

CCC-GHC-BK2-01



SHADOWS OF RITH KEEP



A 2-hour to 4-hour Border Kingdoms
adventure for characters of 1st - 4th level

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Adventure Tier: 1

Optimized For: APL 3

Version: 1.6



SHADOWS OF RITH KEEP

The ruins of Rith Keep lie a short distance from the small Border Kingdoms thorp of Largrin. In times past, the keep was home to the self-appointed River Lord of Largrin, a warrior of great skill who protected the surrounding lands. It is now little more than a stone shell, which rumors say is haunted. Are these tales simply the fanciful stories of local beet farmers, or does something more sinister lurk in the shadows of Rith Keep?

A Two-Hour to Four-Hour Adventure for Characters of 1st – 4th Level



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According to the sage Meriadas of Westgate: “The Border Kingdoms are the most favored destination for adventurers who want to proudly and boldly conquer a realm or establish their own new kingdom. Lords, counts, dukes, kings and emperors rise, proclaim themselves, and are swept away with the speed and regularity of waves crashing upon a shore.”

[Border Kingdoms content at the DMs Guild](#)

This adventure is optimized for a party of five characters. When running an adventure at a large convention such as Gamehole, it is common to have seven players at a table, which has the potential to affect encounter balance. The “Adjusting the Encounter” sidebars within the adventure are developed for an average party, but just like real life, one size doesn’t necessarily fit all.

If the characters are overcoming combats too easily, increase the recommended strength level of the encounters by a step (from average to strong, for example). If needed, you can also increase the number of monsters or maximize their hit points to make things a little harder. In some cases, you may even need to increase the difficulty by two steps, just be careful not to make things unwinnable.

Remember, adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit!



ADVENTURE PRIMER

WELCOME TO *SHADOWS OF RITH KEEP*, A D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, that is part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Convention Created Content* program.

The adventure is set in the Border Kingdoms, a tumultuous region of the Forgotten Realms on the southern shore of the Lake of Steam. During the adventure, the characters explore a ruined keep infested with undead near the headwaters of the River Rith, clearing it of its undead infestation.

BACKGROUND

The ruins of **RITH KEEP** sit on the eastern side of the River Rith atop an overgrown hillock. On a clear day, the residents of the tiny thorp of **LARGRIN** can just see its crumbled walls in the distance. Rumors have persisted for years that the keep, which belonged to a warrior of considerable renown who appointed himself the **RIVER LORD** of Largrin, is haunted. Until recently, these tales were nothing more than fiction.

However, dark times have come to the Border Kingdoms. Not long ago, a group of adventurers unwittingly released a creature of pure evil into the lands: a death knight by the name of **KURTH AVALLAR**. Having allied with an opportunistic upstart noble who calls himself the **BLACK WYVERN**, the death knight now roams the Border Kingdoms, calling forth the dead to serve him.

A tenday ago, the death knight's call reached the ruins of Rith Keep, awakening the dead in and around it. When a trio of skeletons managed to make its way from the keep to the shallow waters of the River Rith, Largrin's terrified residents fled to its inn, The Fin and Feather. The inn's owner, **LORENA VEEGLEN**, rallied the frightened folk, and they managed to destroy the undead.

Fearing another attack, Lorena enlisted the aid of a traveling elf by the name of **ELSWALTH BRIGHTSTAR**. Using his Harper connections, Elswalth has issued a call for able adventurers to investigate the ruined keep and eliminate any undead dwelling within.

EPISODES

The adventure's story is spread over three **episodes** that take approximately two hours to play. These episodes contain two **story objectives** and are introduced by a Call to Action episode. The adventure also includes two **bonus objectives** that can be played if time permits. They are introduced in Episode 2 and Episode 3.

CALL TO ACTION

If you're planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the **Call to Action** once. However, if you plan to play over several sessions, you'll want to revisit the **Call to Action** each time you play. The **Call to Action** can be found in Episode 1, as follows:

- **Episode 1: The Fin and Feather.** The party arrives at the Fin and Feather, an inn in the tiny thorp of **LARGRIN**. Its innkeeper, **LORENA VEEGLEN**, and an elven Harper by the name of **ELSWALTH BRIGHTSTAR** ask the characters to investigate a ruined keep, thinking it could be the source of the undead that recently made their way to Largrin. This is the adventure's **Call to Action**.

STORY OBJECTIVES

This adventure includes two story objectives, which are found in **Episode 2** and **Episode 3**, as follows:

- **Episode 2: The Ruins of Rith Keep.** The party arrives at **RITH KEEP**, a ruined stronghold near **LARGRIN**, where they encounter undead warriors and specters. Upon defeating the undead, the characters find a collapsed entrance to the stronghold's lower level, which requires help from Largrin to clear. This is **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: Tomb of the River Lord.** The characters explore the small dungeon below the keep. Within the dungeon, they find the tomb of the keep's original owner, the **RIVER LORD OF LARGRIN** (see the "About Largrin" sidebar for more information). But something stirs beyond its sealed entrance. Will they open the sealed tomb or let it be? This is **Story Objective B**.

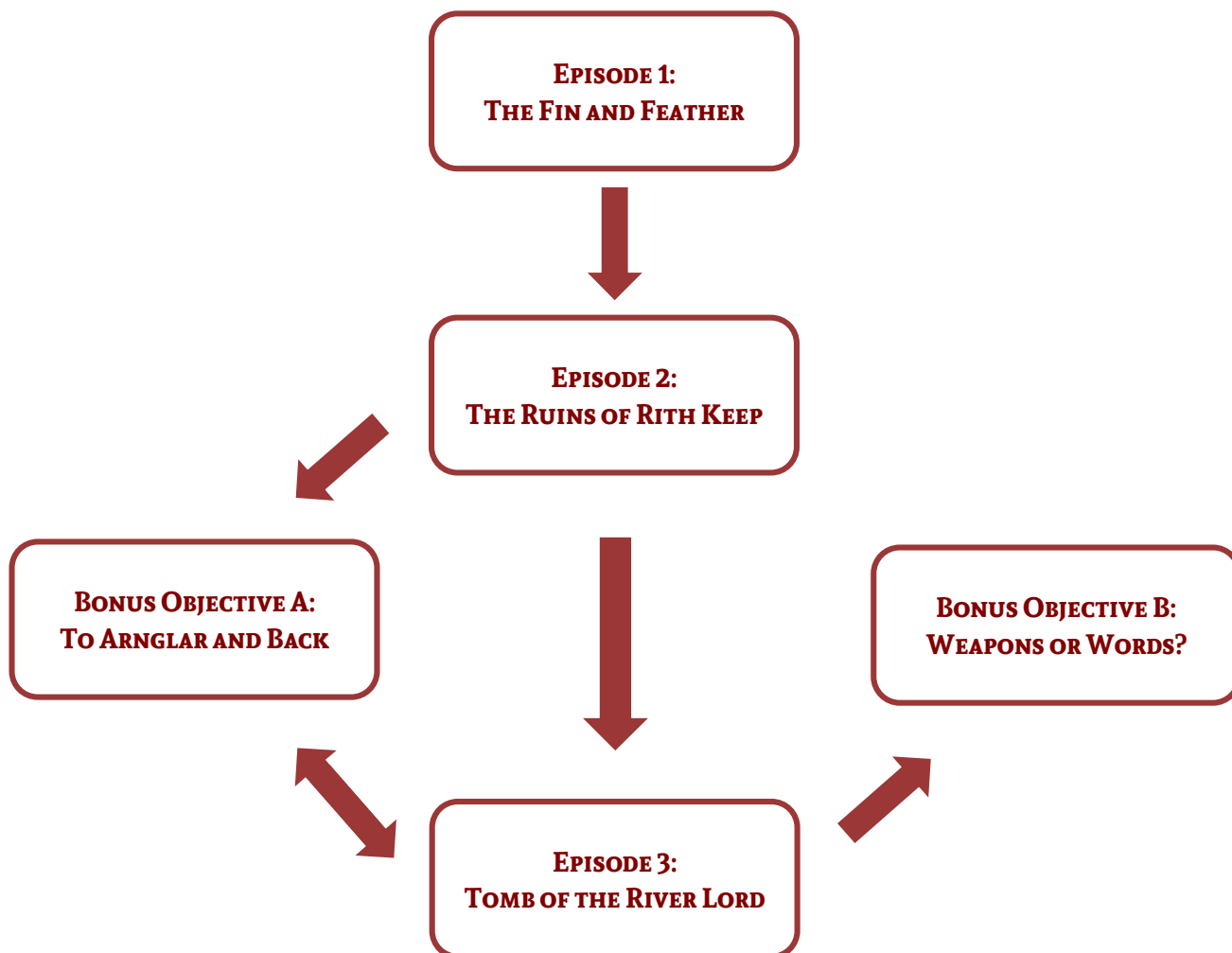
BONUS OBJECTIVES

This adventure also includes two bonus objectives that the characters can pursue if they have extra time. The bonus objectives are found in **Appendix 1: Bonus Objective A** and **Appendix 2: Bonus Objective B**, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: To Arnglar and Back:** While the residents of **LARGRIN** work to clear the collapsed entrance to the keep's lower level, **ELSWALTH BRIGHTSTAR** asks the party to travel west to **ARNGLAR** and gather information about the **BLACK WYVERN'S** activities at the ruined manor of a dead elvish wizard.
- **Bonus Objective B: Weapons or Words?** The characters travel to a cave east of **RITH KEEP**, where a green dragon wrymiling makes its lair. They must either slay the creature or negotiate for peace.

