Best Defense Round 2

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 is not sanctioned for Private Play.

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Round 2

This is the second round of the 2-round battle interactive *ADCP5-2 Best Defense*. You run this part with the same group of people as the first part during the same event. The generic boiler plate text can be found in *ADCP5-2 Best Defense - Round 1* and you need that document to run this part.

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.

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
12	14	20	28
14	15	21	29
16	16	22	31
18	17	23	32
20	18	25	34

Adventure Background

With the fleet defeated, the Cormyreans and elves are ready for the next phase of the attack: conquering the flying fortress Sakkors. Doing so is not going to be easy. Besides dealing with the city's defenders, the Elven High Mages also want to take over the city itself. Netherese magic protects it, which needs to be removed. Unbeknown to the High Mages, the city is sentient and not particularly friendly towards what it considers the rebellious Cormyreans who are trying to enslave it for their own purposes. Conquering the city is not going to a simple matter of defeating soldiers and casting the right ritual.

DM's Introduction

The mechanics of the battle during Part 2 are detailed in Appendix 1 and Player's Handout 1.

Individual tables select missions from a list of encounters, informing HQ about their choice. At the end of an encounter they also report the results of the encounter to HQ. The combined results of all encounters throughout Part 2 determine the end result of the battle as a whole.

Throughout Part 2 of the battle, the status of the Netherese army within Sakkors is depicted through five traits. The traits have a value between 0 and 4. The value of the traits has a direct impact on the battle, both through a primary effect and by triggering events and/or opening new encounters. The primary effects can be found in the table below and affect the opponents of the players. The Senior DM tracks and reports the current value of each trait, warning you when things change. The starting values of the traits are based on the results of Round 1.

As with part 1 the stat blocks of the encounters are in a separate appendix, one for each AL containing all of the opponents for all the encounters and events.

At the start of Part 2, the following encounters can be chosen by the players:

Encounter 1 [Offense]: The fortress of Sakkors contains several artillery platforms both outside and inside. These constantly threaten the invaders. They also form one of the few points of entrance.

Encounter 2 [Maneuverability]: The kir-lanan (gargoyle-like creatures that hate all deities except Shar) hives are both a good entry into the city as well as a potential threat to invading forces. The PCs are asked to open the gates, and destroy the hives with explosives before they are overwhelmed.

Encounter 3 [Defense]: A third point of entry is straight through the roof. Of course, the PCs first need to punch a hole through the stone, which gives the Netherese time to summon reinforcements.

After the initial assault, the following encounters are added to the above list. Encounters 1-5 can be selected by players from that point forward.

Encounter 4 [Morale]: Once inside the city, the PCs can try to lower morale of the Netherese. Targeting shrines of Shar, the barracks, the mess halls, and the hospitals is a sure way to do so.

Encounter 5 [City Command]: Sakkors is controlled by the Netherese from various power points spread throughout the city. These are well-guarded, and the PCs need to deal with both the guardians and the

magical wards that prevent the high mages of Myth Drannor from gaining control of the city.

Note that unlike with the other encounters, the event tied to this encounter only triggers *after* a true victory has been scored, not when it is initially reduced to 0.

At some point the actions of the PCs unlock the following two encounters, which become available as well:

Encounter 6 [Varies]: At some point the Netherese defenders regroup and launch a counter attack. Tables facing a counter attack remain at the same spot as their previous encounter, but now they are the defenders instead of the invaders.

Encounter 7 [Bonus Objectives]: Removing the shackles that bind Sakkors triggers a failsafe. The PCs need to convince Sakkors to switch sides, and reset the failsafe. Of course, the Netherese are not going to sit by idly.

Throughout the battle interactive three types of events can be triggered. One is present at the start and likely removed later on. These events immediately influence the encounter you are currently running. They are detailed in a separate appendix.

Event 1: Magical defenses keep harrying the PCs (and Cormyrean forces). Add a set of traps at the start of each. See Appendix 2 for details. The stats are detailed in the appropriate appendix for the AL on which the adventure is run.

Event 2: The Netherese spellcasters are forced into action and a wizard joins all of the fights. See Appendix 3 for details. The stats are detailed in the appropriate appendix for the AL on which the adventure is run.

Event 3: Desperation sets in and the Netherese send in an assassin to each location. A lurker joins all of the fights. See Appendix 4 for details. The stats are detailed in the appropriate appendix for the AL on which the adventure is run.

Event 4: The failsafe of Sakkors is triggered and suddenly the fortress starts falling to the ground. This impacts all the current fights. Note that it also opens Encounter 7, forcing several groups to retreat from their current fight and switch to Encounter 7 instead. See Appendix 5 for details.

To win the battle, the players need to get the City Command trait at 0 and have an average trait value of the rest lower than 2. Whether Sakkors is still in one piece, and in what conditions the Cormyrean army is, depends greatly on how the PCs did.

The likely outcome is that the group wins the overall battle. It is a question on whether or not Sakkors is working with the allied forces at the end of the adventure, or whether it is destroyed.

Netherese Army Traits: Senior DM

As detailed in Appendix 1 the status of the Netherese army is depicted through five traits.

The traits have a value between 0 and 4. At 0 that trait is permanently disabled, and no table is required to perform the associated encounters.

The value of the traits has a direct impact on the battle, both through a primary effect <u>and</u> by triggering events and opening new encounters. The primary effects can be found in the table below and affect the opponents of the players.

The starting value of the five traits depends on the outcome of Part 1. The official starting value of all traits is 4, but the results of Round 1 likely change most if not all to 2. The exception is City Command which starts at 4. See Round 1 for more details. Throughout running the event note down the number of tables active at a specific mission and with what trait that mission is associated. These values should be clearly visible to all the players, either by projecting them on a wall with a beamer or a large flip over. The value is lowered if a table successfully ends a mission and potential effects come into play immediately (although you should give the responsible table time to return). Individual encounters provide the details as do the report page for each encounter.

To drop a trait by <u>one</u> point [0.2 x #tables] need to <u>start</u> it. Round normally (e.g. 4.2 becomes 4; 3.5 becomes 4). For example, in an event with 20 tables if 4 tables start the encounter with the *offense* trait the trait drops by 1 point. **<u>The minimum required is 1 table</u>**, so an event with less than 5 tables still needs to have 1 table on an encounter to drop said trait by one point. Double the value for City Command (in other words 0.4 x #tables).

As the Senior DM you are in charge of alerting both the players and DMs about the current state of each of the five traits.

Story Awards

Check whether any PC has PREQ07 from *PREQ5-1 Edge of Justice*. It has an impact on Encounter 3.

Note that since the fighting in this round is set within the city itself, the captains of the Five Companies aiding the PCs has no meaningful influence anymore. Those encounter powers <u>cannot</u> be used anymore.

Complications and Aiding One Another

As in Part 2 there are complication cards triggered after 1, 2 and 3 hours. The Senior DM can add more complications based on how things are proceeding (e.g. when a trait reaches a particular value). Tables can aid other tables as discussed in Part 1, either by moving the cards or by transferring monsters. Since the circumstances of this battle are different from Part 1, some cards are removed and new ones added. See Appendix 6 for the cards. Remember that the Senior DM decides which tables get a complication, but the DM picks one from the list in the Appendix based on what is most painful to the table. The players can actively seek help to get rid 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 currently active PCs (i.e. not away on a special mission, 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

The goal of the second part of the battle interactive is to process as many encounters as possible from a list of available encounters within the set time frame. For the PCs to win, each table should be able to finish at least two encounters, which is certainly doable in the given time frame of a regular 4.5 hour convention slot. Still, 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.
- Ask if the PCs are okay with you using average damage values, rather than rolling for each attack. If so, use average damage (round up).
- 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 Part 2 over one four-hour session. Regardless of how much time you have, Round 2 should never take more than 5 hours.

- Introduction: 15 minutes
- Primary Battle (Encounters 1 to 6): 150 minutes
- Final Fight (Encounter 7: It Is Alive): 60 minutes (likely to overlap with the primary battle)
- Conclusion: 15 minutes

Player's Introduction

After a 1-hour break the players should return to their table to start with the 2nd part of the battle. Either let the individual DMs read aloud or paraphrase the following or announce it to all the tables.

From out of nowhere a voice sounds in your head, high pitched and loud.

"Ah yes, I think that's got it. You speak into here sir..."

The whiney voice is replaced by the reassuring voice of the Cormyrean general that addressed you earlier.

"My friends, I am assured this magic should allow you all to hear me, but it seems to be taxing the poor mage. So, as we stand on this precipice, let me be succinct. We have watched as the shadows crept, as they gnawed and nibbled at our world, as they hid concealed and covered evil intent with endless babble, as little by little they turned trust into jealousy, friends into foes, and light into darkness. But today we strike a blow back at them. We make a statement that the charade is done. We won't be fooled again. "

There is a short pause as the general takes a deep breath.

"You see that blemish on our clear blue sky hovering there? That fortress of shadow? Inside it they may still be confident. They may still think they will hold us off. But I promise you, together we can, we <u>will</u>, wipe the smirks off their collective faces. We will make them swallow their blackened forked tongues. We will take that fortress and make it ours. To spite them. To humble them. But most of all, to show them we not only can, but we will!"

Give the players Handout 1 and allow them to shortly discuss matters. After about a maximum of 10 minutes they should pick an encounter and attack. They might want to keep an eye on the Trait tracker though, since at some point joining a specific encounter is pointless.

Once they start playing an encounter give them the appropriate report sheet handout to make sure the players are well aware of the goals. See the individual encounters for the details.

Encounter 1: Reign of Fire

Creatures

This encounter includes the following creatures at Adventure Levels 2, 4 and 6:
1 flamethrower trap (F)
2 Netherese sharpshooters (S)
2 magma claws (D)

This encounter includes the following creatures at Adventure Levels 8 and 10:
1 flamethrower trap (F)
2 deathless sniper (S)
2 cinder-eye basilisks (D)

This encounter includes the following creatures at Adventure Levels 12, 14 and 16:
1 flamethrower trap (F)
2 deathless sniper (S)
2 firestorm fury (D)

Adventure Levels 18 and 20:
1 flamethrower trap (F)
2 Netherese Inquisitors (S)
2 shade fire giant knights (D)

Important: Do not forget the battlefield situation bonuses and be prepared for triggered Events.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove one of the fire elemental defenders (D).

Six PCs: Add an archer or inquisitor (S).

Victory Conditions

The core mission is to disable the flamethrower and force an opening through the area by breaking through the wall and opening one of the steel doors in the bunker. Killing the creatures is unimportant, although doing so automatically disables the flamethrower, and gives the PCs ample of time to open things. Otherwise, the PCs can leave once primary objective has been achieved. The Cormyreans deal with any remaining enemies.

See Handout 3 for the Encounter 1 report sheet which one player at the table must fill in and hand to the Senior DM after you finished the encounter. Give it to the PCs at the start of the encounter as a reminder for the players.

Senior DM: Having an opening and a disabled flamethrower counts as a success. If the Netherese destroyed the flamethrower, the mission counts as a failure.

For quick reference while running this encounter, here is a summary of the skill DCs for actions the PCs are likely to take:

Goal	Action*	Skill DC*
Breaking Through	Breaking the bunker wall	Two Moderate DC Strength checks (standard action)
		Explode the flamethrower
	Opening Steel Doors	Moderate DC Strength check (standard action)
		Hard DC Thievery (standard action)
Disabling the Flame-thrower	Breaking	Defenses and hit points in stat block
	Disabling	Hard DC Athletics and Thievery. (see stat block) Bunker: standard action, 1 success. Platform: move action, 2 successes.
Alternately	Kill all monsters	

* Obviously, you should allow the PCs to use creative actions and powers (and to let it work).

Setup

The PCs have chosen to enter Sakkors through one of its many artillery platforms. These bunkers literally spew fire, and the PCs should be aware of the fiery nature of the encounter from the handout. Make sure that the players are well aware of the objectives of the encounter before proceeding. Give Handout 3 now as a reminder for the players about the objectives:

- Break through the wall into the bunker and open the steel doors at the end so that there is an opening for the Cormyrean forces to enter the fortress.
- Shut down the flamethrower, either by destroying it or making sure there are no enemies around to use it.
- Killing all the enemies is nice, but that can be left to the Cormyrean forces.

The Senior DM can decide to limit the number of artillery platforms and assign them a location. In that case the PCs also need to decide whether to pick an artillery platform on the top, the side, or below Sakkors.

Otherwise ignore this choic. While this has no direct impact on the encounter, it does influences how far down a creature might fall if pushed over the edge.

Before you is a large bunker with four large dark openings leading to its interior. The openings are as wide as a wagon and as high as a horse, easy to step through. The stone around the openings are scorched, and the smell of brimstone and alchemist fire is strong. Every few seconds, a long line of flames bellows forth from one of the openings.

The PCs approach the artillery platform with the aid of an air-yacht, either docking directly next to one of the openings or rappelling down from the ship.

If they dock the yacht directly next to one of the openings on the left side of the map they can step on the platform. Although it is safe for the characters, it could mean the destruction of the yacht if it still there when the flamethrower is triggered. The yacht is automatically hit, taking 100 damage and ongoing 20 fire damage. The flames can be doused through appropriate actions by the PCs, or their crew. If the yacht takes a second hit it goes up in flames, although the PCs have time enough to leave.

Alternatively the PCs can have the yacht hover above the platform and use ropes (or teleport and/or flight) to get below. Climbing a rope requires a DC 5 Athletics check. See Terrain Features (platform) for the distance of the fall in case things go wrong.

Unless the yacht hovers directly in front of an opening, the encounter starts when the PCs land on the platform. The two fire creatures step forward, magically summoned, and the Netherese archers begin targeting the PCs. Barring exceptional circumstances, neither side is surprised and initiative is rolled normally.

Self~Destruct

The flamethrower has a self-destruct mechanism. A PC examining the trap inside the bunker notices it with a Moderate DC Perception check (passive or otherwise). A PC interacting with the flamethrower by making a Thievery check spots it automatically. The self-destruct is as the standard destruction, except that it is specifically tied to the two pillars in the bunker. If it detonates, the ceiling will partially collapse, ruining the area as a potential entry point.

When the PCs are inside the bunker, and outnumber the opponents two to one, or when there is only one archer left and it is bloodied, the Netherese assume the battle is lost. On its next turn, the archer risks everything to move next to the flamethrower and spend a standard action to trigger its self-destruct. Of course, if the flamethrower is already destroyed, or the PCs removed the self-destruct this does not happen.

PCs who succeed at a Moderate DC Insight check realize the archer's intention as soon as the conditions are met. They are aware the Netherese plans to do something with the flamethrower. Be sure to allow at least one PC to act to stop the archer from setting the self-destruct. This should not be a "gotcha" moment, but the PC should be expected to spend appropriate effort and resources to prevent the self-destruction. Reward honest efforts to prevent the self-destruct sequence from being started, but do not hold back if the PCs have fair warning of the threat and choose not to do anything about it until it is too late.

Triggering the self-destruct has the same effect as a regular destruction (see the stats) except that both pillars in the bunker are destroyed in the process. Large parts of the bunker collapse, dealing AL x 1.5 damage to everybody inside the bunker. Creatures who fail a Moderate DC Acrobatics check are knocked prone and pinned down (grabbed: Moderate DC to escape). The real damage is done inside. The entrance is no longer useful to the Cormyreans, and the PCs have failed their mission.

Important: The self-destruct only happens when tit is purposely triggered as such. It does not happen when the flamethrower explodes because of PC meddling.

Terrain Features

Illumination: The area is brightly lit by the sun and the many open flames.

Ceiling: Both the bunker and the platform have a 20 feet high stone ceiling.

Bunker: The area is divided in two areas, the half circle area (the platform) and the area behind the 'fence'-tiles (the bunker).

Doors: The two wooden staircases inside the bunker lead up to steel-doors. These are locked and protected with an Arcane Lock ritual (accounting for the high DC). Opening a door requires a Moderate DC Strength or Hard DC Thievery check.

