

THE STARRY THRONE



BY
**DEREK
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LEVEL 8 ADVENTURE

**IMMERSIVE 5E ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE
FOR THE WORLD'S GREATEST RPG GAME**



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INTRODUCTION

BEFORE YOU BEGIN PLAYING

READ THE ADVENTURE once or twice. Take notes of anything you would like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the game. Such notes include, but are not limited to, ways to role-play an NPC, combat tactics for a creature, or the locations of important things. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and maps.

- Have all the material and accessories you will use to aid you in running this adventure. Such as flashcards, a GM screen, minis, dice, and battle-maps.
- It is useful to have the player characters' names, race, class, armor class, and hit points in a separate and easy-to-see piece of paper or screen. It may also be important to note other things like backgrounds and personality traits.

PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important task. The GM is the table's narrator and organizer for a good game. You must take care of the narrative and adjudicate the party's actions. You transform these words into a living thing.

Here are a few guidelines to help you make this happen:

You have the Power. You make the decisions about the adventure progress and how the group interacts with NPCs, creatures, and the setting's elements. You are encouraged to improvise and change things. Each group is different and they will all have different needs and things they enjoy and things they don't like.

Give Them a Good Challenge. You are the judge of your group's experience. Give them a well-balanced challenge to keep them engaged. A good challenge does not necessarily mean combat. Try to feel out what your group is more interested in and try to give them what they crave. A role-playing situation like a tough negotiation, an interrogation, or calling a favor may be as intense as a full-blown battle.

Do not Stall. If the game starts to slow down because the players are unsure of what to do, feel free to provide hints, clues, or a helping NPC to nudge your group in the right direction. Players can get frustrated if they are unable to react to the adventure due to the lack of necessary information. Hints and clues may present themselves as "ideas" or "thoughts" the characters have. An alternative method is to introduce an NPC who will provide a veiled suggestion to the characters directly and serve as the "GM's voice".

CREATING AN ADVENTURING PARTY

This adventure does not rule out any combination of races, classes, or other features. There are no alignment requirements for this adventure but it is suggested that at least half the party is of good alignment. Otherwise, the incentives for finishing the adventure are curiosity and/or the promise of gold. Good or neutral alignment are recommended for new players.

If you play with a new batch of PCs, ask the players why their character are together and acting as a team. Each player may choose one or two options from the following list to justify why they are together. This will help the game go smoother from the beginning and it will give them a few cues on how to interact with each other.

- Two characters are childhood friends. They come from the same city or town
- One character saved another PC's life a year ago
- One character owes money to another
- Two or more characters are currently employed as mercenaries by the same guild
- Two characters of the same race are relatives (siblings, cousins, etc.)

This list is not exhaustive. Players are free to invent reasons why they already know each other.

As the GM, you are free to disregard this if your players are experienced enough. These instructions are designed to kick-start the game from the top and help new players get a hold of the group faster. A group of experienced players might get together and come up with reasons to work together on the fly with little to no difficulty.

ABOUT LINEARITY AND PLAYER AGENCY

This adventure includes several approaches that the characters may take and several variants in the conclusions of each chapter. These options are not exhaustive but there is a limited amount of information or options a module can include. This adventure, as written, is somewhat linear but the intention is not to constrain players' creativity and options. We have included what we believe are the most likely courses of action in the adventure.

ABOUT NOTATION

Some events or things described in this document express their odds of happening in this format: "1-in-6", "2-in-6" and so on. This means that the GM rolls a d6. Rolling the first number or less means success.

There is a 2-in-6 chance of finding the hidden door.

This means that a player or the GM rolls a 1d6, on a result of 2 or lower, the hidden door is found.

ADVENTURE PRIMER

The place is well-guarded, yes. That's why we must go. Can you imagine the treasure hoard?

Gadino Veren

WHERE TO ADD THIS ADVENTURE

THE STARRY THRONE is a tier-2 adventure optimized for level 8 characters. The adventure centers around the exploration of a desert ruin. A dangerously deep shaft that leads into the depths of the earth, and an otherworldly location that defies all logic underneath the Red Desert.

Forgotten Realms. In the uncharted depths of the Anauroch Desert. West of the Desertsouth Mountains.

Eberron. In the Blade Desert, north of the new country Valenar. Northeast of Zephyr Keep.