ADVENTURE FLOWCHART

This section should provide you, the DM, with a basic understanding of not only the flow of the adventure, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.



EPISODE 1: THE FIN AND FEATHER (CALL TO ACTION)

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

Read the following to start the adventure:

The season is early summer, and last night you arrived late at The Fin and Feather, the only inn in the tiny thorp of Largrin, which lies at the head of the River Rith. After resting for the evening, you rose before the inn opened and meet with the innkeeper, a stout middle-aged woman by the name of Lorena Veeglen. You are just finishing a breakfast of boiled eggs, sharp cheese, rye bread, and sweet beet pie, when a neatly dressed elf descends the stairs. Seeing your gathering, he approaches, introducing himself as Elswalth Brightstar.

Lorena and Elswalth have the information below to share with the characters.

WHAT LORENA VEEGLEN KNOWS

Lorena is a stout woman of Halruaan descent in her early fifties. She has creased olive skin, dark hair streaked with gray, and a round, motherly face. In spite of her soft appearance, she is intelligent, capable, and to the point. Until retiring to the Border Kingdoms five years ago, she served as mercenary in the Five Companies of Halruaa. Even though she is not as young as she used to be, she is still quite capable with a sword. While Largrin has no mayor or ruler, its residents look to Lorena for advice, and she occasionally settles disputes when they arise.

She shares the following with the party:

- Rith Keep lies across the River Rith atop a small hillock about three miles from Largrin. Its ruins are barely visible on a clear day.
- It was once ruled by the River Lord of Largrin, who perished defending the thorp's residents from an orc attack (see the "About Largrin" sidebar for more information).
- Since that time, there have been rumors that the keep is haunted by the River Lord's ghost, but Lorena has hunted its surroundings several times over the years, and she has never seen or heard anything odd.
- Admittedly, she has never made a thorough investigation of the ruins.
- A tenday ago, three orc skeletons clambered through the shallow water of the River Rith and made their way to the edge of Largrin. They were spotted by two halfling beet farmers, who fled to the inn, alerting other residents along the way.
- After quelling the initial panic, Lorena gathered five of Largrin's most skilled residents, and together, they dispatched the undead creatures.

WHAT ELSWALTH BRIGHTSTAR KNOWS

An elf of considerable wealth, Elswalth behaves as a noble, even though he has no nobility in his family. While he is now in his middle years, he earned a small fortune earlier in his life by serving as a spymaster for House Ophal in Amn. He abandoned that post, changed his name, and fled to the Border Kingdoms when the head of House Ophal learned he was actually supplying all of the information he acquired to the Harpers, a faction to which he has always been dedicated.

Elswalth owns a small home in the city of Emrys, but he spends much of his time and wealth traveling the Border Kingdoms to stay apprised of their ever-changing nature. With fine clothing, immaculately groomed long black hair, and deep-green eyes, he maintains the façade of a charismatic fop, but underneath, he is intelligent, thoughtful, and forever a loyal Harper.

He shares the following with the party:

- Elswalth has known Lorena for several years. They met when she arrived in Largrin. The two have been good friends since, and when he learned of Largrin's trouble from her, he posted a call for adventurers in neighboring Irl and Manywaters before setting out for the region. He arrived the day before last.
- The undead are rising all over the Border Kingdoms. Not long ago, a battle occurred at Blackburn. News from that region tells of a death knight and an unscrupulous young Emryan noble working together. The noble, who calls himself the Black Wyvern, was taken prisoner during the fighting, but he recently escaped captivity.
- Largrin isn't a wealthy place, but Lorena and its residents have gathered some coin to make sure something is done about the ruins. (Elswalth will see the characters are suitably rewarded.)
- Elswalth does not readily divulge that he is a Harper, but during the conversation, he discreetly flashes a Harper pin under his lapel. He does so in a manner that only another Harper would recognize and watches for a reaction. Later, he privately gives each fellow Harper a *potion of healing* before they depart for the ruins.

OBJECTIVE

Elswalth and Lorena want the characters to travel to the ruins of Rith Keep and eliminate any undead that might dwell within. Once the keep is free of undead, it can be consecrated by priests from Emrys, and Largrin's residents will be safe.

Proceed to **Episode 2: The Ruins of Rith Keep** to continue the adventure.

EPISODE 2: THE RUINS OF RITH KEEP

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

The ruins of Rith Keep lie roughly three miles from Largrin. It takes the characters about an hour to reach the location on foot. As they travel, have each player describe and introduce their character.

After fording the River Rith near Largrin, you and your companions made your way east through lightly forested, rolling hills. As you traveled, the cloudy morning skies turned gray, and a slow drizzle began to fall. During the hour it took to reach the ruined keep, the rain steadily increased, and peals of thunder can now be heard from dark clouds to the west.

Use the information below as the party explores the ruins of Rith Keep.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Lighting. Dark, cloudy skies.

Sounds and smells. Within 100 feet of the ruin, the surrounding woods are noticeably devoid of typical animal life, and all is quiet. The air smells stale within the keep.

Walls. Rith Keep once had two stories. The entire second story has collapsed to rubble, leaving fallen stones and rotten timber scattered all over the interior. The remaining stone walls vary in height from 8 to 14 feet. Climbing a wall requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check.

Weather. It is early summer, and the day is cloudy and rainy.

USING THE WEATHER

The summer rain isn't likely to stop the characters from exploring the ruins, but it does make hearing things more difficult. While it is raining, characters have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that involve listening.

For every hour the party spends exploring the ruins, roll a d6. If the result is 5 or 6, the rain stops, and the sun comes out for an hour before it clouds over and starts to rain again.

1. ENTRY

A long hallway once stood behind the enormous banded oak doors that blocked entry to the keep. The doors have long ago rotted away, allowing easy entry into the ruins.

A quick survey of the hallway shows the bones of dead animals and remnants of campfires from times past when bandits used the keep as a hideout. Part of the hallway's eastern wall has collapsed, leaving a small, rubble-choked opening into area 3.

Characters with a passive Perception of 15 or higher, or those who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, hear the slight sounds of clanking metal coming from the skeletons in area 9. Any character who examines the western wall (marked with a "C") and makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check recognizes that it once contained a doorway or opening. When part of the keep's upper level collapsed, it buried the entrance to area 9 in rubble. If desired, the characters can clear the rubble. It takes five characters roughly an hour to move enough stones to break through, and each character who helps must make a successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of the work or gain a level of exhaustion.

Even if the characters manage to break through to the courtyard beyond, the area 5 feet around the opening is considered difficult terrain. In addition, the undead there attack when they see an enemy.

2. WAITING AREA

This was once a waiting area for guests who came to visit the keep, but part of the adjacent eastern tower collapsed decades ago, taking with it a large section the room's outer wall. An open doorway to the west leads to the main hall in area 1, and another open doorway to the east leads to area 5.

A stout oak door remains intact to the north, but it is warped and stuck in place from the weight of a sagging wall above its top jamb. It can be forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, but doing so causes part of the wall to collapse, showering all those within 5 feet of the door in rubble that deals (7) 2d6 bludgeoning damage. Characters with the Stonecunning racial trait, such as dwarves, notice the hazard upon approaching or examining the door.

3. CHAPEL

Remnants of broken pews litter the floor of this room, which was once a chapel used by the River Lord and those loyal to him.

The stone doors on the north wall are closed. While still functional, their hinges are rusted, and they require a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to force open.

The southern wall contains a stout oak door that is warped and stuck in place (see room 2 for details).

The western wall has partially collapsed, leaving a small, rubble-choked opening into area 1.

The eastern wall holds a 2-foot-square carving in bas relief of a balanced scale resting atop a hammer.

Characters who succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check recognize it as the holy symbol of Tyr, the god of Justice. Clerics have advantage on this check.

Those who examine the carving and make a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check note a slight crack in its surface, indicating the presence of a hollow space behind it. The stone carving can be easily smashed with the butt of a weapon, revealing a small alcove that holds the treasure below.

TREASURE

A small alcove behind the holy symbol of Tyr holds a *potion of greater healing*.

4. HALL

This area was once contained sizeable hall used for entertaining, but the keep's northeastern tower has completely collapsed, leaving nothing but piles of crumbled stone and timber.