Flamethrower: The blue portal is the flamethrower trap. The half of the map on the platform side is completely separate from the half in the bunker. Until the flamethrower is destroyed, no creature can pass through it. See the stat block for details. Note that the flamethrower is a mechanical and alchemical construction. Arcana **cannot** be used to meddle with it.

Platform: The half-circle in front of the 'fence'-tiles are the platform. Solid stone pillars at the outward side support the roof, providing large openings for the flame thrower to shoot through at outside targets. The area is

scorched. The blue glowing marks are for decoration only, but the PCs do not know that.

Depending on the orientation the PCs picked (top, side, bottom) characters and monsters might be pushed off of the platform into thin air. At the top the fall is only 10 feet at AL 2 to 6, 20 feet at AL 8 to 12, 30 feet at AL 14 to 18 and 40 feet at AL 20. On the sides the drop is 1.5x that distance (rounded up). On the bottom is it is double that before the falling character lands on a ship.

Railings provide a +5 bonus on saving throws to prevent from falling over.

Note that on the map the platform is divided in 4 quadrants numbers 1 to 4. These are the area the flamethrower targets in 1 round.

Shutters / Bunker wall: The 'fence'-tiles are solid stone walls with a long narrow opening for the Netherese soldiers to look and shoot at the platform. The wall is sturdy, but on lower ALs appears to be damaged. It requires two DC Moderate Strength check as a standard action to break an opening the wall.

AL 8 and above, the arrow slit can be closed with steel shutters. One of the archers opens it as a minor action, shoots, and aims the flamethrower. The other archer shoots and then closes the shutter. This prevents PCs from teleporting through unless they have a readied action to do so. If the archers have to choose between aiming the flamethrower and closing the shutter, they tend to pick the shutter unless an opponent is already on their side of the bunker wall.

Tactics

As long as a Netherese soldier is within the bunker, they can spend a minor action while adjacent to the flamethrower to target a specific quadrant. Otherwise the flamethrower cycles through the quadrants from 1 to 4 and from 4 back to 1.

At ALs 2, 4, and 6, the magma claws block the PCs from entering the bunker or meddling directly with the flamethrower trap, in that order of preference. They usually simply hit things, but when the PCs are clustered in one of the four quadrants they *spew lava* in attempt to keep them in one spot for the trap. The claws can enter the bunker, but only do so when there is no enemy outside or when ordered by the sharpshooters. The sharpshooters simply shoot at convenient targets, preferably those targeted with *careful aim* and those within the bunker.

At AL 8 and 10 the cinder-eye basilisks pull as many opponents as possible into 1 quadrant with *flaming tendrils*. They are trained to help the flamethrower be as effective as possible. They certainly try to keep people out of the bunker. Note that unless the PCs enlarge the shutters, they themselves are too big to enter the bunker. The snipers focus on those adjacent to a basilisk since their *soul shot* trait then removes any fire resistance the opponent might have. They start with *life pierce* to make optimal use of *vital aim*. *Shadow jaunt* is saved until needed to trigger the self-destruct.

At AL 12, 14 and 16 the fire storm furies get as many enemies next to them within the same quadrant as possible. They are well aware of the sniper's *soul shot* trait and how it impacts the fight. They prefer to fight on the platform, but are not adverse to using *flame burst* to get within the bunker. The snipers use the same tactics as in AL 8 and 10.

At AL 18 and 20 the fire giants get as many enemies next to them within the same quadrant as possible through *flame's lure*. They count on the inquisitors to remove any resistances the PCs have. They save *shadow jaunt* to get inside the bunker.

At all ALs the creatures fight to the death, although the PCs can certainly leave them to the Cormyrean forces once they have disabled the flamethrower trap and opened a corridor. Also remember that the Netherese trigger a self-destruct if given a chance!

Ending the Encounter

When the PCs have dealt with the flamethrower and forced their way through the platform and bunker into Sakkors, the encounter is over. The PCs are victorious, and they can leave any remaining opponents for the Cormyrean soldiers. Alternatively, if the Netherese triggered the self-destruct, there is no point in fighting and the PCs should immediately leave. Their presence is more useful at other parts of the battle.

The characters should note the results down on Handout 3. They should select their next mission based on the status of the rest of the BI and their own wishes. See Handout 1 for details. Once the selection has been made, one player should deliver the report to the Senior DM and at the same time announce their choice of next mission to the Senior DM.

Note that specific events can influence the PCs' choices. Be ready for an unexpected change in plans.

Milestone

The encounter counts as a milestone.

Treasure

There is no treasure in this encounter.

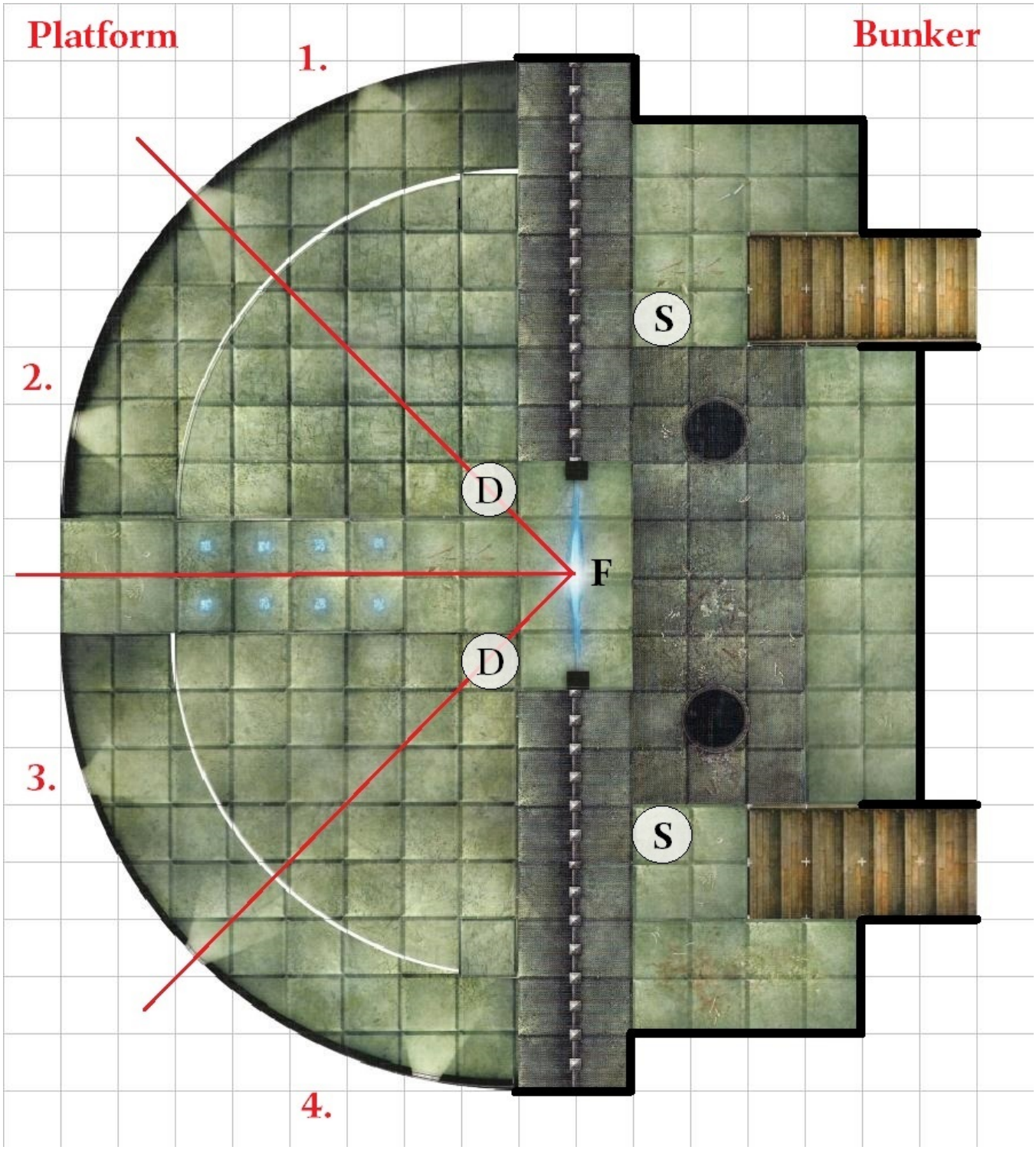
Encounter 1: Reign of Fire Stats

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Encounter 1: Reign of Fire Map

Tile Sets Used

DU4 Arcane Towers x1
DN4 Cathedral of Chaos x4 (for the fence tiles)



Encounter 2: Shadow's Den

Creatures

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 2 to 10 at the start of the fight:
2 horned kir-lanans (H)
4 obsidian kir-lanans (O)

AL 2 to 10 start of 2nd round:
2 kir-lanan shadow hurlers (S)

AL 2 to 10 at the start of round 5:
4 obsidian kir-lanans (O)

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 12 to 20 at the start of the fight:
2 ironwing kir-lanans (I)
5 obsidian kir-lanans (O)

AL 12 to 20 start of 2nd round:
2 kir-lanan shadow hurlers (S)
2 horned kir-lanans (H)*

AL 12 to 20 at the start of round 5:
5 obsidian kir-lanans (O)

* At AL 16-20, each horned kir-lanan has an action point.

Important: Do not forget the battlefield situation modifiers and the Events.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove 1 obsidian kir-lanan at the start and with each wave of reinforcements. Remove 1 shadow hurler.

Six PCs: Add 1 obsidian kir-lanans at the start and during each wave of reinforcements. Add one horned kir-lanan at AL 2-10 and an ironwing kir-lanan at AL 12-20.

Victory Conditions

The PCs need to open the gate and cause the corridors into the kir-lanan hive to collapse. There are [number of PCs minus 2] locations were explosives need to be placed and triggered to be successful for the mission. With 4 or 5 players you can decide which of the 4 points are needed, but the large central column should always be destroyed. The closer the other targets are, the easier the encounter is.

See Player's Handout 4 for the Encounter 3 report sheet which one player at the table must fill in and hand to the Senior DM after you finished the encounter. Give the handout at the start of the encounter as a reminder for the players about the objectives (and it includes a few details on the mechanics as well).

Setup

The PCs have chosen to enter Sakkors through one of the kir-lanan hives and open a nearby gate for the Cormyrean forces. They are also asked to destroy a large part of the hives to prevent the gate from being closed again and to cut off any support. Entering the hives is easy for the characters, and the fight starts with the PCs inside and near the gate mechanism. It is here that they face the first tough opposition.

Make sure that the players are well aware of the objectives of the encounter before proceeding (they are on Handout 4 as well):

- Open the gate (the G on the map).
- Destroy the pillars with explosives.
- The PCs get 6 bombs. They can decide who carries a bomb and how many. Characters with Dungeoneering and Thievery have an easier time placing the bombs, but it is not required.
- Killing all of the enemies is nice, but that can be left to the Cormyrean forces.

Entering the dark winding corridors of the kir-lanan hive was easy. Most kir-lanan are too busy fighting the Cormyreans to notice a small group entering their domain.

At this point is a small stone building with sturdy looking doors and various arrow slits next to a large corridor. The mechanism to open the gate is inside. Of course, something as important as the gate is well guarded, and several dark skinned gargoyle-like creatures hiss at you.

The PCs have arrived at their destination. The gargoyle-like creatures are kir-lanan. They despise virtually all deities, hating the servants of the deities with a particular fervor. They are fanatically loyal to Shar since they share her goal to destroy the other gods and her hatred light.

Remember that most kir-lanan are Stealthy, and those not in full sight at the start of the battle hide themselves before attack (Stealth check versus PC passive Perception, or active Perception with a minor action).

Reinforcements: At the start of the 2nd round, and 5th round reinforcements arrive (see Creatures above for the number and type of creatures). These enter at the areas numbers 1 to 4 on the map. You can determine the entry point randomly or pick one based on how challenging you want to make the fight. Roll initiative as normal. Reinforcements act on their initiative in the round they appear. Here is a summary for easy reference:

Round Start	Reinforcements*	
	AL 2 to 10	AL 12 to 20
2	2 shadow hurlers	2 shadow hurlers 2 horned kir-lanan
3	The PCs realize the area is filling with lethal necrotic energies. They have till the end of the 6th round, or be forced to flee.	
4	The PCs take AL x 2 necrotic damage.	
5	4 obsidian kir-lanans	5 obsidian kir-lanans
6	The PCs take AL x 2 necrotic damage.	
7	Area infuses with necrotic energy and darkness, forcing the PCs to flee.	

* These numbers are for 5 PCs. Remember to modify them for 4 or 6 PCs!

Necrotic Energies: As soon as the fighting starts, the area slowly starts to fill with necrotic energies. PCs realize this is happening at the start of the third round. They also realize they have only 3 rounds left to finish their mission, before they will be forced to flee.

Opening the Gate: The mechanism with which the gate is opened is in the outpost (the G on the map). An adjacent character needs to spend a move action to unlock the mechanism and then spend a number of move actions equal to the number of PCs present at the table turning the mechanism. The character needs to be adjacent the mechanism during his turn.

Up to two PCs can turn the mechanism at the same time, each counting towards the number of rounds (e.g. at a table of 6, it takes two PCs 3 rounds to open the gate). The PCs cannot exchange places in the same round. Spending more than 1 move action per PC at the winch does **not** speed up the process. A character who succeeds at a DC Moderate Strength check though removes 2 rounds from the number required.

Use a d6 on the mechanism to show the number of move actions still required to open the gate.

Note that the kir-lanan can close the gate again by spending their own move actions. Remember though that only two creatures can be adjacent to the mechanism at the same time.

Note: For simplicity sake do not worry about whether the characters have their hands free or not.

Setting Explosives: Placing the explosives is a move action. Setting the trigger is a minor action. PCs are automatically aware of the correct location to place the explosives. Place tokens on the map as a reminder.

Placing the explosives is automatic, but a Moderate DC Dungeoneering check determines whether the explosion is a burst 5 or 2. A success allows the PC to pick one of their choice. A failed check is automatically a burst 5.

When setting the trigger the PCs can set a delay time of 1 to 4 rounds. A Moderate DC Thievery check is needed to do so without flaw. A failed check results in the intended time halved, rounded down (so it could explode immediately). It explodes at the start of the PC's turn that placed the bomb.

Any kir-lanan adjacent to the explosives can tamper with the bombs. They need to make a DC Moderate DC Thievery check (a basic Dexterity check) as a standard action. On a failure the device explodes immediately. On a success the bomb is disabled, and in the possession of that kir-lanan. Obsidian kir-lanan flee with it (which should take at least 2 rounds). Non-minions simply keep it while fighting the PCs.

Note: For simplicity sake do not worry about whether the characters have their hands free or not.

C **Explosion • Terrain Event**

Attack: Close burst 2 or 5 (creatures in the burst); +AL +5 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + 5 / 1d8 + 6 / 2d6 + 5 / 2d6 + 6 / 2d8 + 6 / 2d8 + 7 / 3d6 + 8 / 3d6 + 9 / 3d6 + 11 / 3d8 + 9 damage, and target is knocked prone and grabbed (escape DC Hard). While grabbed the creature cannot stand up.
Miss:: Half damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC Moderate).
Special: While grabbed, the creature cannot breathe and it might suffocate. If it escapes it enters adjacent to the now blocking terrain.
Effect: The area is blocking terrain.

Terrain Features

Illumination: The area near the building is dimly lit with various magical lights. The rest of the area is dark.

Ceiling: The ceiling is only 10 feet high.

Building: The walls of the building are blocking terrain. They include arrow slits. Creatures on the inside have superior cover against attacks made from the outside. Attacking from the inside to the outside suffers no penalties as long as the attacker is adjacent to an arrow slit. The building is 10 feet high.

