gain its damage bonus on it. Until bloodied it will use No Light Without Shade only if there are no targets likely to be in range of a whiptail before its next initiative.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the shadow dragon is defeated or the PCs retreat. The PCs must fill in Handout 18. If it is the last encounter of the Air Battle they can deliver the report together with the other reports to the Senior DM. If the Air Battle is still going on, and the PCs have not picked all the AB3 encounters, they should pick one of the other AB3 fights (Encounter 17 or Encounter 18). If everything has been done, and there is still 60 minutes left of the slot, you can allow them to help the Cormyreans on the ground (AB4. Encounter 19 to 21).

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

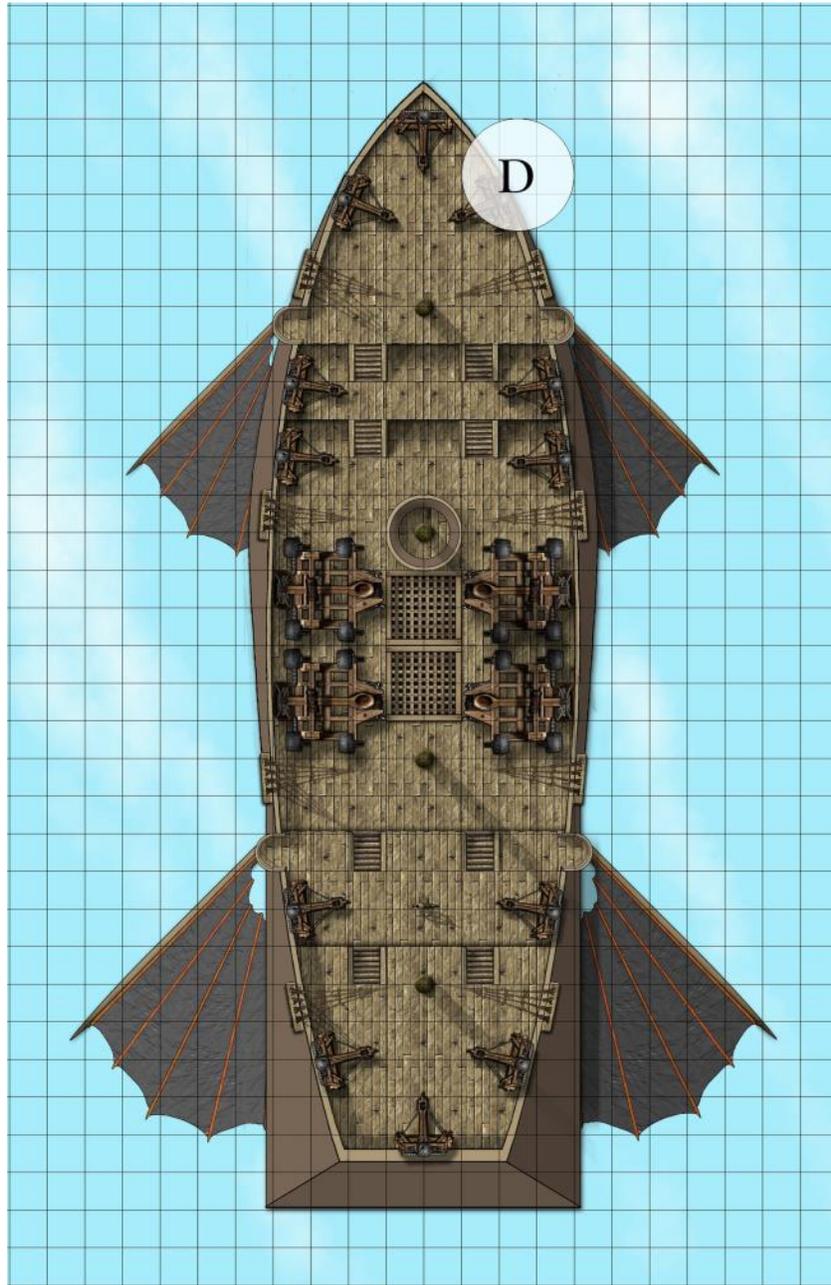
ENCOUNTER 16: NETHERESE SHADOW DRAGON STATS

Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 10.

Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 11.

Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 12.

ENCOUNTER 16: NETHERESE SHADOW DRAGON MAP



AB3. ENCOUNTER IV: REPEL BOARDERS

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 2 to 8:

- 3 Raven Roost highwaymen (H)*
- 6 Raven Roost sharpshooters (S)*
- 3 Raven Roost outlaw veterans (V)*

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 10 to 16:

- 3 deathless blademasters (H)*
- 6 deathless snipers (S)*
- 3 deathless berserkers (V)*

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 18 to 20:

- 3 shadovar shadow captains (H)*
- 6 ebony Shar speakers (S)*
- 3 shadow giants (V)*

This encounter includes the following additional creatures at al ALs:

- 17 Netherese crewmembers*
- 5 Cormyrian crewmembers*

* These creatures are not all in the combat at once. Check the setup and developments.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one boarding hook, subduing the Netherese crew requires one less successful check.

Six PCs: Add one boarding hook, subduing the Netherese crew requires one additional successful check.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the start of the encounter provide the players with Handout 15 which contains the mechanical details of the encounter and Handout 19 for the victory goals.

SETUP

A Netherese yacht has broken through the line and is has boarded a Cormyrian vessel. Unless the PCs act fast the ship is lost, crew, artillery and all.

One of the remaining Netherese yachts has managed to circle around your main forces and is approaching at speed. Maneuvering wildly it manages to avoid the artillery fire and pull up next to one of the Cormyrian ships. You see boarding hooks being deployed and Netherese forces begin to swarm the vessel. While the Cormyrian forces put up a stalwart defense it is doubtful they will be able to hold on for long without aid.

Place the two ships next to each other on the battlemat, then allow the players to position their ship and place themselves on it. An example placement is provided on the map.

By the time the PCs react the Cormyrian forces have been all but routed. They have pulled back around their steering wheel and are being pressed by the Netherese.

- Place 5 minions near the steering wheel of the Cormyrian vessel to represent the captain surrounded by his remaining forces.
- Place 5 minion tokens spread out on the Netherese ship to represent their crew.
- Indicate the position of 5 boarding hooks on the Cormyrian and their tethers on the Netherese vessel.
- **At AL 2-8:** Place 1 Raven Roost highwayman, 2 Raven Roost sharpshooters and 1 Raven Roost outlaw veteran on the Cormyrian ship.
- **At AL 10 to 16:** Place 1 deathless blademaster, 2 deathless snipers and 1 deathless berserker on the Cormyrian ship.
- **At AL 18 to 20:** Place 1 shadovar shadow captain, 2 ebony Shar speakers and 1 shadow giant on the Cormyrian ship.
- All the other Netherese forces are currently below decks dealing with stragglers or replenishing their ammo. Keep track of the number of reinforcements left for the Netherese. Check the developments sections for how to use these.
- If there are no crew left on the Netherese deck place 3 new ones at the start of the next round if there are any left below decks.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Yacht / Greatship: See Handout 1, 2 and 3. Do **not** forget the ranged weapons of the ships.

Moving from ship to ship: Moving from ship to ship is easy. It requires 2 extra squares of movement. When moving across a boarding line/hook no extra squares of movement are required.