If you have not checked the state of the weather recently, do so when the characters enter this area or when they near area 4A (see the "Using the Weather" sidebar). If it is raining, the specters from area 4A attack the party here. If it is sunny, the

specters remain in area 4A, hiding in the northern alcove.

4A. PRAYER PILLAR

A large stone column dominates the middle of this hexagon-shaped room. Prayers in Common to Tyr, the god of justice, cover the pillar. The River Lord and his companions would stop here for a quick prayer before going to area 7 to eat or area 3 to attend services in the chapel.

CREATURES/NPCs

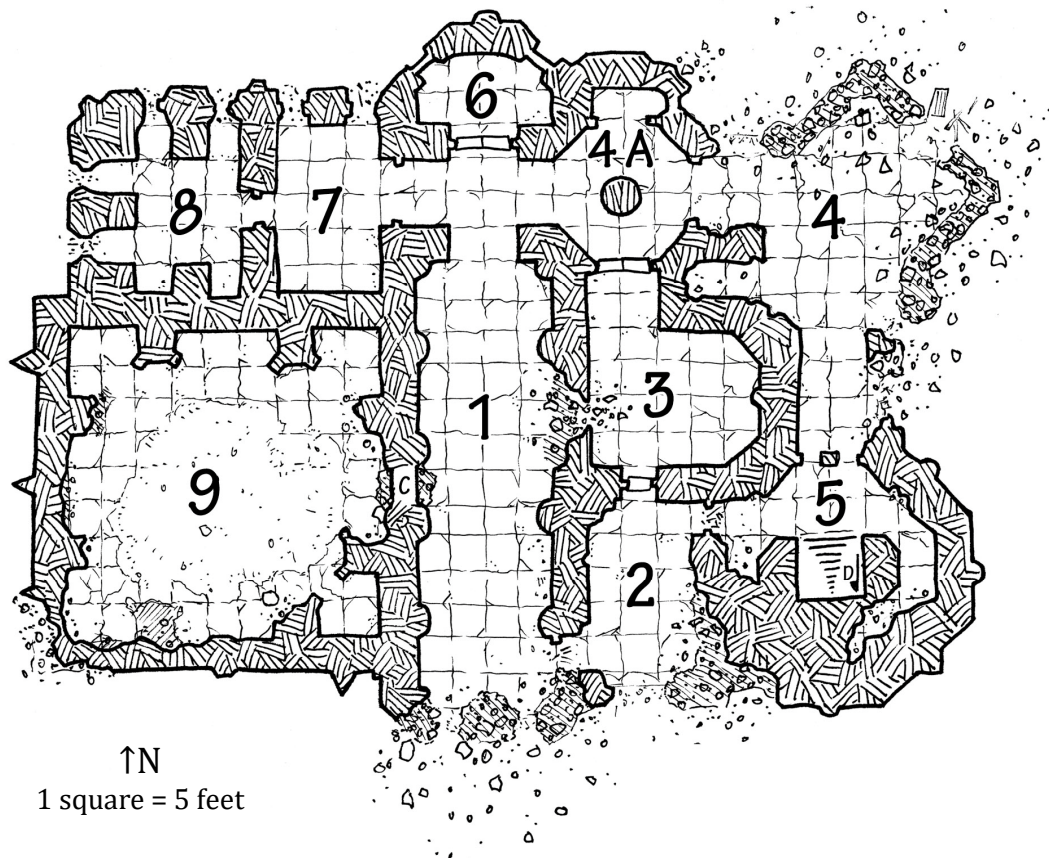
Four specters now spend their time here, as it is one of the only areas in the keep that still contains an intact ceiling (which is 12-feet high). If the sun is not shining, the specters attack any characters that exit area 1 or enter area 4. When sunny, they cower in the alcove to north, which holds the unidentifiable fragments of a smashed stone statue.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

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

- **Very weak party:** Remove two specters.
- **Weak party:** Remove one specter.
- **Strong party:** Add one specter.
- **Very strong party:** Add three specters.

RITH KEEP MAIN LEVEL



5. SOUTHEAST TOWER

Much of the keep's southeast tower has collapsed. The only thing of importance remaining are steps to the dungeon level below. Unfortunately, the stairs lead to a small landing (not shown on the map) that is buried in rubble.

When the southwest portion of the tower fell, the force collapsed the underground landing, making further exploration impossible without significant excavation. If the characters report this to Lorena or Elswalth when they return to The Fin and Feather, Lorena agrees to have the landing cleared by Largrin's residents so the party can explore further. See **Part 3: The River Lord's Tomb** for more information.

6. ARMORY

This small room once served as the keep's armory. Its stone doors are closed, but the lock was forced open and broken decades ago by bandits, providing easy access to the interior.

CREATURES/NPCs

Characters with a passive Perception of 13 or higher, or those who succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, hear faint sobbing as they approach the doors. Inside, the ghost of a 6-year-old girl named Mazzy sits huddled in the southwest corner of the room, crying. If the characters approach her non-threateningly, she shares the information below. If she feels threatened, she flees through the wall, seeking refuge in another part of the keep.

Note. No stats are provided for Mazzy. She is considered a non-combatant and only part of the adventure for roleplaying purposes.

- The ghost's name is Mazzy, and she is scared. She remembers the orcs attacking Largrin. They killed her Ma and Da.
- One tried to kill her with its axe, and she ran away, but something hit her in the back, and she fell to the ground, screaming in pain.
- Her neighbor, Olsen, grabbed her and carried her away from Largrin, but it was hard to breath and things got fuzzy.
- She remembers being in a stone room and seeing glimpses of people standing over her with sadness in their eyes. Many of the women were crying, and some of the men were too.
- Eventually, the fuzziness filled her vision, and she fell asleep.
- Something woke her up, but she isn't herself. She can't touch things, and she feels weird.

- There are strange creatures lurking about, and she just wants to go back to sleep and pretend none of this ever happened.

Since Mazzy died as a child, the death knight's call affected her differently than many others. No malice occupied her soul, and because of this, she retains the consciousness she had in life. If the characters examine her ghostly form, they see the shaft of a broken arrow protruding from her back.

Mazzy knows her parents are dead, and part of her knows she is too. More than anything she wants to see them again, but she does not know how to make this happen. Characters who succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (History or Religion) check know that burial customs vary wildly throughout Faerûn. They also know that those buried in different manners can experience different things in the afterlife.

The people of Largrin typically lay their dead to rest by burning their bodies and scattering their ashes in the River Rith. Characters can learn this information by questioning Mazzy (who saw her Gran laid to rest that way) or by speaking with Lorena. If the party finds Mazzy's corpse, which is buried in the courtyard in area 9, they can take her remains back to Largrin for proper burial, which will reunite Mazzy with her parents in the afterlife. If they do not find her remains, or if they choose not to help her, her soul will eventually find rest when the keep is consecrated, but she will not be reunited with her parents.

WHAT MAZZY KNOWS

As a ghost, Mazzy is incorporeal and can move through walls. She knows of the skeletons in area 9 and the specters in area 4A, but they scare her, so she does not go near them. She has been through the collapsed landing at the bottom of the steps in area 5, but she heard strange noises down there and promptly fled.

ROLEPLAYING MAZZY

Mazzy is quiet and shy. In life, she had long blond hair and enjoyed reading and playing in the river. She keeps her distance from characters that look intimidating, and she is drawn to females, especially those who are nice to her.

Providing the party treats her well, she follows them throughout the ruins. She remains nearby—unless combat occurs. During combat, she flees, but she returns once the fighting is over.

Quote: "I miss my mama."

7. DINING AREA

This room once held a long table and benches capable of seating over twenty people. None of its furnishings remain, having been burned in campfires throughout the years. Recently, a crag cat used the

area as a den, but it fled when it felt the unnatural presence of undead. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a rusty dagger among the bones of the crag cat's former meals.

8. KITCHEN

Two wood-fired stoves occupy the north wall of this room, which once served as the keep's kitchen. Little else remains but rubble and rot.

Over the years, leaves and other debris have blown into this area from the shattered windows on the north and east walls. It has collected in the southern corner of the room, forming a fertile loam that now supports several different types of mushrooms. Characters who examine the mushrooms can make a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check. A success reveals three spotted barkcaps, which have limited healing properties. Any living creature that eats one of the mushrooms within an hour of it being picked regains 3 (1d4+1) hit points. An hour after it is picked, the mushroom loses all of its healing properties.

9. COURTYARD

A large, open courtyard dominates the southwestern portion of the keep. Its perimeter once held covered stables, where the River Lord kept his mounts, but time has collapsed and rotted their wooden roofs, gates, and fences. The center of the courtyard also contained a small dirt area that was used for martial training exercises.

When the River Lord and his men perished defending the keep and Largrin's refugees (see the "About Largrin" sidebar for additional information), the survivors buried the warriors in the courtyard. The River Lord himself (and his great black stallion, Galdor) were entombed in the dungeon below.