Brazier: The brazier in the building provides both light and warmth. It is bolted to the floor. Any creature forced into it takes 5 fire damage at AL 2 to 10 and 10 fire damage at AL 12 to 20.

Doors: The doors of the outpost are closed at the start of the battle. They are bolted from the inside. It requires a move action on the inside the remove a bolt and a minor action to open the door. Otherwise it is a DC Moderate Thievery or Strength check to open a door. Alternatively a bomb can be used. In this case the ceiling does not come down (no grabbed or knocked prone), and the bomb just deals half the damage to everything within the blast.

Gorges: The two gorges lead into the hive, but for falling purposes they are 10 feet deep at AL 2, 20 feet deep at AL 4 to 10, 30 feet deep at AL 12 to 16 and 40 feet deep at AL 18 and 20. It is a DC Easy Athletics check to climb out.

Mushroom/Rubble: The squares with triangles are difficult terrain.

Tactics

Until the PCs place a bomb, the kir-lanan are not aware of the characters' goal. The obsidian kir-lanan spread out their attention amongst the PCs, favoring mobile and ranged attackers to use *cruel claw* trait for maximum effect. The horned kir-lanans grab the easiest victim and drags them into the pits. The ironwings dart in and out, targeting the most dangerous opponents. The ones inside the building use *enfeebling strike* until the doors are opened, at which point they turn to their regular attack. Obviously, they use their abilities to keep the PCs away from the gate mechanism, and are not averse to reversing the characters' work.

As soon as the kir-lanan are aware the PCs are planning to explode the support columns, they focus on the PCs with bombs by dragging them away, slowing them, or otherwise hindering them to the best of their ability. They are loath to tamper with the bombs once placed, well aware of their lack of ability to deal with them. Still, once placed they have no choice. The minions refrain from doing so.

Note: Try to prevent the fight from becoming frustrating for the players. After all, the kir-lanan are fast, have ranged attacks and they can get away without triggering opportunity attacks in case of the ironwings. Remember that they want to delay the PCs from achieving their goals, and that they are fanatics. A fighting PC is not placing a bomb. So don't hesitate to go into melee. Also remember that the ceiling is only 10 feet high, so they cannot fly out of reach.

Ending the Encounter

When the PCs have destroyed the support pillars and opened the gate, they are finished. The PCs are victorious, and they can leave any remaining opponents for the Cormyrean soldiers. Simply end the fight, although if they are adjacent to an obsidian kir-lanan they do get one last *cruel claw* trait. Alternatively, if PCs are out of bombs or are forced to retreat, the fight is over and the PCs have failed.

The characters should note the results down in Handout 4. They should select their next mission based on the results of the rest of the BI and their own wishes. See Handout 1 for details. Once the selection has been made, one player should deliver the report to the Senior DM and at the same time announce their choice of next mission to the Senior DM.

Note that specific events can influence the PCs' choices. Be ready for an unexpected change in plans.

Milestone

The encounter counts towards a milestone.

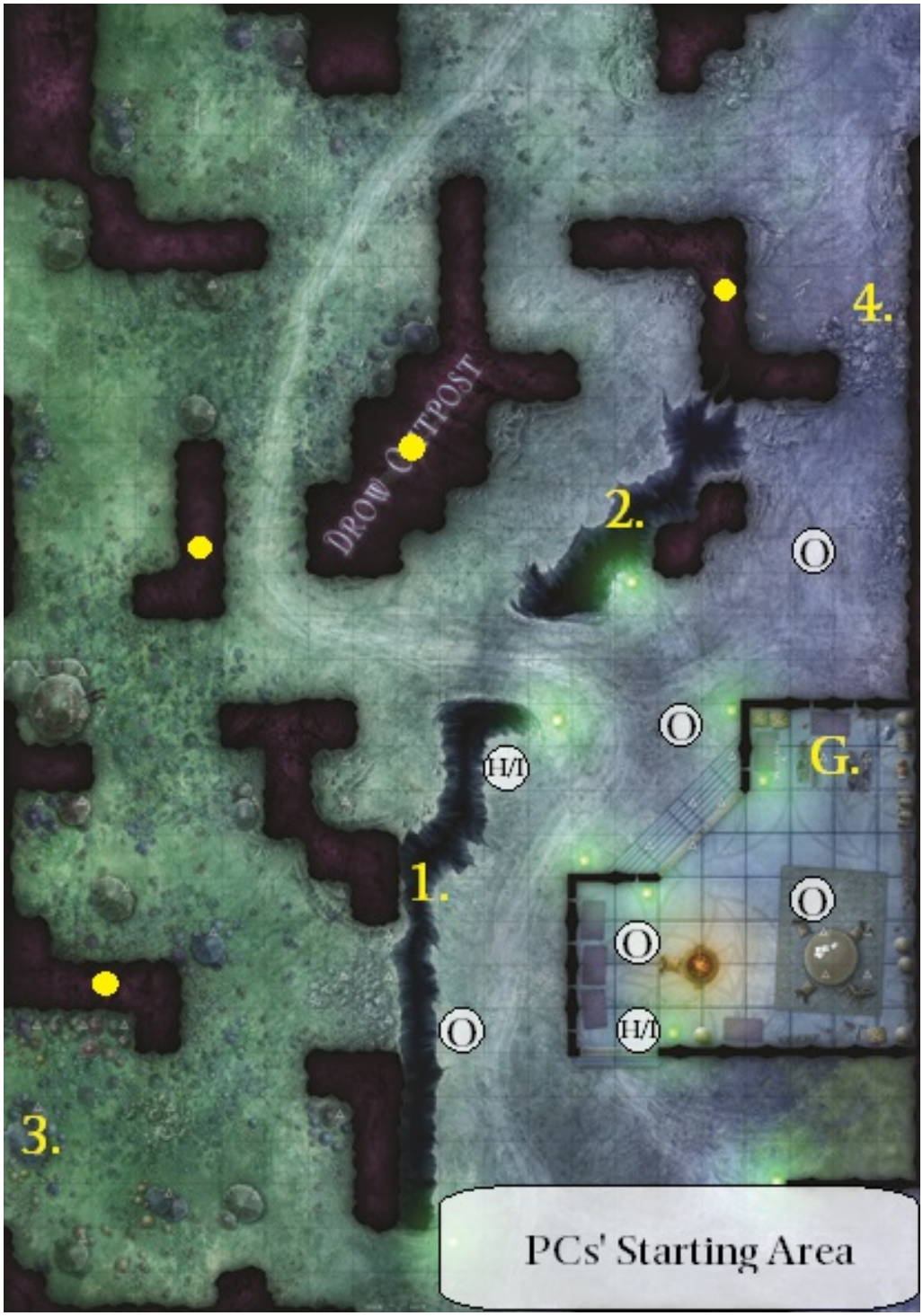
Encounter 3: Shadow's Den Stats

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Encounter 2: Shadow's Den Map

Tile Sets Used

Vaults of the Underdark Map Pack: Drow Outpost



G: Gate chains.
#1 to #4: Areas reinforcements enter from.
Yellow dots Areas where explosives need to be placed.

Encounter 3: Through the Roof

Creatures

This encounter includes the following creatures at Adventure Levels 2, 4 and 6:
1 shadar-kai dreadnaught (B)
2 Netherese grenadiers (A)
2 Netherese soldiers (S)
Start of every round:
4 human goons

This encounter includes the following creatures at Adventure Levels 8 and 10:
1 shadar-kai dreadnaught (B)
2 Netherese snipers (A)
2 Netherese blademasters (S)
Start of every round:
4 human thugs

This encounter includes the following creatures at Adventure Levels 12, 14 and 16:
1 warped mage of Sakkors (B)
2 Netherese snipers (A)
2 Netherese blademasters (S)
Start of every round:
5 shadar-kai stalkers

Adventure Levels 18 and 20:
1 iron golem (B)
2 speakers of Shar (A)
2 shadow giants (S)
Start of every round:
6 devil-bred shadar-kai

Important: Do not forget the battlefield situation and the Events.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove an archer (A) and remove 1 minion per wave.

Six PCs: Add an archer (A) and add 1 minion per wave.

Victory Conditions

Breach through the walls and either survive 4 full rounds or clear all monsters, whichever comes first (standing fully defensive for a round or two to speed things up is certainly an option). The PCs must prevent the Netherse from repairing the damage.

See Player's Handout 5 for the Encounter 3 report sheet which one player at the table must fill in and hand to the Senior DM after you finished the encounter.

Setup

The PCs have chosen to enter Sakkors through a breach of their own making in one of the weak spots of its walls. Make sure that the players are well aware of the objectives of the encounter before proceeding:

- Break through the wall into Sakkors.
- Prevent the Netherese from repairing the wall.
- Kill any particularly big/dangerous opponents.
- Keep standing for 4 rounds to give the Cormyreans the time to send in the troops.

Once the PCs are aware of the goals, they can start finding the right spot to punch a hole through while dodging fireballs and boulders. Proceed with the skill challenge.

Skill Challenge: Smash through the Roof

Goal: The PCs must breach one of the walls of Sakkors to get into the fortresses' interior.
Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)
Primary Skill: Athletics, Arcana, Dungeoneering, Nature, Religion and Thievery.
Victory: The PCs breach the wall quickly and with great force. The elite starts the fight bloodied and the Netherese minions appear on the battle map on the side longest from the breach (north side). Use starting position 1.
Defeat: The PCs breach the wall eventually, but it takes a more time than expected. The elite starts the fight fully healed and the Netherese minions arrive on the battle map on the side shortest from the breach (south side). Use starting position 2.

The skill challenge is relatively simple and straight forward. Do not spend too much time on it; a few quick dice rolls are enough to determine success or failure. Note that while failure makes the consequent fight more challenging, it does not mean the end of the encounter and 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.

The challenge consists of three steps:

- Avoid various defenses of Sakkors (unless the Offense Trait is at 0). Dodging these requires skill from the person behind the rudder (Arcana, Nature, or Religion) or some other use of skill or ritual that protects the yacht against flames and boulders. A failed check counts as a failure in the skill challenge and everybody on the ship takes half their bloodied value in damage at the start of the fight. PCs with the yacht in excellent condition (see SPEC70 from *SPEC5-2*) gain a +5 bonus on this check. Two such checks should be made, one at the start of the challenge and one at the end. If the PC at the rudder fails a check, someone else must step in and attempt the steering check.
- The PCs must find the right spot to breach the wall, which requires knowledge on engineering or the layout of the fortress. Abilities that grant the ability to look past walls (such as tremor sense) help a lot. If the PCs managed to capture an enemy in a previous fight, they can decide to interrogate that prisoner. Otherwise it is requires a Moderate DC Dungeoneering check. PCs with PREQ07 from *PREQ5-1* gain an automatic success on this check.
- Once the right spot is found, the PCs need to shoot/drop down boulders on that area. It requires precision and strength. One PC must make a Moderate DC Dungeoneering, Intelligence or Thievery check while two other PCs make Moderate DC Athletics or Thievery checks to throw or launch boulders. These three checks need to be made by separate PCs, and not by the PC steering. If any result is a failure, the PC steering needs to make an immediate steering check (the bullet point above) to avoid being hit with the fortresses defenses. The PCs can try again, until they succeed or reach three total failures.
- Remember, at the end, the PCs need one final steering check to land the skiff safely.

Through the Roof

Once the PCs are through the roof, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You rush through the breach into a dark wide corridor below. Areas around the breach are covered with rubble. Strange pillars covered with razor-sharp spikes dot the corridor, as does a decrepit rusty catapult stored here. A maelstrom of weirdly distorted earth lies in front of the breach, as if your meddling disrupted the magic of Sakkors itself.

The ceiling is 20 feet high. It appears you breached a major artery, and you see several concerned Netherese soldiers rush towards you and the breach.

Add in case of <u>success</u>: ***The soldiers are coming from the north.***

Add in case of <u>failure</u>: ***The soldiers are coming from the south.***

Allow the PCs to place the miniatures in the starting area on the map. Remind them that while they have to defend the breach, sticking together in a tight group is going to make area attacks painful. They also have to prevent the Netherese from reaching the breach, and the earlier that happens the better.

Terrain Features

Illumination: The area is brightly lit both by the sun through the roof and many torches along the walls.

Ceiling: The corridor's ceiling is 20 feet high (the whole encounter is underground).

Magic Circle: The damage to the walls has triggered the magical repair processes of Sakkors. The floor inside the circle seems to be flowing. Whenever a creature without earth walk starts and ends its turn on the same square of earthen maw, it takes 5 damage per tier and is grabbed (escape Moderate DC).

Pits: Pits have been dug into the floor in several places. These pits are 10 feet deep at AL 2 and 4, 20 feet deep at AL 6 to 10, 30 feet deep at AL 12 to 16 and 40 feet deep at AL 18 and 20. Climbing out of a pit requires a Moderate DC Athletics check.

Rubble: Portions of the walls and ceiling have crumbled under the onslaught, and the heaped rubble is difficult terrain. It provides cover.

Rusty Catapult: The rusty catapult is difficult terrain. The first creature to enter a square occupied by the catapult causes the mechanism to snap. Make an AL +3 vs. Reflex attack. If the attack hits, it deals AL damage, and ongoing 5 poison (save ends) at heroic and ongoing 10 poison (save ends) at paragon.

Spikes: The black obsidian spikes are wickedly sharp, covered with hundreds of razor-like thorns. The base of each is blocking terrain. Anybody forced into a spike takes AL damage and at heroic tier ongoing 5 damage (save ends) and at paragon tier ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

Stairs: The stairs are filled with rubble and are effectively a shallow pit.

Tactics

The goal of the Netherese is to drive off the PCs and repair the breach. To achieve it the Netherese try to break through the PCs frontline, with the large brute (dreadnought, warped mage or iron golem) taking point and the archers remaining in the back. The soldiers (soldiers, blademasters and shadow giants) trying to tie up those opponents most able to block the minions from passing by.

At the start of every round (including the first round), a number of minions appear at the north side of the map -longest distance to the breach- (if the skill challenge was successful) or the south side -shortest distance to the breach- (if the skill challenge was failed). These try to get to the breach, although they do not trigger opportunity attacks to do so. The minions do not attack the PCs unless forced to (for example, if the PCs surround the breach with a damaging zone), they use two move actions to shift or run as needed to reach the breach. Their statistics are included only if the PCs provoke attacks from them. Once next to the breach they need to spend a full turn of actions (1 minor, 1 move and 1 standard action) repairing the wall. If allowed to do so, 0.5 square of the breach in or adjacent to the minions is closed, per minion that succeeds at it. They need a total of 8 successes to close the breach. Also, every minion adjacent to the breach at the end of the 4th round also repairs 0.5 squares.

Any Netherese surviving at the end of the 4th round either flees or surrenders. Otherwise the Netherese fight to the death.

Ending the Encounter

When the PCs have dealt with the monsters or survived for 4 rounds, the encounter is over. The PCs are victorious (unless the minions repaired the wal), and they can leave any remaining opponents the Cormyrean soldiers. Alternatively, when the breach is closed the fight is over since the PCs did not complete the objective.

The characters should note the results down in Handout 5. They should select their next mission based on the results of the rest of the BI and their own wishes. See Handout 1 for details. Once the selection has been made, one player should deliver the report to the Senior DM and at the same time announce their choice of next mission to the Senior DM.

Note that specific events can influence the PCs' choices. Be ready for an unexpected change in plans.

Milestone

The encounter counts as a milestone.

Treasure

There is no treasure in this encounter.