Estimated Duration: 6 - 8 hours.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

EXTRAORDINARY, COSMIC-WIDE EVENTS leave a powerful mark in the Material Plane when they occur. These places are inherently magical and connected to the multiverse. They are known as Convergence Zones by scholars. In Elven Culture, very few scholars understand the deep time that precedes the known history of the world and the even longer lifetime of the planes. Such lengths of time are incomprehensible to mere mortals. To those who know the expansive eons, even the likes of elves are considered children, despite their immortality. The timeline goes back to such length that comprehending such a scale eludes them. Unknown civilizations have fallen and risen in the blink of an eye. Forgotten gods have been born and then vanquished by others more powerful than them. Extraplanar species have gone extinct. Such events cause scars in the fabric of the multiverse. These Convergence Zones are imbued in arcane energy.

For the longest time, the inhabitants of the Material Plane have been aware of Convergence Zones. They are strange regions or pockets of the world where magic is infused in every object and creature. Places where the physical and arcane rules often do not work as expected. Convergence Zones are often tied to a particular place in the planar-cosmos, the adjacent Feywild or the Shadow World, an Outer Plane, or the Astral Sea. The magical aura of a Convergence Zones can be detected from far distances and it affects its vicinity in a way related to the plane it is tied to. Convergence Zones tied to the Feywild modify nearby fauna and flora with the magical aura of the Fey world. Convergence Zones tied to outer planes take qualities from those and superimpose them in the Material World in strange magical ways.

THE RED DESERT AND THE THRONE

EONS AGO, A forgotten elvish culture detected a Convergence Zone beneath the Red Desert. They built a 900-foot-deep shaft and a temple in the desert and studied the place of power for thousands of years.

The amazing elven structure surrounds the Convergence Zone, which in place is tied to the Astral Sea, the gateway to all of the Outer Planes. The elves spent hundreds of years mastering their understanding of the zone and built a jade throne in the zone's center. Sitting on the throne grants glimpses of faraway places and grants control of the Convergence Zone to open a planar portal to the Astral Sea or any known outer Plane. But the elves soon realized that opening such a gate attracted the attention of evil extraplanar entities. So, the elves closed off their arcane creation and set up wards and guardians to impede any further or future use of the Starry Throne.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of the chapters and how the adventure is most likely to play out:

1. The Hole in the Desert. The characters travel to a ruined construction in the Red Desert that is accessible only once or twice a year. The place is protected by dangerous natural predators and it houses the eon-lost elven shaft that descends into the depths of the desert.

2. Down the Sand Hole. The characters descend through three levels of the ancient, underground, elven edifice and unearth information about the forgotten elven culture and the Starry Throne below. The elven dangerous wards are the obstacles to overcome.

3. The Throne Room. The characters reach the bottom of the shaft and the center of the Convergence Zone. The Starry Throne is as powerful as when it was built. The valiant elves who donated their souls to be the eternal guardians of the Starry Throne won't allow its use.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Starry Throne may begin with one or more of the following adventure hooks:

LOOKING FOR MY FATHER

The characters are approached by a young woman, Yanna d'Ariel. She explains that her father set out to explore a ruin in the Red Desert a few years ago and never returned. She wishes to do the same and perhaps retrieve her father's remains. Yanna explains that the place is a subject of local myths and legends and is sure to hold valuable treasure within since no one has explored it yet. Yanna owns a *decanter of endless water* she is willing to part with in exchange for the characters' aid.

THE LEGEND OF THE THREE KEYS

Gadino Veren, a somewhat known explorer and scholar attempts to recruit the characters to set out on an expedition to the Red Desert. He claims that a magical key he owns opens a vault down in the desert shaft that everyone in town talks about once or twice a year. Gadino is willing to share the treasure equally with the adventurers if they agree to come along. The key he owns indeed produces a strong magical aura.

A DOOR TO THE OUTER PLANES

If the adventurers' current adventure requires them to be somewhere else in the multiverse, they must find a planar gateway to reach the higher dimensions. The Starry Throne is the perfect match for their predicament. They may learn about its powers from an elven sage, an old elven tome, or as the result of a spell such as *legend lore*.

THE MISSING KEY

When the elves closed off the throne room and the Convergence Zone, they removed one of the keys needed to open the vault to impede its opening. The key's location was kept a secret for thousands of years until the elven culture collapsed due to unrelated circumstances; human war-bands conquered the lands and stole the key. It became a royal heirloom, a curious trinket to show off to foreign dignitaries and jealous scholars. It was forgotten in a vault and then taken by a thief decades later. The key was exchanged for goods, for gold, and for other magical items but no one knew its purpose. Gadino Veren saw the key once. The sigil carved in it was familiar from his days as a researcher of old elven tomes. He found references to the same sigil in old elven books about an old elvish culture that disappeared thousands of years ago. Gadino became strangely obsessed with it and managed to fool the owner to accept 300 gp for the fabled key.