Damage to the ship: if one of the ships is damaged for 50 hitpoints or more, any creature on its decks must

make a DC Easy Acrobatics check or fall prone. Anyone in the rigging or on the sails must make a DC Moderate check instead. Creatures with a climb speed are immune to this effect.

Sails, mast and rigging: The sails, mast or rigging can be traversed with a DC 15 Athletics check. Any creature standing on the sails or climbing the mast or rigging must make a DC Moderate Acrobatics check whenever they take damage or fall prone, unless they have a climb speed.

DEFEATING THE ENCOUNTER

In order to defeat the encounter, the PCs have to make sure the Cormyrian captain is able to control his ship (by making sure the Netherese soldiers are engaged) and either kill all the Netherese forces and their reinforcements. Or remove all the boarding hooks from the Cormyrian vessel and then either: make the Netherese ship drift away (through taking the Netherese crew out of picture) or make the Netherese ship crash by damaging it.

Boarding hooks: The Netherese ship is attached to the Cormyrian vessel with 4/5/6 boarding hooks (depending on the number of players present at the table). A boarding hook can be removed with a successful Athletics or Thievery check versus Moderate (standard action) or High (minor action) DC as long as the character is adjacent to the hook, or its tether on the Netherese ship. Alternatively the boarding hook's rope can be attacked. The ropes are magically reinforced, have an AC of 13 + AL, a Fortitude defense of 15 + AL, a Reflex defense of 1 and cannot be attacked vs. Will. The rope has 15 + AL hit points

The Netherese ship: The PCs have to decide whether they want to attempt to destroy the Netherese ship or just want to make it float away out of control. Damaging the Netherese ship and making it crash is possible, but keep in mind that if the boarding hooks are still attached when it goes down, it takes the Cormyrian ship with it. If the Netherese ship goes down it deals 75 points of damage to the Cormyrian vessel for each boarding hook still attached.

The Netherese ship drifts away once no boarding hooks are attached and no Netherese crew is manning the ship.

Once per round a PC can use a standard action to order their crew to fire a missile at the Netherese ship. Roll a d20. On a result of 8+ the attack deals 50 damage to the ship, on a result of 16+ the damage is 75.

Refer to Handout 1A for the ships defenses and hitpoints. Assume the Netherese yacht is in top condition.

If the Netherese ship crashes any PCs left on the ship have until the end of their next turn to make it off the ship. Any PC still on the ship when it crashes dies (unless they have a fly speed or featherfall or a similar option).

Dealing with the Netherese crew: While killing the Netherese crew is an option, more are below decks. If there are no crew left on the Netherese deck place 3 new ones at the start of the next round if there are any left below decks. The Netherese ship starts with 12 crew members below decks. While the Netherese ship is manned it does not drift away even if the boarding hooks are removed.

Keeping the crew from “manning” the Netherese ship requires either killing them all or successful Diplomacy, Bluff, Intimidate or Thievery (close all the doors and hatches, can be used only when on the Netherese ship) checks versus Moderate (as a standard action) or High (as a minor action) DC.

The Cormyrian ship and crew: If the last of the Cormyrian crew members dies the PCs will have to either abandon ship or have a PC take the wheel.

The PCs' ship: The assumption is that their crew keep the ship in place. The Netherese already chose their target and they are not switching. They ignore the characters' ship.

Number of PCs	4	5	6
Crew subdued	□ □ □ □	□	□
Hooks removed	□ □ □ □	□	□

DEVELOPMENTS

If the PCs manage to kill one of the Netherese creatures check if reinforcements are still available. If so a fresh creature of the same type joins the fight at a location of your choosing. If no creatures of the same type are left one of the others joins. The initiatives for the creature types stay the same.

Once the ships are separated, by removing the hooks and setting the Netherese vessel adrift or crashing it, there will be no more reinforcements for the Netherese. If the Netherese vessel crashed and took the hooks with it, the Netherese may opt to try and destroy the Cormyrian vessel in a last act of defiance. Otherwise they fight to the death.

If at the end of any round one of the Netherese soldiers has not been engaged (has a PC next to them or has been attacked by a PC) they attempt to make their way to the steering wheel and kill one of the crew members. If they make it there they automatically succeed.

If the last of the Cormyrian crew members dies, the PCs have one round to either make it off the ship before it crashes or have a PC take the wheel.

If the PCs choose to abandon ship, the Netherese use remove their boarding hooks and attempt to flee. Feel free to continue the combat on the Netherese ship if the players so desire, but the encounter counts as a failure.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the Cormyrian ship has been saved or the PCs retreat. The PCs must fill in Handout 19. If it is the last encounter of the Air Battle they can deliver the report together with the other reports to the Senior DM. If the Air Battle is still going on, and the PCs have not picked all the AB3 encounters, they should pick one of the other AB3 fights (Encounter 17 or Encounter 18). If everything has been done, and there is still 60 minutes left of the slot, you can allow them to help the Cormyrians on the ground (AB4. Encounter 19 to 21).

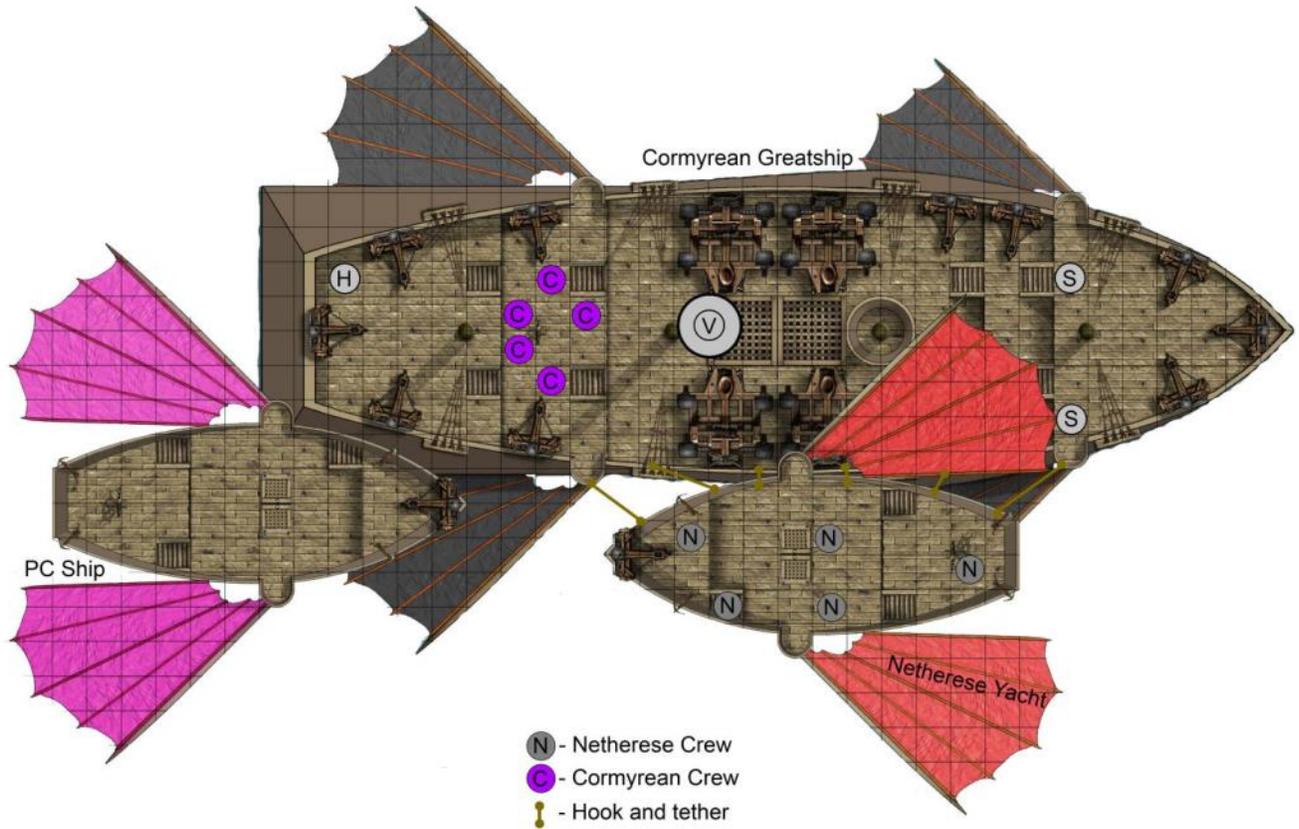
MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ENCOUNTER *IV*: REPEL BOARDERS STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ENCOUNTER IV: REPEL BOARDS MAP



