

HEROIC

1-10

REMAINS OF THE EMPIRE

by Kolja Raven Liquette

An adventure for 3rd-level characters

Elkridge is a pleasant, peaceful valley, home to a community of farmers and artisans unaccustomed to the ways of violence. When wild drakes descend on the valley, attacking livestock and citizens alike, the locals need the help of experienced warriors for protection. Beyond the immediate need for defense is the larger question of where these creatures come from, why they are attacking the valley, and how it's all connected to the region's dim past.

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Remains of the Empire exposes the characters to an obscure breed of drake, thought by some to be extinct. These drakes lead characters to the ruins of a flying citadel atop a haunted summit. A dragonborn zealot, seeking to restore the glory of fallen Arkhosia, has turned to Zehir for strength and guidance.

Remains of the Empire is a 4th Edition D&D® adventure designed to take five 3rd level characters to 4th level. The story offers the chance to tame a drake, disperse a mob, parley with undead, and battle within an alpine meadow that defies gravity. *Remains of the Empire* can be inserted into any campaign setting.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago, when the Dragonborn Empire of Arkhosia thrived, Ustraternes, one of many airborne dragonborn citadels, was undone. Tiefling wizards unraveled the magic that levitated the dragonborn fortresses high above the clouds and began bringing them down. One by one, the floating citadels fell to earth. When Ustraternes crashed into an alpine peak, it cracked open like an egg, scattering the sundered pieces in all directions. The mountain thereafter became known as Morningfall Summit, its original name erased from history.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The story begins with the characters passing through a peasant region plagued with warwing drakes. Most of these drakes seem driven by hunger, with two exceptions; one is inquisitive and playful while the other has learned rudimentary speech and is badly

injured. Skill challenges allow the party to befriend the docile drake and prevent angry villagers from killing the dying one. The clues that surround these warwing drakes, including the remains of a dragonborn rider, all point toward the same direction: the top of Morningfall Summit.

While climbing the one-mile-high peak, the characters discover a cave occupied by two shadowhunter bats and a nest of pestilent vermin.

On reaching the summit, the characters behold the remains of Ustraternes for the first time. The initial impact of the flying city turned an alpine meadow into a craterous valley. Pieces of floating debris hover in mid-air throughout the vale, along with a floating tower that must have been launched skyward after the crash.

Halfway into the valley, the characters encounter the original inhabitants of Ustraternes: specters long dead who guard the remains of their fallen citadel. A dragonborn shadow named Vrak Tiburcaex reluctantly serves a living descendant named Bejik Vuthaner, a Zehir-touched dragonborn. A skill challenge can convince Vrak to change her allegiance, but she requires proof that she is not related to Bejik. She fights the party and retreats when her undead brethren are defeated, either to alert Bejik about the characters or to brood and say nothing.

Approaching the bottom of the valley, the characters encounter either patrolling dragonborn or a single dragonborn who claims to be trapped on the summit (depending on whether Vrak alerted these guards). If possible, they lure the party into an ambush, attacking from below, above, and on the back of a warwing drake. If their trap is revealed early, the dragonborn attack without surprise.

With that threat dispatched, the characters are free to explore the floating tower. They find pickaxes, shovels, and a counterfeit patent of nobility that links Vrak Tiburcaex to Bejik Vuthaner. On the ground, a site is discovered with an entranceway excavated under the largest mound of sundered masonry.

The characters explore into the ruins of the once floating citadel and find an original courtyard, preserved under a precarious ceiling of walls and towers that collapsed against each other. This is where Bejik Vuthaner studies the ancient texts uncovered in the ruins, plots his road to renewed glory, and casts rituals to bind the warwing drakes. He seeks to eliminate the current inhabitants of the region and carve out his own fiefdom devoted to the worship of Zehir. To this end, he deliberately releases his magically bound warwing drakes to prey upon the local villagers. In his quest to restore the airborne cavalry of Arkhosia, Bejik struck a pact with Zehir that left him horribly deformed. The dragonborn would claim that he has been “perfected,” having embraced his new visage as a viper.

To gain access to the underground ruins, Bejik deceived the ghost Vrak into believing that he descended from her noble family. If the original patent of nobility is presented to Vrak during the final battle, she will either turn on Bejik and side with the characters, or collapse the ruins on top of everybody. This result provokes a skill challenge to escape the buried courtyard while the final battle takes place under falling rubble.

Remains of the Empire is a standalone adventure that can be developed into a longer tale of espionage and intrigue, maintaining Bejik Vuthaner as a recurring villain whose influence grows over time and attracts yuan-ti followers and snaketongue cultists with his Zehir-touched appearance.

DETECTIVES, THEY'RE NOT

If the characters are not interested in detective work, it falls on the dungeon master to make the discontent of Vrak palpably obvious. She is unhappy serving Bejik but does so out of a sense of familial loyalty from beyond the grave. Even without presenting the forged patent of nobility to Vrak, perhaps she can still be persuaded to change sides at the last minute through honorable or merciful actions, qualities she highly respects.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters travel to an idyllic peasant region of Elkridge, known for foreign ales, exotic bazaars, and relaxing atmosphere. Instead, the normally peaceful area is rife with nervous activity. The seasonal festivities that usually take place during this time have all been suspended. Something has spooked the peasantry into battening down the hatches, but it doesn't take much to loosen their tongues. A plague of flying drakes has befallen the region, and nobody knows where they come from or why.

COUNTRYSIDE IN PERIL

The peasant region is beautifully serene, offering placid lakes, rolling hills, and few metropolitan comforts. The village of Elkridge, home to only the most essential professions, was once protected by a caretaking warlord in search of peace and quiet. Since he died, the village has been well maintained but is now vulnerable to attack. For this reason more than

any other, the villagers of Elkridge find themselves completely unprepared for conflict. The fact that cottages are so widely spread throughout the region, rather than centralized in one place, only makes this problem worse.

Regardless of whether the characters are passing through the area or have made this locality their destination, read the following aloud:

As the village of Elkridge looms ahead, you can't help but notice the lack of festival banners and widespread mirth that usually characterizes this region. Country folk that normally swarm the arrival of friendly adventurers are too busy boarding up their homes to pay you any notice. A rare glance is spared, but little else.

PEASANTS TASTE GOOD

The characters can speak to any number of cottagedwellers fortifying their homes. They describe a plague of flying beasts laying siege to the area, but any further conversation is interrupted.

Tactical Encounter: V1: Peasants Taste Good (page 61).

WHY THEY'RE HERE

The reason for exploring the peasant region can be no more complicated than heroes seeking downtime, to the much more specific search for a fallen dragon-born citadel. Perhaps the characters heard about a disturbance in the countryside that the locals cannot manage, or maybe they approached the community oblivious, hired to protect a merchant caravan that frequents the region. Each dungeon master will know best how to dovetail this adventure into their campaign with the least amount of shoe-horning.



Quest XP: The task of locating the source of the warwing drakes rewards each character with 150 XP. As well, the characters will forevermore receive accommodation and food in this region for free, they can stake a claim to their own plots of land without cost or formality, and they will be gifted with a basket of *Everlasting Provisions* if they succeed in ending the threat.

TAMING THE DOCILE BEAST

After the characters finish negotiating with Mavros, a village alarm is sounded.

A young boy runs into the village out of breath. "My father is dead ... and the beast is still there!"

The boy will lead the characters back to a small cluster of cottages 1 mile away. The cottages are boarded up but unscathed.

A warwing drake, equipped with a saddle and saddle bags, idly paws at a body on the ground. The distraught boy indicates that the man is his father.

A DC 10 Perception check from up to 10 squares (50 feet) away determines that the man is not dead but unconscious. The man is stout for a human, equal in build to a dragonborn. Before the characters can attack, the warwing drake becomes distracted by a passing butterfly and flits along in its wake, leaving the injured farmer alone and apparently unconcerned about the PCs.

Skill Challenge: V2: Taming the Docile Beast (page 63)

THE HIGHER THEY FALL

Any character who tracks the warwing drake out of the forest (Perception DC 10) finds a trail leading back to the corpse of a chain-armored dragonborn. The drake's tracks disappear at this point, as if the creature landed here. Alternatively, the body can be located with a DC 15 passive Perception check to notice carrion birds circling over a section of the forest. Traveling to the area below the carrion birds locates the body.

The corpse is sunken face down into a body-shaped depression in the ground. A DC 10 Heal check determines that the dragonborn body must have fallen from a great height to have pressed into the ground this way. The dragonborn's armor is destroyed, but tatters of torn cloth are snagged in the links of mail. Coins are scattered everywhere from a belt pouch that split open (see Treasure, below).

Searching the body produces a map of the region. A DC 15 Nature check identifies aerial routes to and from a nearby mountain (Morningfall Summit). Wherever the aerial routes approach inhabited areas, they swing wide and avoid stretches where a flyer could be spotted easily.

A DC 15 Perception check locates a tabard 25 feet up in a tree. If retrieved, the tabard is found to be emblazoned with a symbol of a serpent. A DC 10 Religion check reveals this is the symbol of Zehir.

Treasure: 48 gp, 14 sp, 6 cp.

VILLAGERS ON THE RAMPAGE

Returning to the village, the characters encounter Mavros and several parents marching toward a nearby marsh. On seeing the characters, Mavros approaches the group and speaks on behalf of everybody:

"The teenagers and older children of the village rallied while you were gone. They were anxious before you arrived, but ever since you killed those drakes, they've had bloodlust in their hearts. Someone reported seeing a wounded drake in the marsh near here, and they've all armed themselves however they could and marched off to kill it before any of their parents realized what was going on."

"We're headed out to try to bring them back, but after so much blood and terror, we don't know whether they'll listen to reason. They respect you ... if you could come along, they might listen to you."

With directions to the marsh or a guide to lead them, the characters can race ahead and catch up with the mob of young villagers just as they come into sight of the drake. The crowd is mostly teenage boys and girls ranging from 14 to 17, but some children as young as 8 are with them. All are armed with pitchforks, shovels, rakes, and clubs. They are agitated and angry and heedless of danger in their fervor to attack the creature.

The warwing drake languishes in the marsh, scratching ineffectually at its head. With great effort, the creature hoarsely speaks a few words in Draconic.

"Can't ... stop ... pain. Not ... want ... fight."

A DC 10 Insight check reveals that the drake is delirious with pain. If the characters want to communicate with the drake, they must first stop the teenage villagers from attempting to kill it with farm tools.

Skill Challenge: V3: Villagers on the Rampage (page 64)

THE JOURNEY YONDER

Morningfall Summit is visible from anywhere in the region. Its base is 6 miles away from Elkridge. If the characters announce that they are going to climb the mile-high peak, climbing kits and hempen rope will be supplied at no cost. Traveling to the mountain provides another chance for the characters to discover the dragonborn body (see The Higher They Fall, above), if they didn't find it earlier.

