



Expedition Adventure: *Shargon's Rage*

A One-Round DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] EXPEDITION
Adventure Packet for 7th to 9th-Level Characters
EXPEDITION ADVENTURE for the XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS[™]
Campaign

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Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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Adventure Title: Shargon's Rage

Optimized Level: Level 7

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Sources: Players Guide to Eberron [James Wyatt, Keith Baker, Luke Johnson, Stan!], Eberron Campaign Setting [Keith Baker], Secrets of Xen'drik [Keith Baker], Stormwrack [Richard Baker, Joseph Carriker, Jr. and Jennifer Clarke Wilkes], Miniatures Handbook [Mike Donais, Skaff Elias, Rob Heinsoo, Jonathan Tweet], Magic of Eberron [Bruce R. Cordell, Stephen Schubert, Chris Thomasson], Monster Manual II, Monster Manual III, Players Handbook II [David Noonan], Monster Manual V [David Noonan], The Forge of War [James Wyatt, Wolfgang Baur, Ari Marmell], Heroes of Battle [David Noonan, Will McDermott, Stephen Schubert].

Adventure Background

When the pirate attacks on merchant ships stopped, the harbormaster of Stormreach was quick to pat himself on the back. Young and brazen, he proclaimed the pirate scourge ended, and the Thunder Sea "100 percent safe" for merchant travel. Even as the reports of strange vessels crammed with rugged-looking refugees from as far as the Lhazaar Principalities began to circulate, he declined to investigate further. It wasn't until a thick magical fog settled over the city that anyone realized what plot might have been afoot. A massive pirate army, gathered from all corners of Eberron was perched at their doorstep, ready to strike.

A war-in-the-streets adventure that features several locations in the city of Stormreach, this expedition is ironic in that the villains of the adventure are guided by their own interpretation of the draconic Prophecy. Stormreach is invaded by a pirate army calling itself Shargon's Strike. This vicious horde of cutthroats falls upon Stormreach in the dead of night, preceded by the thickest fog the city has ever seen.

The PCs are brought together by coincidence, each one in the same place for different reasons when the attack occurs. Once they survive the initial assault of pirates, they are empowered by a grateful Coin Lord they've saved to act as her strike force in the city. She sends them to the docks to help fight off the invaders. Getting there is half the adventure; fighting the Shargon's Strike lethal onslaught and surviving to see the dawn is the rest...

Adventure Synopsis

This Expedition Adventure sets the factions up in one of their most cooperative roles yet and can be played by single-faction or mixed-faction parties. Each faction has something to contribute, and despite their difference, must work together to overcome the assault on the city. The adventure begins in the chaotic streets of Stormreach just as the battle unfolds. The Ebon Siren has unleashed her magnum opus:

Shargon's Strike. A lethal combination of metal, manpower, and magic designed to bring Stormreach to its knees. Though her first goal seems to be the siege and overthrow of Stormreach, a more sinister purpose lies beneath. The Ebon Siren seeks to unleash a demon imprisoned by the giants eons ago beneath the city. Her attack on Stormreach is a distraction, hoping to draw away every available force that might hinder her. Once the demon is freed, she hopes to let it slake its hunger in Stormreach, then unleash it across the thunder sea on the Elven Nation of Aerenal to seek her final revenge for the abandonment of the drow.

After the initial battle, the PC's encounter the Coin Lord, Kirris Sel Shadra—who implores them to stop this unfolding tragedy. The only problem is: The pirates are using a stolen Blackwheel Company airship to strafe the city streets and to attack the Stormreach militia's flank. While a massive battle rages at Stormreach's southwestern gate, it's up to the PC's to take out the airship. With a special bit of assistance from the Coin Lord, the PC's take to the sky to ambush the marauding ship.

With the airship gone, a small group of skilled adventurers can sneak behind enemy lines and take out the line of artillery that's bombarding the city. Three large trebuchets are keeping the city under constant siege until the crews manning them can be taken out.

If the PC's are able to learn about the Ebon Siren's true purpose the adventure becomes a mad dash back to the center of Stormreach to stop her from unleashing one of Xen'drik's most ancient evils.

Troubleshooting

Very long read-aloud text: Several sections of the adventure have lengthy read-aloud text. Use changes in your inflection or tone to vary the information. Encourage the PC's to participate in the conversation or instruction, and don't be afraid to improvise when necessary.

The pace of combat: At several points during the adventure the text instructs you to preserve the PC's initial initiative roll. This is done to speed up combat as much as possible. This adventure should feel like one giant frenetic combat. It will run long if you allow the PC's to tarry and debate over every maneuver. Average the foe's initiative rolls and allow them all to go at once, have foe stats on quick-reference or index cards, keep the PC's moving at a good clip, and don't be afraid to remind them at every turn that time is of the essence in the survival of Stormreach.

Long on combat, short on roleplay: The furious pace of combat during this adventure can come at the expense of roleplay. While speed is important, don't discourage roleplay. Roleplay to complete faction-specific missions or with Kirris or the Ebon Siren are great opportunities for players to flex their creative muscles.

Aerial Combat: 3-dimensional combat can get very complicated. Poker chips or other stackable tokens that can represent units of height are a great boon to any DM. Use any method that makes it easier on you to keep track of height and distance. You'll also want to find a miniature, template, or object that represents a 45'x25' airship. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the rules for falling damage, flying, and 3-dimensional combat ahead of time.

Adventure Secret: In this particular adventure you can choose to award one of two adventure secrets at your discretion: 1) The knowledge that the final massive trebuchet is likely to be fire resistant or, 2) Advanced knowledge that the Ebon Siren's strike seems to be a diversion, which prompts them to save some bombardment ammunition for the Circle of Visions.

Adventure Start

The adventure begins in combat, directly in the middle of the streets of Stormreach.

Part One: In Medias Res.

When the mysterious fog blanketed Stormreach last night, it brought a serene calm to the city, pleasantly dampening both sound and vision. The normally bustling streets--raucous even in the dead of night with revelers, criminals, and who knows what else--were tranquil and empty. All of the calm leading up to what started several moment's ago could not have been a more perfect juxtaposition. Diametrically opposed to last night's serenity is today's absolute chaos. Some say they came from the sky--others swear they saw them welling up from the ground. While no one quite seems sure where the crimson-clad pirates came from, one thing is indisputably certain: The city of Stormreach is under siege.

Your involvement in this mess is curious to say the least. At the last moment you received word from one of your faction heads--an emergency dispatch. You were to meet, here at the marketplace bazaar, approximately ten minutes ago. A lone operative from your faction met you here, and handed you a scrap of parchment--an interpretation of the Prophecy, he said, orders from the faction head. But refused to say more, then disappeared suddenly.

DM's Handout 1: You may inform the PC's in secret of their missions by handing them the paper or telling them.

Impatience was building as you awaited further instructions from your faction leaders--and suddenly this. In one curious moment the fog began to thin a bit, becoming little more than a diaphanous veil of mist. The next moment the sky and streets were alive with magic. The rhythmic crack of lightning bolts set pace for a symphony accompanied by exploding flashes of red and orange dulled by the fog. Streaks of liquid green burned through the remaining mist in the distance, accompanied by the sound of thunderous explosions and the screams of men.

A group of Stormreach militia went tearing by, screaming, "All hands, all able hands, Southwestern gate, we're under ATTACK!" And suddenly the sky was filled with a brilliant flash of light, sending all around diving

for cover. The ball of white-hot fire came screaming from the sky and left little but the smoldering bones of the militiamen. Looking to the air, a low-flying ship casts a jagged shadow down through the remaining mists. From the sides of the ship you see a constant barrage of fire and arrows. And then suddenly the battle is joined as something else flies loose from the railing of the ship: Pirates!

1. Market Bazaar (EL 6)

A salvo of covering fire, lightning bolts and orbs of acid precedes the pirates as they drift slowly toward the ground. Just prior to touching down someone screams, "INCOMING!" just as a ball of flame rips apart the center of the bazaar. The pirates immediately fan out and begin to attack civilians mercilessly as the airship above swoops out of view to rain terror on another part of the city.

The random smattering of civilians in the area put up no resistance to the pirates and are cut down effortlessly. The pirates immediately turn their attention to the PC's and attack without hesitation. The pirates are the standard troops of the Ebon Siren's crew, and are clad in crimson-colored armor. If any of the PC's have fought the Ebon Siren pirates before they immediately recognize them. If not, a DC20 Knowledge: Local check is sufficient to tell them that the Ebon Siren pirates had become increasingly active lately, before disappearing completely for a time. They preyed mostly upon Aereni treasure ships, and are led by a ferocious drow captain.

Foes: The pirates are under the effect of a *Feather Fall* potion after drifting down from the ship. Start combat as the pirates reach the ground.

Goblin Ebon Pirate (3): hp 18, 16, 16; Combat Statistic

Human Ebon Pirate (2): hp 35, 34; Combat Statistic

Terrain: This encounter and the next few encounters use the Market Square map from the City of Peril module.

Tactics: Two of the goblins, along with one of the human pirates rush into melee combat. One goblin and one human remain back to snipe. Have them begin combat slightly spread out around the center of the market stalls near the statue. Have the PC's begin the combat just to the right of where the map reads Market Square. The pirates set up as many opportunities to use sneak attack as possible, while the two archers attempt to pick off any spellcasters.

Development: The pirates are absolutely merciless, and will not stop at just murdering, but freely take tokens (fingers, noses, ears, eyes, teeth, etc.) from their fallen enemies. If the PC's dispatch the pirates, keep them in initiative order and immediately read the "Incoming" section below.

Covenant of Light Mission #1: Preserve a Pirate. The Covenant has long wanted to test its powers of conversion, and converting one of these heathen pirates would be the ultimate test. One pirate simply needs to survive and be tied up or otherwise restrained/immobilized to satisfy this requirement, a Covenant operative will be along shortly to pick them up.

Scaling the Encounter:

8th-level: Add an additional Goblin Pirate

9th-level: Add two additional Goblin Pirates and one additional Human Pirate

HUMAN EBON PIRATE

CR 4

The ebon pirates are so called because of the soot, ash, and black mud they use to decorate their faces and skin. They also coat their weapons and armor in soot to prevent any reflection during night raids.

Male or female human rogue 2, fighter 2

CE Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Listen +0, Spot +1

AC 16(+2 Dex, +4 armor), touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 36 (4 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee shortsword +5 (1d6+2 19-20/x2), or +1 heavy crossbow +9 (1d10+2 19-20/x2)

Base Atk +3; Grp +5

Atk Options sneak attack (+1d6), point blank shot

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ Trapfinding

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow)

Rapid Reload (heavy crossbow), Toughness

Skills Balance +8, Bluff +4, Climb +6, Escape Artist +3, Hide +7, Sleight of Hand +6, Move

Silently +7, Jump +6, Profession Sailor +6, Spot +1, Swim +9, Tumble +7, Use Rope +4

Possessions: +1 sharkskin armor, short sword, +1 heavy crossbow, 20 bolts

GOBLIN EBON PIRATE

CR 2

The ebon pirates are so called because of the soot, ash, and black mud they use to decorate their faces and skin. They also coat their weapons and armor in soot to prevent any reflection during night raids. The pirates are known to be a mixed crew, and this particular one happens to be a goblin.