AB3. ENCOUNTER 18: NETHERESE REINFORCEMENTS.

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 2 to 10 at the start of the fight:

5 horned kir-lanans (H)*

5 kir-lanan shadow hurlers (S)*

(Max. number of kir-lanan active equal to number of players at the table.)

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 12 to 20 at the start of the fight:

5 ironwing kir-lanans (H)*

5 kir-lanan shadow hurlers (S)*

(Max. number of kir-lanan active equal to number of players at the table.)

This encounter includes the following additional creatures at al ALs:

99 Recruits on clumsy veserabs (R)*

* These creatures are not all in the combat at once. Check the setup and developments.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 horned/ironwing kir-lanan and one shadow hurler kir-lanan. There are 4 kir-lanan active in the fight at a time.

Six PCs: Add 1 horned/ironwing kir-lanan and one shadow hurler kir-lanan. There are 6 kir-lanan active in the fight at a time.

Glory Tier: Double the damage the PCs can receive at the end of their turn, increase all skill check DC's by 5 and add 2 of each kir-lanan to the encounter. There are 6/7/8 kir-lanan active in the fight at a time.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the start of the encounter provide the players with Handout 16 which contains the mechanical details of the encounter and Handout 20 for the victory goals.

SETUP

The Netherese have put out the call for reinforcements, but the only troops close enough to answer the call are a battalion of recruits that was out on a training mission. These troops were sent into the skies on barely trained

veserabs with only their kir-lanan sergeants for support while the command cadre researched "other venues of support".

Before you start this encounter, please check with the organizers if any other tables are running this encounter. The PCs gain a +1 bonus on skill checks to scare off the reinforcements per table running this encounter, but only if there is more than 1 (so 1 table, no bonus, 2 tables +2 bonus, 3 tables +3, etc.)

Place the PC's ship on the battlemat, the reinforcements arrive from the stern of the ship. Place as many large minions as you can fit, along with 4/5/6 of the kir-lanans. The other 6/5/4 are holding at the back of the reinforcements, ready to move in if needed (see developments). The included map provides an example setup.

"INCOMING ASTERN!"

A loud, somewhat panicky, yell from one of the lookouts calls your attention to the rear of the ship. Out of the clouds to your back a veritable swarm of veserabs descends upon the fleet. Mounted on their backs are soldiers clad in the black of Netheril and leading the charge are a group of gargoyle like creatures.

Give the PCs a moment to process this information and ask them to place themselves on their ship.

As the netherese battle wing moves in position there are many near collisions between the mounted veserabs and some of the soldiers fumble their throwing spears as they attempt to move into formation. The gargoyles shout out harsh rumbling orders, but an organized charge fails to materialize. The stares of the young soldiers widen in alarm as they see you prepare for attack. As they reach your ship, the gargoyle vanguard shifts its focus towards you. From the back of the Netherese formation you can hear more rumbling orders being shouted, urging the soldiers to stand strong and to attack for the glory of Netheril.

If it is not instantly clear to the PCs, any PC that has Insight trained spots the extreme nervousness of these soldiers. They seem scared and unwilling to press the fight. PC's trained in Nature or Heal notice that but a few of the soldiers look to be older than about 16.

Make sure the PCs understand their options (see Defeating the Encounter and Handout 16) before starting the combat.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The Ship: Refer to Handout 1, 2 and 3 for statistics on the ship, it's armaments and how to use them.

Damage to the ship: if one of the ships is damaged for 50 hitpoints or more, any creature on its decks must make a DC Easy Acrobatics check or fall prone. Anyone in the rigging or on the sails must make a DC Moderate check instead. Creatures with a climb speed are immune to this effect.

Sails, mast and rigging: The sails, mast or rigging can be traversed with a DC 15 Athletics check. Any creature standing on the sails or climbing the mast or rigging must make a DC Moderate Acrobatics check whenever they take damage or fall prone, unless they have a climb speed.

DEFEATING THE ENCOUNTER

In order to defeat the encounter, the PCs have to disperse the Netherese reinforcements. This can be accomplished by either killing all kir-lanan sergeants, which cause the recruits to run in fear, or causing the recruits to flee before the kir-lanans die through the use of skill checks (in which case the kir-lanans flee as they are experienced veterans and they do not want to die).

In order to scare away the recruits, the PCs need a total of 2 successful skill checks per PC at the table. Checks that can be made:

- **Intimidate or Bluff:** Threaten or Lie.
- **Nature:** Influence the veserabs.
- **Athletics:** Intimidation through a feat of strength.
- **Endurance:** Intimidation through ignoring damage.
- **Arcana:** A dazzling display of illusionary magic.

Each PC may attempt one check per round against the moderate DC as a standard action or the high DC as a move action.

Any PC failing the skill check immediately takes AL damage as a few emboldened recruits fire spears at them.

All skill checks are aimed at getting the recruits to lose their morale and flee. Feel free to reward good roleplay aimed at this goal with a +2 discretionary bonus to the skill check.

Any PC that kills one of the kir-lanans gains a +4 reputation bonus to their next skill check.

Any PC that kills one of the recruits gains a +1 reputation bonus to their next skill check.

The PCs gain a +1 bonus to their checks per table running this encounter, but only if there is more than 1 (so 1 table, no bonus, 2 tables +2 bonus, 3 tables +3, etc.)

The Kir-Lanans: The kir-lanans do not all join the fight at once, several of them hang back to prod the recruits into attacking. As one of the kir-lanans up front dies, move one of the reserves to the front, arriving at the start of its initiative. There is a number of kir-lanan active equal to the number of PCs at the table.

The Recruits: The recruits are scared, bad at controlling their mounts and not well trained. But, there are a lot of them and they are throwing spears. At the end of each round any PC that has not either made a successful skill check or killed one of the recruits takes AL damage to represent the deluge of spears aimed their way.

If one of the recruits gets killed its place is taken by another.