MORNINGFALL SUMMIT RUMORS

A character knows the following information with a successful Streetwise check after talking with the local peasants and villagers.

DC 5: *The mountain is a dangerous place to which the locals never venture.*

DC 10: *Folklore says that no one who was foolish enough to try to climb the mountain has ever returned.*

DC 15: *Legends speak of ancient spirits who inhabit the peak and consume mountaineers.*

DC 20: *A village elder (Cyril the One-Eyed) claims that his grandfather climbed the mountain in his youth but turned back after spotting dragonborn spirits.*

THE NOCTURNAL AERIE

The alpine peak rises steeply. It can be scaled only with a climber's kit (hooks, hammer, and pitons) and rope, which the villagers will provide. The distance to be climbed is 1,000 squares. The speed of ascent equals the slowest character's climb speed per minute rather than per round. Total climbing times at various speeds are shown on the table. The climb itself is tiring and slow but not especially dangerous. Everyone will reach the peak without mishap; the only variable is how long it takes and whether the climbers are ambushed, as noted below.

Climb Speed	Time Needed
4	4 hrs, 10 mins
3.5	4 hrs, 45 mins
3	5 hrs, 30 mins
2.5	6 hrs, 40 mins
2	8 hrs, 20 mins

As the party ascends Morningfall Summit, they encounter a cave mouth at about the midpoint of the climb. The narrow cave entrance is 6 squares (30 feet) to the left of their climbing route. At this point, each character must make a DC 15 Nature or Perception check. If more characters succeed than fail or the number is tied, then the party can enter the cave without any chance of being surprised by the creatures inside. If more characters fail than succeed, they still notice the cave but stand a chance of being surprised by the creatures inside.

Half-way into your climb, the dizzying view is already enough to make you feel small. Looking ahead, you notice a dark gash in the mountainside, large enough that even the broadest member of your party could squeeze through.

Any character with Nature training notices scratches, scuff marks, and litter near the entrance that indicate some sort of habitation. If the characters ignore the cave, continue to At the Peak. If they pause to investigate, they trigger the tactical encounter.

Tactical Encounter: S1: "The Nocturnal Aerie" (page 65).

AT THE PEAK

After an exhausting climb, the characters pull themselves over the final ridge of Morningfall Summit. The alpine valley stretches in a bowl shape that is about one-half mile (500 squares) in diameter and 600 feet (120 squares) deep. The valley walls are steep near the rim but rapidly become less severe. The ground slopes downward everywhere, but once characters descend 50-60 feet from the lip, the incline is noticeable but manageable.

You have not even begun to stow your climbing gear after pulling yourself over the final ridge when the name of this mountain suddenly takes on new meaning. The bowl-shaped valley that opens beneath you is littered with massive pieces of sundered marble and stonework overgrown with bushes, moss, and trees. The debris is not merely scattered across the ground but suspended in midair throughout the valley, as if frozen in place and weathered over a millennia. Not even the passage of time can disguise the catastrophic event that must have taken place here. Pieces of elaborate architecture, both embedded in the ground and hovering above it, radiate upward and outward from the lowest point in the valley. The most prominent edifice amongst the airborne flotsam is a nearly undamaged tower near the bottom of the valley but well above the surface. To see more than that, you will need to investigate from a closer distance.

MORNINGFALL SUMMIT LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: *The alpine valley did not form naturally, but resulted from an enormous impact.*

DRAGONBORN CITADEL LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful History check after studying the debris for 10 minutes. If the characters study the debris for the better part of an hour, a second History check is permitted, but the dragonborn in the valley below will become aware of their presence.

DC 5: *The designs and artwork etched into the marble and stonework is dragonborn in origin.*

DC 10: *The debris shares many qualities in common with ancient dragonborn architecture.*

FLOATING DEBRIS PROPERTIES

Characters can stand within reach of floating debris at any elevation within the valley. Individual chunks remain fixed at a specific height. In general, the larger the chunk, the closer it is to the crater floor, but there is much variation. The pieces are Tiny near the peak of Morningfall Summit but become progressively larger as they near the bottom of the valley. Floating debris that is removed from the valley or repositioned over the edge of Morningfall Summit is immediately subject to gravity.

The floating debris can be mapped in three dimensions. Roll 1, 2, or 3d10 (as shown on the table) for every relevant 3x3 area on the map. The number on each d10 roll corresponds to which 5-foot cube in the 3x3 area contains a chunk of floating debris (starting from the upper left corner of the 3x3 area and numbering across to the opposite corner). If a 10 is rolled, no debris is present for that roll. The size of each chunk is determined by rolling 1d6. Repeat for every relevant 3x3 area and 5-foot increase in elevation. (It's not necessary to map the debris field in the entire crater. The specific arrangement of debris matters in only a few instances.)

Height Above Crater Floor	Chunks per 3x3 Area	Size of Chunk
0-40 feet	3	1-2: Tiny (3-6 inches cubed) 3-4: Small (1-2 feet cubed) 5-6: Medium (3 feet cubed)
40-80 feet	2	1-3: Tiny 4-6: Small
80-120 feet	1	Always Tiny

Tiny debris can support up to 250 lb.; small debris can support up to 500 lb.; and Medium debris can support up to 1,000 lb. before shifting down at the speed of 1 square per round (per increment of weight being supported). A piece of floating debris can be pulled or pushed at half speed on a horizontal plane as a move action or 5 squares with *mage hand* as a move action.

A character who fights or takes damage while perched on a piece of Tiny debris grants combat advantage until the start of their next turn, must use their move action to balance, and makes a DC 15 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping over the edge. A character who fights or takes damage on a piece of Small debris grants combat advantage until the start of their next turn and makes a DC 10 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping. A character can fight and take damage on a piece of Medium debris without penalty.

A character who slips over the edge gets an immediate chance to catch himself as if bull-rushed over the edge (*Player's Handbook* page 284). If that fails, he falls 10 feet and slams into another chunk of debris (either place one randomly or choose the nearest, suitable piece), takes 1d10 damage, and has another chance to catch the edge. This continues until the character either catches hold of something, hits the ground, or reaches 0 hit points and plummets the rest of the way down. At each stage of the fall, a character trained in Acrobatics can make a check to reduce the falling damage (*Player's Handbook* 181).

DC 15: The marble and stonework match the flying citadels built by dragonborn at the height of their now extinct empire. These citadels were foiled by tiefling wizards who unwove the magic that kept them aloft, killing thousands in the resulting crashes.

DC 20: The debris belongs to *Ustraternes* (*The City of Flying Stone*), which crashed in a remote and unknown region. This particular citadel housed and transported elite dragonborn soldiers. Its downfall was said to portend the end of Arkhosia.

THE RESTLESS GUARDIANS

Regardless of the direction that characters take, they eventually come across a perimeter of crumbling statues half-way into the valley.

Your descent into the valley is steep regardless of the direction you take. About halfway down, the geography forms a natural spur that juts out from the slope. On it stands an ancient statue of a dragonborn warrior, propped up rather than lying broken on the ground. Similar spurs ring the entire circumference of the valley at this elevation, one about every 40 feet, and a similar statue stands on each.

The dragonborn statues have been erected deliberately about 8 squares (40 feet) apart to create a ring of stones at this elevation (100 statues in total).

Moving within 6 squares of the statue perimeter causes a phantom dragonborn to emerge from within the closest statue and address the characters.

Skill Challenge: S3: "Ghost of a Chance" (page 69).

Tactical Encounter: S2: "The Restless Guardians" (page 67).

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters succeed at the Ghost of a Chance skill challenge, Vrak Tiburcaex will keep their presence in the valley to herself. Otherwise, she retreats to alert Bejik Vuthaner and the other dragonborn about the intruders. Either way, Vrak honorably defends Bejik until shown evidence that proves they have no family connection.



THE FLOATING TOWER

After venturing beyond the statue perimeter, they eventually approach the floating tower at the bottom of the valley.

As the valley levels off, the thinning trees gives way to larger pieces of marble, both in the air and on the ground. The overgrown stonework increases in quantity and size until all the debris merges with an enormous mound of rubble at the bottom of the valley. The tower hovers 100 feet above the ground here. There is an entrance at the bottom of the tower with no door.

As the characters descend to the bottom of the valley, they have a unique opportunity to observe the floating tower from a distance. See the Reaching the Floating Tower sidebar and increase the DC of any active Perception checks by +2 to account for range.

Tactical Encounter: S4: “The Floating Tower” (page 70).

THE RUINED CITADEL

Exploring around the rubble mound reveals an excavated area that has been cleared and flattened. This is also revealed to characters who climb atop the floating citadel and survey the valley from there. All tracks in the excavated area converge on a large marble slab that has been recently moved. A character can make a DC 15 Strength check to move the slab and reveal a roughly hewn, vertical shaft with handholds; 30 feet down, it drops into a level passageway. Moving into this passageway triggers a trap.

REACHING THE FLOATING TOWER

Characters can climb up to the tower with a grappling hook and rope by latching onto a Small or Medium piece of floating debris (AC 8 or AC 10 respectively). To determine the closest piece of Small or Medium floating debris, see the Floating Debris Properties sidebar (page 57). Treat the grappling hook as an improvised heavy thrown weapon with a range of 5/10.

If the characters climb to the top of the rubble mound, they recognize that the floating debris forms a winding path 20 squares long leading up to the tower. Characters who look for such a path may locate these repositioned stones from below (Perception DC 15). No skill check is required to ascend the path of floating debris, but having an Acrobatics modifier of 5 or more means that characters do not grant combat advantage while negotiating this path.

Special: If the characters successfully negotiated with Vrak Tiburcaex (see the Ghost of a Chance skill challenge, page 69) so that none of the dragonborn brigands or dragonborn snipers had enough time to warn Bejik about the characters, then the stone slab has not been dragged into place to hide the entrance shaft.

Poison Mist Trap**Level 4 Lurker**
XP 175

A weakened section of floor breaks under the weight of a creature, smashing a flask of volatile liquid underneath.

Trap: The unstable liquid reacts quickly when exposed to air and billows upward as a gas.

Perception

- ◆ **DC 10:** The character notices that the floor feels soft underfoot.
- ◆ **DC 15:** The character notices that a section of floor has been dug up or disturbed.

Initiative +2

Trigger

When a creature moves across the weakened section of floor.

Attack

Standard Action **Close burst 1**

Target: Creatures in burst

Attack: +7 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 1d6 + 4 poison damage.