Male or female goblin rogue 2, warrior 1

CE small goblinoid

Init +2; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 16(+4 Dex, +4 armor, +1 size), touch 15, flat-footed 15

hp 17 (3 HD)

Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee shortsword +2 (1d4-1 19-20/x2), or MW light crossbow +10 (1d6+1 19-20/x2)

Base Atk +2; Grp -3

Atk Options sneak attack (+1d6), point blank shot

Abilities Str 8, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Trapfinding

Feats Rapid Reload (light crossbow), point blank shot

Skills Balance +9, Bluff +5, Climb +3, Hide +14, Move Silently +14, Profession Sailor +4,

Swim +4, Tumble +10, Use Rope +6

Possessions: +1 sharkskin armor, short sword, MW light crossbow, 20 bolts, potion of cat's grace (already used)

2. Incoming! (EL 8)

As the last pirate falls, a pair of small shadows appear on the ground, cast from a pair of circular objects far above. As scraps of remaining mist drift by the pair of spheres above grow increasingly larger. Suddenly it's apparent that these projectiles are about to impact in your general direction. They appear to be about the size of a curled-up human and are completely translucent. As they smash into the ground they rain shards of razor-sharp glass across the market. As the dust settles you see a swarm of strange insects rise up from where the globes impacted.

The pirates are using heavy artillery to sow chaos in the streets of Stormreach. In an attempt to cause as much confusion and human-casualty as possible, they are launching swarms of Bloodmote clouds into the city at different locations.

Foes: One swarm impacts on the southern side of the center statue. The other impacts on the crates and barrels near the house on the center left of the map. Any PC within 10' of the impact is dealt 2d6 points of piercing damage from the glass shrapnel (Reflex DC 15 negates). Grant the PC's a surprise round to act as the slightly injured Bloodmotes are still gathering together from impact.

Injured Bloodmote Cloud (2): hp 59, 56; Combat Statistic

Tactics: The Bloodmotes attack any living targets subject to their blood drain ability, attempting to completely engulf as many victims as possible in their 10' swarm.

Development: If the PC's are able to defeat the Bloodmotes, proceed immediately to the "Death from Above" section that follows—again, keep their initiative order.

Scaling the Encounter:

8th-level: Nothing additional.

9th-level: Add an additional injured Bloodmote Cloud.

BLOODMOTE CLOUD

CR 6

This cloud of buzzing insects boils toward its victims, droning ominously in its strange deep pitch and accompanied by the sickly-sweet aroma of blood.

NE Fine undead (Swarm)

Init +3; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 19 (+1 Dex, +8 size), touch 11, flat-footed 18

hp 65 (10 HD)

Immune weapon damage

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6

Speed Fly 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee Swarm (1d4 + blood drain)

Base Atk +5; Grp -

Space/Reach: 10 ft./0 ft.

Atk Options blood drain, distraction

Abilities Str 4, Dex 13, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., swarm traits, undead traits, diet dependent

Feats -

Skills -

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a bone rat swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution based.

Blood Drain (Ex): A bloodmote cloud drains blood and deals 1d4 points of damage and 1d2 points of Con damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move.

Diet Dependent: A bloodmote cloud is diet dependent upon blood, which it consumes by using its blood drain ability.

3. Death from Above (EL Varies)

As the last of the grotesque insects falls, the sounds of combat give way to the distant rumbling of magic and explosions, and a brief calm again settles over what remains of the market. Hustling out from a side alley near the market comes an extremely well-dressed, if excessively short noblewoman, led in front by a cadre of extremely well-armed guards.

Place the Coin Lord on the north-northwestern edge of the map near the vegetable stalls, with her guards (at least 6) about 10' in front of her. In initiative order give the PC's Spot checks. A DC 20 or higher Spot check allows the PC's to see the airship returning in the sky above. Any PC's who succeed on their Spot checks may have a surprise round to dive for cover or warn their comrades. Read the follow to any who succeed:

A large speck on the horizon quickly grows to a full size ship. Orange balls of flame, lances of icy blue, and green bolts of light pour down from its sides. It appears to be headed directly for the market.

If a PC warns a comrade and that PC is after him in initiative order, grant that PC a +4 bonus on any save during the attack. If the PC's choose to warn the Coin Lord, her attitude immediately improves by one step and she offers a larger reward. But, as they warn her, his men simply turn and look toward the sky. Any PC that ducks for cover or goes prone near a feature is not targeted by a spell. Any PC in the open is targeted,

but targeted only once. If three or more PC's in the same area are adjacent, use a *snowball swarm*. Otherwise target the individual PC's with *electric loop*. Target the Coin Lord's guards with a *fireball*, any PC within that area is also subject to the damage.

Covenant of Light Bonus: Good Samaritan. Any Covenant of Light member that witnesses this attack feels the strong need to heal the injured Coin Lord and to arrange care for her dead guards.

Electric Loop: One creature, no attack roll, 2d6+3 points of electricity damage. Reflex (DC 16) half; any PC that fails the reflex save must make a Will save (DC 16) or be stunned for 1 round.

Snowball Swarm: 10' radius burst, 2d6+3 points of cold damage. Reflex (DC 16) half.

Fireball: 20' radius burst, 6d6+3 points of fire damage. Reflex (DC 17) half.

Read the following just prior to the attack:

Like a massive bird of prey, the airship swoops down violently from above, barely clearing the rooftops. As it screams by, the heat from its fire elemental causes the air in the market square to shimmer. Then a salvo of magic fire erupts from its starboard and port sides, filling the streets with arcane energy. Just as the noblewoman's guards reach the center of the square, a ball of flame rips through the air where they were standing. Smoldering bodies now litter the streets and the wealthy noblewoman appears to be injured under a collapsed market stall.

Tactics: Target each PC only once, rolling damage as appropriate.

Development: The Coin Lord's guards are all killed in the explosion. Kirris Sel Shadra (female gnome, LN expert 8) is nominally injured. If the PC's do not immediately come to help, she will cry out for help from beneath the collapsed stall. Any PC's succeeding on a Knowledge: Nobility (DC20) or Knowledge: Local (DC 16) instantly recognize the Coin Lord for who she is: One of five powerful nobles who serve as Stormreach's governing council. She's also rumored to be an exile from Sharn.

Scaling the Encounter:

8th-level: 3d6 damage from the Snowball Swarm and Electric Loop.

9th-level: 4d6 damage from the Snowball Swarm and Electric Loop, 7d6 damage from the fireball. Increase all Save DC's by 1.

4. The Coin Lord's Plea

The female gnome lying on the ground before you is regally dressed in a platinum-brocaded black waistcoat. Her feathered hat has been almost entirely incinerated, and her face carries heavy soot marks and a bloody lip. Even jammed into an awkward position, she carries an air of authority about her. She groans for a moment and turns to you:

"Thank you for coming to my aid. I am Kirris Sel Shadra, Third Coin Lord of Stormreach."

She takes a deep breath and attempts to stand.

"As you can see, we're under attack. As the Coin Lord in charge of financial... "concerns," I had sent word to a few of our more infamous and influential organizations. I asked them to send their best, or whatever they could spare, for the good of all Stormreach, to the center of the Bazaar here. I had hoped to entreat them to serve on a special mission to help break the siege that we learned only hours ago was coming. I do not know if you are those agents—but at this point it matters little. My original plan will have to be postponed."

She furrows her brow, closing her eyes for a moment in intense concentration. As she chews her bottom lip, she runs a thin finger over the brow of her nose. Suddenly, her eyes open and she speaks,

"If you will help me, I believe Stormreach can be saved. This incursion is lead by some dreadful pirate wench. A drow calling herself the Ebon Siren—and I believe she means to raze the city to the ground after she rapes and plunders every pebble of it. She's been preying on our shipping lanes for years, but we had no idea she had such a massive force at her command. She must have called in every drow from the jungles and every corsair and cutthroat from the Thunder Sea to the Lhazaar straits. She's amassed an

army nearly 3,000 strong. If it were just a game of numbers on land and sea, we might have been able to mount enough of a counterattack to keep the siege at a standstill. But the sea witch has control of the skies as well—which means every time we try and dispatch a ship to sea or a new guard battalion she blasts them en-route. We need to bring down that airship—and the first thing that pile of filth did was sabotage our arcane barracks and the enclave of the Twelve. We have no idea how many mages survived, but we'll need every one of them that's left just to hold the lines at the southwestern gate."

She scratches her grayish-blond hair for a moment with a deep sigh and uses her sleeve to wipe some of the soot from her face. Suddenly, her eyes light up and her breath quickens.

"I think there may be another way! Are you willing to undertake the ambush of a lifetime to save Stormreach? I think I have just the thing to bring down that ship—all I need are some incredibly brave heroes to get it done. Aside from just the good of saving the city you're standing in, and preserving the only vestige resembling true civilization in Xen'drik, I can make it very worth your while—Although the battle will take all of our financial resources, we Coin Lords are not without our means..." "

The reward she offers depends on her attitude toward the PC's. Kirris begins as indifferent. If she or her guards were warned by the PC's improve her attitude by one step. If the PC's healed or were especially kind or sensitive to her after the attack, improve her attitude by one step.

Helpful—Full restoration and healing at her personal quarters. All conditions removed. Each PC receives (as event treasure) an Amulet of Natural Armor +2 or Cloak of Resistance +2 (PC's choice) and a potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds* and a potion of *Cure Serious Wounds*.

Friendly—Each PC receives one casting of *Cure Moderate Wounds*, one casting of *Lesser Restoration* (not transferable to other PC's), and potions of *Cure Moderate Wounds* and *Cure Serious Wounds*.

Indifferent—Each PC receives two potions of *Cure Moderate Wounds*.

Unfriendly—100gp each.

Kirris makes no attempt to cover up her desperation—and pleads with the PC's to help save the city. If they are exceptionally helpful to her, make very positive diplomacy attempts, go out of their way to heal her or treat her politely, or take care of the remains of her guards, she grants them an additional boon (or an additional bribe to sweeten the deal): A potion of *Haste* and a potion of *Aid*.

If the PC's agree, even tentatively, read the following:

"This is something you're going to have see in person—a little gift I took with me from Sharn. Come with me to my manse. It's by the docks and it will be the perfect place from which to launch and ambush. Come quickly, we haven't as much as a single moment to lose."

If the PC's are still hesitant, a Sense Motive check (DC 15) will let them know she is completely dedicated to helping Stormreach and repelling this invasion with the PC's help.

Crismon Codex Mission #1: Charm the Coin Lord. The Codex has instructed its members to butter up and flatter the Coin Lord as much as possible. It has plans to impress the noblewoman with its bravery and chivalry—possibly to gain her favor for the Codex later. Having the Coin Lord at a Helpful attitude and going to lengths to flatter and please her satisfy this requirement.

Part Two: Battle Above Stormreach.

The trip to Kirris Sel Shadra's manse is mercifully short. The long shadows cast by the early morning sun along with the few wisps of mist that remain help you go—apparently—unnoticed through the side alleys and byways of Stormreach. Kirris sent even her personal retinue of guards to the front lines, and the entrance to her sprawling stone estate is completely unguarded. There's hardly time to take notice of the exquisite finery and lavish décor as you race behind Kirris, her short legs moving with surprising speed. In an otherwise simple hallway leading to a small larder, she stops, kisses the signet ring on her left hand and presses it to

the wall. The grinding of stone indicates the presence of the hidden stairway, and even before her ring begins spilling forth bluish-green light, she starts to descend.