Number of PCs	4	5	6
Successful checks	□□□□□□□□	□□	□□

TACTICS

The Kir-Lanan shadow hurlers attempt to stay at range, but they realize that the ship provide the PCs with cover.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends when the Netherese recruits flee or the PCs retreat. The PCs must fill in Handout 20. If it is the last encounter of the Air Battle they can deliver the report together with the other reports to the Senior DM. If the Air Battle is still going on, and the PCs have not picked all the AB3 encounters, they should pick one of the other AB3 fights (Encounter 17 or Encounter 18). If everything has been done, and there is still 60 minutes left of the slot, you can allow them to help the Cormyreans on the ground (AB4. Encounter 19 to 21).

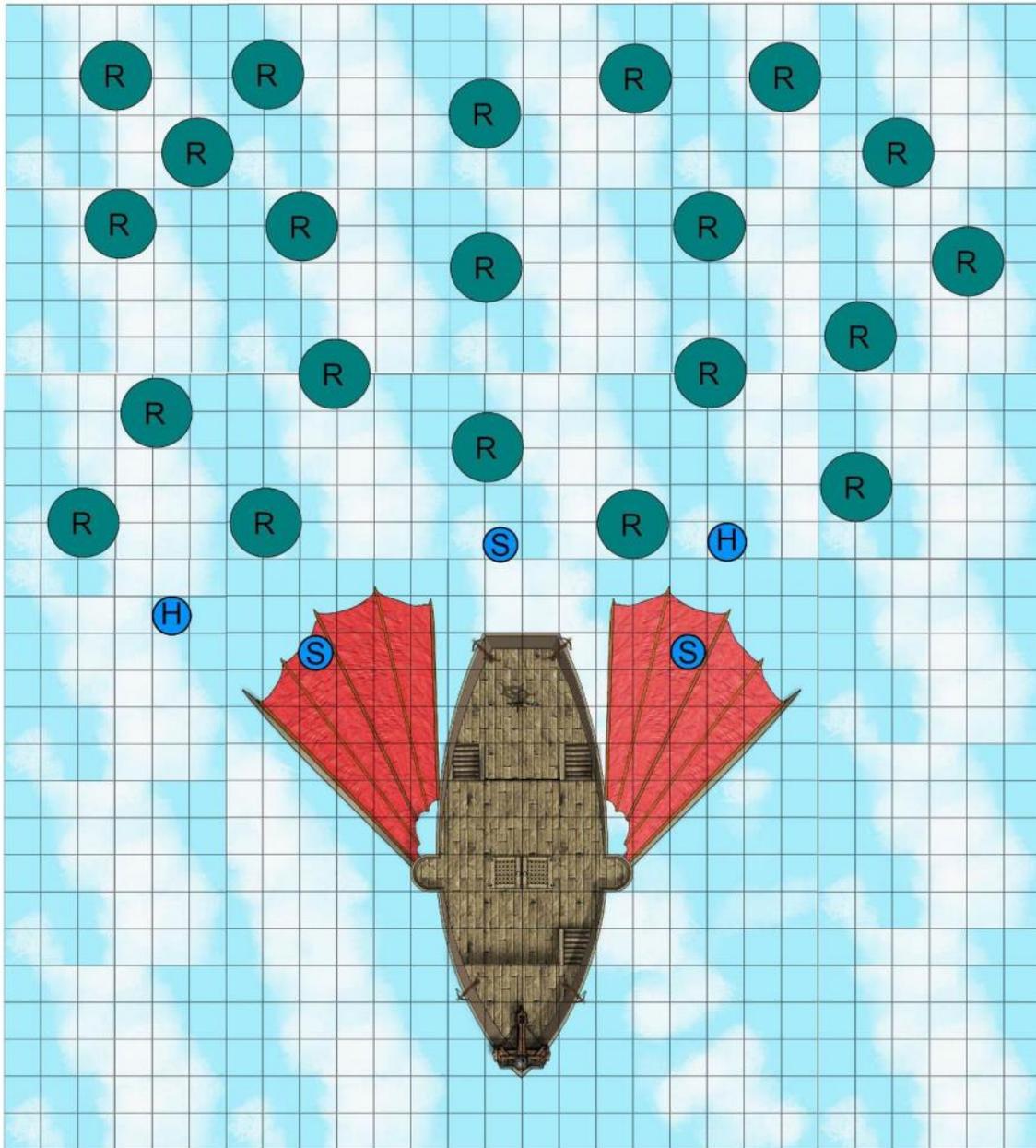
MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

ENCOUNTER 18: NETHERESE REINFORCEMENTS STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ENCOUNTER 18: NETHERESE REINFORCEMENT MAP



Note that the PCs are very likely to be on a great ship. In that case replace the map of the yacht with that of a great ship.

AB4. ENCOUNTER 19A: INCOMING!

SETUP

If the PC's ship wasn't shot down and they chose this mission voluntarily skip this encounter and go to Encounter 19B.

The PCs ship got hit or rammed in the previous encounter and is now plummeting to the ground at startling speed. In order to make a decent crash landing the PCs must take a number of precautions:

- Dump the unused ammunition
- Look for a safe landing spot
- Stop the ship from spinning

Their success on these tasks measure how and where they (crash)land and what happens next. Remember that the PCs they aren't alone on the ship, the life of the crew depends on their ability to safely crash the ship.

A loud bang and the splintering of wood is enough evidence that you are in trouble. You' are crashing and if you don't react quickly the battle will be over before it even began for you. Wind whistles past you and the ship groans under the abnormal strain of falling. Crates with explosive ammunition start to slide across the deck and the ground is coming towards you at astonishing speed.

SKILL CHALLENGE: FALLING WITH GRACE

Goal: The PCs must crash there ship without damaging it too much.

Complexity: Special (See text)

Primary Skill: Acrobatics, Athletics, Arcana, Dungeoneering, Endurance, Insight, Nature, Perception, Religion and Thievery.

Victory: The PCs manage to make a controlled crash, suffering only minor injuries and being able to choose where they land.

Defeat: The PCs suffer a hard crash and some serious injury. In addition they have no say in where their ship comes down.

The skill challenge is relatively simple and straight forward. Try to embellish it with descriptions of falling from the sky and keep the tension high. Note that while failure makes the consequent fight more challenging, it does not mean the end of the encounter. PCs should not

contemplate too long on how to deal with the problem. At the same time, reward creativity and do not hesitate to give automatic successes or bonuses on specific skill checks or the use of powers (especially daily powers).

The challenge consists of three rounds and a total of three objectives. Each objective requires a number of successes and the total number determines how soft the PCs land. Each check is a standard action against the DC Moderate. PCs can spend an action point for a reroll or to make a second check in the same round.

- **Objective 1 - Spinning Out:** Getting control of the ship requires skill checks from the person behind the rudder (Arcana, Nature, or Religion) or someone working the rigging (Acrobatics or Endurance). A total of 4 successful checks is needed to control the ship, one now and of for each round afterward. For each success tick a box in the table below. A control check must be made at least once each round or else the ship spins out of control again. If the PC at the rudder fails a check, someone else can step in and attempt the steering check.
 - PCs with the yacht in excellent condition gain a +5 bonus on this check.
- **Objective 2 - A Safe Landing Spot:** Landing is easier when a good spot is found. A total of 3 checks (Dungeoneering, Insight or Perception) need to be made. For each successful check tick the corresponding box below and give the PCs the following information, more on each subsequent successful check:
 - *Almost directly below you spot a group of crashed Netherese ships. The survivors are huddled together and they look to be in bad shape.* [Encounter 21]
 - *In the distance a bit of to the North you see a small contingent of Cormyrian soldiers. They seem to have crashed themselves and are digging in obviously expecting a ground attack.* [Encounter 22]
 - With the third check the PCs can direct the falling ship to a location of their choice. The players choose which encounter they want to engage first. Give Handout XX to help the players make an informed choice.
- **Objective 3 - Loose Ammunition:** There are three crates with explosive ammunition on the ship. These crates must be dropped from the ship or secured against exploding when the ship crashes. Securing a crate is a Thievery check, dumping a

crate overboard requires two Athletics checks. For each disabled or dumped crate check a box in the table below.