Encounter 3: Through the Roof Stats

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Encounter 3: Through the Roof Map ~ Success

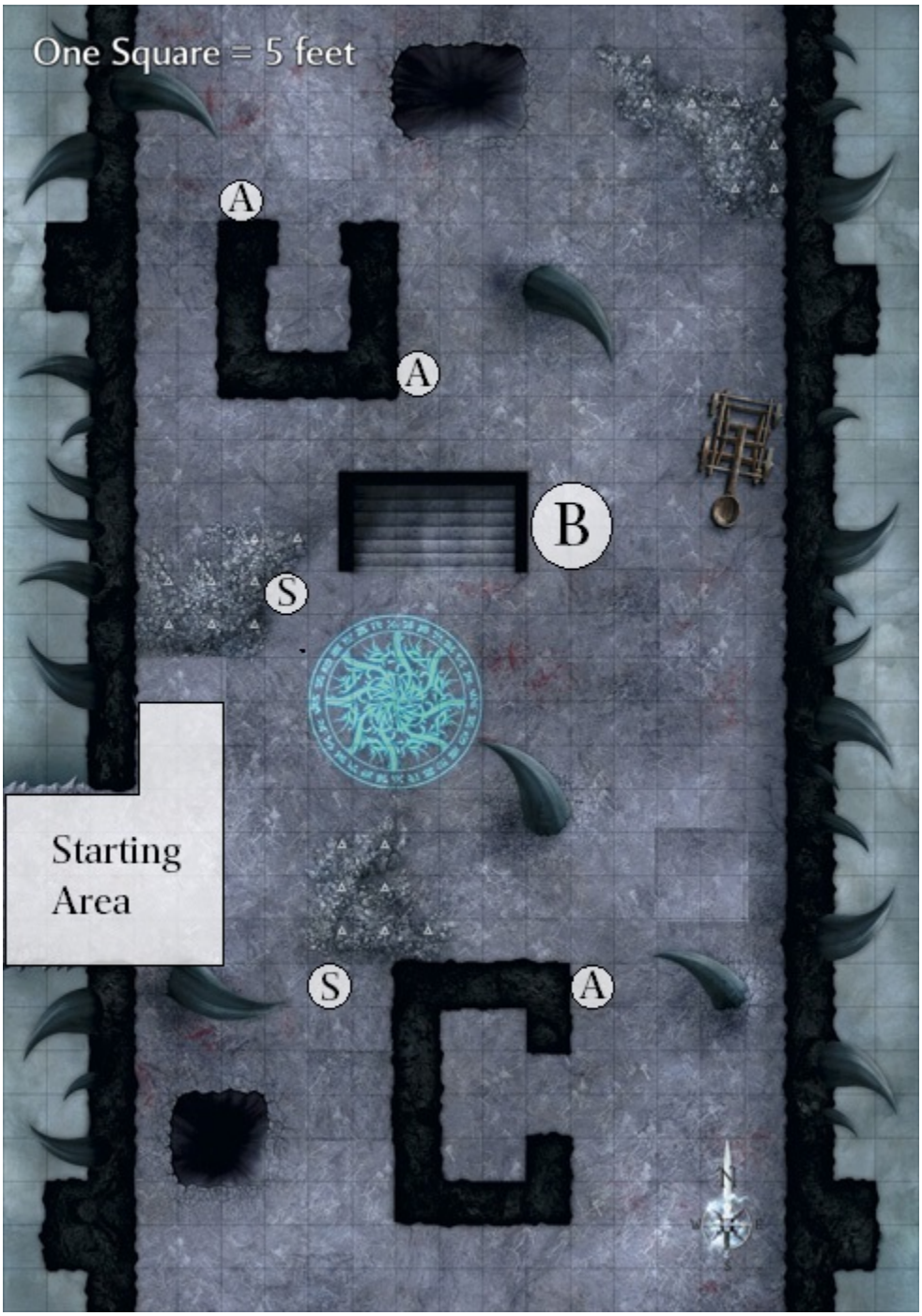
Tile Sets Used

P3 Assault on Nightwyrm Fortress - The Battlements

Encounter 3: Through the Roof Map ~ Failure

Tile Sets Used

P3 Assault on Nightwyrm Fortress - The Battlements



Encounter 4: Into the Hearts

Creatures

This encounter includes the following creatures:
2 Netherese soldier (soldier) (S)
1 Netherese soldier (artillery) (A)
1 Netherese soldier (controller) (C)
1 Shar's painbearer (P)

This encounter may also include the other creatures/features depending on location:
16 wounded soldiers (hospital only) (W)
1 relic of Shar (shrine only) (R)
1 pile of crates of Netherese supplies (warehouse only) (N)

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove a soldier.

Six PCs: Add a controller.

Victory Conditions

There are four areas the PCs can pick: barracks, hospital, a shrine of Shar or a warehouse. The victory conditions depend on the area picked.

Give the players Handout 6 before the pick. It functions as a reminder of the goals of the encounter, and allows them to make a somewhat informed choice. At the end of the encounter the players must fill it in and hand it over to the Senior DM.

If the PCs assault the barracks they are trying to find Netherese battle plans. They need at least six, seven or eight such plans; they should look for plans until they feel that they have found enough (or can't fend off the Netherese troops any longer).

If the PCs attack a hospital, inform them that their goal is to rout the wounded soldiers to prevent the Netherese from regrouping. Warn them that killing too many of the wounded soldiers may enrage, rather than demoralize, the Netherese.

If the PCs attack the shrine, inform them that goal is to destroy the relic of Shar in the shrine.

If the PCs attack the warehouse, inform them that their goal is to steal or destroy the crates of necromantic supplies in the warehouse. Stealing the crates would be better, but destroying them would also demoralize the Netherese.

Setup

At the start of the encounter, the PCs decide whether they are trying to demoralize the Netherese by assaulting a barracks, hospital, shrine to Shar, or warehouse. Each location has its own mission objective, and the Cormyran forces may need the party to target a particular location to most effectively demoralize the Netherese (see the Senior DM for details). The map is different for each area as well.

Important: Unless specified otherwise by the Senior DM beforehand, it is up to you whether you want to prepare all four maps, only one or a number in between. If you do prepare less than the maximum, make this clear to the players!

Features of the Area

Illumination: All areas are dimly lit except the shrines to Shar.

Illumination (shrines): The shrines are covered in an area of magical darkness. There is no natural illumination, and non-magical sources of illumination do not function. Any attempt to use magical illumination requires a DC Moderate Arcana check as part of the action to use the source of illumination. If this check succeeds, the light source works as normal; if this check fails, the light source fails to work and cannot be used again as a light source until the light source leaves and re-enters the shrine.

Desks (barracks only): Many of the desks contain battle plans that may be useful information for the invading forces. Desks can be searched with a Moderate DC History or Perception check taken as a standard action or a Hard DC History or Perception check taken as a minor action. The number of useful plans required to affect Netherese morale varies from barracks to barracks; PCs need to find useful plans: 6 for four PCs, 7 for five PCs and 8 for six PCs.

Hospital: The hospitals are imbued with a magical healing effect. At the start of each creature's turn, it heals hit points equal to the Adventure Level if it has the shadow origin. If the creature is at full hit points, it gains this number of temporary hit points instead.

Relic of Shar (shrine only): The relic of Shar in the shrine must be destroyed to reduce Netherese morale, although it is small enough to be stolen.

If the relic is stolen, the PC is possession of the relic is known to all worshippers of Shar in within 10 squares of that PC and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment of any kind, even if the relic is stored in an extra-dimensional space or a ritual-infused container like a Leomund's Secret Chest.

The relic has an AC, Fortitude, and Reflex equal to the AL + 13, has hit points equal to the AL times 20, and has resist all equal to the AL; this resistance does not function against radiant damage. A Hard DC Arcana or Athletics check taken as a standard action while adjacent to the relic deals damage to the relic equal to the skill check result; this damage is not reduced by the relic's resistances. If the relic is destroyed, the PC who dealt the final blow takes force and necrotic damage equal to the Adventure Level.

Shrine: The shrines are imbued with a magical curse that harms those who are not devoted to Shar. Each round, at the start of each PC's turn, that PC rolls a saving throw. On a failure, that PC is dazed until the end of his or her turn.

Supplies (warehouse only): Each pile of crates contains as many crates as there are PCs. All crates must be carried out or destroyed.

The crates can be picked up or destroyed with a standard action and set down safely as a minor action. PCs are slowed while carrying a supply crate.

The crates are enchanted. At the start of each turn, a PC who is carrying a crate and does not have the shadow origin must roll a saving throw; on a failure, the PC loses a healing surge and must make a second saving throw to avoid dropping the crate.

The crates are considered both creatures and objects for the purpose of being the target of attacks or abilities. A crate that is dropped or dealt damage by an attack or effect (including the explosion of another crate) receives a saving throw to avoid being destroyed. A crate that is destroyed explodes, dealing necrotic damage equal to the AL to all creatures in the same square as the crate or in a square adjacent to the crate.

Tactics

The wounded soldiers (hospital only) begin combat prone. On their turn, they stand up and attack the nearest PC. PCs can scare the wounded soldiers into fleeing the hospital with an Intimidate check taken as a minor action. The difficulty of the check varies based on the number of soldiers the PC wants to scare: scaring the nearest soldier requires an Easy DC check, scaring the two nearest soldiers requires a Moderate DC check, and scaring the three nearest soldiers requires a Hard DC check.

The Netherese forces place the defense of their target at a higher priority than their lives. They focus their assault on the PCs who are spending the most time on their mission objective (destroying the relic, scaring the wounded, stealing or destroying the crates, or finding battle plans).

At the start of each round, if any role of Netherese troops (e.g. soldier, artillery) has been defeated, a troop of that role arrives. If the Sharran painbearer is defeated, he is not replaced.

If the PCs are in the barracks, at the start of each round, an additional Netherese troop of any type arrives (in addition to the troops described above).

Ending the Encounter

This encounter ends when the PCs flee or when all enemies present at the start of the encounter are defeated plus:

- If the PCs are assaulting Sharran shrines, the relic is stolen or destroyed.
- If the PCs are assaulting Netherese hospitals, the wounded are deceased or have fled.
- If the PCs are assaulting Netherese supplies, all the supplies are secured or destroyed.
- If the PCs are assaulting the barracks, the troop orders have been found or the PCs decide to leave without them.

Consequences

The results of this encounter may change the Netherese Morale trait in the following ways. The Senior DM makes the necessary changes.

- **Increase** Netherese Morale by 2 if the PCs fail to kill or disable the Netherese forces present at the start of the encounter. This Morale change stacks with all the below changes.
- **Increase** Netherese Morale by 1 if half or more of the Netherese wounded are slain (hospitals), the PCs fail to find enough troop orders (barracks), the PCs are unable to steal or destroy the relic (shrine), or the PCs are unable to steal or destroy the supplies (warehouse).
- Leave Netherese Morale **unchanged** if the relic is stolen (shrines) or the wounded remain alive in the hospital (hospitals).
- **Decrease** Netherese Morale by 1 if more than half of the Netherese wounded have fled (hospitals), the Netherese supplies are destroyed (warehouse), or the PCs find enough troop orders (barracks).
- **Decrease** Netherese Morale by 2 if the PCs destroy the relic (shrines) or steal all the Netherese supplies (warehouse).

Milestone

This encounter counts toward a milestone.

Treasure

There is no treasure in this encounter.

Encounter 4: Into the Heart Stats

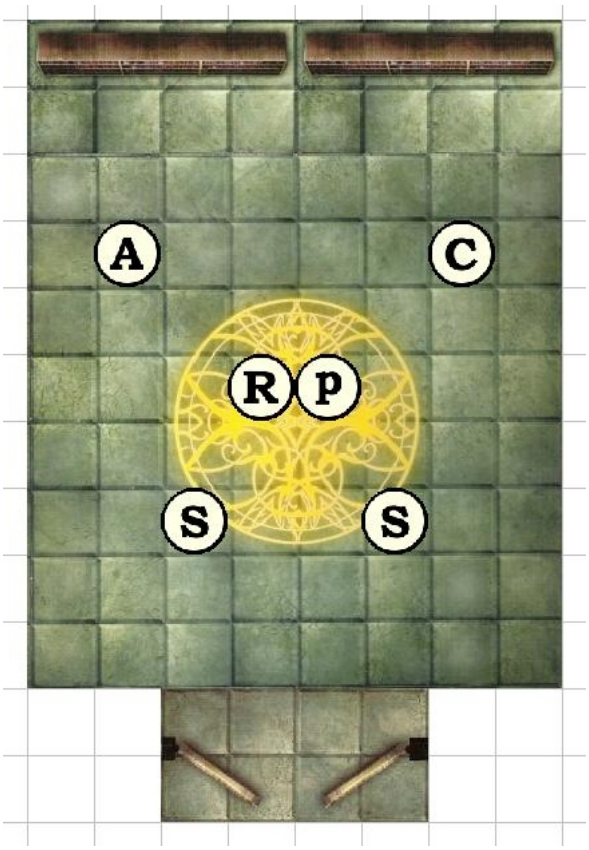
Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Encounter 4: Into the Heart Maps

SHRINE MAP

Tile Sets Needed

DU4 Arcane Towers x2
DU1 Halls of the Giant King x2

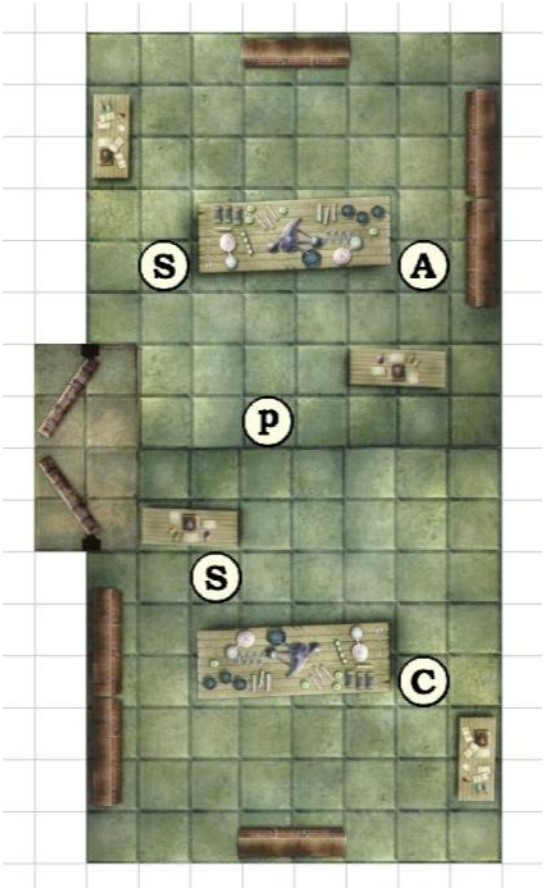


A = artillery
C = controller
P = Shar's Painbringer
R = Relic of Shar
S = Soldier

BARRACKS MAP

Tile Sets Needed

DU4 Arcane Towers x2
DU1 Halls of the Giant King x2



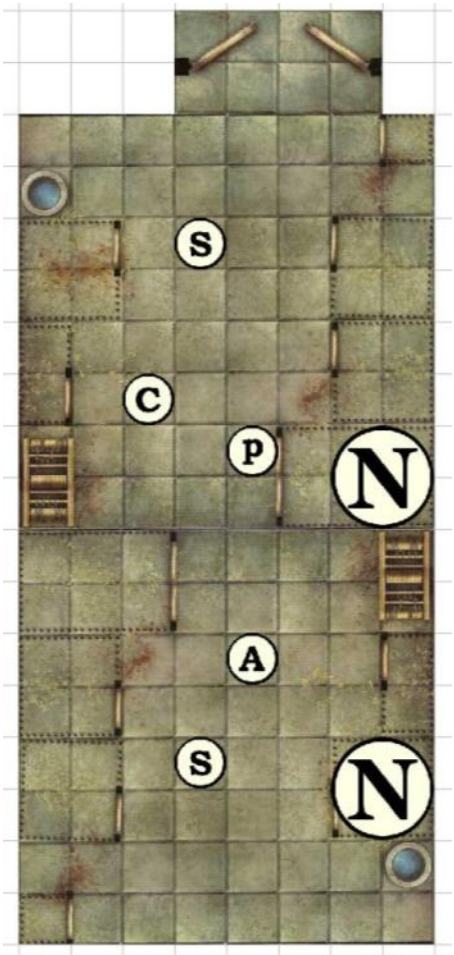
A = artillery
C = controller
P = Shar's Painbringer
S = Soldier