STARTING AN EXPEDITION

THE ADVENTURE ASSUMES that the characters recruit both Gadino Veren and the young adventurer Yanna d'Ariel (page 8). However, the characters are free to refuse both of them. But they still need the key! Gadino Veren owns it. It is impossible to access the throne room without the key. If the adventurers wish to travel alone, they must find a way to retrieve the key. Either by stealing it or by disposing of the explorer and taking the key from his dead body. If Gadino survives, he may confront the characters again when they exit the ruin in the desert or when they return to town (see **Conclusion**).

It is recommended by the locals to hire a guide, something that Yanna d'Ariel is willing to do, free of charge. She yearns for an opportunity to recover her father's bones; she offers the characters her help for free. The characters can omit the guide or hire someone else but lacking a guide may cause their journey to last longer or become dangerous (see **The Red Desert**, page 7).



THE HOLE IN THE DESERT

I know I won't find my father alive. But he deserves a proper burial in our town.

Yanna d'Ariel

THE RED DESERT

THE STARRY THRONE begins in a small town by the edge of a great dry region known as the Red Desert. The fine sand of the endless dunes features a high concentration of powdered iron that has caused its oxidation, giving it a unique red look. On windy days, the iron can be detected through flavor and smell too. The Red Desert is an inhospitable place, a dangerous location that can only be traversed by seasoned guides and survival experts.

The Red Desert is unbearably hot during the day and freezing cold by night. Flora and fauna native to dry regions are present in the desert but it is hard to find. Worst of all is the fact that some of the native fauna is composed of insect predators and lizards. Encounters with such creatures, while seldom, often end in tragedy.

The Red Desert was more welcoming in the distant past, however. When the ancient elves that built the temple and the shaft above the Convergence Zone lived in the area, the region was fertile and humid. A scholar with access to the appropriate tools and samples from the deep desert soil can attest to that (DC 18 Survival).

THE JOURNEY

TO REACH THE ruined temple in the desert, the characters must traverse the dry region. This journey takes four days with a guide present but six days without one.

Roll on the random events table once every two days of travel. The chance for an extra encounter exists without a guide. As an alternative to a hired guide, a character with a dry climate background may do the job of a guide. Such as a desert ranger or a druid of dry regions.

RUMORS AND DESERT EVENTS

Rumors About the Desert

- 1 There are many ruins and forgotten monuments buried in the red sands. Remnants of extinct civilizations
- 2 Brave explorers sweep the desert often looking for valuable treasures. They always bring a guide along
- 3 An explorer set out for the ruined elven temple a few years ago but never returned. He is assumed dead
- 4 The sand crawls with large predatory insects that attack from below. One can never be too careful
- 5 A young woman and guide named Yanna has begged all explorers and scholars to visit the elven ruin in the desert but most have refused because it is dangerous
- 6 Seasoned desert-folk warn newcomers against traveling without enough water, food, and the appropriate clothing. Many have perished to the inhospitable red sands

Random Events

- 1 Two dry-climate, savage **umber hulks** emerge rapidly from the red sands looking for easy prey
- 2 A sandstorm forces the party to look for shelter for 2d10 hours, risking more time in the Red Desert
- 3 A southbound traveling caravan is a sight for sore eyes. They may trade with the party and sell them supplies
- 4 Two **stone giants** slowly traverse the desert. There's a 3-in-6 chance they attempt to rob the characters
- 5 During a clear, hot day, a high-pitched cry from the skies alerts the characters of a descending **wyvern**. The draconic creature attempts to steal a horse or similar
- 6 The characters come across the skeleton of an ancient gargantuan creature. It appears to be a dragon but many bones are missing. One claw wears a golden ring

YANNA D'ARIEL

Human (age 21)

Yanna (**scout**) is an athletic young woman who lives in a desert settlement. She is medium-height, has crystal blue eyes, and shoulder-length blonde hair. Yanna lost her father a few years ago when he left for the desert to explore a known ruin known as the hole in the desert. He was an explorer and spelunker. The man was never seen again. Since then, Yanna's determination to follow her father's footsteps is the seed that made her become a desert guide and a known trouble-maker. As far as she knows, no one has attempted to explore the ruin since her father's failed expedition but she still wants to go.

Manner. Yanna is seldom still and quiet. She always moves and talks, especially when nervous or sad.

Ambition. Yanna dreams of the day she can explore the desert ruin and perhaps recover her father's remains. She shares her dad's sense of curiosity and discovery.



GENERAL FEATURES

Sand. The sand around the ruined elven temple is fine enough that boots sink in it when walking. All sandy areas are considered difficult terrain.

Heat. Characters lacking the appropriate clothing and equipment for dry climates suffer the effects of extreme heat (cold at night). This means a 3-in-6 chance of gaining two levels of exhaustion when reaching area A1.