The room you come upon is too large to be considered anything but vacant, despite the vast amount of goods, artwork, and artifacts stored within. The noble gnome strides past racks of ornate weapons, masterful tapestries, and gem-encrusted sculptures to a small dais. The dais appears to be made of circles of translucent crystal surrounded by brackets of a dark, luxurious wood. Kirris inhales sharply and blows a thick cloud of dust from the large, low pedestal. A small area clears atop one of the translucent circles, and the gnome quickly hops atop it. She kneels down for a moment, running her thin, elegant fingers over the smooth crystalline surface. Then, quite amazingly, as she concentrates rather intently, the crystal begins to pulse with greenish light and then glow intensely. And without a sound, the circle, actually a disk, levitates up from the wood flooring and hovers about 5 feet in the air. With a similar silence, the disk floats past you into the center of the room, and then, with a convex, pointed bottom, like an upside-down tear, alights delicately upon the floor, balancing impossibly upon its narrow tip.

“Soarsleds...” she says breathlessly.

“I took these as a parting gift from Sharn—each of them is worth a small fortune. Unfortunately, they are tied to the manifest zone of Syrania, which is how they function as mobile platforms in the city of towers. However... each soarsled has a residual charge—the last essence of a trapped bit of Syrania that powers it. If we spend this last reserve of power, the soarsleds will act as if they are under the effect of a Fly spell for about 15 minutes. After that they will come crashing to earth as nothing more than hunks of useless crystal.”

The gnome takes a deep breath as she runs her index finger across the bridge of her nose, “That will be our time limit. We need to bring that airship down within 15 minutes or all hope will be lost. There are only five functional soarsleds, but I think I know the perfect way to attract that ship’s attention. That means one of you will have to act as bait.”

The gnome hops off the soarsled and it clunks to the ground lifelessly, “One of our arcane ballista was in for repairs when the pirates struck—which is the only reason it survived, they destroyed nearly all of our other artillery with one lightning strike from that airship. Even though the repairs are not complete, I believe we may be able to fire it manually. If we set it atop a building, we should be able to get some clear shots off on the airship and attract its attention.”

“Come this way,” she gestures, wrapping the edge of her cloak in her hand and stalking out of the room. “I’ll send for someone to prepare the soarsleds and the ballista.”

As you wind your way back through the house, she relates the rest of the plan to you:

“The docks district here should be perfect for an ambush, the buildings are a bit taller and closer together. We should have plenty of cover and alleys to spring our attack from. Furthermore, if that ship comes crashing to the ground, there are fewer civilians here than in other quarters of the city. Most of all, we need to be able to launch our own naval forces, with the pirates completely in control of the sea we lack the mobility we need to hit them at their flanks. Once the sky is clear we can also launch a strike against their artillery that is keeping our forces pinned down.”

“At this point we need prepare the ambush. My suggestion is that those of you with the soarsleds wait on the ground until your gunner gives you the signal. As the ship draws close, activate your soarsleds and spring up from the alleyways. The airship has to skim very low in order to attack. While a fireball might be devastating from 500’ away, those acid orbs and ice rays have to be launched within 40-50’ to be effective. It should be low enough that you can get a good shot at the crew or at the ship itself. As far as we can tell it’s a small ship, built for speed—so the crew is small. Looks like an archer or two, a spellcaster, and a wand-wielder on each side of the ship. Obviously you’ll find a captain, but it’s unlikely that there will be any more crew than that. Take out the captain, unleash the elemental, blast a hole in the ship, burn it out of the sky, or capture it. I don’t care, just make sure that it’s not going to be a problem for our men. Remember, you won’t have long, so whatever your plan is, be efficient and get that ship out of commission as quickly as possible.”

“Well then, I’ve sent for the ballista and the soarsleds. If any of you need healing, speak up now. Whomever among you is heroic enough to man that ballista, speak up now as well and I’ll have one of our men give you some rudimentary training.”

At this point give the PC's a few minutes to plan their attack—but don't let too much time pass. Treat the situation as almost real time; we want to encourage and foster a sense of urgency in their planning and in their attack. Kirris provides any healing and support as detailed in the section above. If the PC's have questions, she answers them to the best of her ability, but she's a city governor, not a military tactician. She also encourages the PC's to move swiftly as many lives (and many hundreds of thousands of gold coins) are at stake. Any time you feel they are taking too long, have Kirris plead with them to hurry.

Soarsled: A soarsled is a crystalline disk crackling with energy, 5 feet in diameter that flies with great speed and maneuverability. A soarsled functions as a Large quadruped for purposes of determining its carrying capacity. A light load for a soarsled is 399lbs or less. A medium load is 400-699lbs and a heavy load is 700-1200lbs. Outside of Sharn a soarsled functions as a fly spell (speed 60' or 40' if heavily loaded. The fly spell lasts 15 minutes.

A soarsled is controlled by thought: activating and controlling the disk does not require actions or checks. In certain situations, remaining standing on a soarsled requires a DC 10 Balance check. Situations that require this Balance check include: another character jumping on to the disk, reversing direction or turning more than 45 degrees, colliding with any obstacle, and taking damage. A character that fails this save is knocked prone. A character that fails this save by 10 or more has a chance to fall from the soarsled. A Reflex Save (DC 15) allows them to catch the edge of the sled as they are falling. As with balancing on any narrow surface, a character riding a soarsled loses his Dexterity bonus to AC unless he has 5 or more ranks in Balance.

Crimson Codex Bonus: Arcane Attunement. Their strong familiarity with magic materials and history in Sharn give any Crimson Codex member a +4 bonus to Balance checks aboard a Soarsled and allow them to retain their Dex bonus to AC even if they do not have 5 ranks in Tumble.

1. Ballista at the Ready.

As you wind your way down toward the dock district a small group of men, mostly servants and old men unfit for combat accompany you. You are no more than a quarter of a mile from the water among a group of crowded buildings between twenty and thirty feet tall when Kirris motions for you to stop.

"This is the place," she calls in a whispered shout to you and her men, "get the ballista atop this roof, but keep it covered until we're ready to fire. Get those soarsleds into the alleys. Remember, don't activate them until you've received your signal, once they're out of power, you'll come crashing straight down to Eberron, so I suggest you deal with that ship as quickly as possible."

Kirris offers any additional information the PC's might ask for that is within her realm of knowledge. If they dawdle too long; however, she presses them into action by reminding them that the ship could return at any moment. Read the following to the PC that will be manning the ballista.

The men quickly hoist the ballista from its perch on the back of a small hay cart. It's covered by a thin patchwork quilt. It takes them several minutes to tie a rope to it and hoist it up the narrow ladder leading to the ramshackle rooftop. After they mount it into place with iron spikes, they signal to you that the time is at hand. Kirris had a master-at-arms brought back from the front lines for no more than 15 minutes. He explained the rudimentary workings of the weapon, including its magical properties. As you duck beneath the quilt, the rest of the men leave hurriedly, almost too hurriedly...

The smooth wood of the weapon is strangely warm and crackles with arcane energy, making it feel almost alive beneath your hands. You know that if properly repaired, the weapon is capable of operating itself with deadly accuracy. At the moment, however, it will be relying on your guidance and timing. With a little luck, you might even hit something with it. As you wrap the corner of the tattered quilt in your hand, you know the time has come and so you slip on the ballista's command amulet, tying your fates together. It's time to bring the battle for Stormreach to the sky.

Allies: The ballista's self-loading capability has been repaired, but its auto-fire capability has not. The ballista is treated as a +3 shocking burst light ballista. In this particular scenario the control amulet functions for any PC, not just those that can cast arcane spells. Because of the PC's training, they do not take the -4 penalty for using a siege weapon untrained. Instead that PC uses their ranged attack roll with an additional +3 bonus for the weapon's enchantment. The ballista is only able to fire once per round, regardless of how many attacks the PC using it is capable of making. Firing the ballista is a full round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. The ballista operator stands behind the ballista (granting partial cover) and can swivel it up to 360 degrees as part of the full-round firing action. The ballista has an effective range of 1,000 ft. and

deals (3d8+3 plus 1d6 electricity/x2 plus 1d10 electricity) points of damage. The ballista's lightning sphere special attack is intact and usable once per day. There are 12 bolts for the ballista, which it loads automatically with each shot; the lightning sphere ability does not use a bolt.

Damaged Arcane Ballista: hp 54 (damaged); Combat Statistic

ARCANE BALLISTA

CR 5

This large siege weapon has the stylized face of a gryphon carved upon its gaping maw. Sturdy, solid wood construction is bolstered by thick iron reinforcement. A pair of glowing eyes sit, staring ominously from the gryphon's face.

N Construct

Init -1; Senses Darkvision 60', Listen -3, Spot -3

AC 18(+10 armor, -1 Dex, -1 Size), touch 8, flat-footed 18

hp 65 (5 HD)

hardness 10, resist fire 10, immune electricity

Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -3

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee slam +7 (1d8+7)

Ranged bolt +7 (3d8+3 plus 1d6 electricity/x2 plus 1d10 electricity)

Base Atk +2; Grp +7

Atk Options lightning sphere

Abilities Str 20, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct traits, lightning sphere

Feats -

Skills -

Possessions:-

Lightning Sphere (Sp): Once per day can fire a sphere of lightning that impacts up to 640 ft away in a 20' burst. It deals 6d6 electricity damage (Reflex DC 17, half).

2. The Trap Is Sprung! (EL 8)

Your shot is sure to get the airship's attention, if you can hit it. As the tattered patchwork quilt whips away from your siege weapon, you catch a glimpse of the airship raining down arcane fire over the southern wall of the city. As you watch it make a terrifyingly fast turn, it comes about in a direction close to yours, and should be within range in a moment.

Give the PC manning the weapon a Spot check (DC 15) or a Wisdom check (DC 18) each round to determine when the ship is in range. The ship starts at 1,500 feet away and moves closer at 100' per round (or per check). It will move in to a distance of about 800' before turning around and heading away. It makes continuous circles between 800' and 1500' until it is hit. The ballista takes a -1 penalty for each 100' range increment beyond 1000'. After the ship is struck it heads directly for the ballista at 200' per round. Allow the ballista to continue firing and dealing damage until the moment they decide the trap should be sprung. Once the airship closes within 100', proceed to the map and run the scenario as directed below.

Attacking an airship: The general format for ship combat has been greatly simplified to speed up the combat for this encounter. During combat, the airship flies at a slower speed to increase the accuracy of its attacks. It slows its movement to 60' per round and flies at a deck height of 60'. Use the Thieves Quarters map from the City of Peril module, and place the ballista on the roof with the gargoyle statues. This building is considered to be 30' tall, all others are considered to be 20' at the top of the roof. Allow the PC's to place themselves between the building alleys at whatever location they wish. Once they've given their signal to start, grant them all a surprise round to act. Place the airship completely on the map at the easternmost edge. It does not move during its first round, each round thereafter it moves 60' per round at the end of each round (after any other initiative count).

- All AC's for ranged attacks in this battle are increased by 2 because of the speed of the ship—this AC bonus applies to the PC's and to the ship itself as well as its crew. All crew on the ship have cover from any attackers below the deck elevation of the ship.
- Any PC in front of the ship and at the same height as any part of the ship as it moves is subject to ramming damage.
- After the ship passes off the map completely, it may not attack or be attacked, nor may any crew upon it, but is subject to attack from siege weapons.
- It takes 3 full rounds for the ship to turn and arrive back on the nearest edge of the map. The round order once it leaves the map is: Full turn; half turn and move back; move back. Keep in mind that as the PC's ready actions for the ship to return, the crew aboard the ship should also ready actions to face the PC's
- Pay close attention to the ship's fire elemental. This elemental sits 10' into the deck from the rear of the ship and extends 10' from the starboard and port sides and 20' from the deck and below the keel of the ship. Any PC's in contact with this elemental takes damage as described below.