Encounter 4: Into the Heart Maps

WAREHOUSE MAP

Tile Sets Needed

DU4 Arcane Towers x2
DU1 Halls of the Giant King x2

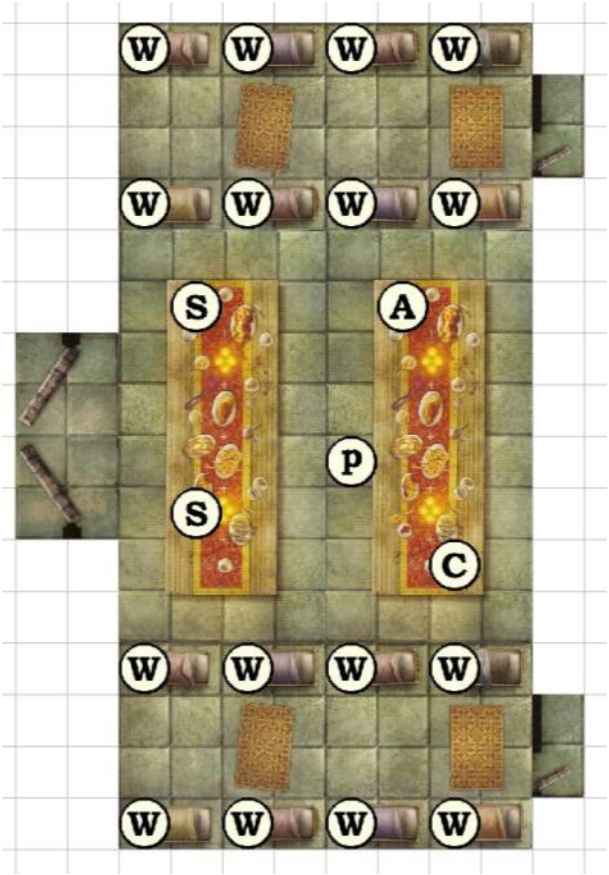


A = artillery
C = controller
P = Shar's Painbringer
R = Relic of Shar
N = Pile of Netherese Supply Crates

HOSPITAL MAP

Tile Sets Needed

DU4 Arcane Towers x2
DU1 Halls of the Giant King x2



A = artillery
C = controller
P = Shar's Painbringer
S = Soldier
W = Wounded Soldier

Encounter 5A: Taking Command Briefing

Setup

Important NPCs:
Commander
Elf High Mage, female moon elf high mage.

The Commander summons the PCs for a briefing to explain their next mission. Also present is a female High Mage. The city Sakkors is controlled from various command centers throughout the city. Conquering these and destroying the wards in them is vital to the final conquest of the city. This is the first step into actually taking control of Sakkors and is the primary goal of the Cormyreans. Ending Netherese control of Sakkors and disrupting the magic that protects the city will enable the Elf High Mages to take control.

The mission is to assault one of these command centers, kill the Netherese mage captain stationed there, and disrupt the mechanism that protects the city from outside magical interference. (Note, it is not necessary to kill all of the monsters, see alternate win condition described below.)

The Commander rattles off your next mission: "You have done well so far. Now we need to break Netherese control of the city so that our own mages can take command of Sakkors. There are many 'command centers' that are used to control the city and activate its magical capabilities. Our intelligence reports show that each command center is manned by a powerful mage and a unit of soldiers serving as bodyguards. We believe that there is some sort of ritual circle or mechanism at each location used to control the city.

Your mission is to temporarily deactivate the ritual circle and kill the mage so that he cannot repair it. If killing the bodyguards makes your task easier, then by all means dispatch of them, but they are of lesser importance. Taking care of the mage and the ritual circle is all that is really necessary."

The Commander can provide the following information.

- There are dozens of "command centers" throughout the city.
- These command centers are used by the Netherese to directly control the city, including activating all of its magical mechanisms.
- Intelligence reports indicate that each command center is controlled by a single powerful mage and a unit of soldiers that serve as his bodyguard.
- The primary goal of the mission is to temporarily disrupt the ritual to control the city and kill the Netherese caster. Killing the bodyguards is optional.

The High Mage can provide the following information.

- A group of high elf mages are standing by, ready to take control of the city once the PCs have disrupted the Netherese control.
- The mages have tried to override the city's control and take command of it externally, but the city's defense systems are simply too strong and it is not possible to overcome them while the Netherese remain in control.
- It is unknown how long it will take for the high elf mages to gain control of the city after the Netherese ritual is disrupted. It is important to kill the Netherese mage because otherwise he can repair the damage the PCs have done.

The allied forces have fairly limited information from the scouting reports and cannot provide much more than what is listed above. Once the PCs have finished asking questions, they attack the command center. Proceed to Encounter 5B: Taking Command.

Ending the Encounter

Continue with Encounter 5B.

Experience Points

The PCs do not earn any XP for this encounter, and it does not count towards a milestone.

Encounter 5B: Taking Command

Creatures

This encounter includes the following creatures:

AL 2-10:
1 Netherese mage captain (M)
2 Netherese deathless snipers (S)
2 Netherese captain's guards (G)

AL 12-20*:
1 Netherese mage captain (M)
3 Netherese deathless snipers (S)
2 Netherese captain's guards (G)

* At AL 16-20, each Netherese Deathless Sniper has an action point.

Important: Do not forget the battlefield situation and the Events.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove one Netherese deathless sniper. Remove the action point from the Netherese mage captain.

Six PCs: Add one Netherese captain's guard on the edge of the circle nearest to the doors (in front of the PCs). The Netherese mage captain begins the combat with temporary hit points equal to 20% of his maximum. For easy reference:

AL	# of Temps	AL	# of Temps
2	15	12	48
4	22	14	55
6	28	16	61
8	35	18	68
10	42	20	74

Victory Conditions

Kill the Netherese Mage Captain and disrupt the ritual circle. Alternately, the characters can kill all enemies present.

See Player's Handout 7 for the Encounter 5 report sheet which one player at the table must fill in and hand to the Senior DM after you finished the encounter.

Setup

Once the PCs are ready to assault the command center, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the doors is a large room dominated by a strange ritual circle. The circle is a writhing mass of thick shadowy chains that are heavily intertwined. Muscular guards stand on either side of the ritual circle, whirling their halberds around them dangerously in grand sweeping motions. Snipers with longbows crouch near the walls.

The Netherese mage captain is standing at the back of the room in finely embroidered black robes. His image flickers and it is difficult to pinpoint his actual location, one moment it appears he is standing in one spot and then in another. The mage captain sneers at you and says, "Now what makes you think anyone other than the Netherese have the knowledge and experience to control this city? Or are you intending to let us all just plummet from the sky to our deaths?"

The characters need to kill the Netherese Mage Captain and disrupt the ritual circle (see below). When the PCs complete this objective, the remaining enemies either surrender or flee. Alternately, the PCs can try to kill all enemies present. The PCs are able to disrupt the ritual circle afterwards, without the pressures of combat so they can take 10 on skill checks once all opponents are defeated. If the PCs choose this tactic, do not call the fight early. The PCs must reduce all opponents to 0 hit points. The time it takes to kill all of the enemies is part of the choice the PCs made in choosing this objective.

Disrupt the Ritual Circle

Dismantling the ritual circle is not a difficult task, but it does take time. A PC who ends their turn on the magic circle can begin working on it as a free action. If the PC then starts their next turn on the circle, they can make an Arcana, Athletics, or Thievery check to damage the circle as a free action.

The results are as follow:

- **Hard DC:** Counts as one success in the skill challenge.
- **Moderate DC:** Counts as one success in the skill challenge, but the PC takes AL psychic damage from feedback.
- **Easy DC:** The PC takes AL psychic damage from feedback.
- **Below Easy DC:** The PC takes AL psychic damage from feedback and is pushed 5 squares from the center of the circle and knocked prone.

The number of successes needed is equal to the number of PCs.

Note: The PC must end their turn in the ritual circle and start their next turn in the ritual circle in order to be able to make a skill check. Due to this restriction, it is not possible to make a skill check during the first round of combat.

Features of the Area

Ritual Circle: The PCs must end their turn and then begin their turn standing in the ritual circle in order to contribute to the "Disrupt the Ritual Circle" skill challenge. The circle occupies the entire 4x4 area. The circle is not difficult terrain (the chains described in the flavor text are shadowy and do not hamper movement in any way).

Rubble: The piles of rock and debris are due to the assault on the city and are difficult terrain.

Tactics

The Netherese mage captain begins the combat with *visions of terror* and then action points to use his *double attack* on immobilized PCs to slide them away from the ritual circle. He uses *visions of terror* whenever it recharges to immobilize PCs and uses his other attacks to move PCs away from the ritual circle. Until he hits an opponent, his displacement causes him to rapidly blink in and out. Even against area and close attacks, there is only a 50% chance that an attack hits him, represented by odd numbers on the d20 roll automatically resulting in a miss. Be sure PCs know about this mechanic before they target the mage captain.

The captain's guard uses his threatening reach to guard the ritual circle and attack PCs trying to get past them. The guards use their *mighty clout* to slide PCs away from the ritual circle. If they win initiative, do not use them to crowd the entryway as that can create a frustrating/unfun bottleneck. They know they should guard the circle, so have them delay until a PC enters the circle.

The deathless sniper focuses their attacks on weaker PCs, especially ones making significant progress on the skill challenge. If they have an action point (AL 16-20), the snipers use it after gaining temporary hit points from life pierce in order to take advantage of their expanded critical hit range.

Ending the Encounter

The encounter ends when the PCs kill the mage captain and disrupt the ritual circle, or when the PCs kill all the enemies. Note that if the PCs choose to stop the ritual, the earliest they can possibly finish the encounter is at the end of round 2 after all of the PCs have taken their turns. Once that happens, let the players fill in the result report in Player's Handout 7, and, if the battle interactive is still running, pick a new mission. Let the table spokesperson deliver the report to the senior DM and announce to the Senior DM the next mission they pick. Be ready for unexpected changes in the characters' plans due to events and how the battle progresses.

Experience Points

This encounter counts towards reaching a milestone.

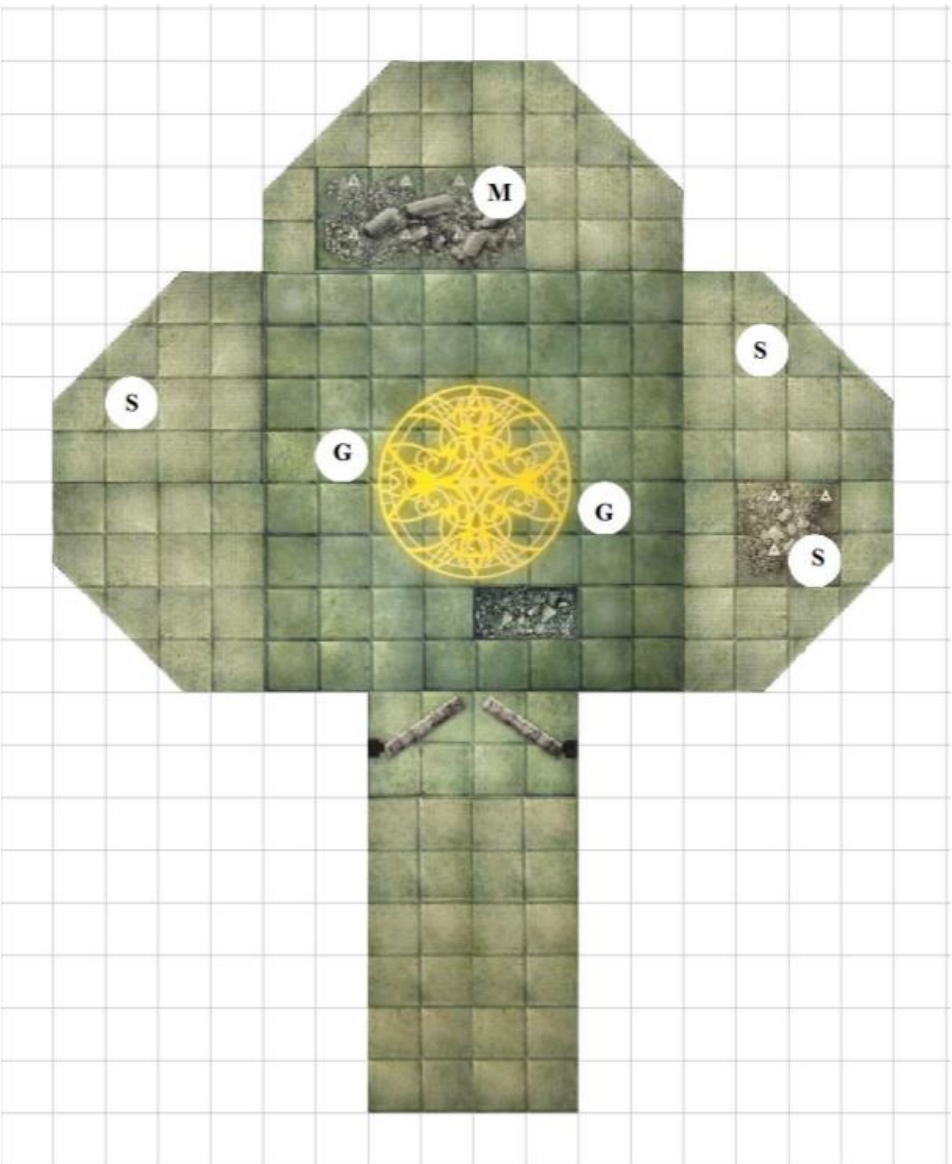
Encounter 5: Taking Command Stats

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Encounter 5: Taking Command Map

Tile Sets Used

DT7 Fane of the Forgotten Gods x1
DU4 Arcane Towers x1
ET1 Dungeon Tiles Master Set - The Dungeon x1



The PCs start in the corridor outside the double-doors.

M = Netherese Mage Captain
S = Netherese Deathless Sniper
G = Netherese Captain's Guard

Encounter 6: Counter Attack

Creatures

This encounter includes the following creatures:

AL 2-10:
2 bulettes (B)
1 Netherese vizier (S)
8 Netherese soldiers (G)

AL 12-20:
2 dire bulettes (B)
1 Netherese grand vizier (S)
10 Netherese soldiers (G)

Important: Do not forget the battlefield situation and the Events.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: One of the bulettes starts the fight bloodied and it has already used its action point. At AL 12 to 20 the grand vizier can use *word of command* only once every other round.

Six PCs: At AL 2 to 10 add 6 Netherese soldiers that arrive during round 2. At AL 12 to 20 add 8 Netherse soldiers that arrive during round 2. The bulettes each have 1 extra action point.

Victory Conditions

Survive for full 4 rounds (or kill all opponents) after which Cormyr sends reinforcements and the PCs are free to pick the next mission. Obviously, the more opponents they kill (in particular the vizier and bulettes) the better. Killing is better than wounding!

See Player Handout 8 for the report summary. Hand this out at the start of the encounter so that the players are aware of the goals of the fight. The report should be filled in and delivered to the Senior DM by the spokesperson at the table at the end of the fight.

Setup

The Netherese defenders of Sakkors are not going to wait idly for the Cormyreans to attack them. Sometime after the beginning of the battle their forces regroup and start a last desperate counter attack.

The encounter becomes available for the PCs to pick as soon as the Netherse Army Defensive or Maneuverability Trait drop to 1 for the first time. This encounter counts towards the trait that opened the encounter (either Defense or Manuverability). The senior DM should announce when this encounter becomes available.

Make sure you and your players realize that picking this encounter results in the reuse of the map from the last encounter you run. Some of these are small, or might not particularly well-suited for this encounter. Your group can either decide to pick another encounter or you pick a more suited map (such as the one from Encounter 2 or Encounter 3).

The PCs have headed to an area (or are already in an area) where intelligence reports indicate a counter-attack by the Netherese.