Magical Aura. A *detect magic* spell reveals the Starry Throne's faint magical aura. It comes from below.

GADINO VEREN

Human (age 32)

Gadino (**thug**) is a tall and attractive man who has been an adventurer for the last six years. Gadino Veren used to be a scholar and a researcher in a large city's college. He grew tired of the life in academia, cleaned his late father's sword, and went out to see the marvels of the world with his own eyes. Through clever bartering and inquisitive research, Gadino came to possess a strange magical key. His recent investigation has led him to believe it is somehow linked to a strange ruin in the middle of the Red Desert no one has yet delved. He is stationed in a nearby town waiting for brave adventurers.

Manner. Gadino acts with overconfidence as a way to compensate for his propensity to flee from trouble.

Ambition. Gadino is driven by sheer curiosity. He expects that no one has delved into the depths of the desert shaft so he wants to be the first to do it.

A1. THE DESERT

The dilapidated elven ruin from ages past stands out in between the endless and repetitive sand dunes. The architecture is that of a temple or a similar place of worship but little remains of its former glory. The walls are partially collapsed to wind erosion and chunks of rock from its sides and ceiling have collapsed to the sand surrounding the place. Two brass statues of elven guardians, clad in armor, remain beside the large open entrance. Their features have been sanded down by the erosion of thousands of years in the dry sun of the Red Desert.