TREASURE
None

After three rounds the PCs crash regardless of their actions. When all the objectives are reached they take 1 healing surge of damage and no other ill effects.

When not all the boxes are filled they take 1 healing surge of damage and lose a total of remaining boxes multiplied by 0.5 healing surges. In addition they gain the following conditions depending on which objectives weren't completed (the conditions are applied for all objections not finished):

- **Control:** The PCs start the next combat knocked prone and slowed (save ends)
- **Landing:** The DM decides which encounter follows this one and the enemies gain a surprise round on the PCs in said encounter.
- **Ammunition:** The PCs start the next combat deafened and dazed (save ends)

Objective	Success?	Damage	Total
Control	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1/2 HS	
Landing	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1/2 HS	
Ammo	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1/2 HS	

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

End the encounter when the PCs have crashed, immediately proceed to the next encounter **without a short rest**. Depending on their control, they either landed in an area of your choice or the players picked Encounter 20 (amongst the Netherese) or Encounter 21 (amongst the Cormyreans). If you have not yet given Handout 21 because the group failed the landing checks, do so now!

In the end, the PCs are tasked with assaulting both the crashed Netherese ships and defending their own ships and crews. These two missions are linked. Scores on the progression tracks are determined by the lowest score on both of the encounters. Tell the player this upfront so they know what to expect. Both encounter 20 and 21 can be broken off anytime to go and pursue the other, however when the choice is made the players can't shift back. There is no going back and forth between encounters. This is important due to the fact that the part is timed.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone. It is not yet finished.

AB4. ENCOUNTER 19B: TO THE RESCUE!

SETUP

The PCs survived the previous battle and their ship is up and running. Not everyone was that lucky and numerous NPC ships have crashed. Some of the PCs are asked or can offer to go down there themselves. Still having a working ship offers a distinct advantage.

- The PCs have more time to complete both of the following encounters.
- The PCs can pick which one of those to start first
- The ship can fire the onboard weapons once before dropping the PCs off

Your ship and crew survived the previous battle, but not all were so lucky. Down below you spot a number of smoking wrecks both Cormyrian and Netherese. A signal from the spotter singles out two peculiar sites. One seems to a small cluster of Netherese following a group of Cormyrian survivors, the other seems a crash site where multiple Netherese are gathered and setting up camp. You can take the fight to them or assist your allies in their evasion. What do you want to first?

Give the players Handout 21. Allow the PCs to make this choice. If asked you can provide a bit more information on the encounters. Encounter 20 is about attacking the Netherese. Encounter 21 is about defending the Cormyreans. Once a choice has been made, read aloud or paraphrase:

Swooping low the captain points the bow at your target and sets the ship in a steep decline. The spotter on the prow hands you a droptoken and counts down on with his fingers. As you drop from the side of the ship you can see the on board ballista firing, then your token activates and you are in the middle of it.

The PCs are given modified *feather fall tokens* called *droptokens*. They allow the characters to jump down, cushioning their fall just before they would hit the ground. The tokens activate on their own at the last moment but if a PC manages to activate his just at the right time he could gain a benefit in the next combat.

Activating the *droptoken* on the right time requires a Wisdom check. PCs who have a fly speed, either natural or through a ritual gain a +2 bonus on the check. Before resolving the rolls ask the players to choose a place on the map where they want to start.

Compare the result of their check to the table below for the effects in the following combat:

Check	Effect
< low DC	The token activates at the last moment, the PC lands 1d6 squares in a random direction.
< Mod DC	The token activates just on time, the PC lands in the chosen square.
< High DC	The token activates on time, the PC lands in the chosen square and gains a +2 to initiative and attack and damage rolls in the first round.
> High DC	The token activates precisely on time, the PC lands in the chosen square, the PC gains a surprise round and gains a +4 to initiative and attack and damage rolls in the surprise round and first round.

SUPPORT

In addition to the benefits of the air drop the group gains the following encounter power for the next two combats (is included on the scoring sheet).

MINOR ACTION	
C Bombing (HEROIC) • Encounter	Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in burst); automatic hit Hit: 10 damage and target is knocked prone.
C Explosive ammunition (PARAGON) • Encounter	Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in burst); automatic hit Hit: 20 damage and the target is knocked prone.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs are tasked with both assaulting the crashed Netherese ships and defending their own ships. These two missions are linked. Scores on the progression track are determined by the lowest score on both of the encounters. Tell the players this up front so they know what to expect. Either Encounter 20 or 21 can be broken off anytime to pursue the other, however if that choice is made it is final. There is no going back and forth between encounters. This is important due to the fact that this entire part is timed.

Proceed with the encounter the players choose to do first. Encounter 20 for attacking the Netherese. Encounter 22 for defending the Cormyrians.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

None.

AB4. ENCOUNTER 20: TAKING THE FIGHT TO THE ENEMY

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 **Captain Saminel** (C)

2 **raven roost outlaw** (R)

4/5 **Phantom brigade squire** (S)

Round	Reinforcements
2	Rain of Fire
3	Captain Brirgund 2 raven roost outlaws 4 or 5 phantom brigade squires
4	Gust of Wind
5	Captain Sondhas 2 raven roost outlaws 4 or 5 phantom brigade squires

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 raven roost outlaw.

Six PCs: Add 1 raven roost outlaw.

SETUP

If this the first fight of AB4. Grounded give Handout 21 now. The players should be well aware of the goals and base their choices on it. Once the Air Battle is ended by the Senior DM or when both encounters are finished, the players should fill in the report. The table spokesperson should then deliver the report to the Senior DM for processing.

You spot a cluster of crashed Netherese ships. Broken wooden hulls and the remains of cargo and ammunition litter the ground, amongst the rubble the Netherese have set up some make shift defenses obviously expecting a ground force. Among the surviving soldiers are a number of ranking officers, taking these out would be a blow to the Netherese forces.

The PCs have either landed close by the Netherese crash site or they have jumped ship to approach them. The Netherese are recuperating from the assault and the following crash, but they remain wary for any ground force. Allow the PCs to approach them from any side they want, unless the PCs take extreme measures a surprise round is unlikely.

Obviously, if they come crashing down they arrive on the map, either on an edge of their choice (successful control) or your choice (failed control). Remember the starting conditions if they crash landed.

At the start of every odd round, starting with the 3rd round (3 and 5) a new team of Netherese joins the fight until all are defeated or until the PCs decide to flee. The captain acts immediate, place the outlaws after the next two PCs in initiative order and the minions after two more PCs. You can choose whether they arrive on an edge of the map, or right in the middle (having been airdropped by Netherese).