The Cloud Ray is a ship built for speed and carries no natural armament. Furthermore, its defenses have been stripped away to allow for more maneuverability. The ship has 500 hull sections, and loses structural integrity at 200 hull sections. The PC's can choose to attack the ship directly, to slay the captain (which causes the ship to crash), to attack the elemental binding struts, to take over the ship, or to disable it in some other way. Feel free to reward their creativity if they come up with a particularly creative way to disable or deal with the ship.

Cloud Ray: Colossal Vehicle: Airworthiness +6, Shiphandling -2; Speed Fly 150 ft. (average). Overall AC -3; Hull sections 500 (Crash 200 sections); Section hp 40 (hardness 5); Section AC 3; Ram 8d6; SA fire ring (3d8 fire); SQ resist fire 10, hover; space 45' by 25'; Height 20'; Watch 6.

Destroying the Ship: Use the Section AC (3) and hp (40) if the PC's are attacking the ship directly. Be mindful of the hardness 5 and the resistance 10 to fire. Once the Ship is reduced to 200 sections it begins crashing immediately, splitting its movement between forward and downward momentum. It takes at least 2 full rounds for the ship to crash, potentially more if it increases its elevation. Use the following guide to determine how effectively an attack impacts the ship's hull:

Full Damage—Bludgeoning & Slashing Melee Weapons, Siege Engines, Force, Sonic.

Half Damage—Piercing Melee Weapons, Large Ranged Weapons, Acid, Electricity, Fire

Quarter Damage—Cold damage

No Damage—Small or Medium Ranged Weapons

Crashing an Airship: An airship that crashes deals 1d6 points of falling damage per 5' of altitude (due to the mass and momentum of the airship) at the start of the crash. It takes at least 2 full rounds for the ship to crash, potentially more if it increases its elevation. A PC may attempt a DC 20 Reflex save to ignore the final 10' of the fall. The PC may also attempt a DC 15 Tumble or Jump Check to ignore the first 10' of falling and convert the second 10' into nonlethal damage. For example, an airship that begins crashing from 50' would deal 10d6 points of damage. If that PC succeed on both a DC 20 Reflex save and a DC 15 Tumble check, they would take 4d6 points of lethal damage and 2d6 points of nonlethal damage. If the ship crashes with its fire elemental still in place, the elemental is completely destroyed.

Attacking the Binding Struts: The binding struts have an AC of 25 before calculating the ship's bonus AC for speed (+2). The struts have a hardness of 10, resistance 10 to fire, and have 105 hp. They take damage according to the chart for the ship. When both binding struts are destroyed, the fire elemental ringing the ship is immediately released and the ship begins crashing. The elemental attacks anything on board the ship and crashes with it, taking full damage. If it survives it begins attacking anything and everything in sight. If Kirris is within earshot of the PC's, she will encourage them to stop the elemental if possible.

Huge Fire Elemental: hp 117; *Monster Manual*

Killing the Captain: Behind the ship's wheel and command shard, the Captain has full cover from any PC below the ship's deck height or directly in front of the ship. If the ship's captain is slain or otherwise incapacitated, the ship begins crashing on the next round. It takes at least 2 full rounds for the ship to crash, potentially more if it increases its elevation. A character may attempt a shiphandling check to coerce the

elemental as a Charisma check untrained (DC 20) to right the ship and keep it aloft, or a DC 15 Profession: Sailor (+ Cha modifier) check to pilot the ship normally. Other characters may attempt a Wisdom check to aid another in any attempt to pilot the ship. A new check may be attempted each round. Docking the ship successfully requires a DC 26 Charisma check or a DC 18 Profession: Sailor check. Other methods for controlling the elemental include *Charm Monster*, *Dominate Monster*, or a cleric capable of commanding a fire elemental. If a PC without ranks in Profession: Sailor is able to gain control of the ship's elemental, the best course of action is probably to order the ship to hover as close to ground level as it can get (20 ft.)—after a short wait, Kirris will find a captain to relieve the PC. If any crew are still alive when the captain is slain, they quaff their potions of *Feather Fall* and attempt to flee.

Blackwheel Company Bonus: Because of their familiarity around airships, a Blackwheel character receives a +5 circumstance bonus on attempts made to pilot, right, or control an airship's elemental.

Foes: The crew aboard the ship attempt to use elevation to their advantage as much as possible. Their first target is the ballista and the PC manning it, after that they target the most threatening PC. For this encounter all foes, except the captain are equipped with potions of *Feather Fall*.

Ebon Pirate Wand (2): hp 15, 14; Combat Statistic

Ebon Pirate Halfling Warmage (2): hp 9, 7; Combat Statistic

Human Ebon Pirate: hp 36; Combat Statistic

Ebon Pirate Captain: hp 67; Combat Statistic

Tactics: The warmages begin by unleashing *Lesser Acid Orbs* against any PC's in range, or by targeting the ballista operator with *Magic Missiles*. The Ebon Pirate Wands will use wands of *Scorching Ray* or *Magic Missile* against any PC's in range, and start by targeting the ballista operator. The Human Ebon Pirate attempts to use his crossbow to maximum effect, but will engage in melee combat if any PC boards the ship. The captain fights only if struck first, but the ship does not start crashing until he is disabled or dead.

Development: If the PC's are able to defeat the airship, Kirris thanks them profusely and says that she has a new mission for them—taking out the pirate artillery so that the counterattack can begin. If the airship crashes, be sure to describe the fiery crash as you see fit.

Blackwheel Mission #1: Save the Cloud Ray. If at all possible, and by any means necessary, try and recover the stolen Company airship.

Scaling the Encounter:

8th-level: Add an additional Halfling Warmage.

9th-level: Add an additional Human Ebon Pirate and Halfling Warmage.

EBON PIRATE CAPTAIN

CR 7

An ebony sash cuts a dark swath across the rugged crimson-stained chain shirt of the pirate captain. Jet-black hair, drawn back severely and piercing grey eyes prove an effective complement to the longsword she carries.

Female elf expert 8

LE Medium humanoid

Init +3; Senses Listen +2, Spot +6

AC 20(+3 Dex, +6 armor, +1 force), touch 14, flat-footed 16

hp 67 (8 HD)

Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee longsword +4 (1d8+1 19-20/x2), or MW composite longbow +7 (1d8)

Base Atk +3; Grp +4

Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12

SQ Elven traits, Low-light vision 60 ft., Resist Fire 10

Feats Skill Focus (Profession: Sailor), Toughness, Improved Toughness

Skills Balance +15, Bluff +2, Climb +5, Diplomacy +3, Jump +8, Profession Sailor +16, Listen +2, Spot +9, Survival +12, Swim +11, Tumble +15, Use Rope +12

Possessions: chain shirt +2, longsword, MW composite longbow, ring of protection +1, potion of resist energy (Fire) 10 (already used), cloak of resistance +1

Elf Traits: +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells and effects. Immunity to sleep spells and effects. +2 bonus on Search, Spot, and Listen checks. An elf passing within 5' of a secret door automatically gets a Search check to detect it.

HUMAN EBON PIRATE

CR 4

The ebon pirates are so called because of the soot, ash, and black mud they use to decorate their faces and skin. They also coat their weapons and armor in soot to prevent any reflection during night raids.

Male or female human rogue 2, fighter 2

CE Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Listen +0, Spot +1

AC 16(+2 Dex, +4 armor), touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 36 (4 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee shortsword +5 (1d6+2 19-20/x2), or +1 heavy crossbow +9 (1d10+2 19-20/x2)

Base Atk +3; Grp +5

Atk Options sneak attack (+1d6), point blank shot

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ Trapfinding

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow)
Rapid Reload (heavy crossbow), Toughness

Skills Balance +8, Bluff +4, Climb +6, Escape Artist +3, Hide +7, Sleight of Hand +6, Move Silently +7, Jump +6, Profession Sailor +6, Spot +1, Swim +9, Tumble +7, Use Rope +4

Possessions: +1 sharkskin armor, short sword, +1 heavy crossbow, 20 bolts

EBON PIRATE HALFLING WARMAGE

CR 2

The ebon pirates are so called because of the soot, ash, and black mud they use to decorate their faces and skin. They also coat their weapons and armor in soot to prevent any reflection during night raids. The pirates are known to be a mixed crew, and this particular one happens to be a halfling.

Male or female Halfling warmage 2 CN small humanoid

Init +3; Senses Listen +1, Spot -1

AC 19(+3 Dex, +4 armor, +1 shield, +1 size), touch 14, flat-footed 16

hp 7 (2 HD)

Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee MW sling +6 (1d3)

Base Atk +1; Grp -3

Atk Options warmage spells, point blank shot

Warmage Spells, as sorcerer (6/5 CL 2nd)

1st (5 per day)-lesser acid orb (ranged touch, 1d8+3 acid, no save, no SR), magic missile (1d4+4)

0 (6 per day)-acid splash, ray of frost

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 8, Cha 14

SQ warmage edge, armored mage (light)

Feats point blank shot

Skills Concentration +2, Spellcraft +5

Possessions: MW chain shirt, MW sling, MW light steel shield

Armored Mage (Ex): Can wear light armor with no chance of spell failure.

Warmage Edge: You add your Int modifier to all spell damage that deals hit point damage.

EBON PIRATE WAND

CR 3

The ebon pirates are so called because of the soot, ash, and black mud they use to decorate their faces and skin. They also coat their weapons and armor in soot to prevent any reflection during night raids. The pirates are known to be a mixed crew, and this particular one happens to be a human with several wands strung from her belt.

Male or female Human wizard (evoker) 3 LE medium humanoid

Init +3; Senses Listen -1, Spot +0

AC 18(+4 Dex, +4 armor), touch 14, flat-footed 14

hp 15 (3 HD)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee MW sling +8 (1d3+1), ranged touch +6

Base Atk +1; Grp +1

Atk Options wizard spells, point blank shot

Wizard Spells(4/3/2 CL 3rd)

2nd (3 per day)– 2x *Melf's Acid Arrow*, *Scorching Ray*,

1st (4 per day)–2x *Magic Missile*, *Burning Hands* (DC 14), *Ray of Enfeeblement*

0 (5 per day)–*acid splash*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13), *ray of frost*, *daze*, *mage hand*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 8, Cha 10

Feats point blank shot, precise shot, weapon focus (ray)

Skills Concentration +7, Knowledge: Arcana 9, Profession:Sailor +5, Spellcraft +11, Spot +2, Tumble +7

Possessions: potion of mage armor (already used), MW sling, spell components, gloves of dexterity +2, brooch of shielding, wand of magic missile (2 missiles at 1d4 +1 each) 3 charges ☐ ☐ ☐ , wand of scorching ray (1 ray, 4d6 fire) 5 charges ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

3. A New Proposal

The early morning sun has burned away the last wisps of magical fog as your battle with the airship draws to a close. Kirris arrives promptly to thank you exuberantly on behalf of all of Stormreach. But from grateful benefactor she quickly switches back to aggressive politician... There is still one job left to do: Destroy the heavy artillery bombarding the city randomly. Kirris is eager to have the job done, but wishes to wait until the cover of night—she has a special surprise for the pirates: She's going to give them a bit of their own medicine. A local mercenary company has granted use of one of its fast-transport airships, nearly identical to the one you just finishing attacking, and Kirris means to bombard the Pirates. She agrees to heal you and allow you ten hours of rest at her manse until the attack begins. She would like you to spearhead the aerial bombardment.