The encounter starts shortly after the previous one and the PCs are still on the same map. The PCs have just completed a short rest and can reposition themselves all over the map as the players see fit. Then read or paraphrase the following.

A light tremor and soft rumbling noise announces trouble, giving you no time to prepare before two bulettes dig their way out of the rocky floor. Snarling aggressively, they are followed by a handful of silent Netherese soldiers under command of a lightly armored officer. It seems the Netherese regrouped and started a counter attack.

The The bulettes each attack a different cluster of PCs. The soldiers are divided into equal groups with each bulette. The vizier follows one of the groups. The Netherese enter through the newly dug corridor.

Features of the Area

See the encounter whose map has been selected.

Tactics

The tactics of the Netherese are relatively simple. The bulettes try to hurt as many PCs as possible, knocking them prone and getting them to scatter. The vizier follows closely, using *word of command* when convenient (at AL 12+ preferably on PCs with good basic melee attacks) and otherwise keeping his distance. The soldiers simply swarm two PCs and try to kill them.

Ending the Encounter

After 4 full rounds of fighting the PCs can leave the area and select a new mission. Alternatively, if the PCs manage to kill all opponents within 4 rounds they can leave the area as well. Killing one of the bulettes and the vizier is a full success. The characters can leave earlier,

although before they do, you might want to remind them that they can shift monsters to another table with permission. The players should fill in the result report from Handout 8, pick a new mission and deliver the report and mention their next mission to the Senior DM.

Experience Points

This encounter counts towards reaching a milestone.

Encounter 6: Counter Attack Stats

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Encounter 6: Counter Attack Map

The map is the same as the map of the previous encounter of the PCs have fought.

Add the two pits the bullets and soldiers come from as well as a few pieces of rubble.

Encounter 7A: It Is Alive

Important NPC

Sakkors, sentient Netherese city

The PCs can begin this encounter in one of two ways. When this encounter is unlocked by Event 4, several tables need to abandon their current missions and teleport directly to this mission. Let the players report to the senior DM if your table abandons their current mission as if the mission failed before beginning this one. They cannot return to the previous mission later.

Many tables will choose to continue with their current mission and see it to completion. At that time, they may choose this encounter as their next mission. Before they do so, have them check the overall status of the battle interactive. The overall primary objective is to win the conflict, not gain control of the city. If there are objectives that still need successes, especially City Command, the leaders of the assault force advise that the PCs help in those encounters first.

When the PCs select this encounter, read or paraphrase the following:

Via a special sending, the image of an eladrin High Mage appears before you. "The Netherese control of the city is broken. We have a special mission for you, but only a short time to answer your questions. Then, we will teleport you directly to the mission destination."

The High Mage provides the PCs with the following information.

- The city is falling from the sky. Destruction of the city is a good thing, since it prevents the Netherese from ever using it as a weapon.
- The primary goal of the mission is to gain the means to destroy the city. Doing so means destroying Netherese automated guardians in one of the central control chambers of the city.
- The secondary goal is to gain control of Sakkors. The High Mages are trying to exert their own control on the city, but something is blocking their magical attempts.
- If the PCs can disable whatever is blocking the mages' efforts, the city can be brought to serve Cormyr and Myth Drannor, rather than being destroyed.
- Of utmost importance, complete the primary objective so that we can destroy the city if we cannot control it.

The High Mage briefly answers any questions the PCs may have, but has little more to offer. She emphasizes that while gaining control of the city would be nice, it can never be allowed to fall back under Netherese control. Destruction of the city is considered a successful outcome as far as the Cormyrian and elven leaders are concerned.

Make sure the PCs understand the objectives. They are teleported directly to the next scene.

Sakkors

When the PCs are teleported to the central command center of the city, read or paraphrase the following.

In a flash, you arrive in one of the central command centers of the city. It is eerily quiet. The room has a large central column, and control panels cover the outer walls of the chamber. Many of the panels are damaged.

A voice speaks to you telepathically in your native language. "Intruder, state your identity and purpose for your presence."

The voice is the city of Sakkors. Sakkors is a sentient being, an unaligned colossal living construct. It does not trust the PCs. After all, they and their allies have caused a great deal of damage to the city, and are now trying to control it. Through discussion, the PCs should learn the following information.

- Sakkors was enslaved to serve the Netherese. It is happy to finally be free.
- The PCs and their allies have attacked and severely damaged the city. It is not happy with the aggressors.
- Some outside force (the High Mages) is attempting to enslave it. It would rather be destroyed than forced into servitude again (which is why it is falling out of the sky).
- The Netherese placed a defense system in this room. It must be damaged, as it has not activated yet.

Allow the PCs to provide Sakkors with apologies or explanations about the damage and attempts to control the city. As long as they are friendly, the city considers allying itself with them. At this time, PCs should not make any skill checks.

Ending the Encounter

Continue with Encounter 7B.

Encounter 7B: Sakkors

Creatures

This encounter includes the following creatures:
2 Netherese serpent guardian (S)
3 Netherese runic statue (H)

Reinforcements:
4 Netherese dawnkiller (C)

Important: Do not forget to account for the battlefield situation and the Events.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove a Netherese runic statue and a Netherese dawnkiller.

Five PCs: The Netherese dawnkillers have a group action point.

Six PCs: Add a Netherese serpent guardian and a Netherese dawnkiller. The constructs and dawnkillers each have a group action point.

Victory Conditions

The primary objective is for the PCs to destroy all of the Netherese constructs. As a secondary objective, the PCs can complete the skill challenge. This is likely the last encounter for the PCs, though if they are able to complete the encounter and there is still time remaining, they can attempt another mission.

Setup

This encounter includes the option of convincing the city Sakkors to become an ally. See the skill challenge for details.

When the PCs have learned what they need to know in Encounter 7A, read or paraphrase:

Some of the panels in the walls slide open and shadowy automatons step forward. Sakkors states, "These creatures are defenses installed by the Netherese, not part of me. I suspect that the Netherese will send additional soldiers to this location soon."

Be sure the PCs understand that their primary mission is to destroy the automatons. Doing so removes the last Netherese link to the city, allowing the Cormyrian War Wizards to destroy the city if all else fails. Give the PCs Handout 2 which details the optional skill challenge.

Once the PCs understand the mechanics of the encounter, have them roll initiative.

Features of the Area

The features of the area are primarily relevant to groups who attempt the skill challenge.

Central Core: The central core in the center is blocking terrain. Bursts and blasts that include the central core may damage Sakkors. Add any damage dealt to the Resolve Pool (see skill challenge). PCs must be adjacent to the central core to attempt Diplomacy checks.

Magical Panels: The magical panels are where Sakkors is blocking the War Wizard's attempts at control. PCs must be adjacent to a panel to attempt an Arcana check in the skill challenge. The panels also contain the living essence of the city. PCs must be adjacent to a panel to attempt a Heal check during the skill challenge.

Difficult Terrain: The difficult terrain represents badly damaged parts of Sakkors. PCs must be standing in a square of difficult terrain in order to attempt Athletics or Thievery repair checks.

Energy Drain: Sakkors is drawing the life force of all creatures in the area in order to try and repair itself. At the end of each round, each PC must make a saving throw. On a failure, the PC loses a healing surge. PCs who have at least one action point are immune to this effect.

Healing Surge Loss

This encounter is intended to push PCs to the limit. Any time a PC is instructed to lose a healing and they have no surges remaining, they can choose one of the following effects.

- Take half their bloodied value in damage.
- Count as having failed a death saving throw.

Remind the PCs that they are deep behind enemy lines, so unless they view this as a suicide mission, they should hold on to enough resources to survive retreating back to the Cormyrian forces.

Tactics

The Netherese constructs are automated and generally attack the closest PC, unless there is a compelling reason (such as a mark) not to.

When half of the constructs are destroyed, or when at least half of the Resolve Pool is empty (whichever happens first), add the Netherese dawnkillers to the battle. They appear in the room within 2 squares of any

entrance. They are spread out and come from different directions. At AL 2-14, they enter initiative immediately before the acting creature's turn (so there is one full round before they act). At AL 16-20, they enter initiative immediately after the current creature's turn (so probably act immediately).

The Netherese dawnkillers attack PCs who are blinded by the constructs. If no PCs are blind, they focus on a PC leader. If possible, they use *shadow jaunt* and charge a target on their first turn, trusting in their insubstantial status to keep them alive. The Netherese dawnkillers also have the following power:

STANDARD ACTION
Command Construct • At-Will
Effect: One construct ally in 10 squares uses an at-will attack power.

They use this power to command the serpents to blind PCs, or to make a runic statue with damage bonuses attack.

Be sure the PCs know that killing the shock troopers is independent of their objectives. They need to destroy the constructs as their primary objective, and complete the skill challenge for their secondary objective.

Skill Challenge: Sakkors' Resolve

Goal: Convince the city of Sakkors to ally with the Cormyrian forces.
Complexity: special
Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Bluff, Diplomacy, Endurance, Heal, Thievery
Victory: When the Resolve Pool reaches 0, Sakkors is convinced that the PCs are trustworthy.
Defeat: Sakkors does not ally with the PCs.

At the beginning of combat, distribute Player's Handout 2. It details the overall mechanics of the skill challenge. At the start of each round, be sure the PCs understand the skill needed and the positioning requirments.

The PCs can make checks two different ways. They can make a check during their turn as a standard action. At the end of the round, every PC in position can make a check as a free action.

Making a skill check requires the PC to channel some of their life force into the city. If the PC's result is below a DC Hard, they lose a healing surge. If it is below a DC Moderate, they lose two healing surges. Below and Easy DC costs 3 healing surges. Regardless of the healing surge outcome, the result of the skill check is subtracted from the Resolve Pool.

Bluff is a universal skill in this skill challenge. If the PC is in the correct position, they can use Bluff in place of the required skill. However, this runs the risk of increasing Sakkors' trust if the PC is detected. If the PC makes a Hard DC check, subtract the result from the Resolve Pool as normal. If the result is below a Hard DC, add the check result to the Resolve pool and the PC loses a healing surge. If the check misses the Hard DC by 5 or more, also add the DC Hard for the AL to the Resolve Pool; the PC loses two healing surges instead of one.

You should determine the Resolve Pool value at the start of the encounter. The formula is 6 times the C Moderate DC times the number of PCs. The following chart is provided for easy reference.

AL	4 PCs	5 PCs	6 PCs
2	312	390	468
4	336	420	504
6	360	450	540
8	384	480	576
10	432	540	648
12	480	600	720
14	504	630	756
16	528	660	792
18	552	690	828
20	600	750	900

Note: At AL 2-6, when half of the Resource Pool is empty, Sakkors empowers the PCs. Each PC may regain the use of one encounter power.

Each round, there is one skill check that the PCs can make to convince Sakkors that they can be trusted. There are also specific positioning requirements. In addition, PCs may come up with clever and appropriate use of powers to appease Sakkors. As a general rule, an Encounter power should score points equal to a Moderate DC, and a Daily power should score points equal to a Hard DC.

Round 1: Protect Me!

At the beginning of Round 1, Sakkors asks the PCs to protect him from the outside forces (their allies) who are trying to magically enslave it to their will. Sakkors tells the PCs that they must move to a magical control panel and strengthen its arcane wards against the intrusion. After Sakkors telepathically explains what must be done, and listens to the PCs' reply, continue in initiative order.

During the first round, and only during the first round, the PCs may make an Arcana check while adjacent to a panel as a standard action. At the end of the round, every PC adjacent to a panel can make a check as a free action. Deduct all results from the Resolve Pool.

Each PC who makes a DC Moderate, but not a DC Hard, loses a healing surge. Each PC below a DC Moderate loses two healing surges. Below a DC Easy costs three healing surges.

Remember the Energy Drain feature at the end of each round.

Round 2: Repair Me!

At the beginning of Round 2, Sakkors asks the PCs to repair the damage done to him. Sakkors tells the PCs that they must move to the difficult terrain and repair the damage by lifting heavy pieces back into place or manipulating gears. After Sakkors telepathically explains what must be done, and listens to the PCs' reply, continue with: Round 2.

During the second round, and only during the second round, the PCs may make an Athletics or Thievery check while in difficult terrain as a standard action. At the end of the round, every PC in difficult terrain can make a check as a free action. Deduct all results from the Resolve Pool.

Each PC who makes a DC Moderate, but not a DC Hard, loses a healing surge. Each PC below a DC Moderate loses two healing surges. Below a DC Easy costs three healing surges.

Remember the Energy Drain feature at the end of each round.

Round 3: Convince Me!

At the beginning of Round 3, Sakkors is willing to the PCs explanations as to why they can be trusted. Sakkors tells the PCs that they must move to the central column and touch it so that he can sense their true intentions. After Sakkors telepathically explains what must be done, and listens to the PCs' reply, continue with Round 3.

During the third round, and only during the third round, the PCs may make a Diplomacy check while adjacent to the central column as a standard action. At the end of the round, every PC adjacent to the central column can make a check as a free action. Deduct all results from the Resolve Pool.

Each PC who makes a DC Moderate, but not a DC Hard, loses a healing surge. Each PC below a DC Moderate loses two healing surges. Below a DC Easy costs three healing surges.

Remember the Energy Drain feature at the end of each round.

Round 4: Heal Me!

At the beginning of Round 4, Sakkors asks the PCs to heal him. The panels slide open, and the PCs can see a veined membrane pulsing behind. Sakkors tells the PCs that they have earned enough trust that it exposes its most vulnerable, and damaged, living component. After Sakkors telepathically explains what must be done, and listens to the PCs' reply, continue with Round 4.

During the fourth round, and only during the fourth round, the PCs may make a Heal check while adjacent to a panel as a standard action. At the end of the round, every PC adjacent to a panel can make a check as a free action. Deduct all results from the Resolve Pool.

Each PC who makes a DC Moderate, but not a DC Hard, loses a healing surge. Each PC below a DC Moderate loses two healing surges. Below a DC Easy costs three healing surges.

In addition, PCs may use powers to heal Sakkors if the panel is within range of the healing power. Sakkors has 3 healing surges with a surge value equal to the DC Moderate for the AL. Subtract the amount healed from the Resolve Pool. Note that since technically speaking Sakkors is an object he cannot be bloodied.

Remember the Energy Drain feature at the end of each round.

Round 5+: Feed Me!

At the beginning of Round 5, Sakkors asks the PCs to channel even more of their life force to strengthen him, a true gesture of friendship and trust. Sakkors tells the PCs that they must channel as much of their life force into it as they can. This can be done from anywhere in the chamber. After Sakkors telepathically explains what must be done, and listens to the PCs' reply, continue with Round 5.

During the fifth round, and every subsequent round, the PCs may make an Encurance check from anywhere in the room as a standard action. At the end of the round, every PC can make a check as a free action. Deduct all results from the Resolve Pool.

Each PC who makes a DC Moderate, but not a DC Hard, loses a healing surge. Each PC below a DC Moderate loses two healing surges. Below a DC Easy costs three healing surges.

Remember the Energy Drain feature at the end of each round.

Fleeing

The PCs have been teleported deep into Netherese controlled areas of Sakkors. At the start of a PC's turn, they may choose to flee as a free action. Doing so means quickly navigating through enemy lines to reach allied forces.

The PC must make a Stealth check and a Perception check to make it back safely. With a DC Hard check there is no penalty. With a DC Moderate check, the PC

loses a healing surge. With a DC Easy check, the PC loses 1d4 healing surges. If the result is below the Easy DC, the PC loses 1d6 healing surges.

At the end of the encounter, even if the PCs are successful, they must flee from the other Netherese forces closing in on their location. Each PC must make the Stealth and Perception checks, as described above.

Ending the Encounter

The encounter ends when each PC has decided to flee. If all of the monster constructs are destroyed, the PCs have succeeded in their primary mission. If the Resolve Pool is reduced to 0, the PCs have succeeded in their secondary mission. Have the table captain fill in the report on Player's Handout 8 and deliver the results to the senior DM.