Effect: The triggering creature is immobilized (save ends). Any creature that enters the cloud or starts their turn there takes 5 poison damage. The mist provides concealment and blocks line of sight for creatures inside it. The cloud persists until the end of encounter or for 5 minutes.

Countermeasures

- ◆ A character can make a DC 15 Acrobatics check to balance across the weakened area.
- ◆ A character can make a DC 5 Athletics check (DC 10 without a running start) to jump over the weakened area.
- ◆ An adjacent character who notices the weakened floor can make a DC 15 Thievery check to disable the trap without breaking the flask of poisonous gas. A Thievery check of 12 or less triggers the trap.
- ◆ Any melee attack against the weakened floor triggers the trap.

If the characters set off the poison mist trap, they have ample time to spend healing surges and recover from any damage before proceeding. If Bejik and his servants haven't already been warned about the characters, then triggering the trap alerts them that intruders are in the corridor and they use this time to get into ambush positions.

If characters bypass the trap without setting it off, make a mental note of that. The trap will still be live when it comes time to evacuate the underground chamber. In the chaos that's likely to occur, someone might set it off in their haste to escape.

A corridor continues beyond the trapped area and emerges through the back of a stone wall into a gutted tower, the upper floor of which is partially choked with rubble. Looking through the wide, doorless entrance-way or either of the paneless windows reveals the following.

An ancient courtyard opens before you, sheltered under a roof of sundered marble and the mound of rubble above. Two now-buried stone towers have toppled against each other to create a precarious ceiling. The broken architecture supports the full weight of the ruins above, keeping an avalanche at bay. Lanterns flicker throughout the area, illuminating broken statues on the ground. The base of the tower opposite the one you occupy is closed off by wooden doors that appear to be newly repaired.

Tactical Encounter: S5: "The Ruined Citadel" (page 73).

Hazard: "Collapsing Ceiling" (page 75).

MINDSHAPE WARWING DRAKE

Like the dragonborn beastmasters of old, you instantly tame a warwing drake with a violent burst of psychic energy.

Level: 5

Category: Creation
(see text)

Time: 1 Hour

Duration: Permanent

Component Cost: 100 gp

Market Price: 250 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Nature

To perform this ritual, you require a single warwing drake bound inside a magic circle drawn to bind a natural creature. When you successfully perform this ritual, the warwing drake is tamed as determined by your Arcana or Nature check result.

Check Result	Effect on Warwing Drake
7 or lower	-4 Int; attacks all other creatures.
8-13	-2 Int; still wild.
14-19	-1 Int; tame and trained.
20-25	Tame and trained.
26 or higher	Tame and trained; can speak

A tame and trained warwing drake is ready to accept a rider and riding gear, and it understands commands. It is loyal to the ritual caster or someone the ritual caster designates. Such a drake can be trained to accept other potential riders and masters. If the ritual grants the drake the ability to speak, the drake speaks in a broken form of a language the ritual caster selects.

If use of this ritual reduces a warwing drake to 0 Intelligence, the drake dies.

CONCLUSION

If Vrak changed her allegiance to side with the characters and the party subsequently defeated Bejik and his servants, the dragonborns' possessions can be looted. Bejik's ritual book (written in Draconic) includes *arcane lock*, *brew potion*, *magic circle*, lists of dragonborn artifacts and their selling prices, and pages of an ancient ritual called *mindshape warwing drake*. It's not immediately clear whether this last ritual is complete; extensive notes by Bejik are scribbled in the margins.

A character attempting to decipher Bejik's work must first spend 8 hours studying his notes. At the end of that period, a decipher check (Arcana DC 15) shows that Bejik's research did complete the ritual. Another 8 hours of study are required to master the ritual. See the *mindshape warwing drake* ritual (page 77). It was on this ritual that Bejik hung his hopes to create a force of drake-mounted cavalry with which to carve out a dragonborn fiefdom based on worship of Zehir.

Regardless of whether the ritual book was found by the party, surviving the Ruined Citadel encounter warrants being awarded with Quest XP and receiving all the associated benefits offered by Elkridge.



VI: PEASANTS TASTE GOOD

Encounter Level 2 (525 XP)

SETUP

3 warwing drakes (D)

A group of feral warwing drakes are trying to tear through a thatched cottage that has not yet been fortified. Two parents and their daughter are huddled inside the cottage. The warwing drakes will fly off with any peasant they kill to eat without distraction. A drake that breaks through the wall will reach inside and start flailing around with a claw, like a cat trying to snatch a mouse.

The bloodcurdling scream of a young woman echoes from a nearby glen. A peasant yells out, "That's the farmer's wife! He ran out of wood to board up his house this morning!" A bestial screech comes next, gripping the villagers with fear and rooting them to the ground. The sound of claws raking through timbered planks is unmistakable, coupled with the excited flapping of leathery wings. The creature is nearby and eager to feed.

TACTICS

One warwing drake is tearing up the cottage roof, another is trying to break through a shuttered window, and the third is clawing at a nearby animal shelter. The characters can attempt to surprise these drakes from the treeline with ranged attacks or charge into melee.

If a warwing drake is not damaged by a ranged attack, it continues breaking into the cottage or shelter. A warwing drake will give its undivided attention to anybody who attacks at melee range. After that, the drakes target characters with flyby attacks and land to use bite attacks only if a target maintains cover.

3 Warwing Drakes (D)		Level 4 Skirmisher
Large natural beast (mount, reptile)		XP 175
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +10	
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 16		
Immune fear (while flying)		
Speed 8, fly 8, overland flight 12; see also flyby attack		
M Bite (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.		
M Claw (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage		
M Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)		
The warwing drake flies up to 8 squares and makes two claw attacks at any point during that movement. The drake doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from a target of either attack.		
Fearless Flight (while flying and mounted by a friendly rider of 4th level or higher; no action) ☒ Mount		
Attackers can't target the warwing drake's rider when the drake's movement provokes opportunity attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Athletics +11		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 16 (+5)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 10 (+2)

DEVELOPMENT

The drake bodies are not marked or adorned with any equipment. The family and community heartily thank the characters for saving their lives and offer free accommodations, food without charge, and mundane healing. Within an hour, as news of their deed spreads, they are approached by a distinguished, middle-aged human. After thanking them profusely for battling the monsters, he asks if he can speak with them in private. If they agree, he escorts the characters to an Elkridge community hall where a map charts several drake attacks:

"The drakes you dispatched today were only the latest attacks in what has become a plague. Nobody knows why they arrived or from where they originate, but no pattern exists. If I can persuade you to look into this matter further, our entire village will be at your disposal. We live outside the attention of kingdoms and no longer possess the resources to fight this threat ourselves. For that reason alone, I ask you to play the role of champions, if only for a little while."

Anyone trained in Insight confirms that Mavros is earnest and truthful.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

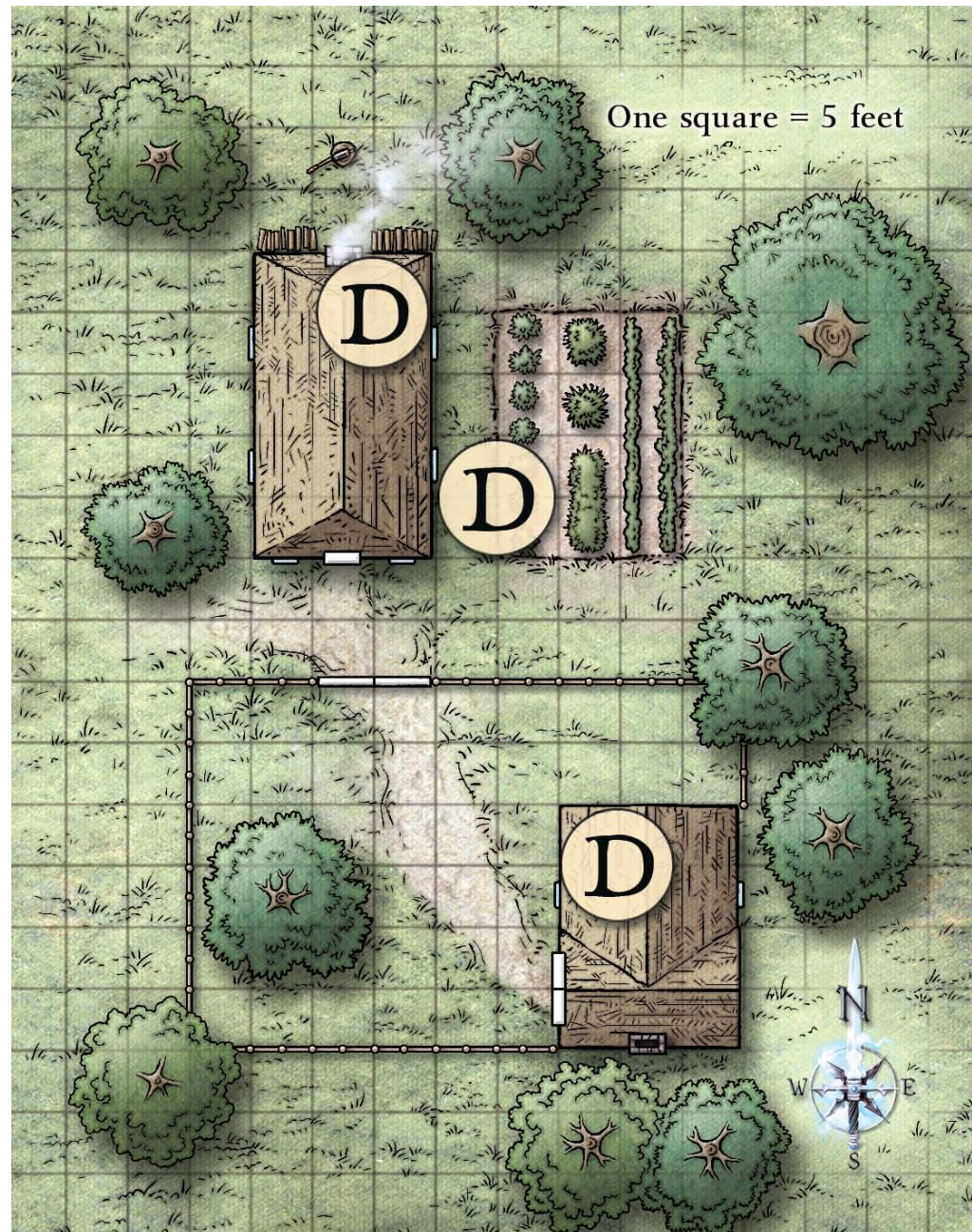
Illumination: Daylight.

Barred Door: The barred cottage door is made from old timbered wood with a break DC of 20.