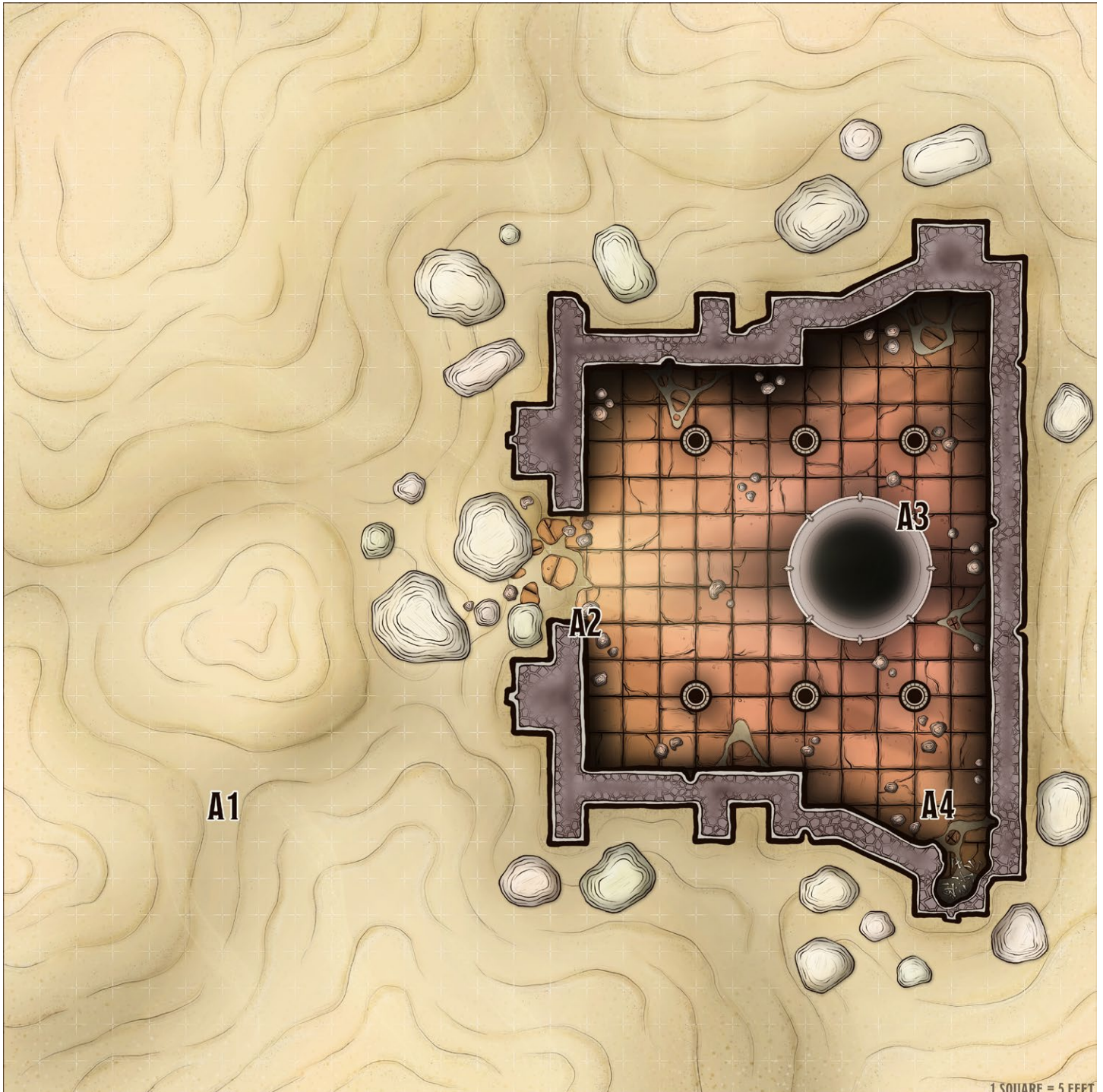
A2. TEMPLE'S ENTRANCE

Featureless chunks of soapstone rock, eroded by the wind and fine sand of the Red Desert, block the 15-foot-wide entrance to the dilapidated structure. This rock-filled area is considered difficult terrain. Two sets of three brass hinges are still embedded in each side of the entrance but there is no door. During the day, there is dim light within the ruined elven temple.

An observant individual deduces that the wood splinters, iron nails, and brass corners scattered around the entrance are all that remain from the heavy, wooden, double doors of the ancient temple (DC 14 Intelligence).

The Temple. Within the cracked walls, the elven temple barely remains standing. Carvings on some walls and the pillars have withstood the passage of time and depict scenes of elvish priests sitting on a large throne.

Lurkers from Below. When the characters approach the rocks near the temple's entrance, the uneven desert floor trembles in anticipation as three **bulettes** approach and attack the characters with their Deadly Leap ability. The bulettes are ferocious predators but they have a sense of self-preservation. If a bulette is defeated, there's a 3-in-6 chance the other two flee. If a second bulette is defeated, there's a 5-in-6 chance the remaining one flees.



A3. THE ACCESS SHAFT

A gaping hole near the far end of the temple appears to be the only way forward. A 5-foot-tall railing surrounds the dark shaft that pierces the desert's soil to unspeakable depths. It features eroded hand-made carvings.

Elvish Runes. The stone railing is carved with runes in a bygone elvish dialect. There is a 2-in-6 chance that any character that speaks elvish can understand them. It is a warning to visitors that reads:

Be gone from these lands, stranger. There is nothing but death below. Return to your folk and let them know that the Starry Throne is no more. None shall ever sit on the cursed seat again.

The Descent. The only way forward in this adventure is down the shaft. See **Planning the Descent** for more details on how to accomplish this task.

A4. ANCIENT EXPLORERS' REMAINS

The southeast corner of the temple features considerable structural damage. Some kind of clawed creature dug through the stone bricks to create a makeshift lair; a 7-foot-deep alcove within the temple wall. The bricks around it feature deep scratch marks that can be identified as bulette's by a researcher (DC 14 Nature).

Bone Remains. A pile of clean, dry bones rests near the far end of the makeshift lair. A healer can assert that some of the found bones are human but at least half of them come from desert vertebrates like reptiles and the rare mammals that live in the dry region (DC 14 Medicine). If Yanna is present, she examines the remains carefully looking for clues of her father. Unfortunately, there is no conclusive evidence to make a guess.

PLANNING THE DESCENT

THE DARK SHAFT in area A3 has a total depth of 900 feet. There are intermediate levels 300 and 600 feet below the surface. Planning the descent is a challenge of variable complexity depending on party composition and the availability of certain spells. Here are some options:

► **Mobility Options.** Characters with climb or flight speeds can descend at no peril to themselves. Carrying another character on their backs requires a DC 18 Strength check and imposes a level of exhaustion.

► **Throwing Stuff.** Throwing a rock or similar object to wait for the sound it makes when touching the ground does not work. The bottom is too deep for the sound to reach this area. The sound of the rock bouncing against the walls of the shaft has a 3-in-6 chance of occurring.

► **Climbing Gear.** The descent to area B1 is possible if at least 300-feet of rope and climbing gear are available. If Gadino Veren is present, he possesses this equipment. He was readily equipped for this challenge from his research about the strange elven temple.

► **Feather Fall.** A single casting of *feather fall* allows up to 5 creatures to reach area B1 or B7. The spell wears off only a few feet from the steel grate in area B7, impeding further progress until it is bypassed.

► **Other Spells.** Creative use of spells is encouraged when solving this challenge. Some spells that may prove useful in this situation are *clairvoyance*, *dimension door*, *enhance ability*, *jump*, *fly*, *gaseous form*, *levitate*, *spider climb*, *web*, among others.