At this point the PC's will likely have expended enough resources to merit a rest. No matter the conditions, allow them a full 8-hour rest so they can recover spells, etc.. Kirris provides each PC with one casting of *Cure Moderate Wounds* and one casting of *Lesser Restoration*. As soon as the PC's have finished resting, move immediately to the next encounter.

Part Three: Stormreach Strikes Back.

Your rest seems unmercifully short, but Kirris makes you as comfortable as possible in such a time. As your finish your preparations she returns with an excited look upon her face.

"Night has fallen over Stormreach, and your ship is ready. We should leave immediately before those siege weapons cause any more damage. If you'll follow me, we can be at the ship within five minutes."

Allow the PC's a final minute for any other preparation and then read the following.

The Blackwheel Company's airship is sleek and small, with its underside painted midnight black for this mission. It looks almost identical to the Cloud Ray that you battled with earlier except that it sports an air elemental instead of a fire elemental and probably has the same general function as the other ship. It has been temporarily moored on a noble's tower just around the corner from Kirris' manse, and the trip up the tower to the airship takes longer than the trip to the tower. Once aboard, you are greeted with a nod from a hulking minotaur dressed in a smart, black leather uniform. He seems to stare past you rather than at you, and the salt and pepper haired half-elven captain gives you a wave and a nod as well.

"Not much for conversation," Says Kirris off-handedly.

"But they're supposed to be the best. They have one mission, to get your over your target and circle until it's destroyed. I've called in favors from all over Stormreach—A group called the "Covenant of Light" has provided us with some "blessed fire." Another organization known as the "Crimson Codex" has provided us with something it calls "crimson pain." You can thank some other shadowy group that shall remain nameless for pinpointing the location of the pirate artillery. We only have a limited supply of ammunition—so make them count. Every available bit of firepower we have is tied up holding the gate, you are the only hope for knocking out the bulwark of their offense."

"Your targets will be two light trebuchets and one heavy trebuchet currently raining destruction on my city. Once you've knocked them out we should be able to move our forces freely. With our naval ships already dispatched we can execute a hammer and anvil maneuver if we can get troops out of our southwestern and southern gates. I'll leave Sgt. Crash here to inform you of the finer points of aerial bombardment. I trust you will do whatever needs to get done in order to take those weapons out and ensure the future and safety of all Stormreach. Good luck!"

The large minotaur amusingly called "Crash" speaks with surprising eloquence. He informs you that the "blessed fire" is actually an Alchemist's Stone—a spherical clay ball about a foot and a half in diameter. The ball is filled with alchemist's fire, and with a well-timed drop and a little luck, should actually be able to catch the siege weapons on fire. The "crimson pain" is a Hellwasp Shot. Looking much like a hardened mound of mud, when they impact they release a crazed swarm of hellwasps that attack anything in the area. They should work as an effective deterrent and distraction for the siege weapon crews. There are also several small boulders that can be dropped with some effect. Sgt. Crash calls them "Screamers" as they have small holes drilled in them; apparently aside from the loving impact of a 70lb boulder, they emit a horrid, bone-chilling scream as they hurtle through the air. You have six Alchemist Stones, three Hellwasp Shots, two Screamers, and five regular boulders.

He proceeds to inform you that Captain Wrynth will slow down slightly to aid in aiming, but the Cloud Ray was a stolen Blackwheel Company vessel, and they cannot afford to take too much fire from the ground and risk losing yet another ship. Your aim will have to be precise. He's going to fly at around 70 ft. off the ground to make bombardment easier while staying out of range of many spells and small arms.

Fortunately, the bulk of the pirate forces are at the frontlines engaged in direct combat, leaving the siege weapons at the rear lightly manned and guarded.

Finally, the Sgt. informs you that each of you will be given a potion of Feather Fall. Should you run short on ammunition, find that the siege weapons are resistant to bombardment, or should some other need arise, you should take your potions, jump from the ship, and carry out your mission on the ground. Do not stop until every one of those siege weapons is disabled or destroyed. Once the weapon is burning and the crew scattered, the job is as good as done, don't try to raze it to the ground—just get a good burn on it and make

sure you keep the crew from extinguishing the flames. Every second could save another life, so waste as little time as possible.

Aerial Bombardment: Allow the PC's to place themselves along the edge of the airship as they wish. The combatant dropping an object makes a ranged attack roll against AC 5 (effectively AC 7 because of the penalty from speed) and takes a -4 penalty unless they are proficient with improvised weapons. An attack that misses hits a nearby square (PHB 158). If a square or squares are targeted, a creature standing in those squares may make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid damage from the attack. If a specific creature is targeted, use that creature's AC (+2 from the speed), if the attack is successful, that creature gets no save to avoid the damage. Feel free to inform the PC's in advance of the rules for aerial bombardment. Allow the PC's a few moments to plan their strategy and decide who will do what during the bombardment. Obviously the PC's are free to attack with their own spells and ranged weapons as appropriate. Other spells that start fires on the siege engines include: *Fire Seeds*, *Flame Arrow*, *Flaming Sphere*, *Heat Metal*, *Lightning Bolt*, and *Produce Flame*.

Alchemist's Stone (6): Deals 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage along with 2d6 points of fire damage in the square that it hits. It also deals an additional 1d6 points of fire damage to all adjacent squares. Any creature or object exposed to the alchemist's fire also catches fire; creatures and attended objects can avoid this by succeeding on a DC 15 Reflex save (Trebuchets have +0 to Reflex saves).

Hellwasp Shot (3): On impact, the Hellwasp Shot deals no damage but instead releases a Hellwasp Swarm (MM 238). The swarm fills a 10'x10' cube and attacks all creatures within that area for 10 rounds. For the purpose of this adventure, assume that any pirate or crew caught within the hellwasp swarm must make a DC 16 Will save or become panicked and flee. If they flee they do not return. Any creature that succeeds on the Will save remains to fight, but takes 3d6 points of damage per round.

Screamer (2): A 70lb small boulder that requires a DC 12 Strength check to hurl from the airship (failing this check means the PC cannot drop the stone from the ship and may try again the next round). Upon impact it deals 7d6 points of damage to anything in the square and 1d6 points of splash damage to each adjacent square. As it hurtles through the air it emits a high-pitched whistle that requires a DC 12 Will save from any creature within 20' of the impact square to avoid becoming Shaken for the duration of the encounter.

Boulder (5): A 70lb small boulder that requires a DC 12 Strength check to hurl from the airship (failing this check means the PC cannot drop the stone from the ship and may try again the next round). Upon impact it deals 7d6 points of damage to anything in the square. Heavy objects such as screamers and boulders do 1d6 points of damage for every 10' of altitude, if the ship changes altitude, be sure to adjust the damage as necessary.

Cabal of Shadows Bonus: Cunning Shot. The Cabal are secretive in all things they do—including aerial bombardment. Any time a Cabal agent bombards and is able to catch an opponent unaware or a target is denied their Dex bonus, that bombardment deals an extra 2d6 points of damage.

Terrain: These three encounters use the Field of Ruin map from the D&D Miniatures *Wardrums* starter set. Place the trebuchet on top of the large wooden ruin at the center of the map. At the start of each encounter place the airship completely on the map at the easternmost edge. It does not move during its first round, each round thereafter it moves 60' per round at the end of each round (after any other initiative count). The PC's may only use bombardment when their section of the airship is within 20' (laterally) of any target below, they may use their own weapons and spells at any time or distance, range permitting.

Cabal of Shadows Mission #1: Plant an item. The mission is to, unbeknownst to the airship crew, plant a personal, scryable item somewhere inconspicuous on the ship.

1. Bombs Away! (EL 8)

The nimble airship wastes no time in screaming towards the front lines. The sky above Stormreach is awash with color and light, painting a sharp contrast to the black night sky. Balls of flame, jagged bolts of lightning, and arcane energy of green, purple, and blue, illuminate the city streets and buildings. Columns of smoke, like thin spindly fingers, reach skyward in the hundreds. And below, even over the rushing wind of the airship, you can hear the sounds of combat: men shouting and dying, orders being barked, volleys of arrows hissing through the air, and the crackle of magic. Suddenly, the minotaur's voice booms,

"Target upcoming. Light trebuchet, minimal defenses, 500 feet and closing, at your posts now, be ready!"

The PC's should be encouraged to take their places on the ship and prepare for bombardment. A DC 15 Spot check will grant a PC a +1 bonus on any attack rolls for the round by virtue of being better able to time their shot. The PC's will also have a +1 bonus from their altitude advantage. The PC's have partial cover from any ranged attacks below.

The airship slows to 60' of movement per round and takes three rounds to return in a strafing pattern once it has left the map completely. The airship will strafe the target this way until it is destroyed. The first target is a light trebuchet. The light trebuchet has a hardness of 5 and 3,200 hp. It weighs 4 tons and is gargantuan in size.

An Intelligence (DC 20), Profession: Soldier (DC 15), or Knowledge: Architecture and Engineering Check (DC 16) can tell a PC that the counterweight is the most vulnerable point of a light trebuchet. For ranged weapons the counterweight has an AC of 23, a hardness of 10, and 80hp. With a melee weapon the counterweight has an AC of 5, a hardness of 5 and can be hacked off of the machine by dealing 40 damage to it. A Climb check (DC 18) is required to reach the counterweight.

Foes: This siege engine has a small contingent of guards and a minimal operating crew. The guards stand together in one group about 20' from the trebuchet while the Ogre crew stand together near the trebuchet. The sorcerer stands alone roughly 30' away from the trebuchet.

Ogre (crew) (2): hp 23, 22; *Monster Manual*

Human Ebon Pirate (2): hp 36, 35; Combat Statistic

Goblin Ebon Pirate (2): hp 17, 15; Combat Statistic

Ebon Pirate Drow Sorcerer: hp 15; Combat Statistic

Tactics: If the trebuchet catches fire, the Ogres will run to a nearby trough (30' away) and run back and attempt to extinguish the flames. This requires a Reflex (DC 15) save that increases by 1 for each round the fire has been burning. If the fire burns for 5 rounds it is impossible to extinguish. The guards take ranged shots at the PC's if possible.

Development: If all the crew and guard are dead and the trebuchet is burning, move immediately to the next target. Be sure to preserve the initiative order for each of the three targets to save time. If the PC's have to attack on the ground for any reason, don't assume any time for travel, just move from map to map quickly in between targets.

Scaling the Encounter:

8th-level: Add one additional Ebon Pirate Drow Sorcerer

9th-level: Add one additional Ebon Pirate Drow Sorcerer and one Ebon Pirate Wand

2. The Second Target (EL 4)

No read aloud text is necessary here. Simply describe the destruction of the first target and quickly describe the scene at the next trebuchet. The PC's should be encouraged to take their places on the ship and prepare for bombardment. A DC 15 Spot check will grant a PC a +1 bonus on any attack roll by virtue of being better able to time their shot. The PC's will also have a +1 bonus from their altitude advantage. The PC's have partial cover from any ranged attacks below.

The airship slows to 60' of movement per round and takes three rounds to return in a strafing pattern once it has left the map completely. The airship will strafe the target this way until it is destroyed. The second target is also a light trebuchet. The light trebuchet has a hardness of 5 and 3,200 hp. It weighs 4 tons and is gargantuan in size.

An Intelligence (DC 20), Profession: Soldier (DC 15), or Knowledge: Architecture and Engineering Check (DC 16) can tell a PC that the counterweight is the most vulnerable point of a light trebuchet. For ranged weapons the counterweight has an AC of 23, a hardness of 10, and 80hp. With a melee weapon the counterweight has an AC of 5, a hardness of 5 and can be hacked off of the machine by dealing 40 damage to it. A Climb check (DC 18) is required to reach the counterweight.