Recently, the death knight's call caused some of the River Lord's followers to rise from their graves.

CREATURES/NPCs

Four dread warriors now wander the courtyard aimlessly, unable to climb its 14-foot-tall walls and escape. They cannot speak and attack any living creature they see, fighting until destroyed.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

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

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **dread warriors**.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **dread warrior**.
- **Strong party:** Add one **dread warrior**.
- **Very strong party:** Add three **dread warriors**.

FINDING MAZZY'S CORPSE

Any character who searches the courtyard easily notices the disturbed graves of the River Lord's warriors. They also find one grave to the south of the training area that is marked with a small pile of stones. This is where Mazzy is buried.

If Mazzy is with the party, she breaks down in tears upon seeing her grave, and once her bones are exhumed, she fades from existence.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

If you plan to use **Bonus Objective A** to extend the length of the adventure, proceed to **Appendix 1: To Arnglar and Back**. Otherwise, the characters return to Largrin, where Elswalth asks them to rest and recover at The Fin and Feather while Lorena and Urgin Flatsteel, Largrin's dwarven blacksmith, recruit residents to clear the collapsed hallway leading into the keep's lower level. Proceed to **Episode 3: Tomb of the River Lord** to continue the adventure.

EPISODE 3. TOMB OF THE RIVER LORD

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

After nearly three days of moving stone, Largrin's blacksmith, Urgin Flatsteel, and a small crew manage to clear the rubble blocking the entrance to Rith Keep's lower level. With the task complete, Lorena asks the characters to continue their exploration of the ruins.

Late yesterday, a crew of Largrin's residents finished clearing the entrance to Rith Keep's lower level. Rumbles of distant thunder played throughout the night as you slept, but the morning brought clear skies and cooler temperatures, making your short walk to the ruins pleasant. You now stand before a ten-foot-wide set of stairs that leads from the surface into the shadowy darkness below.

Use the information below as the party explores the lower level of the keep.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Lighting. Darkness.

Ceilings, floors, and walls. The ceilings in all areas are 10 feet high. Unless otherwise noted, all ceilings, floors, and walls are made of worked stone.

Doors. All of the doors in the keep's lower level are made of stone. With the exception of area 3, which is barred, all door are unlocked.

Sounds and smells. The lower level of the keep is quiet, damp, and smells musty.

OBJECTIVE

Eliminate any undead that remain in Rith Keep.

1. LANDING

Fine debris covers the floor at the bottom of the steps to keep's lower level. In places, the walls have been shored up using stout timbers. Additional timbers brace the double doors in the southeast corner of the room. The workers who cleared the space added them to keep anything dwelling within from escaping, but they are easily lifted aside by the characters.

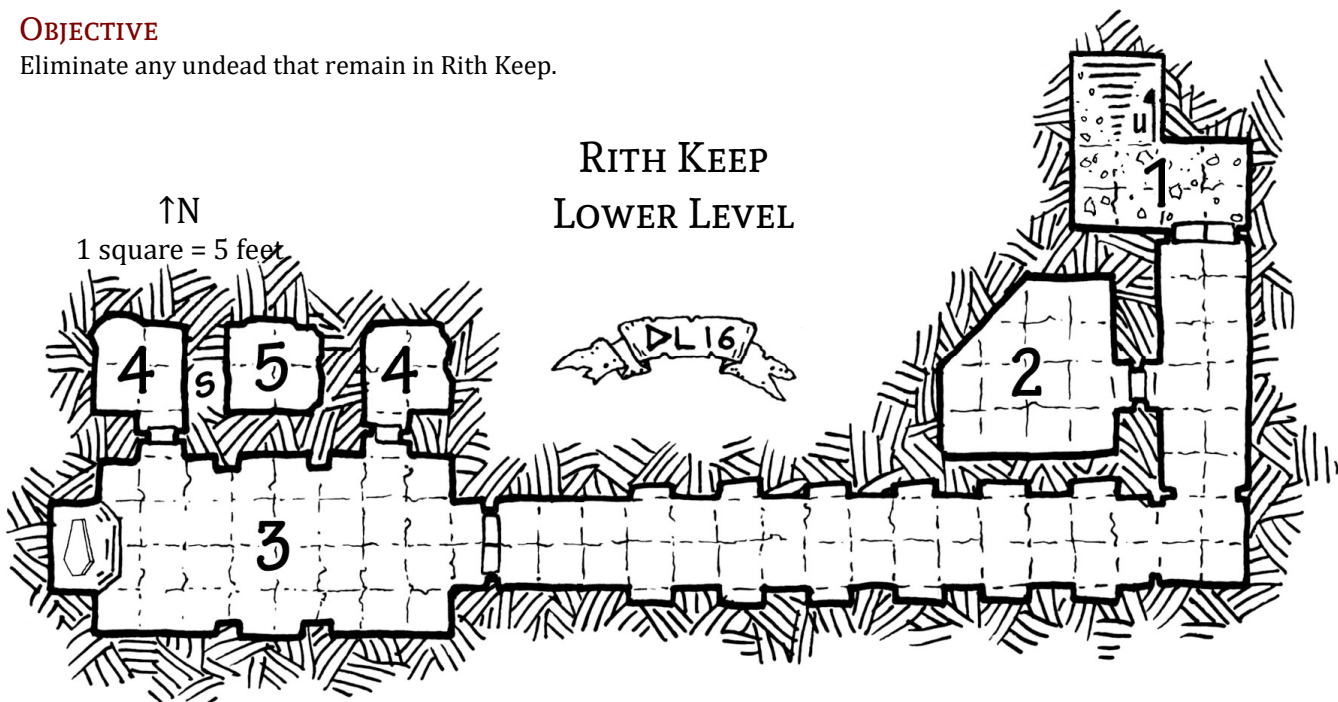
Note. Sunlight from above dimly illuminates the landing, but the areas beyond are completely dark. Characters without darkvision will need a light source to continue exploring beyond this room.

2. STORAGE

This five-sided room once served as a storage area for the keep. Remnants of broken chairs, rusty tools, and other commonplace items cover its floor. The upper half of the diagonal northwestern wall has given way in several places, exposing the room to rocky soil. Several rotted bags of barley lie nearby on the floor, covered by moist, loose dirt from the ruined wall above. **Two swarms of rot grubs** dwell within the mess. They only attack if disturbed.

TREASURE

None.



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3. THE RIVER LORD'S TOMB

A long hallway leads to a pair of stone doors. They are held shut by a large iron bar affixed to the adjacent stone walls with stout iron brackets. Characters with a passive Perception of 12 or greater, or those who succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check when they approach the door, hear the sound of shod hooves on stone from the other side. While heavy, a character can easily slide the bar from the brackets and gain entry.

Beyond the stone doors lies the keep's former treasury, which now serves as the burial chamber of Tilden Rellar, the River Lord of Largrin. After he fell in battle, Largrin's surviving residents entombed him and his dead warhorse, Galdor, inside.

CREATURES/NPCs

The death knight's call caused the **River Lord** (a **sword wraith warrior**) to rise from his simple wooden coffin atop a dais on the west wall.

He is supported by **two specters** serving as his personal guards.

It also animated his mount, **Galdor** (a **warhorse skeleton**).

While capable of speech, the River Lord's mind is addled at being summoned from the dead. He sees all living creatures as orcs who have invaded his keep, as if reliving the final hours of his life. He cannot be reasoned with, and he fights against his imaginary invaders until destroyed.

TACTICS

The River Lord charges the nearest enemy attacking with wild abandon. During his first turn, he calls for his men to aid him in battle. On his initiative count the following round, **two specters** float from the ceiling to harry characters attempting to attack from range.

Once the doors to the room are open, Galdor immediately attempts to flee the keep, heeding the call of its true master (see the "About Galdor" sidebar for more information). It uses its Forceful Movement special trait to move through the space of enemies, taking to the shortest path to the ruins above, where it races away at full speed.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

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

- **Very weak party:** Use the **dread warrior** stat block for the **River Lord**. Remove one **specter**.
- **Weak party:** Use the **dread warrior** stat block for the **River Lord**.
- **Strong party:** Add one **specter**.
- **Very strong party:** Add two **specters**. The **River Lord** has 60 hit points.

TREASURE

Removed at burial, Galdor's fine leather saddle rests in the southwest corner of the room, unblemished by time. It is actually a *saddle of the cavalier*.

ABOUT GALDOR

When the paladin, Kurth Avallar, was imprisoned for his crimes over a century earlier, his valuables, including his mount, a magnificent black stallion named Galdor, were sold at auction. The warhorse was purchased by Tilden Rellar, a seasoned adventurer and heroic warrior who would become the River Lord of Largrin. After Tilden and Galdor perished while protecting Rith Keep from an invading force of orcs, both were entombed within its dungeon.