Note: If there are no more opponents left, you can let the reinforcements arrive earlier.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Broken hulls: The broken hulls are difficult terrain were indicated on the map (Δ). The other parts are difficult terrain as well and provide cover. The top of the hulls are 15 ft. in the air. The ships can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check. PCs climbing or standing on top of the ships must make an DC Easy Acrobatics check at the beginning of their turn or the ship collapses, causing the PC 2d10 falling damage and to be prone and restrained (save ends).

Cannonballs: The cannonballs are dropped explosive ammunition that hasn't exploded yet. These are highly unstable. When they are hit with a fire, lightning or thunder attack that deals at least 10 points of damage they ignite with the following power:

TERRAIN POWER
<p>C Explosive ammunition (HEROIC) • Encounter</p> <p><i>Trigger:</i> The explosive ammunition is hit with a fire, lightning or thunder attack and takes at least 10 points of damage.</p> <p><i>Attack:</i> Close burst 2 (creatures in burst); AL+3 vs. Reflex</p> <p><i>Hit:</i> 2d10 + AL fire damage, and push 2.</p> <p><i>Miss:</i> Half damage and push 2.</p>
<p>C Explosive ammunition (PARAGON) • Encounter</p> <p><i>Trigger:</i> The explosive ammunition is hit with a fire, lightning or thunder attack and takes at least 10 points of damage.</p> <p><i>Attack:</i> Close burst 3 (creatures in burst); AL+3 vs. Reflex</p> <p><i>Hit:</i> 3d10 + AL fire damage, and push 3.</p> <p><i>Miss:</i> Half damage, and push 3.</p>

Crates: The crates are 10 ft. high blocking terrain and can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check. They are parts of the magical propulsion of the ships and contain a bound elemental. The Netherese have stabilized them for now but the elemental could be released to wreak havoc.

Releasing the elemental requires two successful Arcana, Religion or Nature checks, PCs with ritual casting get a +2 bonus on this check. The DC is hard for

a minor action and moderate for a standard action. Only 1 check per round can be made.

When successful add the elemental creature from Encounter 21 to this fight under your control. It attacks the nearest creature and flees after 4 rounds.

Note that the Netherese are also willing to do so if they are clearly losing, or there are more PCs than Netherese nearby.

Captains: Whenever the PCs defeat a captain, all PCs within 5 squares regain 1 encounter power and they can spend a healing surge as a no action. When the 3rd captain drops everyone gains an action point they must use this combat or it disappears. If they have already used an action point they can use a second one this combat.

BATTLE EVENTS

At two points during the fight something big happens that impacts everybody at the battlefield and changes the terrain:

- **Start of 2nd round:** Rain of fire (something burning falls down). All creatures are targeted by an AL +3 vs. Reflex attack. At heroic level on a hit the attack deals 10 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). At paragon level on a hit the attack deals 20 fire damage and ongoing 10 fire and poison damage and the target is dazed (save ends both). Ship hulls start burning, dealing 5 or 10 fire damage if somebody is touching them. Do not forget any remaining ammunition!
- **Start of the 4th round:** Gust of wind (ship crashes nearby). All creatures are targeted by an AL +3 vs. Fortitude attack. On a hit a creature slides half AL squares in a random direction, knocked prone and takes AL damage. On a miss the target takes half AL damage from debris. The fires are extinguished and all hull pieces crash down in heaps of debris. The hulls are now difficult terrain. A creature moving through it is slowed (save ends).

TACTICS

The Netherese forces have suffered losses as they came crashing down and know their chances of survival are slim when the ground forces come for them. They will fight to the bitter end but won't chase the PCs when they break away.

The captain wades in the middle of melee but try to keep another creature between him and the PCs, preferably a minion so the minion can take a hit for the captain. When pinned down he'll use *shadow jaunt* to escape and engage a backline foe if possible.

The outlaws charge into melee and try to break the PCs ranks with mighty blow in an attempt to open a spot for the captain to engage lesser armored foes.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs can choose whenever they would like to end their assault, either by fleeing or when all four Netherese crews are defeated. The score for the encounter is determined by the number of creatures they have taken out. For each captain the PCs have taken out they earn 5 points, for each crewmember they earn 1 point, the minions don't offer any points.

If the Senior DM has called the Air Battle part of the battle interactive, the players should fill in Handout 21. One player should deliver it to the Senior DM for processing.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

None.

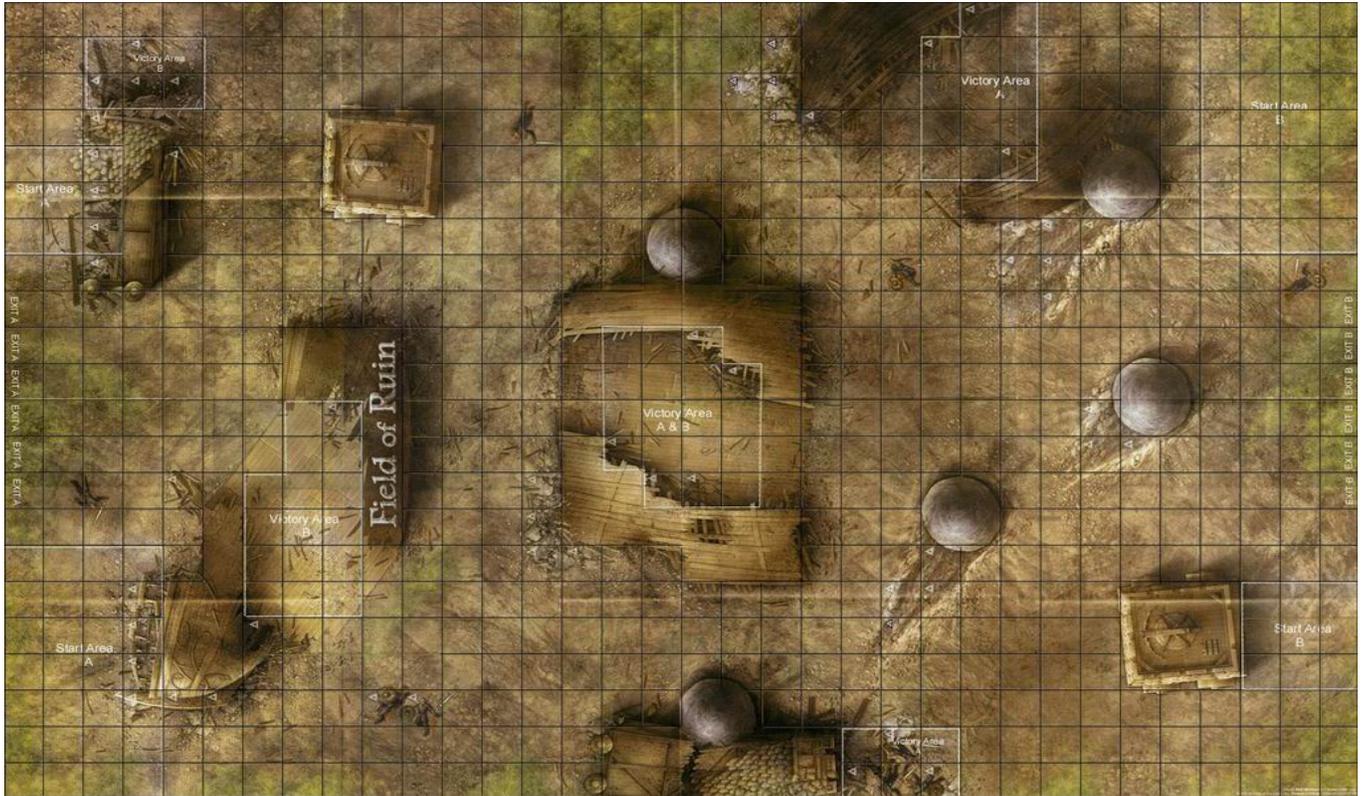
ENCOUNTER 20: TAKING THE FIGHT TO THE ENEMY STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ENCOUNTER 20: TAKING THE FIGHT TO THE ENEMY MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Postermap: *Fields of Ruin*



PCs can approach from any side.