Foes: This siege engine has a small contingent of guards and a minimal operating crew. The guards stand in two groups, one 15' and the other 25' from the trebuchet while the ogre crew stand together near the trebuchet. The sorcerer stands alone roughly 30' away from the trebuchet.

Ogre (crew) (2): hp 23, 22; *Monster Manual*

Human Ebon Pirate (2): hp 34, 28; Combat Statistic

Goblin Ebon Pirate (2): hp 17, 15; Combat Statistic

Ebon Pirate Drow Sorcerer: hp 15; Combat Statistic

Tactics: If the trebuchet catches fire, the Ogres will run to a nearby trough (30' away) and run back and attempt to extinguish the flames. This requires a Reflex (DC 15) save that increases by 1 for each round the fire has been burning. If the fire burns for 5 rounds it is impossible to extinguish. The guards take ranged shots at the PC's if possible.

Development: If all the crew and guard are dead and the trebuchet is burning, move immediately to the final target. Be sure to preserve the initiative order for each of the three targets to save time. If the PC's have to attack on the ground for any reason, don't assume any time for travel, just move from map to map quickly in between targets.

Scaling the Encounter:

8th-level: Add one additional Ebon Pirate Drow Sorcerer

9th-level: Add one additional Ebon Pirate Drow Sorcerer and one Ebon Pirate Wand

3. The Final Target (EL 7)

This trebuchet is larger than any of the others, and considerably more well-guarded. As the airship angles downward for it's strafing run you hear a colossal "WHUMP" as the trebuchet's counterweight drops and a massive chunk of a carved stone wall covered in burning pitch goes hurtling through the air just ahead of the ship.

The PC's should be encouraged to take their places on the ship and prepare for bombardment. A DC 15 Spot check will grant a PC a +1 bonus on any attack roll by virtue of being better able to time their shot. The PC's will also have a +1 bonus from their altitude advantage. The PC's have partial cover from any ranged attacks below.

The airship slows to 60' of movement per round and takes three rounds to return in a strafing pattern once it has left the map completely. Because of the size of the siege weapon, the airship must ascend to 90' off the ground, increasing the damage to 9d6 for screamers and regular boulders. The airship will strafe the target this way until it is destroyed. The last target is a heavy trebuchet. The heavy trebuchet has a hardness of 5 and 7,500 hp. It weighs 10 tons and is Colossal in size. This trebuchet has been specially treated to fire flaming projectiles, which grants it resistance 10 to fire—which means that the PC's must deal more than 10 points at one time to have a chance of catching fire. As a result of the trebuchet's special construction, it may make Reflex saves unattended and it gets a +9 bonus to saves to avoid catching fire.

An Intelligence (DC 20), Profession: Soldier (DC 15), or Knowledge: Architecture and Engineering Check (DC 16) can tell a PC that the counterweight is the most vulnerable point of a light trebuchet. For ranged weapons the counterweight has an AC of 23, a hardness of 10, and 100hp. With a melee weapon the counterweight has an AC of 5, a hardness of 5 and can be hacked off of the machine by dealing 60 points of damage to it. A Climb check (DC 18) is required to reach the counterweight.

Foes: This siege engine has a much greater contingent of guards and a standard operating crew. The guards spread out in three mixed groups, one 20' the other 25' and the last 30' from the trebuchet while the ogre crew stand together near the trebuchet.

Ogre (crew) (3): hp 23, 22, 22; Monster Manual

Human Ebon Pirate (3): hp 36, 33, 30; Combat Statistic

Goblin Ebon Pirate (3): hp 18, 17, 15; Combat Statistic

Ebon Pirate Drow Sorcerer (2): hp 14, 13; Combat Statistic

Tactics: If the trebuchet catches fire, the Ogres will run to a nearby trough (30' away) and run back and attempt to extinguish the flames. This requires a Reflex (DC 15) save that increases by 1 for each round the fire has been burning. If the fire burns for 5 rounds it is impossible to extinguish. The guards take ranged shots at the PC's if possible, and the sorcerer's target them with unerring *Magic Missiles*. If the PC's hit the ground, the goblins, humans, and ogres all engage in melee while the sorcerers continue to sling spells.

Development: If all the crew and guard are dead and the trebuchet is burning, move immediately to the "Something's Not Right" section below.

Scaling the Encounter:

8th-level: Add one Ebon Pirate Drow Sorcerer

9th-level: Add one Ebon Pirate Drow Sorcerer and one Ebon Pirate Wand

HUMAN EBON PIRATE

CR 4

The ebon pirates are so called because of the soot, ash, and black mud they use to decorate their faces and skin. They also coat their weapons and armor in soot to prevent any reflection during night raids.

Male or female human rogue 2, fighter 2

CE Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Listen +0, Spot +1

AC 16(+2 Dex, +4 armor), touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 36 (4 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee shortsword +5 (1d6+2 19-20/x2), or +1 heavy crossbow +9 (1d10+2 19-20/x2)

Base Atk +3; Grp +5

Atk Options sneak attack (+1d6), point blank shot

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ Trapfinding

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow)
Rapid Reload (heavy crossbow), Toughness

Skills Balance +8, Bluff +4, Climb +6, Escape Artist +3, Hide +7, Sleight of Hand +6, Move Silently +7, Jump +6, Profession Sailor +6, Spot +1, Swim +9, Tumble +7, Use Rope +4

Possessions: +1 sharkskin armor, short sword, +1 heavy crossbow, 20 bolts

GOBLIN EBON PIRATE

CR 2

The ebon pirates are so called because of the soot, ash, and black mud they use to decorate their faces and skin. They also coat their weapons and armor in soot to prevent any reflection during night raids. The pirates are known to be a mixed crew, and this particular one happens to be a goblin.

Male or female goblin rogue 2, warrior 1

CE small goblinoid

Init +2; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 16(+4 Dex, +4 armor, +1 size), touch 15, flat-footed 15

hp 17 (3 HD)

Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee shortsword +2 (1d4-1 19-20/x2), or MW light crossbow +10 (1d6+1 19-20/x2)

Base Atk +2; Grp -3

Atk Options sneak attack (+1d6), point blank shot

Abilities Str 8, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Trapfinding

Feats Rapid Reload (light crossbow), point blank shot

Skills Balance +9, Bluff +5, Climb +3, Hide +14, Move Silently +14, Profession Sailor +4, Swim +4, Tumble +10, Use Rope +6

Possessions: +1 sharkskin armor, short sword, MW light crossbow, 20 bolts, potion of cat's grace (already used)

EBON PIRATE DROW SORCERER

CR 2

The ebon pirates are so called because of the soot, ash, and black mud they use to decorate their faces and skin. They also coat their weapons and armor in soot to prevent any reflection during night

raids. The pirates are known to be a mixed crew, and this particular one happens to be a drow.

Male or female Drow (elf) sorcerer 2 CN medium humanoid

Init +3; Senses Listen +2, Spot +2

AC 17(+3 Dex, +4 armor), touch 17, flat-footed 14

hp 12 (2 HD)

Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee MW light crossbow +5 (1d6)

Base Atk +1; Grp +1

Atk Options sorcerer spells

Sorcerer Spells (6/5 CL 2nd)

1st (5 per day)—*ray of enfeeblement, magic missile*

0 (6 per day)—*acid splash, ray of frost, touch of fatigue (DC 13), resistance, daze (DC 13)*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16

SQ Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, spell resistance (11)

Feats Toughness

Skills Concentration +6, Knowledge: Arcana +6, Spellcraft +8

Possessions: MW light crossbow, potion of mage armor (already used)

Drow Traits (Sp): Once per day can use faerie fire, darkness, or dancing lights as a 2nd level caster.

4. Something's Not Right

After the destruction of the final piece of pirate artillery, describe a situation for the PC's that fits their current location. If they're on the ground, describe a rendezvous with the airship by rope, if they're still aboard the airship, describe heading back in to Stormreach. Then read the following:

Arriving back at the makeshift docking tower, you immediately notice that something isn't right. Even from several hundred feet away you can see a small figure out on the hastily-constructed docking platform, hopping up and down. The scant torchlight casts amusing shadows as the figure waves and beckons toward you. As Captain Wrynth pulls you along side, the Coin Lord, Kirris Sel Shadra quite nearly hops aboard from several feet away. She begins shouting to you:

"It's a diversion, it's a diversion! We have to go now and stop her. Earlier today someone spotted a group of strangely-dressed traveler's entering a cave entrance near the Circle of Visions in the northeast corner of town directly opposite her attack. We wondered why the airship never hit that area and none of the artillery hit there—there was a pattern to it. We believe that she means to wake a demon that some think the giants imprisoned below the city. We have to go now! Captain, lift off and head due north!"

If the PC's make a Profession: Soldier (DC 18) or Knowledge: Architecture/Engineering (DC 22), or Knowledge: Local (DC 20), or Knowledge: History (DC 20) check, they may find that it is a good idea to use any remaining ammunition to bombard the Circle area in hopes of disrupting anything going on below. However futile it may seem, it may be of some use. If the PC's bombard at all, they receive a small bit of luck from the gods and will have a bonus in the final battle.

Cabal of Shadows Mission #2: Defile the Circle. Cabal operatives were instructed to defile the Circle as much as possible. Any bombardment fulfills that criteria. Otherwise, dealing more than 100 points of damage to area (Obelisks have a hardness of 10 and 60hp) will do.

It's an extremely quick flight to the Circle of Visions. Kirris spends to time briefly filling you in on how she learned of the diversion and what little she knows about the rumor of a demon imprisoned beneath Stormreach. She relates to you a short tale:

"It is said that in ancient times after the Dragon-Fiend wars, the giants were tasked with guarding a prison for one of the Rakshasa rajahs and his retinue deep within Khyber, beneath their most sacred holy site. None had ever been able to locate the path to Khyber beneath Stormreach, including some of the most

intrepid explorers. We learned from a captured pirate of high ranking that this sea-witch... this... this 'Ebon Siren' claims to have uncovered some Draconic Prophecy, an interpretation by someone named Caldyn that she says showed her the path to the prison. Apparently she hopes to gain favor from the demon and try to convince it to exact revenge for her upon the nation of Aerenal in exchange for its freedom. Obviously this pirate-queen thinks quite highly of herself to even attempt a negotiation with a demon."

"I do not know how true these rumors are, but I do know that the ancient sahuagin worship many evil gods. Most of them revere the Devourer but among some tribes is a minor deity they call 'Shargon' the very demon that gave name to the straits and perilous shoals that skirt the bay that protects Stormreach. Oddly enough, their story of Shargon is almost identical to the one this captured pirate related from his conversations with the Siren. Little does she know that she may be releasing a minor god. And the good nine help us all if she succeeds. We may lose far more than just Stormreach. She must be stopped!"

The shift in direction as the airship begins to descend snaps Kirris out of her rant. Below, fifteen worn and battered stone obelisks, some no higher than two or three feet, make a rough circle in the hard soil. Kirris motions and points out an odd obelisk that seems to have toppled over, revealing a staircase beneath. As the airship casts ropes over the side, Kirris wishes you good luck, as Sgt. Crash booms:

"All ashore! Down those ropes hires... Uh... sorry, descend at your leisure 'honored guests.' It's your only way down, and you've got a city to save."

Allow the PC's a few moments to gather their thoughts, but if they tarry too long, have Kirris urge them along. The final battle awaits just below.