When Kurth Avallar, now a death knight, was finally freed from his long imprisonment, he called for his mighty steed, waking the warhorse and the rest of the dead in the keep.

4. TREASURE ROOM

Two small rooms occupy the north wall of area 3. Each once held the River Lord's valuables. After the deaths of the River Lord and his men, the residents of Largrin used the gold and items in each to fund the rebuilding of their village. The iron-banded wooden doors to each room are closed, but unlocked, and each now contains only empty crates and chests.

Secret door. A secret door leading to area 5 exists on the eastern wall of the western room. Characters who succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check when they enter the room, notice its outline.

5. SECRET TREASURE ROOM

A secret door from area 4 leads to a small room with wooden shelves on the north and east wall. The shelves contain silver goblets, folded tapestries, statuettes, and various other items. This room is where the River Lord kept many of the treasures from the distant lands he traveled as an adventurer.

An unlocked, wooden chest filled with copper, silver, and gold pieces rests on the south wall. If the characters open the chest, they find the folded letter in **Appendix 3: Player Handout** atop the coins.

TREASURE

In addition to the chest of coins and other mundane items, the northern shelf holds an ornate scroll tube containing a *spell scroll* (1st level, *bless*).

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

With the ruins of Rith keep now free of undead, the characters have completed their goal. If you are using **Bonus Objective B** to extend the length of the adventure, continue to **Appendix 2. Weapons or Words?** Otherwise proceed to **Adventure Rewards** to wrap up the session.

ADVENTURE REWARDS

At the **end of the session**, the characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments.

CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters earn the following rewards:

ADVANCEMENT

Upon successfully **completing** this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind your players that the amount of gold that their characters can earn per level is limited; declining advancement means that they may reach a point where they earn no gold.

GOLD

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it where you see fit. The maximum gold that you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

MAGIC ITEM(S)

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in **Appendix 4: Character Rewards**.

- *saddle of the cavalier*

COMMON MAGIC ITEM(S)

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in **Appendix 4: Character Rewards**.

- *charlatan's die*

CONSUMABLE MAGIC ITEM(S)

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in **Appendix 4: Character Rewards**.

- *potion of greater healing*
- *spell scroll bless*

DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

For running this adventure, one of your character gains a level. That character receives gold based on their tier prior to advancement:

Tier	GP Earned
1	80 gp
2	240 gp
3	1,600 gp
4	6,000 gp

You may also complete DM Quests for running this adventure. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE & LOCALES

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

NPCs

- **Elswalt Brightstar.** An elf of considerable wealth, Elswalt behaves as a noble, even though he has no nobility in his family. He owns a small home in the city of Emrys, but he spends much of his time and wealth traveling the Border Kingdoms to stay apprised of their ever-changing nature. With fine clothing, immaculately groomed long black hair, and deep-green eyes, he maintains the facade of a charismatic fop, but underneath, he is intelligent, thoughtful, and forever a loyal Harper.

Personality: I don't take life too seriously, and I like to enjoy myself.

Ideal: I'm blessed with wealth, and I don't mind sharing it for a good cause.

Bond: I am first and foremost a Harper.

Flaw: I have weakness for wine.

- **Theena Avad.** Theena is an upstart Red Wizard of Thay. After completing her apprenticeship, she set out to gain real-world experience. Being outside of her homeland, she has let her hair grow to a long and lustrous black mane, which many find beautiful. However, Theena cares little for her looks. She is logical, articulate, and prefers to be judged on her intellect. She eschews emotion, choosing instead to concentrate on the accumulation of knowledge.

Personality: I'm used to helping out those who aren't as smart as I am, and I patiently explain anything and everything to others.

Ideal: Emotions must not cloud our logical thinking.

Bond: Thay is all, and its magic will one day rule the world.

Flaw: I sometime speak without really thinking through my words, invariably insulting others.

- **Veemradara.** The spawn of the Xeoghirrirth the Careful and Tunnassoass, Eater of All, the green dragon wyrmling, Veemradara, left the Chondalwood to be free from the shadow of her mighty parents. In the forest caves of the Border Kingdoms, she found many small tribes of kobolds, and easily swayed the most powerful among them into her service. For now, she gathers what wealth she can to start building her hoard, letting nature take its course, as she grows larger on the easy prey found in the surrounding lands.

Personality: As a dragon, I am superior to other creatures, and I deserve to be treated as such.

Ideal: I hope to attain enough power to eclipse the infamy of my parents.

Bond: One day I will return to the Chondalwood, and all will quiver before me.

Flaw: While I deal with lesser creatures out of necessity, I consider dragons the superior race, and other life has little value to me

- **Lorena Veeglen.** Lorena is a stout woman of Halruaan descent in her early fifties. She has creased olive skin, dark hair streaked with gray, and a round, motherly face. In spite of her soft appearance, she is intelligent, capable, and to the point. Before retiring to the Border Kingdoms five years ago, she served as mercenary in the Five Companies of Halruaa. Even though she is not as young as she used to be, she is still quite capable with a sword. While Largrin has no mayor or ruler, its residents look to Lorena for advice, and she occasionally settles disputes when they arise.

Personality: I am pragmatic and down to earth.

Ideal: The simple way is usually the best way.

Bond: I've grown attached to the residents of Largrin, and they have become family to me.

Flaw: I don't like those who consider themselves smarter than others.

LOCATIONS

- **Largrin.** Largrin is a small thorp near the head of the River Rith. Its residents are mostly beet, turnip, and potato farmers, but a handful also catch and smoke river trout, which they sell in nearby Irl.
- **Mithlan Manor.** A solitary manor outside Arnglar that was once the home of the high elf wizard, Cantis Mithlan. Cantis and his valuables vanished decades ago, never to be seen again. Today, a solitary stone door rests as the base of the cliff that leads to the ruined Manor. No one knows what lies beyond it, but it is rumored to be protected by powerful magic.
- **Rith Keep.** Once the stronghold of Tilden Rellar, the self-proclaimed River Lord of Largrin. The keep fell to ruin after the River Lord and his men perished protecting the residents of Largrin from an invading force of orcs. Tilden and his men were buried in the keep.

ABOUT LARGRIN

Largrin lies roughly twenty-five miles east of Arnglar amid fertile rolling grounds that drain to form headwaters of the River Rith. Once a thriving farming hamlet of respectable size, Largrin's population dwindled over a century ago with the death of its protector, Tilden Rellar, a warrior of considerable renown who had appointed himself the River Lord of Largrin.

In the late 1380s DR, orcs from the Broken Shield tribe attacked Largrin, slaughtering many of its residents. Those who survived fled across the waters of the River Rith to the River Lord's keep, seeking sanctuary. Though his keep was small, Tilden Rellar took in all who came, providing food and shelter. Less than a day later, the orcs found their way to his doorstep and laid siege to the keep. The initial attack lasted over a tenday, with the orcs making little headway.

While the stronghold remained secure and defensible, a different problem ultimately proved the River Lord's undoing: Due to the additional refugees from Largrin, the keep did not contain enough food stores to survive a prolonged siege. The River Lord tried twice to dispatch riders to Arnglar for aid. Both times they were hunted down and killed by the orcs.

After eighteen days, Tilden and his remaining men were forced to fight. They planned a daring night incursion and attacked in the small hours of the morning. The River Lord led the charge into the orc camp astride his warhorse, Galdor, a magnificent black stallion. He took the orc chief through the chest with a lance, killing the creature instantly, but the death of their leader did not break the orcs as Tilden has hoped. Instead, it threw them into a frenzy.

The River Lord and his men fought valiantly, taking all but a handful of the orcs with them to the grave. Those that remained fled northeast to the wilds when the first light of the new day showed the carnage of the nighttime fighting.

The refugees buried Tilden's men in the keep's courtyard, marking the heroes' graves. They interred the River Lord in the lower levels of his keep, sealing both him and his warhorse in a stone tomb.

Largrin's residents returned to their home to rebuild, but the hamlet never managed to achieve its former glory. Over time, the keep fell to ruin, leaving little more than overgrown rubble. Throughout the years, various monsters and brigands have used the ruins as a lair, but none have ever remained long, leading the locals of Largrin to believe the keep is haunted by the River Lord's ghost.

Today, Largrin is nothing more than a collection of small farm houses. A two-story inn called The Fin and Feather lies near the center of their scattering. Its proprietor, a Halruaan woman of fifty two years named Lorena Veeglen, was a mercenary in the Five Companies of Halruaa before retiring to Border Kingdoms. She pours ale for the locals and provides rooms to the few merchant wagons that make their way up the banks of the River Rith to trade for the beets, parsnips, and wool provided by local farms.