Netherese are hiding in the middle, spread out somewhat, taking cover in the remnants of the hull (victory area A & B). They attack any enemy they see.

AB4. ENCOUNTER 21: BESIEGED

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 2-10:

- 1 Raven Roost grenadier (C)
- 3 Raven Roost highwaymen (S)
- 1 dust devil (E)

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 12-16:

- 1 deathless mage (C)
- 3 Netherese blademasters (S)
- 1 silt elemental (E)

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 18-20:

- 1 Netherese inquisitor (C)
- 3 shadow giants (S)
- 1 greater silt elemental (E)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 Raven Roost highwayman / Netherese blademaster.

Six PCs: Remove 1 Raven Roost highwaymen / Deathless blademaster and add 1 Raven Roost grenadier / deathless mage / Netherese inquisitor and 1 dust devil / sSilt elemental.

SETUP

If this the first fight of AB4 Grounded give Handout 21 now. The players should be well aware of the goals and base their choices on it. Once the Air Battle is ended by the Senior DM or when both encounters are finished, the players should fill in the report. The table spokesperson should then deliver the report to the Senior DM for processing.

Groups of Cormyrian crash survivors have banded together and holed up close to one of the crashed ships. The Netherese have set out to strike a blow against the Cormyrian morale by taking out lone survivors. They have liberated a shadow elemental from their crashed ships and are out for blood. They approach to the sparse woods.

Their Netherese want to kill as many of the survivors as possible before being forced to retreat. The survivors are evacuated over a number of rounds and it is up to the PC to cover their retreat.

Depending on whether the PCs did this encounter first the Netherese are either approaching the camp (first encounter) or already engaged to the soldiers (second encounter). Adjust the text below accordingly.

A small group of survivors has gathered close to a crash site. Supplies are counted and wounds are treated when from the woods the sound of approaching people is heard. At first it looks like more crashed soldiers but then a living shadow bursts from the treeline followed by a number of Netherese soldiers. Clearly they are trying to kill any survivors. The camp quickly breaks up and survivors start running but you'll need to keep the Netherese occupied long enough for them to make an escape.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area has a few important features.

Illumination: Normal.

Trees: The trees are difficult terrain according to the map (Δ). Creatures standing in a forest square have partial concealment from ranged attacks.

Rocks: Rocks are difficult terrain where indicated (Δ). Where not they are blocking terrain.

Slope: The edges of the pit are 15ft high and can be scaled with a DC 20 Athletics check. They are very unstable so anyone standing on the edge needs to make a DC 15 Acrobatics check or slide down into the pit and fall prone.

TACTICS

AL 2-10: The grenadier stays away from the melee and engage the softer backline of the PCs. The dust devil wades in the middle of the melee and tries to blind as much people as possible. The highwaymen stay back until people are blinded and then move in to engage melee characters. One stays back to protect the grenadier from harm.

AL 12-20: The mage and the blademasters work in tandem to engage the frontline of the PCs. They try to gain temporary hit points as fast as possible and share them to maximize the effects. The elemental slinks around the frontline to engage the artillery and controllers in the back.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs can choose whenever they would like to end this encounter by fleeing from the map or when 10 rounds have passed. Obviously, when all enemies are slain, the PCs automatically make it till 10 rounds. The

score for the encounter is determined by the number of rounds that has passed.

In the table below the score is tabulated.

Round	Score	Round	Score
1	1	6	9
2	2	7	11
3	3	8	14
4	5	9	17
5	7	10	20

If the Senior DM has called the Air Battle part of the battle interactive, the players should fill in Handout 21. One player should deliver it to the Senior DM for processing.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

None.

ENCOUNTER 21: BESIEGED! STATS

- Adventure Level 2:** See Appendix 3.
- Adventure Level 4:** See Appendix 4.
- Adventure Level 6:** See Appendix 5.
- Adventure Level 8:** See Appendix 6.
- Adventure Level 10:** See Appendix 7.
- Adventure Level 12:** See Appendix 8.
- Adventure Level 14:** See Appendix 9.
- Adventure Level 16:** See Appendix 10.
- Adventure Level 18:** See Appendix 11.
- Adventure Level 20:** See Appendix 12.

ENCOUNTER 21: BESIEGED! MAPS

TILE SETS NEEDED

Postermat: *Dragondown Grotto* or *Keep on the Shadowfell*



CONCLUSION ROUND 1

With the Netherese fleet on the run, it is time for an extended rest both for the characters and the players. The battle proceeds in round 2 in *ADCP5-2 R2* in the next round.

Don't forget to report the results of the Air Battle to the Senior DM for processing!

REWARDS

At the conclusion of the adventure, which is after round 2, the PCs earn XP, access to Treasures, and possibly Story Awards. See *ADCP5-2 Best Defense Round 2* for the number.

APPENDIX 1: COMPLICATIONS

All complications have two effects:

- An individual effect that each PC gains the moment the complication enters play. These end for the individual if that character succeeds at a saving throw.
- A table effect that affects all PCs as long as there is still one player affected by the individual effect. The table effect ends the moment every PC has saved against the individual effect

Trading or moving complications:

If a complication is giving the table trouble, the players can ask for volunteers to take it off their hands. If another table decides to take it, the complication acts as if it had just arrived at that table. In other words, each PC at the new table gets the individual effect, regardless of the situation at the original table. The effect disappears instantly, both individual and table effects on your table.

Her Displeasure
<i>Your hostile actions towards Sakkors have drawn the displeasure of Shar herself. She has cursed you. Your shadow separates from your body and starts fighting you.</i>
Individual effect for each PC
You gain ongoing (AL+2) cold and necrotic damage (save ends).
Table effect
All PCs take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
<i>The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.</i>

Her Extreme Displeasure
<i>Your hostile actions towards Sakkors have drawn the displeasure of Shar herself. She has cursed you. Your skin turns a bleak white, dark outlines defining the extremes from which dark wisps of energy flow towards your enemies.</i>
Individual effect for each PC
You gain ongoing (AL+2) cold and necrotic damage (save ends)
Table effect
All enemies can save against any dazed, stunned, dominated or removed from play condition at the start of their turn (even if they would not normally be allowed a save).
<i>The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.</i>

Her Annoyance
<i>Your hostile actions towards Sakkors have drawn the displeasure of Shar herself. She has cursed you. A mental wailing starts reverberating around your skull, making it hard to focus your actions.</i>
Individual effect for each PC
You gain ongoing (AL+2) cold and necrotic damage (save ends).
Table effect
The standard actions gained from using an action point cannot be used to perform an attack power.
<i>The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.</i>

Please stay?
<i>The very surface you are standing on animates, wrist thick tendrils of dark black smoke pouring out to twirl around your legs, pulling you down.</i>
Individual effect for each PC
You are pulled to the nearest horizontal surface and are restrained (save ends).
Table effect
PCs cannot teleport. Additionally they cannot shift more than 1 square per turn.
<i>The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.</i>

Termites!!!!