Critical failure during this challenge causes a character to fall rapidly onto the steel grate in area B7. Such an impact destroys the falling body and causes instant death.



DOWN THE SAND HOLE

Can you smell it? It's the scent of gold! Let's go down this shaft; I've got some climbing gear.

Gadino Veren

EXPLORING THE SHAFT

THE CHARACTERS MAY explore the three levels of the dungeon, each of them 300 feet apart. They can find clues and long-lost lore about the forgotten elven culture, and get to the Starry Throne after opening the Gate of Stars at the bottom of the shaft.

When moving within the three levels of the structure, there is a 1-in-6 chance of triggering a random event from the table (2-in-6 when making too much noise). Each encounter can only occur once. Choose the next higher or lower result if a number is repeated.

- 1 The corrupted spirits of three ancient elven scholars (**wraiths**) rise and attack the living
- 2 One of the characters steps on a pressure plate that triggers the swing of a large blade (4d6 slashing damage, DC 16 Dex for half damage)
- 3 A cave-in destroys a section of a wall and a mound of sand and rocks buries a creature passing by (6d6 bludgeoning damage, DC 15 Dex for half damage)
- 4 A pair of **black oozes** squeezes through a crack on a wall and attempt to dissolve the characters to eat them
- 5 Three **umber hulks** use their tremorsense to locate the characters, they approach from three different tunnels
- 6 A **shield guardian** that was created with the sole purpose to protect this place stumbles upon the characters, the guardian attacks intruders until destroyed
- 7 Five **gargoyles** and an **earth elemental** see the characters as intruders to their lair and attack. If the earth elemental drops to 0 hit points, the gargoyles flee
- 8 The characters are struck with strong, harmful telepathic warnings in an ancient elven tongue (4d6 psychic damage, DC 16 Int for half damage)

FEATURES OF THE TEMPLE

The following features correspond to the three levels of the ancient elven temple; areas B1 through B16.

Central Shaft. The 15-foot-diameter shaft has a depth of 900 feet in total. The upper level of the dungeon was built at a depth of 300 feet. The middle level at 600 feet. The shaft is the only connection between the three levels. The characters must use the shaft to reach them.

Slab Doors. All doors shown in the map are thick slabs of stone that block several chambers. They can be moved with strength (DC 20 Strength) unless otherwise stated.

Secret Doors. All of them consist of a section of the wall made from a different, lighter material (DC 16 Perception). To open them, a hidden nearby switch must be found and pressed (DC 17 Investigation). It causes the wall section to swing inward on heavy iron hinges.

Light. Some of the underground chambers are lit with magical torch sconces with *continual flame* spells. Removing the torch causes it to burn out at the normal rate.

Steel Grate. The stainless steel grate rests at a depth of 600 feet, in area B7. It is magically held to the stone walls. Removing it manually is a complex task. See area B7 for ways to bypass it or get rid of it.

Magical Aura. A *detect magic* spell reveals the Starry Throne's magical aura. It comes from the shaft's bottom. The magical presence of the throne can be felt even at a distance of 900 feet, while on the surface. This is proof of its incredible power. The lower the characters descend, the stronger the throne's aura becomes.

B1. CENTRAL SHAFT

Two busts north and south of the shaft oversee the 15-foot-diameter hole, two corridors to each side.

The busts represent elven scholars who earned this place of honor through their deeds. A steel plate below each states their names, Gillian Flinn and Sofforos Nadir. The characters can ignore this level and descend to area B7.

Treasure. There are hidden compartments under each of the busts' stone bases (DC16 Investigation). There are 250 gp and a *potion of healing* inside each.

Open Shaft. If the characters wish to jump across from area B2 to B3, they must jump and/or climb carefully to avoid falling into the shaft (DC 14 Athletics).

B2. WEST WING

A steel table by the east wall shows delicate models of other Planes of Existence. Four rune-carved metallic plates form a square on the floor.

The pressure plates in the chamber are concealed as decorated, engraved iron tiles (DC 16 Perception). The plates in areas B2 and B3 must be pressed in a particular order to avoid a trap and solve the riddle (see below).

Elven Riddle. If the characters study the runes and the positions of the scale models of the planes on the tables they realize that a riddle stands before them. Each of the pressure plates' runes and engravings correspond to one of the planes depicted on the table. The puzzle takes into consideration the plates in area B3 as well. Pressing the plates in the same order as the planes shown on each table opens the slab doors that lead to B4. Each time the pressure plates are pressed in the wrong order, two **invisible stalkers** magically appear and attack until slain.

B3. EAST WING

This chamber mirrors area B2. Use the description in area B2 to describe this place if it is visited first.