The descent into the depths is short, and strangely so. After descending the staircase, you come to a natural cave, with a floor worked by hand. It seems to descend sharply, though not too sharply to traverse by foot. Yet with each step downward, the building heat in the air begins to intensify. At first it starts as muggy, humid swelter, and proceeds to absolutely blistering, arid air that burns with each breath. As the cave narrows to a point, a small tunnel is carved off to the side. The walls, ceiling, and floor of the tunnel are clearly hewn by hand, and it bends off at a 90 degree angle about twenty feet in obscuring any view of what awaits beyond.

5. The Ebon Siren (EL 8)

As you round the corner you find that the tunnel is quite well lit... due to the raw molten rock pooling at its exit. In fact, as you descend a short staircase you come to what appears to be an ancient temple of some sort, completely perforated by magma at a number of points. Jagged fingers of orange flame extend deep into the temple's interior, and the air throughout shimmers with the staggering heat. At the ruined temple's center is a portal composed of swirling prismatic mist. The portal is nearly 30 ft. tall and some 10 ft. wide. Around it are eight crimson-robed figures that appear to be entranced. Each is covered in a thick, tar-like pitch that seems ready to burst into flame at any moment. They chant in unison, though their words can scarcely be heard over the fuming roar of the churning lava. A ring of force can be seen, glowing a nearly-transparent yellow against the occasional lava-burst, surrounding the temple's interior.

Standing wide-legged, staring expectantly up at the portal is a stunning female figure. Her crimson hair stands in almost perfect contrast to her ebony skin, and an impressively sculpted crimson colored breastplate accentuates her dangerously lithe physique. As you enter she whirls about on her heels, and gives a brief tug at what appeared to be a belt made of wicked blood-colored glass thorns. The belt comes loose and then dangles like a long serpent in her hands, a vicious scorpion barb punctuating its end.

The savage stare she levels at you is suddenly torn away as one of the crimson robed figures burst into flames. The sickly smell of incinerating flesh fills the air as the skin melts away from the bones. And as surely as the robed figure melts into a puddle of flaming flesh, the fat crackling violently from the heat, a strange looking creature with broad shoulders, overly long arms, and menacingly clawed hands appears behind the screen of force. You can only imagine what might come through that portal if all of these robed figures are allowed to be immolated.

With a brief chuckle the fiery-haired drow takes a step towards you, her blood-glass chain whirring in the air. As her arrogant chuckle cuts through the wavering air, you suddenly know what you must do—kill the robed figures before they can immolate, and hopefully if you kill enough of them, you can prevent whatever might come through that portal from setting foot in Stormreach.

One figure bursts into flame each round of combat, at the very end of the round, instantly killing it. For each figure that immolates, a carnage demon is summoned behind the wall of force. The wall of force does not fall until the Ebon Siren is slain. If all eight figures immolate before they are slain, a Rakshasa Rajah steps through the portal and immediately teleports away. It does, however, leave a Solamith behind to clean up. If even one of the robed figures are slain before they can immolate, the Rakshasa's summoning is prevented. If six or more figures successfully immolate, the Solamith is summoned and immediately attacks the PC's after the wall of force is removed.

Bombardment: If the PC's are bombarded before entering, two of the robed figures have died due to a small cave-in from the ceiling above. This instantly prevents the summoning of anything but Carnage Demons.

Terrain: This battle is fought on the Temple of the Prismatic Flame map from the Fantastic Locations: *Hellscape Prison* module. The PC's descend on the western edge of the map, in the stairwell near the word "Temple" marked on the map. Spread the sacrificial robed figures out at least 5' apart around the eastern side of the prismatic portal, fanning out around the central lava stream. The Ebon Siren starts 10' to the west of the portal.

Any character adjacent to a square containing lava that is not protected by an endure elements spell or another spell, ability, or item that grants resistance to fire takes 1 point of fire damage per round at the end of their turn. If a character falls into the lava or fails a jump check over it, the magma deals 2d6 points of damage per round of exposure, except in the case of total immersion (such as when a character falls into the crater of an active volcano), which deals 20d6 points of damage per round. Damage from magma continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases, but this additional damage is only half of that dealt during actual contact (that is, 1d6 or 10d6 points per round). A character touching lava must also succeed on a Reflex (DC 15) save or catch fire, dealing an additional 1d6 points of fire damage per round.

Foes: The Ebon Siren is the main foe in this combat, and taunts the PC's happily as she fights. The PC's goal is to kill the robed figures before they can succumb to the magical immolation effect. They may use other fire effects to kill the figures.

Ebon Siren: hp 71; Combat Statistic

Robed Figure (7): hp 24, 24, 24, 24, 23, 22, 22

Tactics: The Ebon Siren is all too happy to quickcast *Blade of Blood* or *Stretch Weapon* to start the battle—particularly if she can hit (and perhaps trip) a caster that's threatening to take out some of her sacrificial lambs. With her resistance to fire she's quite capable of stepping over or onto the lava. She'll use terrain to her advantage as much as possible, and is happy to attempt improved feint on her opponents to make a sneak attack against them from range. The robed figures do not attack. They go full defensive and continue their chant, even when being attacked.

Development: If and when the Ebon Siren is slain, the *wall of force* drops and any demons behind it immediately rush in and attack.

Crimson Codex Mission #2: A scrap of the fragments. Rummaging the Ebon Siren's corpse (Search check, DC 23) turns up a scrap of the Caldyn fragments that lead the pirate queen to this location. This scrap should be brought back to headquarters.

Scaling the Encounter:

8th-level: The Ebon Siren begins with *Bear's Endurance* cast upon her and resistance 5 to cold, electricity, and acid.

9th-level: The Ebon Siren begins with *Bear's Endurance* and *Bull's Strength* cast upon her as well as resistance 10 to cold, electricity, and acid.

THE EBON SIREN, DROW PIRATE

CR 9

A myriad of dyed crimson braids stand in sharp contrast to the dusky skin of this fierce drow captain. A steel breastplate covered in a thin sheet of scarlet leather highlights the rest of her entirely crimson attire. A linked chain that appears to be made of crimson-colored glass tipped with a scorpion barb hangs menacingly at her side.

Female drow (elf) rogue 1, duskblade 5, fighter 1, scarlet corsair 2

CN Medium humanoid

Init +3; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 23(+3 Dex, +8 armor, +3 force), touch 15, flat-footed 21

hp 95 (9 HD +24hp from amulet of tears)

Resist fire 20

Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +3

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 keen flaming drow scorpion chain +14/+9 (1d6+8 + 1d6 fire 17-20/x2)

Base Atk +8/+3; Grp +12

Atk Options sneak attack (+2d6), improved feint, improved trip, duskblade spells, drow skirmisher

Duskblade Spells, as sorcerer (6/6/3 CL 5th)

2nd (3 per day)–*dimension hop* (10 ft., DC 16), *stretch weapon*

1st (6 per day)–*Blade of Blood* (DC 16), *Kelgore's Fire Bolt* (5d6 fire, DC 16), *Bigby's Tripping Hand* (+11 attack, DC 16)

0 (6 per day)–*acid splash*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 14), *ray of frost*, *daze*, *open/close*, *mage hand*

Abilities Str 18, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 8, Cha 14

SQ Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, arcane attunement, arcane channeling, spell resistance (19), trap finding, armored mage, quick cast

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, Improved Feint, Daylight Adaptation, Drow Skirmisher, Weapon Focus (drow scorpion chain), Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes

Skills Balance +5, Bluff +13, Climb +8, Concentration +10, Intimidate +14 Jump +7, Knowledge (arcana) 8, Knowledge (local: thunder sea) 8, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +6, Knowledge (planes) +5, Profession (sailor) +10, Spellcraft +11, Swim +6, Tumble +7, Use Rope +6

Possessions: breastplate +3, ring of protection +3, drow scorpion chain (flaming, keen) +1, ioun stone (pale blue), amulet of tears (Magic Item Compendium), brooch of shielding, gloves of dexterity +2, scrap of prophecy, potion of *resist fire 20* (already used)

Arcane Attunement (Sp): Can use the spell-like powers *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, or *read magic* a combined 7 times per day.

Arcane Channeling (Su): You may use a standard action to deliver any touch spell known as part of a melee attack. This attack does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The spell must have a casting time of 1 round or less.

Armored Mage (Ex): Can wear light or medium armor with no chance of spell failure.

Drow Skirmisher: You treat the drow scorpion chain as a martial weapon. You gain a +1 bonus on damage rolls with this weapon as long as you have moved more than 5' under your own power during the round in which you make the attack.

Drow Traits (Sp): Once per day can use faerie fire, darkness, or dancing lights as a 9th level caster.

Improved Feint: You may make a Bluff check to feint in combat as a move action.

Improved Trip: You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when tripping an opponent. If you trip an opponent you gain an immediate attack against that opponent as if you hadn't used your attack for the trip attempt.

Quick Cast: You can cast one spell each day as a swift action. That spell must have a casting time of 1 standard action or less.

ROBED FIGURE

CR 2

Broad shoulders are the only visible feature beneath thick, hooded robes. While these figures appear to be deeply enmeshed in their chanting, closer inspection reveals that they are watching you quite carefully.

Male human commoner 3

LE Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Listen +2, Spot +8

AC 16(+2 Dex, +4 mage armor), touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 24 (3 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee -

Base Atk +1; Grp +1

Atk Options -

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

SQ -

Feats Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

Skills Knowledge (arcana) 3, Knowledge (religion) 3, Spot +8

Possessions: potion of *mage armor* (already used)**New Spells**Bigby's Tripping Hand, *PHB II*, 103

Evocation [Force]

Level: Duskblade 1, sorcerer/wizard 1**Components:** V, S, M**Casting Time:** 1 standard action**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./ level)**Target:** One creature**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** Reflex negates**Spell Resistance:** Yes

A large hand sweeps at the target creature's legs in a tripping maneuver. This trip does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Its attack bonus equals your caster level + your key ability modifier + 2 for the hand's Strength score (14). The hand has a +1 bonus on the trip attempt for every three casters levels up to a maximum of +5.

Blade of Blood, *PHB II*, 103

Necromancy

Level: Assassin 1, blackguard 1, cleric 1, duskblade 1, sorcerer/wizard 1**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 swift action**Range:** Touch**Target:** Weapon touched**Duration:** 1 round/level or until discharged**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

When the affected weapon strikes a living creature, blade of blood discharges. The spell deals an extra 1d6 points of damage to the target. You can voluntarily take 5 hit points of damage to empower the weapon to deal an additional 2d6 (for a total of 3d6) points of damage. The weapon loses this property if it is dropped or the wielder loses contact with it.

Dimension Hop, *PHB II*, 110

Conjuration [Teleportation]

Level: Duskblade 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You instantly teleport the subject creature a distance of 5 feet per two caster levels. The destination must be an unoccupied space within line of sight.

Kelgore's Fire Bolt, *PHB II*, 110
Conjuration/Evocation [Fire]
Level: Duskblade 1, sorcerer/wizard 1
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./ level)
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: See text

The spell conjures a small orb of rock and sheathes it in arcane energy. This spell deals 1d6 points of fire damage per caster level (maximum 5d6). If you fail to overcome the target's spell resistance, the spell still deals 1d6 points of fire damage from the heat and force of the conjured orb's impact.