Be sure each PC resolves the Fleeing scene to rejoin the forces of Cormyr. If there is still time remaining, the PCs can regroup and take on another objective, to determine the overall outcome.

Experience Points

This encounter counts towards reaching a milestone.

Treasure

See the Conclusion for treasure rewards.

Roleplaying

At the beginning of each round, have a brief roleplaying scene between the PCs and Sakkors. Base the city's attitude on the progress they have made in the skill challenge. If they are mostly done, Sakkors is friendly. If they still have a long way to go, Sakkors is wary and guarded. Use this to help the PCs gauge their progress.

Overall Results

If more than half of the total number of tables in the interactive (whether or not they select this mission) destroy all of the constructs, then this mission is successful. The elven High Mages can destroy the city.

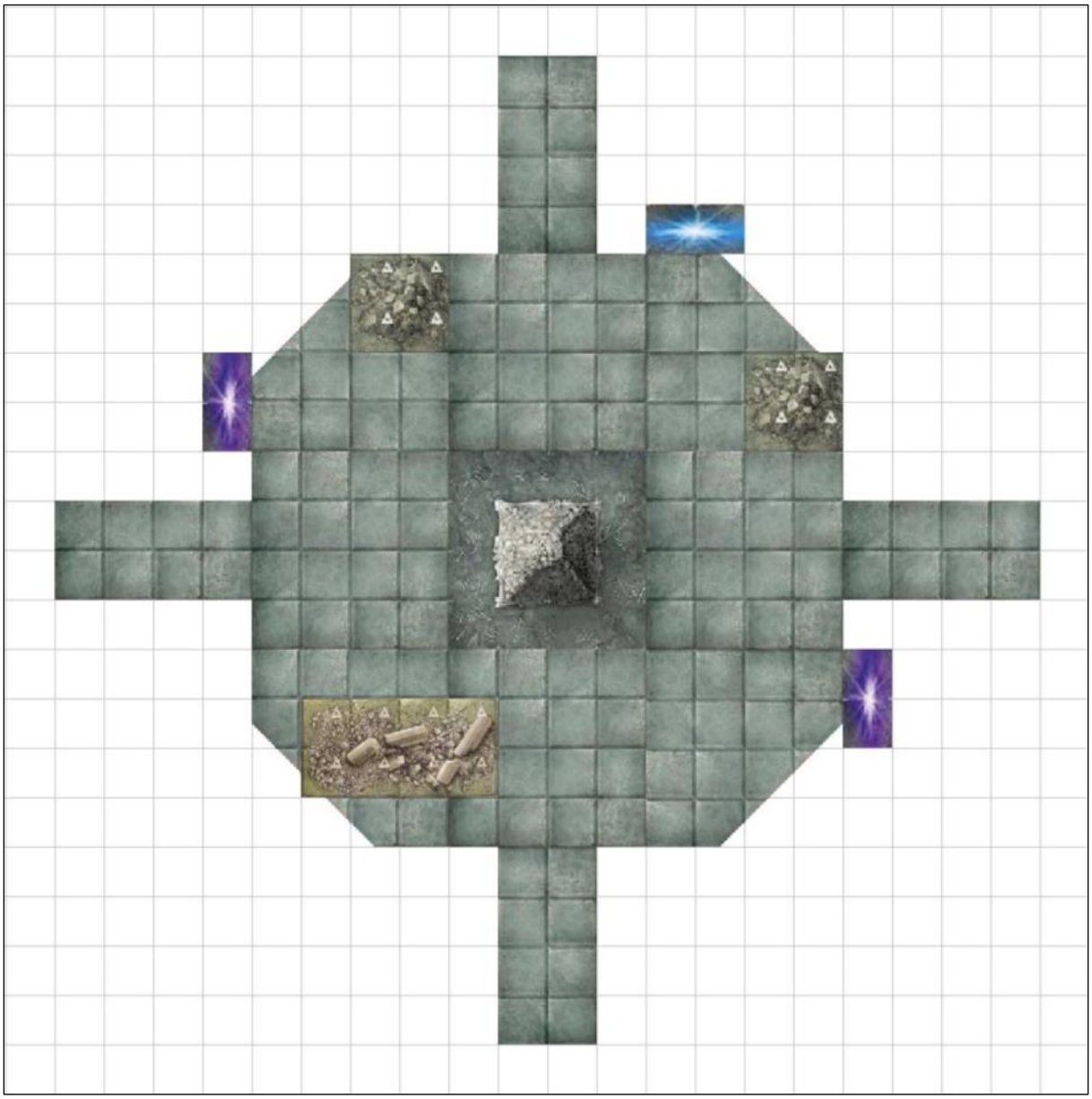
If, in addition to the above condition, if more than half of the total number of tables were also able to reduce the Resolve Pool to 0, then Sakkors agrees to become an ally of Cormyr.

Encounter 7B: Sakkors Stats

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Encounter 7B: Sakkors Map

The PCs start within 2 squares of the central obelisk. The runic statues step out of the magical panels; place each one adjacent to a panel. The serpent guardians rise up from the difficult terrain. Place them in separate areas of difficult terrain.



Concluding the Adventure

After 4 to 5 hours of fighting the battle has ended and it is time to determine the results. Throughout the battle the Senior DM modified the Netherese Army Traits. There are three major possible outcomes:

- Victory: City Command trait at 0, AND the others together have an average of 2 or lower.
- Defeat: City Command trait not at 0, OR the other traits have an average higher than 2.
- In case of Victory - Fate Sakkors: PCs earned his alliance in Encounter 7; if they failed the city is destroyed. Note that if they failed to destroy the construct guardians in Encounter 7, they still get the friendship ending. That friendship, however, is false.

The exact value of the Netherese Army Traits beyond the average is unimportant to the end result of the BI. However, it will impact future scenarios.

Proceed to the appropriate section once the end result is determined.

Treasure

Regardless of the results of the battle, all PCs who partook in both rounds of the battle interactive gain maximum experience points and basic gold as discussed in the Reward Summary. The gold is part of their pay. All PCs also gain **ADCP37 First Strike**.

Sakkors' Friendship

As you gather in the central square of Sakkors, this time without anyone swinging a blade at you, you finally get a chance to take in the surroundings. Dour and efficient, this flying fortress is built for defense. On a balcony, seemingly made especially for the purpose of addressing troops, stands the familiar figure of the Cormyrean general.

"I have waited long for this day. We were bold. We were fearless. We took it from them."

The general pauses.

"I am not sure I understand all of this. They tell me this fortress is alive, and it has joined us. Strange? Yes. But in a good way. I started this by saying Cormyr has the best friends, so what better way to end this than to gain a new friend? A new friend to join us in the celebration of this victory!"

Our victory is more than a resounding slap in the face of Netheril. Today is an unmistakable signal to the world that Cormyr, Myth Drannor and her friends are not done with this game! We have just gained a second queen. So I say to you all, I say to Netheril and its shade princes: Check! Your move!"

The PCs earn **ADCP39 A New Friend** in addition to the other rewards.

Sakkors' Destruction

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

From the air the smoking ruins of Sakkors look like an alien landscape has invaded the world. Green hills have turned to blackened rubble, strewn with fires and patches of clinging shade. An entire forrest has disappeared, and where it once was now rests half a mountain, on its side. Black stones float in makeshift circles, whipped by unknown magics breaking free from dying Sakkors. The general's magic assisted voice sounds across the skies.

"So we are not taking it home... but let there be no mistake. This is a victory! A resounding slap in the face of Netheril! An unmistakable signal to the world that Cormyr, Myth Drannor, and her friends are not done with this game. We were bold, we were fearless, and we drew the line. The game is afoot and it is their move, but this is one piece that will never see play again!"

The PCs earn **ADCP38 Destroyers of Sakkors** in addition to their other rewards.

Defeat

Huddled together on the few surviving airships you limp back towards Cormyr. Gathered once more upon the square a young man climbs the ladder to the scaffolding with slow measured steps. Squaring his shoulders he addresses the crowd.

"Pride. What else can I say but, pride. It is what we had in spades. Along with boldness fearlessness and the will to win. You were here to share in that pride, to witness it. Now alas you must also witness the fall it came before. The day was not ours, and our losses are grave. We have lost an ally that we desperately needed. We have lost a commander. And we have lost some of our pride. But make no mistake. We have not lost our spirit. They have not broken us. We shall not sulk in shadows. We will find a way to regain that pride. To restore the luster of the purple host. To find the road back to our pride. And I ask you, humbly this time, for your continued aid along that road. It will a journey, but oh what a journey it will be."

The PCs have earned no additional rewards.

Rewards Summary

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn XP, access to Treasures, and possibly Story Awards. All totals listed here are per PC, regardless of whether there were 4, 5, or 6 PCs in the party.

Important: The rewards are a total both for Round 1 and 2.

Experience Points and Base Gold

All PCs earn at least the Minimum XP for playing the adventure. In addition, the Major and Minor Objectives are worth the listed XP awards if successfully completed (as determined by the DM, following the guidelines specified in the adventure). The PCs may be given partial awards if the DM determines that they completed part, but not all, of a given objective. No character can earn more than the listed maximum XP.

Any character that died during the adventure receives 20% less XP than the rest of the party, unless there was a TPK, in which case the entire party presumably failed to achieve at least some of the listed objectives. Even with the 20% penalty, a character may not fall below the Minimum XP for the adventure.

Adventure Level 2

Minimum Possible XP: 250 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1: 300 XP
Finishing Round 2: 300 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 850 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 150 gp

Adventure Level 4

Minimum Possible XP: 300 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1: 450 XP
Finishing Round 2: 450 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 1,200 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 250 gp

Adventure Level 6

Minimum Possible XP: 500 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1: 600 XP
Finishing Round 2: 600 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 1,700 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 450 gp

Adventure Level 8

Minimum Possible XP: 600 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1: 900 XP
Finishing Round 2: 900 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 2,400 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 900 gp

Adventure Level 10

Minimum Possible XP: 1,000 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1: 1,200 XP
Finishing Round 2: 1,200 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 3,400 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 1,350 gp

Adventure Level 12

Minimum Possible XP: 1,200 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1: 1,800 XP
Finishing Round 2: 1,800 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 4,800 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 3,200 gp

Adventure Level 14

Minimum Possible XP: 2,000 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1: 2,400 XP
Finishing Round 2: 2,400 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 6,800 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 5,500 gp

Adventure Level 16

Minimum Possible XP: 3,500 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1 - 3,000 XP
Finishing Round 2 - 3,000 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 9,500 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 11,000 gp

Adventure Level 18

Minimum Possible XP: 4,600 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1 - 4,500 XP
Finishing Round 2 - 4,500 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 13,600 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 22,000 gp

Adventure Level 20

Minimum Possible XP: 7,000 XP per PC

Objectives
Finishing Round 1 - 6,000 XP
Finishing Round 2 - 6,000 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 19,000 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 33,000 gp

Treasure

All potential NPC payments or rewards, any treasure that the PCs could have looted during the adventure and other monetary awards are included in the "Base Gold per PC." At the conclusion of the adventure, each character receives the listed amount of gold, less any amounts that they did not find or earn, and may additionally select one Treasure from the following list.

A Treasure may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or something else of value. Each player makes one and only one selection for their character; multiple players may choose the same Treasure. Some of the listed Treasures may not be available if the PCs did not complete the objective specified in the adventure to unlock that Treasure.

If a character buys or sells gear during the adventure (or pays for services, such as NPC ritual casting) add or subtract the amount from the base gold.

If a player selects a Treasure that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character's base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character to spend more gold than he or she earns during an adventure, but characters may not spend gold that they do not have. For details on selling items, see the *Living Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist's weapon +1* is listed as a Treasure, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist's dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC's adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

Certain Treasures have a minimum Adventure Level listed. That Treasure is not available if the group played below the listed AL. However, those who played at a higher AL can always choose from the lower-level options. (Treasures X, Y, and Z are always available at every Adventure Level.)

Each PC Selects Two of the Following:

Note: Treasure X is more generous than usual, since this is a Battle Interactive. The Common item level limit is character level + 3 and the Uncommon item level limit is character level + 2.

Treasure X (Choose an Item): The character finds a Common or Uncommon permanent magic item of the player's choice. The item must come from a player resource (as defined in the *LFR Campaign Guide*).

The player may choose a Common magic item of the character's level +3 or less, or an Uncommon magic item of the character's level +2 or less. The character must have an available found-item slot, and only permanent magic items may be chosen with this option (no consumables, ammunition, etc.)

Treasure Y (Consumable plus Gold): The character finds a potion of healing (AL 2-4) or a number of frozen whetstones (AL 6+). The value of consumables gained may not exceed the More Gold amount for the AL, with any amount not spent paid to the character in gold pieces. The player should record the item(s) gained on his or her Adventure Log. Consumables gained in this fashion never require a found-item slot.

AL 2-4: any number of *potions of healing* (level 5) at a value of 50 gp each, up to the More Gold amount for the AL; any amount left over is gained in gold.AL 6-14: any number of *frozen whetstones* (level 7) at a value of 100 gp

each, up to the More Gold amount for the AL; any amount left over is gained in gold.

AL 16-20: any number of *frozen whetstones* (level 7 at a value of 100 gp each, and/or level 17 at a value of 2,600 gp each), up to the More Gold amount for the AL; any amount left over is gained in gold.

Treasure Z (More Gold): The character finds or is given coin, gems, jewelry, art objects, ritual components, or other non-magical valuables (in addition to his or her Base Gold).

AL 2: 50 gp	AL 12: 1,000 gp
AL 4: 75 gp	AL 14: 1,750 gp
AL 6: 150 gp	AL 16: 3,500 gp
AL 8: 300 gp	AL 18: 7,000 gp
AL 10: 450 gp	AL 20: 11,000 gp

Story Awards

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. All PCs who joined the battle interactive gain ADCP37 First Strike regardless of the outcome. ADCP38 and ADCP39 are mutually exclusive. Both are earned when the PCs are victorious in their battle with the Netherese. The tables gain ADCP38 Destroyers of Sakkors when at the end of the battle interactive Sakkors has been destroyed. They gain ADCP39 A New Friend when they befriended the city instead.

ADCP37 First Strike

You fought in the battle now known as "First Strike" in which the armies of many nations banded together to strike at the Empire of Netheril. To commemorate the battle, you were given a small medal, purple with a silver outline of a skyship.

If you show this medal to authorities from Cormyr, Myth Drannor, or Evereska, or any other enemy of Netheril (DM's discretion), they treat you with a bit more respect. You gain a +2 bonus on social interaction skill checks with those groups.

At some point during the battle you recovered a magic item from a fallen foe. This Story Award allows you to choose a single Common or Uncommon permanent magic item from an LFR player resource with an item level up to your character level + 2 (maximum item level 22). You must choose the item before you play your next adventure. The item counts as one of your two Treasure selections for this adventure, but it does not cost you a found-item slot.

ADCP38 Destroyer of Sakkors

During the Battle of Sakkors the flying fortress crashed into the ground below. Perhaps one day it might be repaired, but that would require years and a massive amount of magic, assuming it is possible at all.

During the destruction of Sakkors, a huge amount of energy was released, some of which might have infused one of your items. As one of your two Treasure selections for this adventure, you may upgrade one of your existing magic items. One suit of armor, weapon/implement, or neck slot item is upgraded by 1 plus (5 item levels, maximum new item level 24) for free. The item's new level must be less than or equal to your current character level + 4. This upgrade does not change the item's rarity, nor does it cost you an additional found-item slot. Items that do not have an enhancement bonus are not eligible.

ADCP39 A New Friend

During the Battle of Sakkors the flying fortress itself was discovered to be sentient (and interested in self-preservation). After a tense negotiation and a demonstration of good faith by you and your allies, the citadel was liberated and decided to join Cormyr in the fight against Netheril. The presence of the sapient fortress represents a great boon for the war effort. The authorities of Cormyr, Evereska, and Myth Drannor will long remember and commemorate your heroism. You are offered an honorary knighthood in either Cormyr or, if you are an elf or eladrin, in either Evereska or Myth Drannor.