CREATURE STATISTICS

DEATH DOG

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Two-Headed. The dog has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dog makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. Every 24 hours that elapse, the creature must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. This reduction lasts until the disease is cured. The creature dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

DREAD WARRIOR

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)

Hit Points 37 (5d8 + 15)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Wis +3

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the dread warrior to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the dread warrior drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dread warrior makes two melee attacks.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if wielded with two hands.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

GREEN DRAGON WYRMLING (VEEMRADARA)

Medium dragon, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +3, Wis +2, Cha +3

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.

Poison Breath (Recharge 5-6). The dragon exhales poisonous gas in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

KOBOLD DRAGONSHIELD

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (leather, shield)

Hit Points 44 (8d6 + 16)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +1

Damage Resistances see Dragon's Resistance below

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Dragon's Resistance. The kobold has resistance to a type of damage based on the color of dragon that invested it with power (choose or roll a d10): 1- 2, acid (black); 3- 4, cold (white); 5-6, fire (red); 7-8, lightning (blue) ; 9-10, poison (green).

Heart of the Dragon. If the kobold is frightened or paralyzed by an effect that allows a saving throw, it can repeat the save at the start of its turn to end the effect on itself and all kobolds within 30 feet of it. Any kobold that benefits from this trait (including the dragonshield) has advantage on its next attack roll.

Pack Tactics. The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The kobold makes two melee attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

SPECTER

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

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

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

SWARM OF ROT GRUBS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

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

Damage Resistances piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny maggot. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* The target is infested by 1d4 rot grubs. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage per rot grub infesting it. Applying fire to the bite wound before the end of the target's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the target and kills these rot grubs. After this time, these rot grubs are too far under the skin to be burned. If a target infested by rot grubs ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as the rot grubs burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all rot grubs infesting the target.

SWORD WRAITH WARRIOR

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Martial Fury. As a bonus action, the sword wraith can make one weapon attack. If it does so, attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

THAYAN APPRENTICE (THEENA AVAD)

Medium humanoid (human), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +4

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Thayan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Doomvault Devotion. Within the Doomvault, the apprentice has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The apprentice is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

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

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

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

ACTIONS

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

THUG

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

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

WARHORSE SKELETON (GALDOR)

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (barding scraps)

Hit Points 22 (3d10 + 6)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

WINGED KOBOLD

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 7 (3d6 - 3)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

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

Pack Tactics. The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Dropped Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, one target directly below the kobold. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

APPENDIX 1: TO ARNGLAR AND BACK (BONUS OBJECTIVE A)

Estimated Duration: 30-60 minutes

When the characters return to Largrin after clearing the main level of Rith Keep, Elswalth and Lorena are delighted to hear of the progress they've made. Lorena recruits Urgan Flatsteel, Largrin's dwarven blacksmith, and several other residents capable of "handling themselves" to help clear the collapsed hallway leading into the keep's lower level. In the meantime, she provides the characters with free meals at the inn and rooms so they can rest.

After a night's sleep, Elswalth Brightstar approaches the party and asks for their help with a different matter.

The rain that previously drenched the area pushed out during the night, and this morning you awoke find bright, clear skies. While breaking your fast with fresh milk, sweet rolls, and a stout porridge laced with dried prunes, Elswalth Brightstar enters the inn's common room and approaches your table. With a nod, he says, "I apologize for disturbing your meal, but Lorena has told me it will be several days before the coordinated effort of clearing the rubble from the keep's lower level is complete, and there is a matter I would like to discuss with you in the interim."

WHAT ELSWALTH KNOWS

Providing the characters are not averse to hearing him out, Elswalth sits and relays the following information in hushed tones:

- Elswalth is a member of the Harpers, a secret organization that advocates equality and covertly opposes the abuse of power.
- He has been trying to gather information about the goals of the death knight, Kurth Avallar and his ally, the Black Wyvern.
- Last night, Elswalth received word that a small contingent of the Black Wyvern's men were spotted in the forest east of Arnglar.
- Ruins of Glorfindral, a long-vanished elven realm, surround Arnglar, and many elven burial mounds dot the area.
- The Harpers do not know what the Black Wyvern is doing in Arnglar, but it likely isn't good.
- Elswalth would like the party to travel to the site where the Black Wyvern's crew was seen and investigate.
- The primary objective of the mission is to gather information, so combat may or may not be the best option.

If the party agrees to help, Elswalth sees they are suitably rewarded for their efforts. He also provides them with a map to the location, which lies about a day to the west on foot. Unfortunately, he cannot provide the characters with mounts, but since the goal is to gather information, they would likely serve as a detriment.

I'm a Harper. If a fellow Harper is in the party, Elswalth assures them he will make certain their superiors know of their dedication to the Harper cause. Each Harper gains inspiration for undertaking the mission. This special inspiration stacks with any inspiration a character might already have, but it is only valid during Episode 2A.

MITHLAN MANOR

While no rain fell throughout the day, travel west to Arnglar was not as easy as you had hoped. With no major road to follow, you and your companions were forced to navigate a series of little-used footpaths. In addition, as the summer sun rose in the sky, so did the temperature, making your journey hot, humid, and riddled with biting and stinging insects.

In spite of the unfavorable conditions, you reached your destination shortly after dusk. A quick exploration of the area revealed a ruined manor house with a series of pools connected by a thin stream that cascades down a small limestone cliff. The southeastern portion of the ruins still contains intact walls, and from within, you can hear voices and see the soft glow of a campfire.

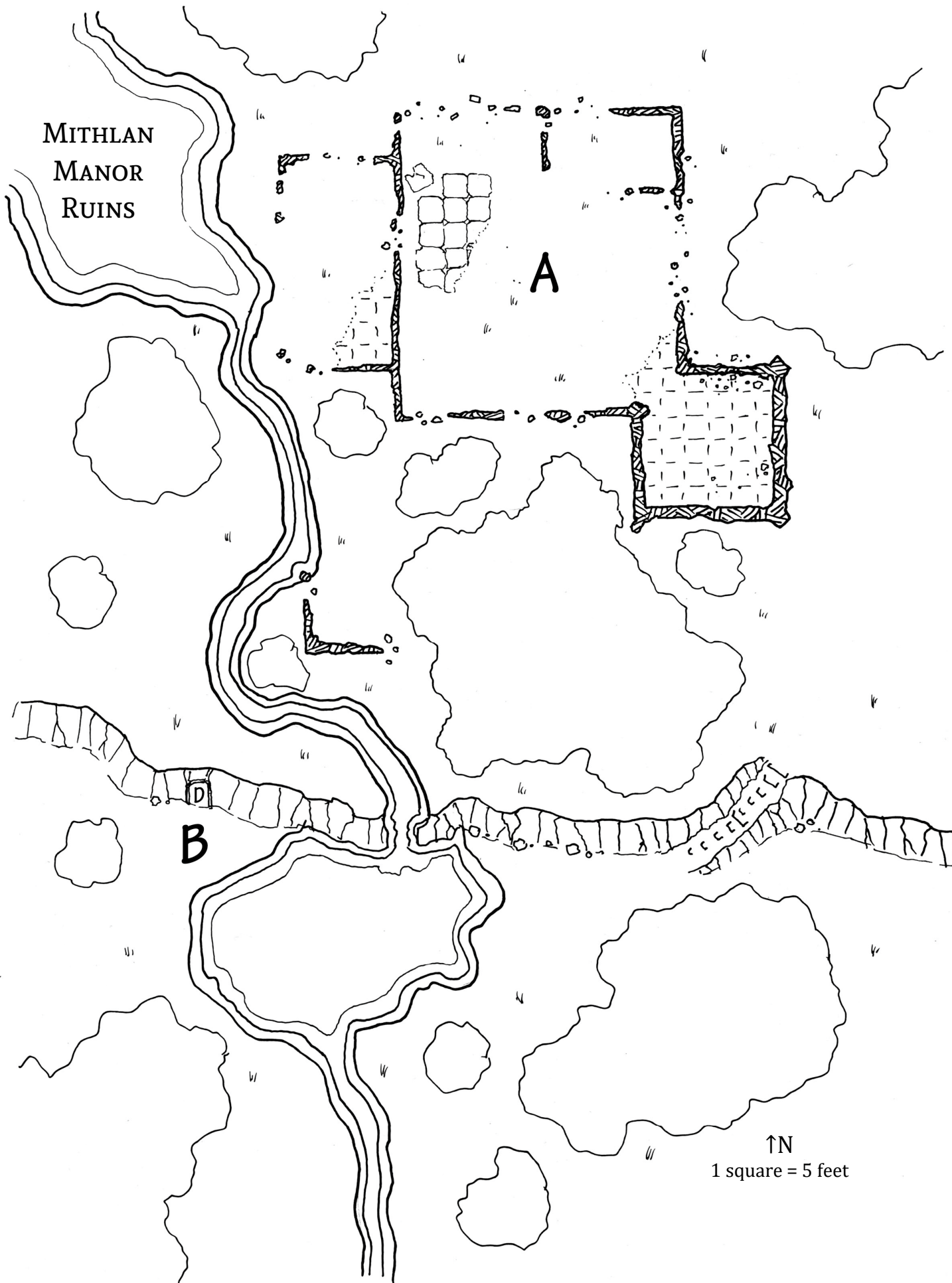
The party's initial exploration did not turn up the stone door (marked with a "D" on the map) in area B, but if they decide to investigate their surroundings further, they find it without any trouble (see area B for details).