B4. BOOBY-TRAPPED HALLWAY

The two spiked walls get propelled forward at a high speed and crush whoever crosses the hallway. They are magical and get triggered when living matter passes by, even if it does not touch the floor. (10d6 piercing damage, DC 16 Dex save for half). The trap can be disarmed (DC 18 Thieves' Tools). Additionally, *dispel magic* spell can disable the trap for one minute.

Pulling the lever found in the easternmost corner of this area deactivates all traps on this level. Although there is no way to know this after pulling it.

B5. EAST SHRINE

The secret passage leads to a square chamber with a narrow eastbound passageway. A table with old dusty scrolls and documents rests at the end of it.

The elves stored documents with information that pertains to the Starry Throne and its capabilities. The area is hidden and protected.

Poison Darts Trap. A pressure plate in the middle of the room triggers flying poison darts (DC 18 Perception). They hit all creatures, including those in the narrow passageway and the shrine. (6d6 poison damage and poisoned for one hour, DC 17 Con for half damage).

Long-lost Lore. All texts are written in an old dialect of elvish and explain the lore about the elves who built the temple. They describe in a detailed and specific manner how the elves sealed this place and filled it with guardians and security measures. There's a 2-in-6 chance that a character that speaks elvish can understand them.

B6. WEST SHRINE

This room is a mirrored copy of area B5. It has the same poison darts trap and more ancient elven lore.

Long-lost Lore. The texts are written in an old dialect of elvish. They say the throne should never be used again due to the great dangers and threats it attracts. They damn anyone in the future who dares undo their job and fool their security measures. There's a 2-in-6 chance that a character that speaks elvish can understand them.

B7. STEEL GRATE

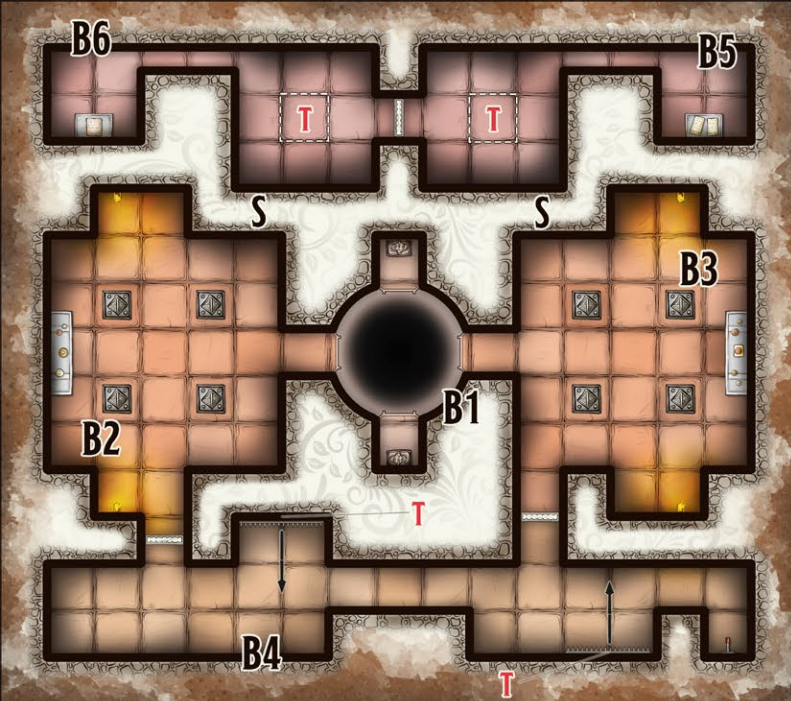
The temple's bottom is impossible to reach without removing this grate. It is impossible to move it by force.

Steel Grate Removal. The magic holding the grate can be deactivated. Pressing the switches hidden under the stone busts left and right of the grate turns off the magic (DC 18 Investigation). With the magic gone, the grate can be pushed into the shaft's wall. Otherwise, Gadino offers to cut the grate with a steel saw he brought. If the characters agree, Gadino takes six hours to finish. He cannot accompany the characters during this time.

B8. MAIN HALL AND ELVEN ALCOVES

This was once an elven meditation area. To the west, five alcoves contain five identical stone pedestals holding elven circlets bathed in gold. Removing any circlet causes five **wights** to materialize. They fight until slain.

Treasure. Each of the elven circlets in the alcoves is worth 250 gp. There are hidden switches under each of them. They can be pressed to deactivate the magic of the statues in area B11 (DC 18 Investigation).