Stretch Weapon, *PHB II*, 126
Transmutation
Level: Bard 2, cleric 2, duskblade 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 swift action
Range: 0 ft.
Target: Melee weapon wielded
Duration: One attack
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

The affected weapon stretches, extending towards its target, though it can be wielded normally. The spell adds an additional 5 feet of reach to a melee weapon for a single attack.

New Weapon

Drow Scorpion Chain, *Secrets of Xen'drik*, 137
Exotic [Two-handed melee]
Cost: 25gp
Dmg (S): 1d4
Dmg (M): 1d6
Critical: 19-20/x2
Range: --
Weight: 3lb.
Type: Slashing

A drow scorpion chain resembles a regular spiked chain in many respects. It is slightly longer than a regular spiked chain and has a daggerlike blade at each end. The weapon takes its name from the technique of holding a sizable length of chain behind the back and then flipping it over the head to strike at a foe: drow warriors often open combat with such a strike. A drow scorpion chain has a reach of 10 feet, but unlike other reach weapons it can be used against adjacent enemies. You can make trip attacks with the drow scorpion chain; if you are tripped during your own trip attempt you can drop the chain to avoid being tripped. When using a drow scorpion chain you get a +2 bonus on attack rolls made to disarm an opponent. You may use the Weapon Finesse feat with a drow scorpion chain even though it isn't a light weapon. Weapon Focus,

Weapon Specialization, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, and other feats associated with a spiked chain also apply to the drow scorpion chain.

New Material

Blood Glass, *Secrets of Xen'drik*, 147

Blood glass is a dark, volcanic glass similar to obsidian. It is formed when Khyber dragonshard deposits mix with cooling magma. The resulting fusion is strong enough that minor elementals can be bound into blood glass without the need for an actual dragonshard. Blood glass slashing or piercing weapons grant the wielder a +1 bonus on damage rolls. Blood glass only has a hardness of 5 and 10 hit points per inch of thickness and is vulnerable to *shatter* spells and similar effects. Blood glass items weigh 10% less than the same item made from metal. The market price modifier for a blood glass weapon is +500 gp. Ammunition costs +10 gp.

6. Cleaning Up (EL Varies)

With the death of the Ebon Siren, the wall of force shimmers and fades. The snarling maws and razor sharp talons beyond hesitate for only moment before rushing to slake their hunger.

Foes: The demons are on the map just outside the area where the robed figures were placed. They attack recklessly until slain.

Carnage Demon (Varies): (One per robed figure that immolated) hp 20; Combat Statistic

Solamith (1): (only if 6 or more robed figures immolate) hp 108; Combat Statistic

Tactics: The carnage demons rush in and attack as one, hoping to maximize their Carnage ability. If the Solamith is summoned, it wades deep into the lava and uses its Soullfire ability to launch ranged attacks against the PCs.

Development: Once all the demons are slain, proceed to the “Ending the Adventure” section.

Covenant of Light Mission #2: Reconsecrate the temple. The PC's must destroy or remove (in the case of the Ebon Siren) all of the corpses, throw 300gp worth of items or treasure into the lava, and spend one full hour in prayer to reconsecrate the temple.

Scaling the Encounter:

8th-level: Add one additional Carnage Demon

9th-level: Add three additional Carnage Demons

CARNAGE DEMON

CR 4

This cloud of buzzing insects boils toward its victims, droning ominously in its strange deep pitch and accompanied by the sickly-sweet aroma of blood.

CE Medium outsider (chaotic evil, extraplanar)

Init +0; Senses Darkvision 60' Listen +4, Spot +4

AC 13 (+3 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 13

hp 20 (3 HD)

DR5/silver, Immune electricity/poison

Resist 10 fire, acid, cold

Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3

Speed Fly 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee 2 slams +8 each (1d4+5)

Base Atk +3; Grp 8

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Atk Options aligned strike (chaotic evil), carnage, reaving fists

Abilities Str 20, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 6, Cha 6

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., destructive appetite, carnage, reaving fists

Feats Great Fortitude, Iron Will

Skills Climb +11, Jump +11, Listen +4, Spot +4, Survival +4

Destructive Appetite (Ex): A carnage demon is a threat even to its allies. After every successful melee attack, a carnage demon must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or attack the nearest creature that is not a carnage demon whenever it is unable to attack an enemy on any round.

Carnage (Su): For each other carnage demon within 30' a carnage demon gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls up to a maximum of +5.

Reaving Fists (Ex): A carnage demon's slam attacks ignore any damage reduction that could be overcome by any metallic material such as silver, cold iron, or adamantine.

SOLAMITH

CR 8

A corpulent monstrosity at least 10' tall lumbers forward on slab-like legs. Rings of flabby flesh cradle its horned head. Pressing against the green-veined and pallid skin of its great gut are screaming faces.

CE Large outsider (chaotic evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Init +3; Senses Darkvision 60' Listen +15, Spot +15

AC 21 (+9 natural, +3 Dex, -1 size), touch 12, flat-footed 18

hp 115 (11 HD)

Fast healing 5; DR5/magic or good; Immune electricity, fire, poison

Resist 10 acid, cold; SR 16

Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +8

Weakness vulnerable cold

Speed Fly 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee 2 slams +14 each (1d8+4)

Base Atk +11; Grp +19

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Atk Options aligned strike (chaotic evil), magic strike, power attack, cleave

SA Soulfire retort, soulfire

Abilities Str 19, Dex 16, Con 23, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 8

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., soulfire retort, soulfire

Feats Ability Focus (soulfire), Power Attack, Cleave, Improved Natural Attack (slam)

Skills Balance +17 Climb +18, Intimidate +13, Jump +8

Soulfire (Su): As a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity, a solamith can deal itself 5 damage to tear flesh from its body and hurl that flesh up to 100' with perfect accuracy. When it lands, the flesh explodes in a 20' burst dealing 4d6 points of damage, half of which is fire damage (Reflex DC 23, half).

Soulamiths are immune soulfire. The save DC is Constitution based.

By dealing itself an extra 5 points of damage, the solamith can widen the burst to 40'. By dealing itself an extra 10 points of damage the solamith can deal maximum damage with the burst. A solamith can use both of these abilities on a soulfire attack, but takes damage for each.

Soulfire Retort (Su): Whenever a solamith takes damage from an opponent's melee attack, it can unleash a 15' cone of soulfire as a swift action on its next turn. The cone deals damage as soulfire above (Reflex DC 21, half). The save DC is Constitution based.

Ending the Adventure

If the PC's are able to survive the ordeal, the adventure ends after the defeat of the last demon:

The prismatic portal suddenly winks out of existence, as if it had never been there at all. Walking past the corpse of the Ebon Siren, you note a disturbing postmortem grin on her face...

The ascent to the surface seems to take almost twice as long as the descent, but with each step, the smoldering heat abates. As you crest the entrance to the cave you find yourself startled by a dozen crossbowmen, who look almost disappointed that they can't shoot you when you emerge. Kirris Sel Shadra greets you warmly, offering you the thanks of all Stormreach. She informs you that thanks to your efforts, the pincer attack of the naval forces and ground troops from the southwestern gate were able to beat the pirates to a standstill. She hopes that tomorrow morning at first light, she can use an airship to drop the head of the Ebon Siren down over the pirate horde, while displaying her impaled body upon the parapets. That, along with the space you've cleared for Stormreach's armed forces, should send the pirate army into full retreat.

Kirris joyously distributes the Heroes of Stormreach medal to all of the surviving PC's and thanks them graciously. If the PC's were able to get her to a Helpful attitude, they also receive the Friends in High Places story object.

Blackwheel Mission #2: Heads—Pikes. The second Blackwheel objective is to return to General Pilgrim with the head of the Ebon Siren. It takes a DC 18 Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Bluff check to convince Kirris to allow the PC's to keep the head. Grant circumstance bonuses for particularly good roleplay.

Adventure Questions

1. Was this PC able to fulfill his/her secret faction missions?
 - a. Yes, both of them.
 - b. Only one of them.
 - c. Neither of them.
2. Describe how the PC's interacted with Kirris Sel Shadra.
 - a. They treated her with kindness and respect and were exhilarated by the chance to save Stormreach.
 - b. They treated her respectfully, but with sharp, efficient negotiation skills. In the end, Kirris got what she wanted and the PC's got what they wanted.
 - c. Negotiations and interactions with Kirris foundered a bit or were awkward.
 - d. Interaction with Kirris went extremely poorly.
3. Were the PC's able to defeat the Cloud Ray in the skies above Stormreach.
 - a. Yes, they fought like heroes and eliminated the threat from the ship.
 - b. Yes, they fought well, but took quite a bit of time trying to disable/destroy the ship.
 - c. Yes, but only after significant losses.
 - d. No, the Cloud Ray proved too much for them.
4. How did the PC's fare during their bombing run?
 - a. They proved to be skilled bombardiers, and took out the targets with exacting precision.
 - b. They used the bombardment effectively, though it was a challenge at times.
 - c. They had an extremely hard time mastering the art of aerial bombardment, and the run was clumsy or ineffective.
 - d. They failed to destroy all of the siege weapons.
5. Describe the PCs encounter with the Ebon Siren?
 - a. The PCs prevented any further robed figures from immolating.
 - b. The PCs killed more than 5, but not all robed figures before they could immolate.
 - c. The PCs killed three or four robed figures before they could immolate.
 - d. The PCs could not stop the Solamith from being summoned.
 - e. The Rakshasa Rajah was successfully summoned.

6. Describe the adventure's conclusion.
 - a. The PC's defeated the Ebon Siren and slew all the demons that were summoned, proving themselves as true heroes of Stormreach.
 - b. The PCs fought valiantly, but suffered losses—though they were able to overcome the Ebon Siren and the Demons, they paid dearly.
 - c. The PCs slew the Ebon Siren, but fell to the demons.
 - d. The PCs were defeated by the Ebon Siren.
7. Rate the group's roleplaying.
 - a. Fantastic! Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted and challenged the adventure in very fun ways.
 - b. Good. Most players had interesting and engaging characters.
 - c. Okay. There was some roleplaying.
 - d. None. There was no roleplaying. They treated the adventure as nothing more than a set of objectives to be accomplished.

EXSR01

Hero of Stormreach: This object is an honorary medallion given to only the bravest, most charitable, and most selfless that serve the city of Stormreach. It is rarely awarded, but when done so, it commands respect and admiration from populace and politicians alike. Any character bearing this medal receives a +4 circumstance bonus to any Charisma-based checks when dealing with a citizen of, or person/creature from Stormreach.

EXSR02

Friends in High Places: You have impressed Kirris Sel Shadra, a powerful and important Coin Lord in Stormreach. As a result, she allows you to call in minor favors in return for the promise that she may count on you again if Stormreach is ever in need. In any adventure that begins in the city of Stormreach proper, you may make a roll on the "Favored in House" table in the XE Campaign Standards. You take a -2 penalty on the roll, and may not spend an action point. The result is hand-delivered to you personally by one of Kirris' servants with her blessing and well-wishes.

DM's Handout #1

Blackwheel Company.

Prophecy Directive 1: Recover the Ray.

Prophecy Directive 2: Return the Siren's Head to the Pilgrim.

Covenant of Light.

Prophecy Directive 1: Preserve a Pirate for Conversion in Stormreach.

Prophecy Directive 2: Reconsecrate the Fiery Temple.

Cabal of Shadows.

Prophecy Directive 1: Plant something personal aboard the new Blackwheel Ship.

Prophecy Directive 2: Defile the Circle.

Crimson Codex.

Prophecy Directive 1: Flatter the Coin Lord.

Prophecy Directive 2: A Scrap of Fragments. Search the Siren.