There is no right or wrong way for the characters to approach this encounter. To succeed, they need to obtain the Red Wizard's journal, which she keeps in her pack in area A, or capture her and force her to tell them all she knows. Below are some of the ways this can be accomplished:

- The characters can attack and kill the enemy party, retrieving the journal after the battle.
- Once or more characters can wait until area A is unguarded, then sneak in and steal the journal.
- The characters can wait until the Red Wizard is alone in area B and abduct her.

There are likely other ways for the party to get the information they need. Allow and reward creativity, providing the proposed solution is reasonable.

MITHLAN
MANOR
RUINS



ABOUT MITHLAN MANOR

Centuries ago, the high elf, Cantis Mithlan, dwelled within a solitary manor outside Arnglar. Like many wizards, he preferred the company of dusty old tomes to people, but unlike many of kind, he had an obsession with the dark art of necromancy. Tales say Cantis sought to become a baelnorn, a “good” elven lich of considerable power, but their truth is unknown. What is known, is that during his later years, Cantis fell in love with a half-elven maiden from Irl. Many of his peers criticized his love of a “half-breed”, but it mattered not to Cantis, who had little use for them anyway.

The wizard was old and grey when his love finally perished, and he had her remains entombed in a specially constructed crypt near his manor. Several years later, Cantis and his valuables simply vanished, never to be seen again.

Today, a solitary stone door lies as the base of the cliff that leads to the ruined Manor. No one knows what lies beyond it, but it is rumored to be protected by powerful magic.

AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features.

Lighting. Varies depending on the time of day.

Ponds. Two small ponds occupy the area: one to the north and another to the south. Each contains cool, clear water and is 6-feet deep in the middle. A small, ankle-deep stream connects each.

Sounds and smells. Birds and squirrels chitter in the surrounds trees. The air smells of damp earth and fallen leaves.

Trees. Dense thickets of oak trees dot the area. They provide half cover.

Walls. The manor’s remaining stone walls vary in height from 3 to 10 feet. Climbing a wall requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check.

Weather. Sunny, hot, and humid, with temperatures dropping somewhat at night.

CREATURES/NPCs

The Black Wyvern has sent a force consisting of **four thugs**, a mercenary Red Wizard of Thay named **Theena Avad** (a **Thayan apprentice**), and her pet **death dog**.

TACTICS

Two of the thugs sent to protect her patrol the area below the ruins during the day, while the other two guard the camp in area A.

At night, the party rests in the ruins, with each thug taking a turn at watch. The thugs are loyal to the Black Wyvern. If combat occurs, they fight to the death rather than face their leader’s wrath for failure.

A. MITHLAN MANOR RUINS

The Black Wyvern hopes that his expeditionary force will find a way into what he believes to be Cantis Mithlan’s crypt. Inside, he hopes to find the wizard’s treasures, which he can use to help fund his conquest of the Border Kingdoms. In addition, his ally, the death knight Kurth Avallar, seeks Cantis’ corpse for his own nefarious machinations.

The Black Wyvern’s group arrived at the manor six days ago, but thus far, Theena has had no luck in opening the sealed entrance in area B. She and her death dog spend most of the daylight hours studying the entrance and the arcane sigils covering it. At night, she records her findings in her journal.

As a mercenary from Thay, Theena is loyal to coin alone. If captured, she does not fear or beg for her life. She offers to share her journal, which contains the information below, but only if the characters buy out her contract with the Black Wyvern for 100 gp.

- The stone door at the base of the cliff is sealed by powerful magic. It contains no handle or keyhole.
- A mix of Netherese and Elvish sigils cover the door, protecting it and making the stone, which is likely of dwarven construction, impenetrable.
- All of her attempts to open the entrance or dispel its magic have failed.
- The Black Wyvern believes the entrance leads to the crypt of a powerful, long-dead elven wizard named Cantis Mithlan.
- The wizard and his valuables disappeared centuries ago. The Black Wyvern hopes the crypt holds treasures and magic he can use to fund his conquest of the Border Kingdoms.
- The Black Wyvern has allied himself with a death knight, who wants the wizard’s corpse for his own unknown purpose.
- Theena has never met the death knight or the Black Wyvern. She was hired as a mercenary by an intermediate party in Emrys. She does not know their identities, and she has learned it is often better to not ask too many questions.
- She is to give her findings to the Wyvern’s men when her study is complete and receive her payment from them.

B. SEALED STONE ENTRANCE

The stone door (marked with a “D” on the map) in area B is covered in arcane sigils. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals they are powerful Abjuration wards that strengthen the stone and keep the entrance sealed.

DMs Note: For the purposes of this adventure, opening the door is impossible, and what lies beyond it is a mystery.

Theena has already spent three days studying the door. While she has determined opening it is beyond her ability, she wants to be certain she records all of its sigils accurately for examination by those with more skill. To that end, she makes notes during the day and transcribes them into her journal, which she keeps in area A, during the night.

COMPLETING THE OBJECTIVE

The characters can learn the bulleted information in the **Mithlan Manor Ruins** section by questioning Theena Avad or by acquiring her journal, once they do, proceed to **Episode 3. Tomb of the River Lord**.

APPENDIX 2: WEAPONS OR WORDS? (BONUS OBJECTIVE B)

Estimated Duration: 20-60 minutes

With their primary objective complete, the characters are free to depart Largrin whenever they wish. The night before their final stay at The Fin and Feather, Lorena hesitantly approaches their table with a free round of drinks.

Lorena Veeglen makes her way to the table where you and your companions are relaxing and chatting. In her hand, she carries a tray of drinks. When she arrives, she slides the tray onto the edge of the tabletop. "Here is a round on the house. It's nice to have heroes in Largrin. People are pleased with the way you handled the keep, and when people are happy, they drink. To be fair, they also drink when they are sad," she adds, with a wink.

"I won't lie. Seeing the group of you in action makes me miss my own time as a mercenary. My fighting days are behind me, but hearing the tales of the River Lord over the past tenday has stirred something inside me. People, especially those who can't defend themselves, need someone to look out for them. I have a bit of coin I was saving just in case The Fin and Feather ever failed, but I've decided I want to invest it in something special. I want to become the first River Lady of Largrin," she says with a smile.

Lorena shares the following information with the characters concerning her plan:

- Dark times have come to Border Kingdoms, and while there are always adventurers to help, the people of Largrin need a place to seek refuge if things get bad.
- Lorena wants to rebuild Rith Keep and once again make it a shining bastion of hope in the region.
- In addition to her savings, she has a small fortune from her father's passing back home in Halruaa. She has sent a missive to her brother, who still runs the family's spice trade business there, asking for her share of her inheritance.
- When she shared her plan with Elswalth Brightstar, he dispatched an elven "friend" to scout the lands surrounding the keep. The scout reported a cave of kobolds eight miles to the east.
- Kobolds wouldn't normally be an issue, but the scout also reported that they serve a young green dragon.
- Lorena does not know what the dragon considers its territory, but she does not want to draw its ire, so she would like the characters to deal with it.
- While often vile and evil, green dragons are known to keep their word, so fighting the creature may not be necessary. A mutual agreement would do.

- Lorena can provide the party with a map to cave where the dragon lairs. She asks that they defeat the creature or secure its word that it will not attack Rith Keep or the residents of Largrin.
- She has prepared a chest of silver, gold, and jewelry as an offering to show her willingness to remain peaceable neighbors with the dragon.
- Reaching the cave should only take about a half of a day of foot. She offers the characters free lodging if they want to rest before leaving.
- She will see the characters are suitably rewarded once the dragon is dealt with.

OBJECTIVE

Travel to the dragon's lair and slay the creature or negotiate a peace.

THE DRAGON'S LAIR

To reach the dragon's lair, which lies at the base of a rocky limestone cliff, the characters must cross the River Rith and make their way back to the ruined keep. From there, the cave they seek lies eight miles east, within a thick forest of oak and hickory trees.

Providing the characters leave before midday, they arrive at the dragon's lair while it is still light. The narrow entrance to the cave is flanked by dead trees that have perished due to the dragon's poisonous influence.

AREA INFORMATION

The cave has the following features.

Lighting. The cave is completely dark.

Ceilings, floors, and walls. The ceilings in all areas are 20 feet high. Unless otherwise noted, all surfaces are made of unworked limestone.

Sounds and smells. A strong, noxious order fills the cave and the area near its entrance. Animals and other wildlife shun the cave's entrance.

Weather. The weather outside is cloudy, windy, and warm.