Something hits your mast with the sound of breaking glass. At the point of impact small creatures start to gnaw their way into your ship. Termites!!!

Individual effect for each PC

Your ship is infested with termites (save ends). You may not save against this effect unless you spend a move action to do so.

Table effect

Your ship gains ongoing 20 (30 for a greatship) damage. The ship takes this damage at the start of every players turn until all players have saved.

The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.

Shady Tribulations

Out of the corner of your eye you see a little black dot, then another, and another. Soon you are caught in a cloud of what some of you recognize to be shadow-mites. Something must have spooked them as they are clinging to you for safety, hindering your movement.

Individual effect for each PC

Your speed is halved (save ends, or DC Easy Intimidate as a minor action ends).

Table effect

The entire area is swarming with Shadow Mites, getting in the way of, and absorbing attacks. All enemies gain damage resistance equal to the AL.

The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.

Paratroopers

Out of nowhere a team of Netherese commando's drops in, catching you off guard. They are loaded for bear and ready to ruin your day.

Individual effect for each PC

Whenever you are hit by an attack, you go prone (save ends).

Table effect

All enemies gain a +2 bonus to their attack rolls and a +5 bonus to damage.

The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.

Her Withering Displeasure

Your hostile actions towards Sakkors have drawn the displeasure of Shar herself. She has cursed you. An overwhelming weariness seeps into your bones, exhaustion dragging on your very soul.

Individual effect for each PC

You are weakened (save ends).

Table effect

PCs cannot spend any healing surges.

The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.

Heavy thoughts

An inquisitive presence starts rooting around in your mind, While you detect no malice, its clinical curiosity easily manages to bypass all your mental defenses and it takes nearly all your concentration to hang on to a few secrets

Individual effect for each PC

You cannot use any immediate actions or opportunity actions (save ends).

Table effect

When a PC spends their action point, they take their bloodied value in psychic damage.

The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.

Merely a distraction

A loud yell of INCOMING! Alerts you to the fact that a Netherese artillery battery has found your location. Soon after it starts raining down flaming rocks of all sizes. The tar covered rocks stick to your armor, making it pretty hard to concentrate,

Individual effect for each PC

You gain ongoing 2 + AL fire damage (save ends).

Table effect

All PCs take a -5 penalty to skill checks.

The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.

Shadow Caltrops

Without warning the floor under your feet erupts in black insubstantial spikes. While they do not hinder movement, they do manage to feel very solid as they penetrate your feet.

Individual effect for each PC

You take 2 points of damage per square of movement (4 at paragon) when not flying. Teleporting or flying deals damage for every square you land in (save ends).

Table effect

All PCs are vulnerable to all damage 2 (4 at paragon).

The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.

Shadow Leeches

Black spots start appearing on your skin. First one, then two, then a dozen. But it is alright. They are just a few spots. Now if only you could take a little nap.

Individual effect for each PC

You cannot use any racial powers including ones from feats and/or paragon paths (save ends) (examples: a dwarf's minor action second wind, a minotaur's gore, a genasi's promise of storm, etc.).

Table effect

All effects from healing or temporary hit point granting powers are halved.

The table effect ends when no player at the table is affected by the individual effect. All effects start fresh if this complication is transferred to a different table.

APPENDIX 2: AIR BATTLE TARGETING

NPC Ships	PC Ships															
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Cormyrian Yachts	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10
Cormyrian Greatships	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10
Netherese Yachts	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Netherese Greatships	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10

TARGETING RULES FOR CORMYR

Round 1: The Cormyrian forces spread all their attacks evenly across the Netherese greatships.

Round 2: The Cormyrian forces spread all their attacks evenly across the Netherese yachts, trusting the PCs to finish off the most damaged greatships

Round 3: The Cormyrian forces aim their attacks at the most damaged ships, trying to take as many of them down as possible. A maximum of 3 shots will be aimed at any one Netherese vessel.

TARGETING RULES FOR NETHERIL

Round 1: The Netherese forces spread all their attacks evenly across the Cormyrian greatships No PC ships will be targeted.

Round 2: A maximum of 4 shots are aimed at any one vessel. The Netherese forces attack anyone that is taking an suicidal stance first. Next any ships in an aggressive stance will be targeted. If targets remain PC ships will be targeted at preference. Targets to be determined randomly or by the organization.

Round 3: The Netherese forces aim their attacks at the most damaged ships, trying to take as many of them down as possible. A maximum of 4 shots are aimed at any one vessel. Suicidal targets first, aggressive second and then random or to preference.

APPENDIX 3 TO 12: STATS OPPONENTS PCs

See separate documents.

APPENDIX 13: SUMMARY AIR BATTLE

Tables pick an area to fight in at the start of the Air Battle. Once picked, you run the encounters of that area. Report the results at the end of the air battle to the Senior DM. If the table has done all encounters early, they can fly to a new area or offer direct aid.

AB1: DREADNOUGHT

All tables - Encounter 3: The attack on the dreadnought consists of three storylines, one for each table attacking the dreadnought. There is an assault on the main, aft and front deck. The tables must decide together which tables attacks which area.

Quickly run Encounter 3 with the three tables present so that they can choose which area to attack. The Senior DM or the DMs for each dreadnought (two to three tables) can take the players of all the involved tables aside for the briefing. Keep it short though!

- **Main Deck:** Encounter 4A and 5: The PCs take and defend the main deck
- **Shields:** Encounter 4B and 4C: The PCs try to take down the shields hampering their allies attack. Likely the group that assaulted the main deck.
- **Poop Deck:** Encounter 6, 7 and 8: The PCs try and take the helm and wrest control of the ships “engines.”
- **Aft Deck:** Encounter 9, 10 and 11: The PCs try and take the forward deck and stop the self destruct mechanism.

AB2: TAKING POINT

The PCs are assumed to have their own yacht.

- **Encounter 12:** Destroy a Netherese yacht.
- **Encounter 13:** Deal with artillery at Sakkors, and more importantly a large group of opponents.
- **Encounter 14:** A large group of wraiths descends upon the PCs.

AB3: HOLDING BACK

The PCs are assumed to be on a Cormyrian greatship.

- **Encounter 15 (AL 2 to 14 only):** The Cormyrian ship is attacked by flying opponents.
- **Encounter 16 (AL16 to 20 only):** A huge shadow dragon descends upon the PCs ship.
- **Encounter 17:** A Cormyrian ship is boarded and nearly overrun unless the PCs help.
- **Encounter 18:** A large group of flying opponents descends upon the Cormyrians, luckily they are just recruits. Maybe the PCs can scare them away?

AB4: GROUNDED

- **Encounter 19A:** Going down in an uncontrolled descend is dangerous and potentially lethal.
- **Encounter 19B:** Even if the PCs do not crash, others did. They could use help.
- **Encounter 20:** A group of Netherese has bunkered down. Killing them, especially the officers, is good for the coming battle.
- **Encounter 21:** The Cormyrians on the ground are attacked and need cover before they are airlifted.