Barred Window: Perception checks made through a shuttered window take a -5 penalty. Barred windows can be opened as a move action from inside. From outside, they can be forced open with a DC 15 Strength check (a standard action). Open windows provide superior cover. It costs 2 squares of movement to climb through an open window.

Fence: It costs 2 squares of movement to climb over the fence.

Walls: These 6-inch-thick walls are made from heavy timbers. They can be climbed (Athletics DC 15) or broken (DC 25).



V2: TAMING THE DOCILE BEAST

Encounter Level 5 (400 XP)

SETUP

This particular drake has Intelligence 3, no trained Athletics, Insight, or Perception skills, and understands Draconic commands but cannot respond to questions. Attacking the drake at any point ends the skill challenge.

The drake only attacks reactively, whines when it takes damage, and flies 1 mile away after losing 14 hit points. If the drake is encountered afterward, the skill challenge can be restarted no less than 5 minutes later, after which the creature has forgotten being attacked.

With this skill challenge, the characters can try to tame the warwing drake enough to peaceably interact with it.

Taming the Docile Beast Skill Challenge

Level 5
XP 400

The warwing drake appears both fascinated with the party and weary at the same time, clearly unable to distinguish between friend and foe.

Complexity

2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills

Athletics, Insight, Intimidate, Nature

Success

The characters can freely approach the warwing drake and examine or search the saddle bags worn by the creature. Unless restrained, the drake eventually runs or flies away in search of new curiosities, but it will seek out the characters again at an opportune time.

Failure

The warwing drake, *distracted* by a new curiosity, flies away. The drake will seek out the characters again but at an inconvenient time.

Athletics

DC 15, move action. The first successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge; subsequent successes have no effect.

You excite the warwing drake with rambunctious, playful behavior. Failing this check also results in the drake biting (playfully) at the character as an opportunity attack.

Insight

DC 10, minor action. The first successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge. First success with this skill opens up use of Athletics and Intimidate, and second success reveals that the warwing drake understands Draconic and will respond well to food.

You realize that the warwing drake is completely devoid of malice and responds well to authority or playfulness.

Intimidate

DC 10, standard action. The first successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.

You take advantage of the training that the warwing drake has received and issue authoritative commands. Increase the DC by 5 if you do not speak Draconic.

Nature

DC 15, standard action. The first successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.

You appeal to the curiosity of the warwing drake, which responds even more favorably when food is offered (+2 bonus when food is offered).

DEVELOPMENT

The upper right foreleg of the warwing drake is branded with a symbol of the evil god Zehir. Any character trained in Religion can identify the symbol of Zehir on the drake and on the tabard nearby. This drake wears a metal collar, a saddle, and saddle bags. The warwing drake has been trained to accept only a particular rider (see *The Higher They Fall*). This quality can be retrained, but with a more difficult skill challenge over a longer period of time. If a character attempts to mount the warwing drake, make a Strength vs. Reflex check while adjacent to the creature. The warwing drake flies to a height of 30 feet and tries to shake off the character with an Athletics vs. Fortitude check.

If the characters heal the unconscious man by activating his healing surge, he speaks of being knocked over by the warwing drake as it bounded out of the forest. It didn't attack him so much as blunder into him playfully, and he was knocked out when his head struck the ground.

Treasure: The saddle bags contain a sturdy antique dagger (250 gp) that dates back to the Dragonborn Empire (History DC 15), a *potion of healing*, and a tonic of antivenom.

V3: VILLAGERS ON THE RAMPAGE

Encounter Level 4 (525 XP)

SETUP

The young villagers have whipped themselves into a fervor to kill the warwing drake. This particular warwing drake has Intelligence 9, is branded with a symbol of the evil god Zehir, and wears a metal collar. It is slowed and weakened by mental seizures. The creature must make one saving throw at the end of each turn to resist both conditions until the end of its next turn.

To begin this skill challenge, the characters must place themselves between the drake and the young villagers. The characters can then pacify the young villagers long enough to interact with the warwing drake.

Villagers on the Rampage Skill Challenge

Level 4
XP 525

The warwing drake struggles to speak while in physical distress; a weakness the agitated village teenagers seem all too quick to exploit.

Complexity

3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills

Bluff, Diplomacy, Heal, Intimidate.

Secondary Skills

Insight, Nature.

Success

The characters persuade the villagers to back down and let the party approach the creature instead. The warwing drake is open to communication with any character who speaks Draconic. The creature reveals that it escaped from atop Morningfall Summit, knocked a pursuing dragonborn off another warwing drake, and wasn't always able to speak.

The warwing drake can be spoken to more candidly for 5 minutes after this skill challenge ends (see Development).

Developments

If the characters succeed with 1 failure, they persuade the villagers to back down and the warwing drake communicates in Draconic that it escaped from atop Morningfall Summit and knocked a pursuing dragonborn off another warwing drake. The warwing drake can be spoken to more candidly for 2 minutes after this skill challenge ends (see Development).

If the characters succeed with 2 failures, the Warwing drake communicates in Draconic that it escaped from atop Morningfall Summit, then it immediately experiences a mental seizure (see Development).

Failure

The villagers will not be discouraged from their purpose, and they attack the warwing drake. The drake fights back until bloodied, then flies off to die. If the characters intend to speak with the drake, they must subdue the young villagers (unconscious but not dead) to protect them from themselves. The mob of young villagers consists of 15 human rabble (see page 162 of the *Monster Manual*).

Bluff

DC 15, standard action. The first successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge; others have no effect. *You convince the young villagers that there is more to the warwing drake than meets the eye. The creature could be lulling them into a false sense of security before striking.*

Diplomacy

Standard action. The first Diplomacy check fails automatically and reveals that Diplomacy will not be effective in this situation. *The young villagers have already worked themselves into a froth and refuse to be calmed with rationality.*

Heal

DC 10, standard action. A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge. First success with this skill activates a healing surge and grants the warwing drake enough mental clarity to communicate in Draconic. *You approach the warwing drake without any weapons, showing the villagers that the warwing drake is not malicious.*

Insight

DC 10, minor action. A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge. First success with this skill reveals that the young villagers are highly agitated, and second success reveals that any use of the Diplomacy skill earns a failure.

You sense that the villagers are frightened of the warwing drake but want to prove their worth, much as the characters did in combat.

Intimidate

DC 15, standard action. A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.

You command the villagers to lay down arms, shame them into protecting their parents, and assert that the party is more qualified to deal with the warwing drake.

Nature

DC 5, standard action. A success on this check does not count as a success on the skill challenge but does grant a +2 bonus on all further Bluff and Intimidate checks until a character fails a Bluff or Intimidate check.

You demonstrate that you and your companions know far more about warwing drakes than the villagers, and this knowledge sways them to pay greater heed to your arguments.

DEVELOPMENT

Speaking is painful for the warwing drake, but the creature will answer any question asked in Draconic once the villagers back down. Depending on the degree of success in the skill challenge, the drake dies from a massive mental seizure 5 minutes, 2 minutes, or immediately after the skill challenge ends (time this in real minutes). This time can be stretched by 5 minutes for every healing surge worth of hit points the drake receives, keeping in mind that the one healing surge the warwing drake possessed might have been activated during the skill challenge.

In addition to what was learned during the skill challenge, the warwing drake confirms that it was subjected to brutal training after being captured by dragonborn. When the creature overheard that it was going to be killed, it escaped from atop Morningfall Summit and knocked a pursuing dragonborn off another warwing drake after being wounded in the aerial fight.

SI: THE NOCTURNAL AERIE

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

SETUP

2 shadowhunter bats (B)

2 dire rats (D)

5 giant rats (G)

The characters enter the tall, narrow opening in the mountainside and descend into a wide cavern. Two shadowhunter bats sleep in this cave during the day and hunt at night. The rats never leave the cave and hide in an adjoining chamber to avoid being eaten. They feed off whatever the shadowhunter bats leave behind.

TACTICS

The shadowhunter bats are clumsy fighters on the ground and so remain airborne when attacking (dangling from the cave ceiling when at rest). They typically begin and end their flyby attacks behind or near the central stalagmite pillar in the cave to gain cover or superior cover.

At night, the shadowhunter bats hunt outside but are never far away. The rats attack first at night, attracting the bats from outside one round later. During the day, the rats hide in the adjoining chamber connected by an underwater passage. They delay until the shadowhunter bats attack first and then harry the characters on the ground.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None.

Bone Remains: Skeletal remains from hunted creatures are scattered across the floor. They count as difficult terrain.

Water: Moving through water counts as difficult terrain. The deep end of the cave requires a DC 10 Athletics check to swim.

Slight Slope: The cave slopes downward, but not so much as to create difficult terrain in the reverse direction.

Treasure: Three vials of *ghoststrike* oil (see page 28 of the *Adventure's Vault*TM) can be found in the adjoining chamber (backpack of gnome skeleton).



2 Shadowhunter Bats	Level 3 Lurker
Medium shadow beast	XP 150 each
Initiative +9 Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
HP 38; Bloodied 19	
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 12	
Speed 2 (clumsy), fly 8; see also <i>flyby attack</i>	
⊕ Tail Slash (standard; at-will)	
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. In dim light or darkness, a shadowhunter bat gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 6 damage.	
‡ Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)	
The shadowhunter bat flies up to 8 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The bat doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Skills Stealth +10	
Str 13 (+2) Dex 18 (+5) Wis 13 (+2)	
Con 14 (+3) Int 2 (-3) Cha 11 (+1)	



5 Giant Rats	Level 1 Minion
Small natural beast	XP 25 each
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12	
Speed 6, climb 3	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 3 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Str 12 (+1) Dex 17 (+3) Wis 10 (+0)	
Con 12 (+1) Int 2 (-4) Cha 6 (-2)	

2 Dire Rats	Level 1 Brute
Medium natural beast	XP 100 each
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 38; Bloodied 19	
AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 11	
Immune filth fever (see below)	
Speed 6, climb 3	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Disease	
+4 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, and the target contracts filth fever (see below).	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Skills Stealth +7	
Str 14 (+2) Dex 15 (+2) Wis 10 (+0)	
Con 18 (+4) Int 3 (-4) Cha 6 (-2)	

Filth Fever	Level 3 Disease	Endurance improve DC 16, maintain DC 11, worsen DC 10 or lower
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- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The target is cured. | ◀ Initial Effect: The target loses a healing surge. | ◀▶ The target takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude defense, and Reflex defense. | ▶ Final State: The target takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude defense, and Reflex defense. The target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points. |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

S2: RESTLESS GUARDIANS

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

SETUP

Vrak Tiburcaex, phantom dragonborn (V)

2 dragonborn specters (S)

1 zombie (Z)

4 decrepit skeletons (D)

The phantom dragonborn named Vrak Tiburcaex manifests through the statue as the characters come within 6 squares of the sculpture. Vrak is open to parleying with the characters but will attack the party if they approach the line of statues without permission.