When Sakkors touched your mind it provided you with protection and knowledge. You may choose the mental block boon as one of your two Treasures for this adventure. The initial level of the boon is the highest-level version less than or equal to your current character level. The boon automatically upgrades when your character level equals the next available upgrade level. This boon is always active and is an exception to the normal LFR rule that you may only have one active boon. However, the boon does count as a permanent Uncommon magic item for determining the maximum number of Uncommon items you can possess.

Mental Block of Sakkors — Uncommon, Level 4 / 14 / 24

The sentient flying city of Sakkors taught you a trick to ignore the effects of mind-affecting magic and the phantom pain of psychic damage.

Alternative Reward: Legendary Boon

Property

You gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws against fear or charm effects.

Level 14: +3 item bonus

Level 24: +4 item bonus

Utility Power ✦ Daily (No Action)

Trigger: You are subject to a fear or charm effect.

Effect: You make a saving throw against the triggering effect (even if it does not normally allow a save). On a successful save, the effect ends on you.

Utility Power ✦ Daily (Immediate Interrupt)

Trigger: You take psychic damage.

Effect: Choose one of the following:

1: You gain resist 5 psychic until the end of your next turn, OR 2: you gain resist 2 psychic until the end of the encounter.

Level 14: You gain either resist 10 psychic until the end of your next turn OR resist 3 psychic until the end of the encounter.

Level 24: You gain either resist 15 psychic until the end of your next turn OR resist 5 psychic until the end of the encounter.

Reference: Modified version of *mental block* (*Dark Sun Campaign Setting*)

Appendix 1: Netherese Army Traits

Throughout Part 2 of the battle, the status of the Netherese army within Sakkors is depicted through 5 traits. The traits have a value between 0 and 4. At 0 victory of the PCs is complete and that trait is permanently disabled. The value of the traits has a direct impact on the battle, both through a primary effect and by triggering events and/or opening new encounters. The primary effects can be found in the table below and affect the opponents of the players.

To drop a trait by 1 point, 0.2 x #tables need to succeed at it. For example, with 20 tables if 4 tables start the encounter with the *offense* trait the trait drops by 1 point. The minimum is 1 table, so an event with less than 5 tables still needs to have 1 table on an encounter to drop said trait by 1. HQ is responsible for showing the current trait values to you and the players.

City Command always starts at 4, but it is reduced by 0.4 x #tables.

Trait	0	1	2	3	4
Offense	Traps stop functioning		+1/2 trait (rounded down) bonus to attack and damage of Event 1.		
Defense	-	+trait bonus to attack and damage			
Maneuverability	-	+1/2 trait (rounded down) bonus to speed			
	-	-		Saving throw against one immobilize, restrain or slow condition at the start of the creatures turn (even against effects that normally do not get a saving throw). The creature still gets a saving throw at the end of its turn as normal.	
Morale	-	+1/2 trait (rounded down) bonus on saving throws			
	-	-		Saving throw against one daze, dominate or stun at the start of the creatures turn (even against effects that normally do not get a saving throw). The creature still gets a saving throw at the end of its turn as normal.	
City Command	-	No mechanical effect			

Offense:
- As long as Offense is higher than 0, add Event 1: Blast Away to each encounter.

First of Defense or Maneuverability to reach 1:
- Triggers Event 2*: Out of Hiding.
- Trait is immediately raised to 3.
- Opens Encounter 6: Counter Attack (affecting the trait that triggered it).

Morale dropped to 1:
- Triggers Event 3*: Assassins.

City Command 0:
- Trigger Event 4: Falling.
- Opens Encounter 7: It Is Alive.

* If these events trigger during the same fight, only use whatever creature appears first. Ignore the second event.

Appendix 2: Event 1 – Blast Away

Creatures

As long as the Offense Trait is positive add the following at the start of a new encounter at heroic level:
4 turrets

As long as the Offense Trait is positive add the following at the start of a new encounter at paragon level:
5 turrets

Note: Remember to modify the attack and damage bonus based on the level of the Offense Trait.

Scaling the Encounter

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

Four PCs: Remove one turret.
Six PCs: Add one turret.

Setup

As long as the magical defenses of Sakkors are active, it lashes out at intruders. At the start of a new encounter place the turrets on the map on a place of your choosing as long as it is one a wall or floor and within possible reach of the PCs (e.g. not 20 feet up in the air). Make sure to spread them out so that barring special circumstances one PC cannot reach two within 1 move action.

They are clearly visible to the PCs, and they act first regardless of the initiative of the PCs or the opponents.

The turrets are part of Sakkors itself. They are objects and as such they are immune to poison, psychic and necrotic damage. They don't have a Will defense and are immune to attacks that target Will defense. They can be influenced shut down through skill checks as well. Other than that they are for all intents and purposes traps. Any character adjacent to a turret can destroy it with a standard action against DC Moderate or with a minor action against a DC Hard with Arcana, Athletics, Nature, Religion or Thievery. A failed check means the PC is hit automatically. A PC can make as many checks per round as the character has actions.

Attack rolls, damage rolls and DCs to destroy them are provided below separated by AL.

Tactics

At heroic level the turrets are simple mindless constructs simply targeting the closest target. At paragon level they are somewhat intelligent, focusing on ranged attackers. They especially dislike non-martial types, divine characters in particular.

Note that they tend to shoot at different targets if possible. Still, if your tables are having an easy time you can focus on a single target.

Stats

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Appendix 3: Event 2 – Out of Hiding

Creatures

The following creature appears on the battlefield at the start of the next round* for AL 2 and 4:
1 human shadow caller

The following creature appears on the battlefield at the start of the next round* for AL 6, 8 and 10:
1 shadar-kai storm caller

The following creature appears on the battlefield at the start of the next round* for AL 12 and 14:
1 shadar-kai flameborn

The following creature appears on the battlefield at the start of the next round* for AL 16, 18 and 20:
1 shade sorrow mage

Note: Remember to modify the creature based on the Defense, Maneuverability and Morale trait.

* If the PCs actually just finished the encounter, they are in luck. The creature does **not** appear!
* If the assassin from Event 3 is present, the creature does **not** appear!

Scaling the Encounter

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

Six PCs: The mage has an action point.

Setup

At first the Nethere underestimate the opposition. Only when the PCs make an impression do they realize action is necessary. Up until that time most of the wizards kept their distance from the fighting, detesting violence. As soon as Event 2 is triggered, do they rush out to deal with the pesky nuisance.

Immediately add the wizard on the board. Continue the round until after the **next** PC takes a turn. Then the wizard acts. It tries to remain hidden until it act (use its passive Stealth against the passive Perception of the PCs). If the PCs have already finished the fight by that time it flees and the PCs never have to face it.

Tactics

The tactics of the Netherese mage depends on the AL. It is an intelligent creature, focusing on the logical targets. It is relatively cowardly, likely to flee or surrender if it is the last one standing or when seriously hurt.

At AL 2 and 4 it focusses on targets standing in big clusters, preferably in melee with its allies, using both *shadow phantoms* and *deathmark bolt* to great effect. It saves *shadow strangler* if it needs to retreat.

At AL 6, 8 and 10 it starts by throwing *vengeful whirlwind* at a large cluster of its enemies, especially if that can get a threatened ally out of melee. It then keeps its distance and uses *lightning strike* from as far away as possible. It saves *shadow jaunt* for its escape.

At AL 12 and 14 it either keeps its distance, using *fire bolt* immediately followed by *fiery eye* if the first attack hits and sliding the target into an uncomfortable position. Its favored targets are ranged attackers. If there is a large group of allies clustered together it might get close to use *blessing of Shar*, blessing both its allies and hurting the PCs. Otherwise it uses the blessing to get away (as well as *shadow jaunt*).

At AL 16, 18 and 20 it prefers to keep its distance while targeting ranged opponents. It prefers to shoot at slowed opponents. It saves *tears from the night* when it tries to flee or when such an attack would be a great boon to its allies.

Stats

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Appendix 4: Event 3 – Assassins

Creatures

The following creature appears on the battlefield at the start of the next round* for AL 2 and 4:
1 shadow stalker

The following creature appears on the battlefield at the start of the next round* for AL 6, 8 and 10:
1 shadar-kai executioner

The following creature appears on the battlefield at the start of the next round* for AL 12, 14 and 16:
1 shadow puppeteer

The following creature appears on the battlefield at the start of the next round* for AL 18 and 20:
1 bonegouge assassin

Note: Remember to modify the creature based on the Defense, Maneuverability and Morale trait.

* If the PCs actually just finished the encounter, the creature at the start of the next encounter!
* If the wizard from Event 2 is present, this creature does **not** appear!

Scaling the Encounter

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

Six PCs: The assassin has an action point.

Setup

At some points the PCs draw the attention of people they might have wanted to avoid. When the Morale traits drops to 1, the Netherse summon and/or send an assassin specifically after the PCs. These silent deadly stalkers have only one goal: kill the PCs.

Immediately add the assassin on the board. Continue the round until after the **next** PC takes a turn. Then the assassin acts. It tries to remain hidden until it act (use its passive Stealth against the passive Perception of the PCs). If the PCs have already finished the fight by that time it joins the next fight from its start.

Tactics

The tactics of the assassin depends on the AL. It is an intelligent creature, focusing on the logical targets. It is relatively cowardly, but it has been given a task (sometimes magically enforced). If it is the last creature standing it flees, only to join in the next fight having recovered 1 healing surge worth of healing and recharged encounter powers.

Stats

Adventure Level 2: See Appendix 7.
Adventure Level 4: See Appendix 8.
Adventure Level 6: See Appendix 9.
Adventure Level 8: See Appendix 10.
Adventure Level 10: See Appendix 11.
Adventure Level 12: See Appendix 12.
Adventure Level 14: See Appendix 13.
Adventure Level 16: See Appendix 14.
Adventure Level 18: See Appendix 15.
Adventure Level 20: See Appendix 16.

Appendix 5: Event 4 – Falling

When enough tables finish Encounter 5 successfully, suddenly the shackles of Sakkors are removed with drastic effects on the city. First of all, it triggers a failsafe placed by the Netherese which causes the city to shake violently and then begin to fall, slowly at first, but faster later on. Secondly, the High Mages realize something is actively resisting their efforts to control the city.

Suddenly a loud shriek remnant of shredding steel and chalk on a chalkboard echoes through the halls of Sakkors. For a blink of an eye time appears to slow down, even your opponents seem to look around surprised and with worry. Then all hell breaks loose. The whole city shakes violently, almost as if the city itself shudders and groans in pain. Rubble and dust falls from the ceiling and most fall prone in the sudden upheaval. It is then that you get a feeling in your stomach you associate with a sudden drop. Something tells you the city fell a few dozen yards, and while the falling has either stopped or slowed down, this might change all of a sudden.

All creatures in the battle must make a DC Hard Acrobatics checks or fall prone. Creatures adjacent to a large solid object such as a wall, pillar or large statue gain a +5 bonus on this check. If the check is failed by 5 or more that creature takes AL in damage from falling debris.

Proceed for two turns with the encounter, when all of a sudden a call for aid is send by the High Mages of Myth Drannor. Each group is asked to help find out what is disrupting their attempts in gaining control of the city and deal with it before the city is lost. Of course, wresting control of the city but losing the battle is not an option either. If a group decides to help, they are instantly teleported to Encounter 7. If they have not yet achieved a victory in the current encounter, that encounter is lost and should be reported as such to the senior DM. If a group decides to stick around, they can finish the encounter, and if there is still time afterwards decide to join Encounter 7 or pick another encounter from the regular list.

Obviously, the table should report their choice immediately to the senior DM. Allow the tables to discuss amongst one another what do, but a choice should be made within 10 minutes.

Note: A minimum of 0.2 x #tables is required to join Encounter 7 immediately or the secondary objective is automatically lost. While the impact is not directly noticeable, it means that Sakkors is destroyed instead of conquered. Ultimately Cormyr prefers Sakkors destroyed than in hands of Netheril (who can easily restore their control with the Cormyrean forces defeated).

Appendix 6: Complication Cards

All complications have two effects:

- An individual effect that each player 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 players 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 you trouble, you can ask for volunteers to take it off your 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
Your hostile actions towards Sakkors have drawn the displeasure Shar. She has cursed you. Your shadow separates from your body and starts fighting you.
Individual effect for each player
You gain ongoing (AL+2) cold and necrotic damage (save ends).
Table effect
All players take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
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 Extreme Displeasure
Your hostile actions towards Sakkors have drawn the displeasure of Shar. 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.
Individual effect for each player
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),
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 Annoyance
Your hostile actions towards Sakkors have managed to annoy Shar. She has cursed you. A mental wailing starts reverberating around your skull, making it hard to focus your actions.
Individual effect for each player
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.
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.

Please stay?
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.
Individual effect for each player
You are pulled to the nearest horizontal surface and are restrained (save ends).
Table effect
Players cannot teleport. Additionally they cannot shift more than 1 square per turn.
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. They are clinging to you, hindering your movement.
Individual effect for each player
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
A team of Netherese commando's drops in. They are loaded for bear and ready to ruin your day.
Individual effect for each player
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. She curses you. An overwhelming weariness seeps into your bones, exhaustion dragging on your very soul.
Individual effect for each player
You are weakened (save ends).
Table effect
Players 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 player
You cannot use any immediate actions or opportunity actions (save ends).
Table effect
When a player 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 player
You gain ongoing 2+AL fire damage (save ends).
Table effect
All players 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 player
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 players 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. Now, why do my hands look translucent?
Individual effect for each player
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 7 to 16: Stats Adventure Level 2 to 20

See separate documents.

Event Summary (Senior DM Only)

The results of this adventure will have an impact on the future development of the Desolation story!

There can only be one result of the event. The Senior DM should fill in the on-line summary for future use in the campaign.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ADCP0502LFR

The survey period closes on **01 October 2013**. The adventure remains playable after that date, but we will tabulate the results at the end of the survey period and that will be the official result for the campaign as a whole.

1. How many tables played the event?

a. 5
b. 6 to 10
c. 11 to 15
d. 16 to 25.
e. More

2. What was the fate of Sakkors?

a. Never conquered (the battle was lost)
b. Allied with Cormyr
c. Destroyed
d. False alliance with Cormyr

3. What was the end value of the Offense Trait?

a. 0
b. 1
c. 2
d. 3
e. 4

4. What was the end value of the Defense Trait?

a. 0
b. 1
c. 2
d. 3
e. 4

5. What was the end value of the Maneuverability Trait?

a. 0
b. 1
c. 2
d. 3
e. 4

6. What was the end value of the Morale Trait?

a. 0
b. 1
c. 2
d. 3
e. 4

7. How did the airship battle go for Cormyr*?

a. Badly (50%+ of the Cormyrean ships were destroyed).
b. Reasonably (25% to 50% of the Cormyrean ships where destroyed).
c. Great (less than 25% of the Cormyrean ships were destroyed).

* If using the alternate skill challenge for Encounter 2 in round 1 only count PCs' ships (so how many tables had their ships crash).

8. How did the airship battle go for Netheril?

a. Badly (50%+ of the Netherese ships were destroyed).
b. Reasonably (25% to 50% of the Netherese ships where destroyed).
c. Great (less than 25% of the Netherese ships were destroyed).

9. How many dreadnoughts were conquered?

a. 0
b. Half
c. All

10. Did you like the complication card mechanic?

a. Never used
b. Yes
c. No

11. How do the players rate this adventure on a scale from 1-5, where 1 is the worst possible rating, 3 is average, and 5 is the best possible rating?

5 4 3 2 1

12. How does the DM rate this adventure on a scale from 1-5, where 1 is the worst possible rating, 3 is average, and 5 is the best possible rating?

5 4 3 2 1