1. MAIN CAVE

A 5-foot-wide passage leads to a sizeable cavern containing a large pillar of natural stone. A 5-foot-tall ridge divides the southern portion of the cavern, and roughly carved steps north of the pillar provide easy access to its elevated area. Two passages on the eastern wall lead deeper into the cave.

CREATURES/NPCs

Three winged kobolds and two kobold dragonshields use the southernmost area of the cave as their quarters. At any given time, one of

kobold dragonshields is standing watch at the top of the stairs near the pillar.

TACTICS

The kobolds do not immediately attack, but the kobold on guard duty does alert the others if it sees anyone enter, and they approach intruders with caution.

The kobolds speak broken Common. If the characters ask to speak with the dragon, one of the winged kobold flies to area 2 to get **Veemradara**. If the characters simply attack the kobolds, the fighting draws the dragon's attention, and she flies into the main cavern to investigate.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

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

- **Very weak party:** Only one **winged kobold** occupies the cavern. The other kobolds are out hunting in the forest.
- **Weak party:** Remove two **kobold dragonshields**.
- **Strong party:** Add one **kobold dragonshield**. If **Veemradara** joins the fight, she has 50 hit points.
- **Very strong party:** Add one **kobold dragonshield** and two **winged kobolds**. If **Veemradara** joins the fight, she has 63 hit points.

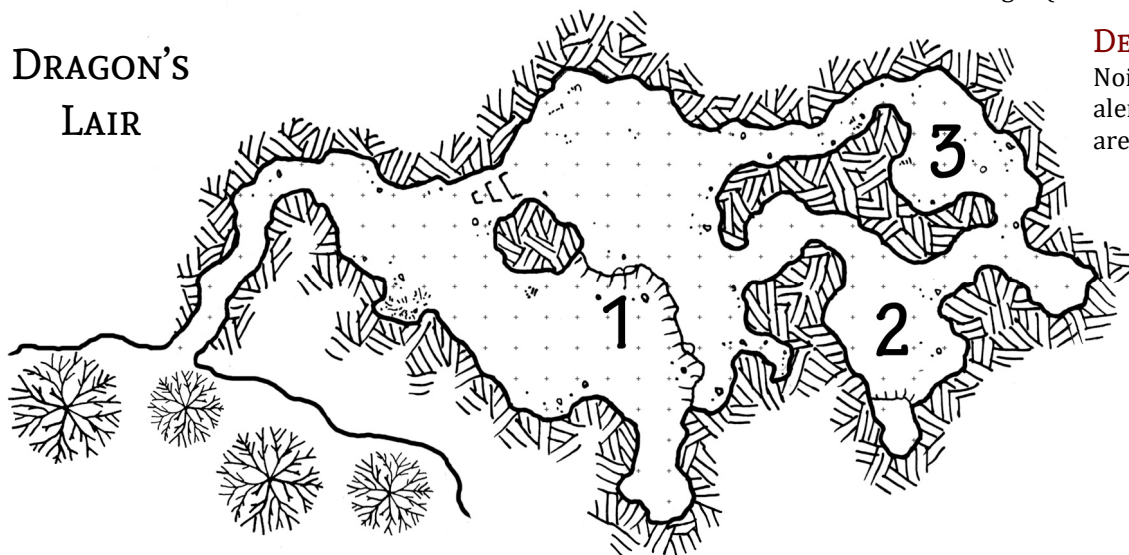
2. VEEMRADARA

The cavern is largely empty, except for a 3-foot-raised area to the south.

CREATURES/NPCs

The green dragon wyrmling, **Veemradara**, (Veem, for short), makes her lair in this portion of the cave. Veem spends the bulk of her time in this small space, resting atop a scattering of coins, jewelry, and gems. While young, the dragon is intelligent, composed, and self-aware. She speaks Common as well as Draconic.

DRAGON'S LAIR



TACTICS

Veem is unlikely to start a fight she does not think she can win. As such, she rarely succumbs to anger. If insulted, she laughs off any slights as petty in order to save face in front of her kobold minions.

If faced with a well-armed party of adventurers, the dragon can be persuaded to agree to Lorena's terms, providing proper tribute is offered. A character must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince Veem to accept the offering provided and leave Largrin and Rith Keep in peace. This check is modified as follows:

- For every 50 gp offered (in addition to Lorena's chest of items), reduce the DC by 2.
- For every magic item offered, decrease the DC by 2. If it is a permanent magic item, decrease it by 5.

If the check is successful, Veem accepts the agreement, giving her word. If the check fails, she declines, and asks the characters to leave. If they refuse, she and her minions attack. Veem fights until reduced to one-quarter of her hit points before attempting to flee through the opening in area 3.

TREASURE

Various coins, jewelry, and gems occupy the southern portion of the cavern. Amid the treasure is a small stone box that contains a *charlatan's die*.

3. VERTICAL OPENING

This small cavern contains a 10-foot-round opening in its ceiling, which extends 20 feet to the top of the cliff that contains the cave system. The dragon uses this passage to fly in and out of her lair.

If the characters scout the surrounding forest before entering the cave, a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals the opening atop the 40-foot-tall cliff. Climbing up or down it requires a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check.

DEVELOPMENT

Noise in this area may alert the dragon in area 3.

APPENDIX 3: PLAYER HANDOUT

If you are reading this letter, I am likely dead, and you are likely an adventurer looting what remains of my keep. This secret room is where I kept my sentimental treasures, those worth more to me in memories than in gold.

This chest contains a modest amount of coins I set aside for hard times. I am not naive, I plundered ruined castles and troll lairs in my youth. I know the danger of such quests, and I know the spoils now belong to you.

I only ask that you consider wisely how you use this treasure. It took me many years to recognize that accumulation of wealth is not as important as the needs of the less fortunate, and that true happiness comes from helping others. Hopefully these words will help you realize the same.

Tilden Rellar

River Lord of Largrin

APPENDIX 4: CHARACTER REWARDS

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; it's suggested that you print off enough copies of this page to be able to give one to each of your players (crossing off rewards they didn't receive during the session):

MAGIC ITEMS

SADDLE OF THE CAVALIER

Wondrous item, uncommon, table C

While in this saddle on a mount, you can't be dismounted against your will if you're conscious, and attack rolls against the mount have disadvantage.

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

COMMON MAGIC ITEMS

CHARLATAN'S DIE

Wondrous item, common (requires attunement)

Whenever you roll this six-sided die, you can control which number it rolls.

This item can be found in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

Special. The *charlatan's die* is a common magic item. It is treated like a potion or scroll and can only be claimed by one character in the party.

CONSUMABLES

POTION OF GREATER HEALING

Potion, uncommon

You regain 4d4 + 4 hit points when you drink this potion.

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

SPELL SCROLL BLESS

Scroll, common

This scroll contains a single *bless* spell.

A description of spell scrolls can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPENDIX 5: DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character within the adventure’s level range (see Adventure Primer). Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first if outside its level range.

NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

NEW TO THE BORDER KINGDOMS STORYLINE?

Gamehole Con has been granted the ability to develop CCC (Convention Created Content) adventures for the Border Kingdoms. No other convention or organization outside of Wizards of the Coast has been granted this ability. Their region guide was written by Ed Greenwood and [you can get your copy on dmsguild.com](#). Border Kingdoms adventures can be run just the same as any other Adventurers League-approved content.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Perception score, and anything the adventures specifies as notable (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether the completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

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

Determining Party Strength

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

Shadows of Rith Keep



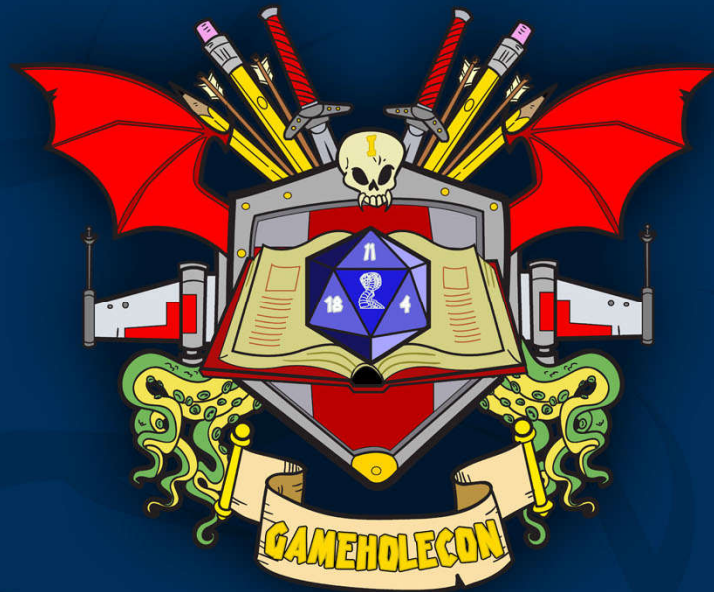


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