TACTICS

The phantom dragonborn speaks to the characters after phasing out of the ancient dragonborn statue.

“This is no place for the still breathing. It is a sad tomb meant for the dead. My name was Vrak Tiburcaex in life, but now I am something less. My soldiers and I mean to do you no harm, but our preference will become meaningless if you persist here. We are duty-bound to the last remaining scion of a once glorious house of warriors. While it pains us to siphon life from the living, we must carry out the will of our new steward, even if doing so compromises our noble history. Leave while you can or forfeit your lives to our growing hunger. We can only stand idle for so long.”

Vrak is a profoundly despondent ghost who clearly does not enjoy her current predicament (Insight DC 12). She has become the instrument of Bejik Vuthaner, a Zehir-worshipping dragonborn, who has proven to her satisfaction that they are related

by blood. Vrak is forthcoming about how much she regrets her obligation to Bejik but will not allow the characters to approach the line of statues without a fight. She is loyal to her familial descendant, regardless of his contemptible god. If the characters parley with Vrak, they can start the Ghost of a Chance skill challenge (S3, page 69).

During the skill challenge, two dragonborn specters hover invisibly above the characters while suppressing their *spectral chill* aura. Characters make passive Perception checks to notice the specters, keeping in mind that they have +9 Stealth checks.

Alternatively, a dragonborn character who wears the symbol of Zehir tabard (discovered during The Higher They Fall, page 55) can attempt to pass themselves off as a dragonborn permitted in the valley. As such, they can negotiate permission for themselves and the party to pass through the perimeter without Bejik or the other dragonborn being warned about their presence (Bluff DC 17).

If the characters remain in the area longer than 5 minutes without starting the Ghost of a Chance skill challenge or passing themselves off as dragonborn permitted in the valley, Vrak will attack the closest target while the dragonborn specters reactivate their *spectral chill* aura. Vrak and the specters will attack sooner if the characters move toward the line of statues without permission. They initiate combat with their breath attacks.

The zombie and decrepit skeletons delay until after Vrak and the dragonborn specters use their breath attacks, then emerge out of the ground as a move action already adjacent to the characters. The zombie targets any defender with a *zombie grab*.

After becoming bloodied, Vrak will use her *howling breath* again, shift out of reach, and phase into a hollow space underground to effect her retreat.

“Vrak Tiburcaex,” Phantom Dragonborn (V)		Level 4 Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 175
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +7; darkvision		
HP 40; Bloodied 20		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 16		
Immune disease, poison; Resist insubstantial		
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing		
⊕ Phantom Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 2 necrotic damage, and the target is marked until the end of the phantom dragonborn's next turn.		
← Howling Breath (minor; recharge when bloodied) ♦ Fear, Psychic		
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; 2d6 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the phantom dragonborn's next turn.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Insight +7, Stealth +8		
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 12 (+3)	Wis 11 (+2)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 14 (+4)

2 Dragonborn Specters (S)		Level 4 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 175 each
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +6; darkvision		
Spectral Chill (Cold) aura 1; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.		
HP 30; Bloodied 15		
AC 16; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, insubstantial;		
Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing		
⊕ Spectral Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage.		
← Spectral Breath (minor; recharge when bloodied) ♦ Illusion, Psychic		
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; 2d6 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Invisibility (standard; at-will) ♦ Illusion		
The specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Draconic
Skills Stealth +9		
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 8 (+1)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 6 (+1)	Cha 15 (+4)

Zombie (Z)		Level 2 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 125
Initiative -1	Senses Perception +0; darkvision	
HP 40; Bloodied 20; see also <i>zombie weakness</i>		
AC 13; Fortitude 13, Refl ex 9, Will 10		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 4		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage.		
⊖ Zombie Grab (standard; at-will)		
+4 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed (until escape). Checks made to escape the zombie's grab take a -5 penalty.		
Zombie Weakness		
Any critical hit to the zombie reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.		
Alignment Unaligned Languages –		
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 6 (-1)	Wis 8 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 1 (-4)	Cha 3 (-3)

4 Decrepit Skeletons (D)		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 25 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 13		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 6		
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.		
⊖ Shortbow (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 3 damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 15 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 14 (+2)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 3 (-4)	Cha 3 (-4)
Equipment heavy shield, longsword, shortbow, quiver of 10 arrows		

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light, or dim light at night.

Brush: Forest scrub grows throughout the valley and counts as difficult terrain.

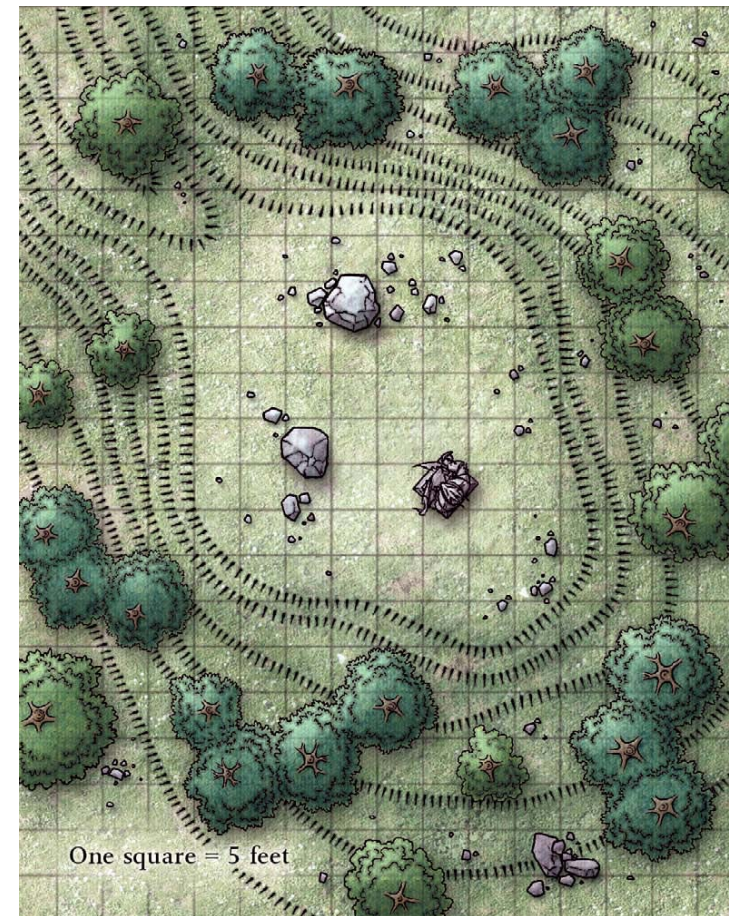
Floating Debris: Pieces of broken marble and stonework hover in mid-air.

Statues: The broken dragonborn statues are spaced 40 feet apart (100 statues around the valley perimeter). It costs 2 squares of movement to maneuver around a statue.

Steep Slope: Moving uphill in this area counts as difficult terrain.

Rubble: Marble architecture protrudes out of the ground and can provide normal cover if crouched behind and superior cover if prone. Rubble counts as difficult terrain.

Trees: Fir trees provide cover and can be climbed (Athletics DC 15).



S3: GHOST OF A CHANCE

Encounter Level 5 (800 XP)

SETUP

Vrak has no love for Bejik Vuthaner. She despises his worship of Zehir, and this can be used to persuade her to either turn against her descendant or to at least withdraw her support. Vrak can agree with every argument the party makes and still attack the characters, compelled by honor until her familial connection to Bejik is disproved.

In this skill challenge, the characters attempt to convince Vrak Tiburcaex that her loyalties to Bejik Vuthaner are misplaced.

Ghost of a Chance
Skill Challenge

Level 5
XP 600

Vrak Tiburcaex, the lingering spirit of a noble dragonborn warrior, questions her loyalty to a living descendant.

Complexity

4 (requires 10 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills

Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Intimidate, Insight

Success

Vrak admits that Bejik proved his connection to her family with a patent of nobility. Vrak will not let the characters pass the line of statues without a fight, but if they succeed, she will not inform Bejik that they have entered the valley. If the characters disprove the family connection by presenting Vrak with the forged and actual patents of nobility, she immediately sides with the characters against Bejik.

Failure

Vrak is resigned to serving Bejik as her only living descendant. Not only will Vrak fight to prevent the characters from passing the statue line, but if they succeed, she retreats to inform Bejik that they have entered the valley. If the characters present Vrak with the authentic patent of nobility afterward, she no longer knows who to trust, flies into the ceiling, phases out a vital piece of masonry holding the ceiling in place, and starts an avalanche that will bury the ruined citadel and anybody left inside.

Bluff

Standard action. The first use of this skill fails automatically and reveals to the characters that Vrak cannot be bluffed.

Vrak has no patience for conjecture, half-truths, or lies. She sees through deceptions instantly.

Diplomacy

DC 10, standard action. A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge but only after a successful Insight check; before that, it reveals that the character's need to make an Insight check before they can use Diplomacy.

You appeal to Vrak's honorable nature in the hope that she will give your words a fair audience and due consideration.

History

DC 15, standard action. A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.

You speak with authority about dragonborn lineage or how the Tiburcaex family would never sully its good name by associating with Zehir worshipers.

Insight

DC 10, minor action. A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge and allows use of Diplomacy and Intimidate skills in subsequent checks. It also reveals that any use of Bluff will fail automatically.

You sense that Vrak is an honorable and straightforward soul who dislikes being a ghost and likes the underhanded ways of Bejik even less.

Intimidate

DC 15, standard action. A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge but only after a successful Insight check; before that, it reveals that the character's need to make an Insight check before they can use Intimidate. A dragonborn character gains a +2 bonus on this check.

You shame Vrak for ever trusting somebody who worships the evil god Zehir.

S4: THE FLOATING TOWER

Encounter Level 4 (875 XP)

SETUP

2 dragonborn brigands (B)

2 dragonborn snipers (S)

1 warwing drake (D)

A dragonborn brigand patrols the area beneath the floating tower near the bottom of the valley. A dragonborn sniper remains hidden on a Medium piece of floating debris 15 squares off the ground (half-way along the path from the rubble mound to the floating tower), looking out for the dragonborn brigand on the ground. A second dragonborn brigand and warwing drake survey the valley from atop the floating tower. A second dragonborn sniper surveys the valley from the bottom floor of the floating tower.

If the characters succeeded at the Ghost of a Chance skill challenge (S3, page 69), they may surprise the dragonborn brigands and dragonborn snipers.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light or dim light at night.

Clearing: The area directly beneath the floating tower has been cleared of debris and leveled.

Floating Debris: Pieces of broken marble and stonework hover in mid air. Characters can position themselves behind or under floating debris and gain cover or superior cover. For the same reason, the warwing drake and dragonborn rider benefit from normal cover when flying.

Rubble: Broken marble is strewn over the battlefield, creating difficult terrain. Large chunks of marble architecture litter the ground and provide cover if standing and superior cover if crouching behind. It costs 3 squares of movement to climb onto Large pieces of rubble.

Rubble Mound: The bottom of the valley is one enormous, overgrown mound of rubble comprised of debris from Ustraternes. It requires a DC 10 Athletics check to climb the mound up to 50 feet. The entire mound is comprised of Large marble chunks that provide cover if standing and superior cover if crouching behind.

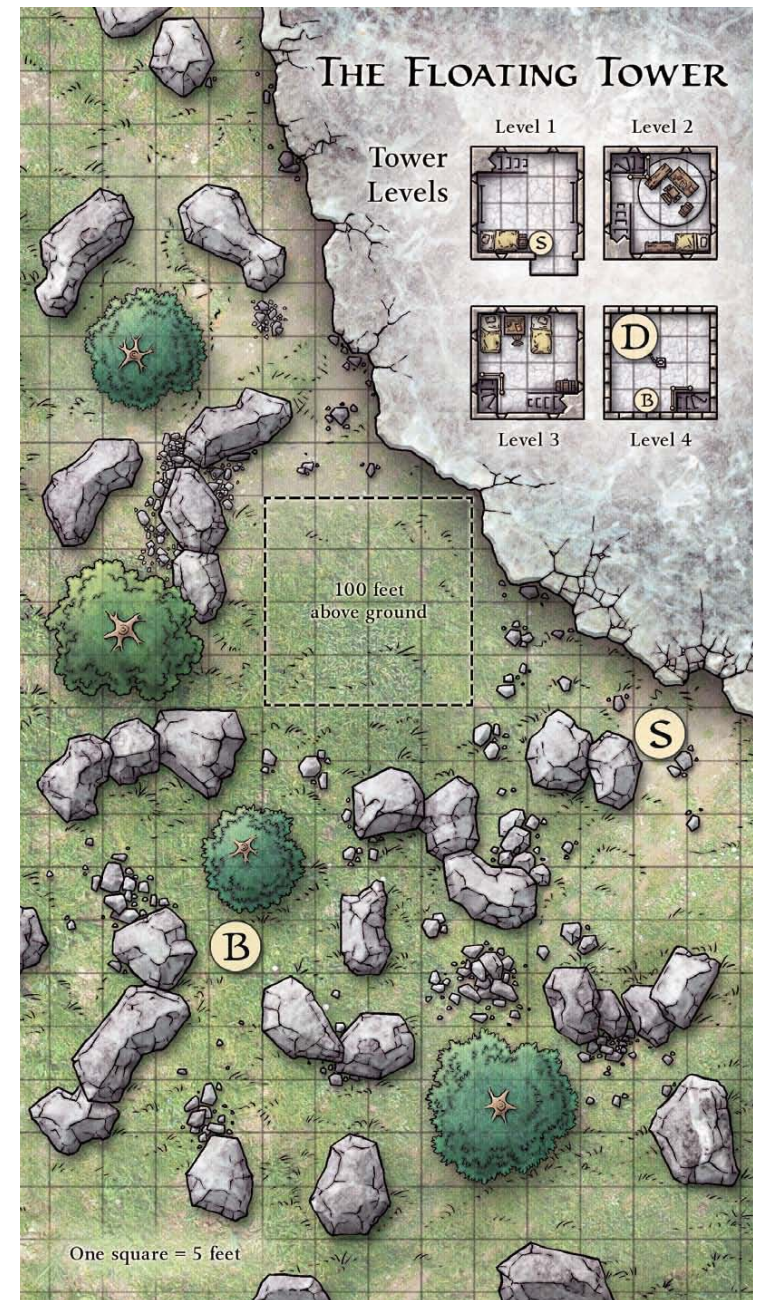
Trees: Fir trees provide cover and can be climbed (Athletics DC 15).

TACTICS

If the characters failed the Ghost of a Chance skill challenge and Vrak Tiburcaex retreated, then the dragonborn in this encounter have been warned about their presence. In this case, a dragonborn brigand openly approaches the party (without his Zehir tabard) and makes a Bluff attempt.

“Hail to you all! I heard fighting in the valley and feared that the undead had increased their numbers. I barely survived myself. They’ve boxed me into this forsaken place without food or water. Perhaps you can spare a little of both?” The dragonborn points to the floating tower. “In return, I’ll gladly share my temporary refuge.”

If the characters see through this Bluff attempt, they are not surprised by the dragonborn when the attack comes.



The patrolling dragonborn brigand on the ground benefits from the Perception skill of the dragonborn sniper positioned on a Medium piece of floating debris. The dragonborn brigand, warwing drake, and dragonborn sniper positioned in the tower are well hidden and more than 10 squares away (Perception DC 27). As such, they benefit from superior concealment and superior cover once revealed.

If the characters fail to see through the Bluff attempt, then the dragonborn brigand on the ground claims to be an airborne courier named Gix who delivers messages between cities. He explains that his mount began flying unpredictably over the summit

2 Dragonborn Snipers (S)		Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175 each
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +10		
HP 44; Bloodied 22; see also <i>dragonborn fury</i>		
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 15		
Speed 6		
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC (+9 while bloodied); 1d8 + 3 damage.		
⊗ Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Range 20/40; +10 vs. AC (+11 while bloodied); 1d10 + 4 damage. <i>Bloodstinger Poison</i> : If this is the weapon's first hit; +6 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
↗ Disruptive Shot (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Requires longbow; range 20/40; +8 vs. AC (+9 while bloodied); 1d10 + 4 damage, and the dragonborn sniper grants allies adjacent to target combat advantage until the end of their next turn.		
Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)		
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.		
↶ Versatile Breath (minor; encounter) ♦ Poison		
Area burst 2 within 10 squares or close blast 3; +8 vs. Reflex (+9 while bloodied); 1d6 + 4 poison damage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills History +5, Intimidate +4, Stealth +10		
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 16 (+5)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 12 (+3)	Cha 10 (+2)
Equipment hide armor, longsword, longbow with 30 arrows, bloodstinger poison, Zehir tabard		

and threw him from the saddle. To his knowledge, the only place the undead do not go is the floating tower. He adds that if they choose to follow him, he will gladly show them how to reach the tower safely, but he will not wait for the undead to return.

Once the characters are within close range of the dragonborn snipers, the dragonborn brigand yells "Attack!" and triggers the readied attacks of his allies.

The patrolling dragonborn brigand will charge, while the dragonborn sniper in the tower uses *disruptive shot* from cover to grant him combat advantage. The second dragonborn sniper will likewise attack with *disruptive shot*, then move to different pieces of floating debris in search of cover, eventually retreating all the way to the floating tower. The dragonborn

2 Dragonborn Brigands (B)		Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175 each
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +3		
HP 66; Bloodied 33; see also <i>dragonborn fury</i>		
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 14, Will 15		
Speed 5		
⊕ Heavy Flail (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC (+8 while bloodied); 2d6 + 4 damage.		
<i>Bloodstinger Poison</i> : If this is the weapon's first hit; +6 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)		
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.		
↶ Dragon Breath (minor; encounter) ♦ Poison		
Close blast 3; +6 vs. Reflex (+7 while bloodied); 1d6 + 4 poison damage.		
Erratic Maneuver (move; encounter)		
Make a Bluff check to gain combat advantage.		
Vicious Strike ♦ Weapon		
Requires flail and combat advantage; the dragonborn brigand deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Bluff +9, History +4, Intimidate +6, Stealth +8		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 14 (+4)
Equipment chain armor, heavy flail, bloodstinger poison, Zehir tabard		

brigand atop the floating tower mounts the warwing drake and swoops down against the characters using the creature's flyby attack and his own flail attack.

If the dragonborn were warned about the characters, then their weapons are already coated with bloodstinger poison. They must otherwise use a standard action to coat their weapons with bloodstinger poison.

Warwing Drake (D)		Level 4 Skirmisher
Large natural beast (mount, reptile)		XP 175
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +10		
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 16		
Immune fear (while flying)		
Speed 8, fly 8, overland flight 12; see also <i>flyby attack</i>		
m Bite (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.		
M Claw (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage		
M Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)		
The warwing drake flies up to 8 squares and makes two claw attacks at any point during that movement. The drake doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from a target of either attack.		
Fearless Flight (while flying and mounted by a friendly rider of 4th level or higher; no action) ☒ Mount		
Attackers can't target the warwing drake's rider when the drake's movement provokes opportunity attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Skills Athletics +11		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 16 (+5)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 10 (+2)

FEATURES OF THE FLOATING TOWER

Illumination: Bright light or dim light at night.

Arcane Symbols: A circle of magical runes has been etched around a bookshelf, chair, desk, and *arcane locked* chest. An identify ritual check on the runes identifies the *magic circle* ritual and shadow category (Arcana DC 22). The original Arcana check for this magic circle is 20.

Armory: An armor form or weapon rack provides cover. It costs 2 squares of movement to maneuver around an armor form or weapon rack. The weapon rack is stocked with pickaxes and shovels.

Bed: The bed provides cover. It costs 2 squares of movement to hop onto the bed. A character can make a DC 15 Strength check to tip over the bed, which can then grant superior cover.

Battlements: A crenellated parapet borders the top of the tower and provides superior cover.

Bookshelves: The shelf in the *magic circle* and the one against the wall contain tomes about the nature of magic. By skimming these books, a character can identify two rituals hidden in the text (Arcana DC 15 to recognize each). Reading these tomes automatically identifies the rituals contained therein (see Treasure below).

Chairs: A chair can be picked up and wielded as an improved weapon, but it is smashed if the modified attack roll is 17 or higher.

Desks: A Small creature can move under a desk or table and gain cover. It costs 2 squares of movement to hop onto a desk. A character can make a DC 10 Strength check to tip over a desk, which can then grant superior cover.

Locked Chest: It costs 2 squares of movement to maneuver around the chest. The chest can be opened with a DC 25 Thievery or Strength check. An identify ritual check on the chest identifies the *arcane lock* ritual (Arcana DC 22).

Mooring: A strong chain is fixed to the top (open) floor of the tower. The chain is meant to bind a warwing drake by its collar.

Strongbox: A strongbox beside each bed contains rations and personal items.

Walls: These 1-foot-thick walls are made from ancient, quarried stone. They can be climbed (Athletics DC 15) but not broken.

Window: Open windows provide superior cover. Climbing through an open window costs 2 squares of movement.

Treasure: The arcane tomes contain the rituals *secret chest* and *sending* (see page 199 of *Adventurer's Vault*). Four of the strongboxes contain a sturdy antique dagger (250 gp) and a tonic of antivenom.

DEVELOPMENT

Dragonborn kept alive are hostile targets for any Intimidate skill checks. If successfully cowed, they reveal the entrance to the ruins, wherein their commander, Bejik Vuthaner, has been utilizing an ancient ritual to subjugate warwing drakes. The dragonborn can also reveal that Bejik negotiated a truce with the undead of this valley.

Searching the tower bookshelf yields multiple tomes about the nature of magic, two of which contain a single ritual each.

Searching the tower desk, the characters find colored inks, fancy quills, expensive paper, and a patent of nobility written in Draconic. The patent of nobility starts with the name Vrak Tiburcaex (Child Born of the Sword), details scores of generations, and ends with the name Bejik Vuthaner (Savior of the Black Spear).

Treasure: Searching the arcane locked chest, the characters find four *potions of healing*, a piece of white *eternal chalk*, several books about dragonborn ancestry written in Draconic, and a second, older patent of nobility. Both patents trace the same lineage, but this one does not include the Vuthaner family name. Vrak Tiburcaex is mentioned several times in the lineage books as a warrior who served in Ustraternes; the Vuthaner name does not appear in the books. If the two patents are compared, a History skill check (DC 15) reveals that this one is genuine and the one in the desk is a forgery.

SS: THE RUINED CITADEL

Encounter Level 6 (1,350 XP)

SETUP

Bejik Vuthaner, dragonborn venom zealot (B)

1 dragonborn brigand (R)

1 dragonborn sniper (S)

1 warwing drake (D)

Vrak Tiburcaex, phantom dragonborn (V)

1 pseudodragon (P)

Bejik Vuthaner and his servants occupy the excavated section of the citadel that has been preserved underground for a millennia. If the characters have infiltrated the ruined citadel without Vrak or a dragonborn servant alerting Bejik of their presence and have either circumvented or disabled the poison mist trap, they can possibly surprise the dragonborn venom zealot and his servants moments after they complete the *mindshape warwing drake* ritual (see page 77) in the far north tower.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light or darkness.

Arcane Symbols: The warwing drake in the far north tower is surrounded by a circle of magical runes etched into the ground. An identify ritual check on the runes identifies the *magic circle* ritual and natural category (Arcana DC 22).

Ceiling: The ceilings in the north and south towers are 15 feet high. The ceilings on the second floors of these towers are 10 feet high.

Doors: The two doors leading into the north tower are made from wood and can be broken (DC 16).

Rubble: Heavy rubble is impassible and chokes doorways, passages, and rooms. Light rubble appears in certain places across the floor and counts as difficult terrain.

Second Floors: The second floor of the north and south towers can be accessed but are largely choked with rubble. The windows can be accessed at this level, but only the center window has line of sight to the courtyard below.

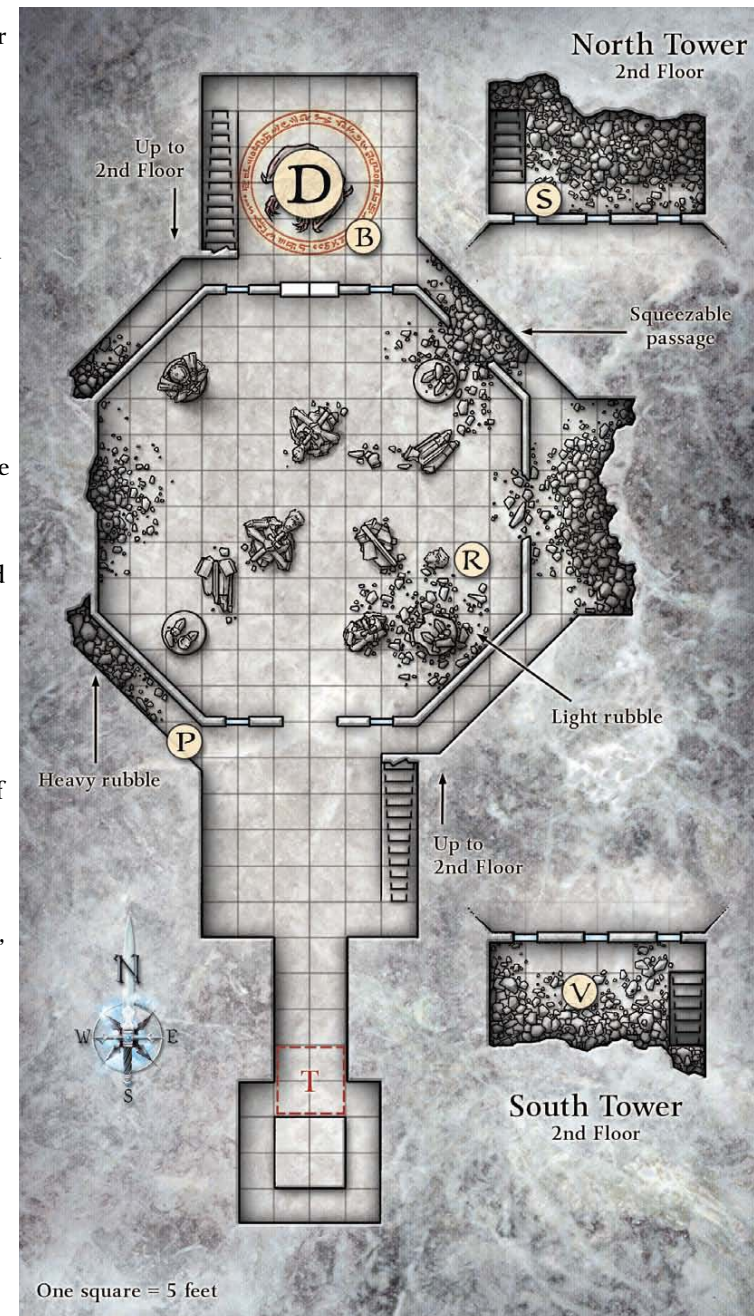
Statues and Pedestals: The broken pieces of statues and their original pedestals provide cover. The intact northwest statue and pedestal provides superior cover. It costs 2 squares of movement to climb over a piece of statue or pedestal or maneuver around the intact statue.

Walls: These 1-foot walls are made from ancient quarried stone. They can be climbed (Athletics DC 20) but not broken.

Window: Open windows provide superior cover. Climbing through an open window costs 2 squares of movement.

Treasure: Bejik Vuthaner wields a black *poisoned greatspear* +1 (page 75 of *Adventure's Vault*), wears a pair of *wildrunner boots* (page 131 of *Adventure's Vault*), and carries a *potion of healing*.

The dragonborn brigand wears an *amulet of health* +1, and the dragonborn sniper wears a suit of *adder-grease leather armor* +1 (page 39 of *Adventure's Vault*).



TACTICS

If Vrak or a dragonborn servant was able to warn Bejik, or the characters set off the poison mist trap, he speaks out loud as they enter the ruined citadel, now prepared for their attack with an ambush of his own.

“Welcome lost children. You chose the perfect time to visit my domain. Spirits of this ruin lend their ghostly might to my cause. Of course, you can no more see them than you can me. Indeed, my servants have already surrounded your position. But don’t fret. The darkness of Zehir will fall upon you soon enough.”

Combat begins when Bejik uses *smothering cloak of Zehir* to extinguish all sources of illumination in the ruined citadel while granting darkvision to any allies within his aura using *piercing eyes of Zehir*. All his servants have delayed, waiting for this moment to strike with combat advantage and concealment. They act after the highest possible initiative that Bejik can roll (24), having delayed if necessary for this place in the combat.

The dragonborn venom zealot maintains complete cover in the far tower with a newly created warwing drake, as per the *mindshape warwing drake* ritual (page 77). Bejik watches the characters through the space between the wooden doors of the far north tower as they emerge from the 30-foot tunnel into the gutted south tower.

The dragonborn sniper is hidden on the second floor of the north tower with superior concealment and superior cover once revealed (Perception DC 25). The dragonborn brigand attempts to sneak up on the characters using the broken statues for cover and the darkness to gain superior concealment. The dragonborn brigand and dragonborn sniper have coated their weapons with bloodstinger poison.

The phantom dragonborn (Vrak Tiburcaex) is hiding on the second floor of the south tower in a pocket of rubble. The pseudodragon is invisible, waiting to strike at the characters with surprise. Make a Stealth check for it (+10) to determine whether characters notice it with passive Perception (or an active Perception check if they actively search).

The dragonborn brigand will harry a party defender on the ground while Vrak targets a party striker. The pseudodragon makes flyby attacks against a party controller and the dragonborn sniper uses disruptive shot from a distance to grant the dragonborn brigand combat advantage. The warwing drake remains within the magic circle of the north tower until Bejik releases the creature.

Bejik will approach to within range of his *enlarged dragon breath* and exhale poison on the characters, making no effort to exclude Vrak (who is immune to poison) or the dragonborn brigand (wearing an *amulet of health*). Bejik will then join the melee with his greatspear and help as needed, targeting a party striker.

If the characters succeeded at the skill challenge S3: Ghost of a Chance and use a move action to present Vrak with the authentic patent of nobility, she spends a standard action examining the document, then immediately switches sides. Present the statistics for Vrak Tiburcaex to the party to use in this combat as they deem fit, keeping in mind that she is now furious with Bejik.

Bejik Vuthaner, Level 5 Elite Controller (Leader)		
Dragonborn Venom Zealot		
Medium natural humanoid		XP 500
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +3, darkvision	
Piercing Eyes of Zehir aura sight; allies in aura gain darkvision		
HP 126; Bloodied 63; see also <i>dragonborn fury</i>		
AC 21; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 20		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 5		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Spear of the Forked Tongue (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Requires greatspear; reach 2; +11 vs. AC (+12 while bloodied); 1d10 + 4 damage (crit 1d6 + 14 damage), and the dragonborn venom zealot makes a <i>viper’s bite</i> attack against an adjacent target.		
⊕ Viper’s Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+8 vs. AC (+9 while bloodied); 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)		
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.		
↵ Enlarged Dragon Breath (minor; encounter) ♦ Poison		
Close blast 3/5; +8 vs. Reflex (+9 while bloodied); 1d6 + 3 poison damage.		
↘ Hidden Fangs (immediate reaction, when an ally hits with a melee attack; recharge ☞☞☞☞) ♦ Poison		
Range 5; one ally within range gains a secondary attack equal to primary attack -2 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage.		
Smothering Cloak of Zehir (minor; recharge ☞☞☞☞)		
Range sight; all forms of illumination are extinguished until the end of encounter. New sources of illumination may be ignited after this ability is activated.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Arcana +10, History +12, Intimidate +13		
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 16 (+5)	Cha 19 (+6)
Equipment scale armor, +1 <i>poisoned greatspear</i> , <i>wildrunner boots</i> , <i>potion of healing</i> , ritual book		

If the characters failed at the Ghost of a Chance skill challenge but now use a move action to present Vrak with the authentic patent of nobility, she spends a standard action examining the document, then immediately experiences a crisis of loyalty. Vrak flies away, phases into the ceiling, and removes a vital piece of masonry that holds up the overhead rubble. This activates the Collapsing Ceiling hazard.

If Bejik notices the patent of nobility before the characters present it to Vrak, he will try to seize or destroy it. If the pseudodragon is still alive, Bejik commands the creature to snatch the patent of nobility from the characters. Grabbing it is a Dex vs. Reflex attack. While it is stuffed in a character's pocket or bag, the patent's Reflex defense equals the character's AC. If a character is holding it, the patent has the character's Reflex defense.

Once Bejik has lost two of his dragonborn servants, he falls back to the north tower, releases the warwing drake from the magic circle, and climbs onto the creature's back. Bejik then emerges from the north tower through the double doors and rides across the courtyard toward the south tower, into the 30-foot passageway, and up the roughly hewn shaft. The warwing drake will make fly-by attacks against the characters to avoid opportunity attacks, allowing the mounted Bejik to enjoy the same protection. The warwing drake will resist being ridden by anybody except Bejik, who attacks with his greatspear while mounted.

Special: This encounter is when the warwing drake from V2: Taming the Docile Beast may return at either an opportune or inopportune time, depending on whether the characters succeeded or failed at that skill challenge. If the characters succeeded at the skill challenge and need help during this battle, the drake swoops into the chamber and attacks the dragonborn

(or prevents Bejik from escaping). If they are winning this battle but failed at the skill challenge, the drake swoops into the ruined chamber and either attacks the characters or otherwise aids the dragonborn.

Collapsing Ceiling Level 2 Lurker Hazard XP 125

A foreboding crack echoes through the chamber that quickly grows to a thunderous rumble.

Hazard: The mound of rubble above the chamber collapses, filling the Ruined Citadel area with tumbling, crushing slabs of masonry and debris.

Perception

DC 5: The character realizes that the ceiling is collapsing before the first chunks hit the floor and gains a +2 Reflex bonus until the start of the character's next turn.

DC 15: As a free action, the character can shout directions to an ally within 5 and give that ally a +2 Reflex bonus until the start of this character's next turn.

Trigger

The hazard is triggered when Vrak Tiburcaex loosens the stones holding the ceiling together. At that time, allow the characters to make Perception checks, then roll the hazard's initiative and place it in the turn order.

Initiative +5

Attack

Standard Action

Close burst 8 (fills entire area between North and South Towers)

Targets: Creatures in burst

Attack: +4 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6+2 damage

Miss: Half damage

The burst area becomes difficult terrain at the moment initiative is rolled for the hazard. The collapse continues for 5 rounds. At the end of 5 rounds, the burst area becomes impassable.

Countermeasures

As a minor action, a character in the burst area can make a DC 10 Acrobatics or Athletics check to dodge nimbly between falling rubble. With a successful check, a character takes half damage (no damage on a miss) from rubble until the start of the character's next turn.

Dragonborn Sniper (S)		Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +10		
HP 44; Bloodied 22; see also <i>dragonborn fury</i>		
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 15		
Speed 6		
⊕	Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	+8 vs. AC (+9 while bloodied); 1d8 + 3 damage.
⊕	Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	Range 20/40; +10 vs. AC (+11 while bloodied); 1d10 + 4 damage. <i>Bloodstinger Poison</i> : If this is the weapon's first hit; +6 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).
↗	Disruptive Shot (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	Requires longbow; range 20/40; +8 vs. AC (+9 while bloodied); 1d10 + 4 damage, and the dragonborn sniper grants allies adjacent to target combat advantage until the end of their next turn.
Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)		
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.		
↔	Versatile Breath (minor; encounter) ♦ Poison	Area burst 2 within 10 squares or close blast 3; +8 vs. Reflex (+9 while bloodied); 1d6 + 4 poison damage.
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills History +5, Intimidate +4, Stealth +10		
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 16 (+5)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 12 (+3)	Cha 10 (+2)
Equipment hide armor, longsword, longbow with 30 arrows, bloodstinger poison, Zehir tabard		

DEVELOPMENT

If Vrak caused the ceiling of the ruined citadel to collapse, Bejik and his servants become invested in saving their own necks. They will use every chance to slow down the player characters and escape first. If both sides manage to escape and Bejik remains alive, the battle spills above ground.

“Vrak Tiburcaex,” Phantom Dragonborn		Level 4 Soldier (V)
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 175
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +7; darkvision		
HP 40; Bloodied 20		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 16		
Immune disease, poison; Resist insubstantial		
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing		
⊕ Phantom Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 2 necrotic damage, and the target is marked until the end of the phantom dragonborn's next turn.		
↖ Howling Breath (minor; recharge when bloodied) ♦ Fear, Psychic		
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; 2d6 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the phantom dragonborn's next turn.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Insight +7, Stealth +8		
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 12 (+3)	Wis 11 (+2)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 14 (+4)

Pseudodragon		Level 3 Lurker
Small natural beast (reptile)		XP 150
Initiative +9		Senses Perception +8
HP 40; Bloodied 20		
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 14		
Speed 4, fly 8 (hover); see also <i>flyby attack</i>		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
⊕ Sting (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️ ☹️) ♦ Poison		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
⊕ Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)		
The pseudodragon flies up to 8 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The pseudodragon doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.		
Invisibility (standard; recharges when the pseudodragon is damaged) ♦ Illusion		
As long as the pseudodragon doesn't move, it is invisible.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Skills Insight +8, Stealth +10		
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 15 (+3)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 6 (-1)	Cha 17 (+4)

Dragonborn Brigand (R)		Level 4 Brute
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +4		Senses Perception +3
HP 66; Bloodied 33; see also dragonborn fury		
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 14, Will 15		
Speed 5		
⊕ Heavy Flail (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC (+8 while bloodied); 2d6 + 4 damage.		
<i>Bloodstinger Poison</i> : If this is the weapon's first hit; +6 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)		
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.		
↖ Dragon Breath (minor; encounter) ♦ Poison		
Close blast 3; +6 vs. Reflex (+7 while bloodied); 1d6 + 4 poison damage.		
Erratic Maneuver (move; encounter)		
Make a Bluff check to gain combat advantage.		
Vicious Strike ♦ Weapon		
Requires flail and combat advantage; the dragonborn brigand deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +9, History +4, Intimidate +6, Stealth +8		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 14 (+4)
Equipment chain armor, heavy flail, bloodstinger poison, Zehir tabard		

Warwing Drake (D)		Level 4 Skirmisher
Large natural beast (mount, reptile)		XP 175
Initiative +6		Senses Perception +10
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 16		
Immune fear (while flying)		
Speed 8, fly 8, overland flight 12; see also <i>flyby attack</i>		
m Bite (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.		
M Claw (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage		
M Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)		
The warwing drake flies up to 8 squares and makes two claw attacks at any point during that movement. The drake doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from a target of either attack.		
Fearless Flight (while flying and mounted by a friendly rider of 4th level or higher; no action) ☒ Mount		
Attackers can't target the warwing drake's rider when the drake's movement provokes opportunity attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Skills Athletics +11		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 16 (+5)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 10 (+2)

APPENDIX 1

WARWING DRAKE

A LETHAL REPTILE IN THE AIR, warwing drakes can hit multiple targets before flying away. They balance mass and strength with intellect and mobility, creating an even-tempered flying mount. Most warwing drakes cannot speak, but they understand spoken Draconic.

Warwing Drake		Level 4 Skirmisher
Large natural beast (mount, reptile)		XP 175
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +10	
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 16		
Immune fear (while flying)		
Speed 8, fly 8, overland flight 12; see also flyby attack		
M Bite (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.		
M Claw (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage		
M Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)		
The warwing drake flies up to 8 squares and makes two claw attacks at any point during that movement. The drake doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from a target of either attack.		
Fearless Flight (while flying and mounted by a friendly rider of 4th level or higher; no action) \square Mount		
Attackers can't target the warwing drake's rider when the drake's movement provokes opportunity attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Athletics +11		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 16 (+5)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 10 (+2)

WARWING DRAKE TACTICS

A warwing drake is most effective when airborne and so relies heavily on flyby attacks to target multiple opponents. Keenly aware and self-preserving, the drake attacks opponents armed with ranged spells or weapons and flees once bloodied (unless under the control of a rider).

WARWING DRAKE LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature skill check.

DC 15: *Warwing drakes are not only renowned for their strength, but for having the same mental awareness as psuedodragons. They are well-suited to serving as aerial mounts.*

DC 20: *Warwing drakes can understand spoken Draconic.*

A character knows the following information with a successful History skill check.

DC 20: *Warwing drakes were originally bred by dragonborn to serve as flying mounts. They turned wild after the Dragonborn Empire collapsed and were thought to be extinct.*

APPENDIX 2

MINDSHAPE WARWING DRAKE

Like the dragonborn beastmasters of old, you instantly tame a warwing drake with a violent burst of psychic energy.

Level: 5

Category: Creation
(see text)

Time: 1 Hour

Duration: Permanent

Component Cost: 100 gp

Market Price: 250 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Nature

To perform this ritual, you require a single warwing drake bound inside a magic circle drawn to bind a natural creature. When you successfully perform this ritual, the warwing drake is tamed as determined by your Arcana or Nature check result.

Check Result	Effect on Warwing Drake
7 or lower	-4 Int; attacks all other creatures.
8-13	-2 Int; still wild.
14-19	-1 Int; tame and trained.
20-25	Tame and trained.
26 or higher	Tame and trained; can speak

A tame and trained warwing drake is ready to accept a rider and riding gear, and it understands commands. It is loyal to the ritual caster or someone the ritual caster designates. Such a drake can be trained to accept other potential riders and masters. If the ritual grants the drake the ability to speak, the drake speaks in a broken form of a language the ritual caster selects.

If use of this ritual reduces a warwing drake to 0 Intelligence, the drake dies.

About the Author

KOLJA RAVEN LIQUETTE divides his professional time between writing for books, D&D, and film. His recent credits include *Races of the Dragon* and *Adventurer's Vault*. While Kolja has been known to perform on occasion, this happens more by accident rather than design.