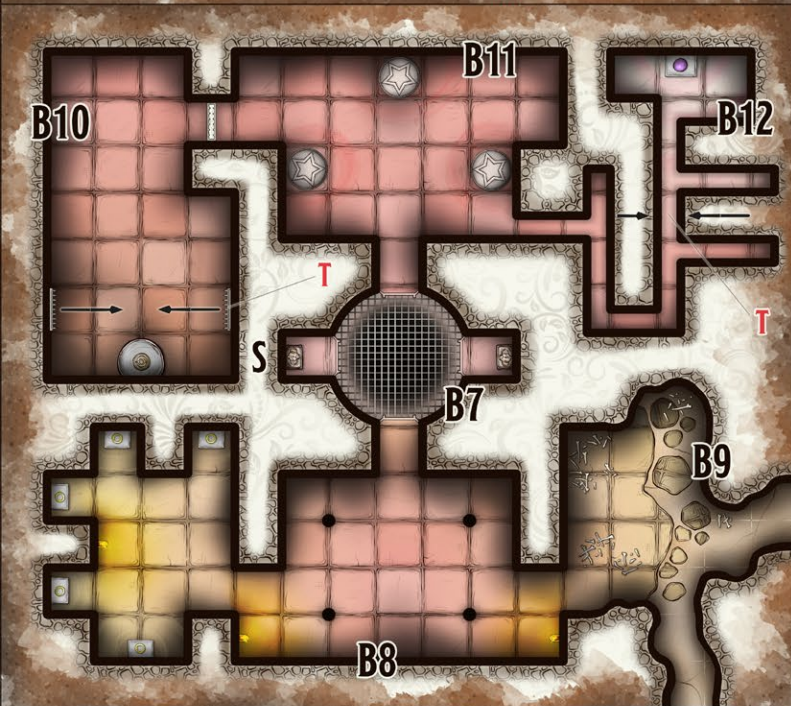
B9. CAVE-IN

Rocks and debris have taken over half of this chamber. Several mounds of bones litter the ground.

This chamber was destroyed during a cave-in ages ago. These tunnels lead to uncharted and unknown territories of the desert, 600 feet underground. The bones in the room are not only human. Bones from other mammals and creatures are here too (DC 16 Nature).

Umber Hulks' Lair. Two **umber hulks** roam the underground areas of the desert and dig new tunnels toward their various lairs under the sand. This is one of them. They attack any living creature that comes and attempt to confuse them with their gazes first.

A Proper Burial. If Yanna is present, she recognizes her father's remains thanks to a bracelet she gave to him. Surprisingly, the trinket withheld whatever happened to the poor man. Yanna asks the characters for a moment to store her father's remains in a bag.

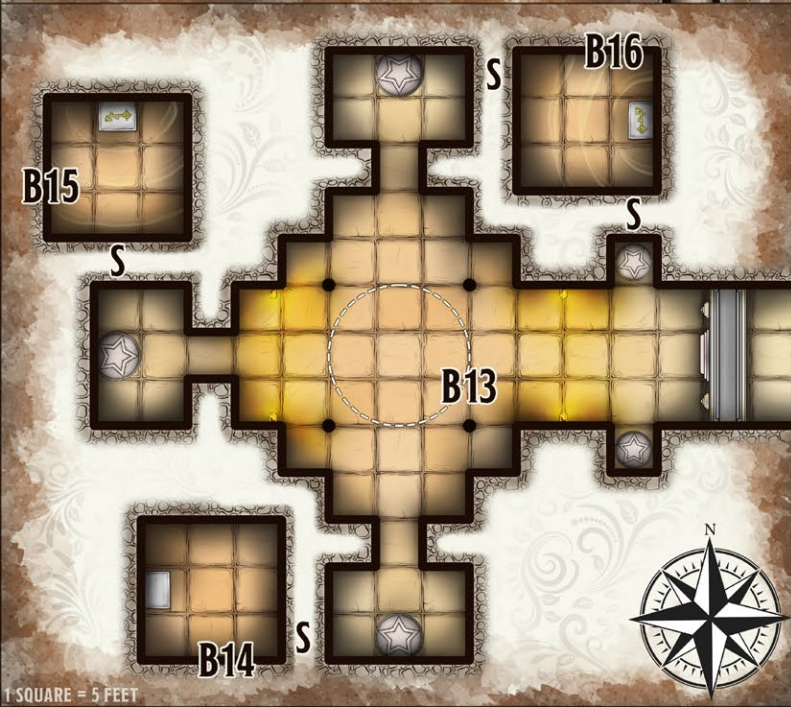


B10. THE MAGIC JAR

A circular stone base holds a jar. Two spiked plates to the sides threaten those who approach.

The two spiked walls get propelled forward at high speed and crush whoever crosses the hallway. They are magical and get triggered when living matter passes by, even if it does not touch the floor. (10d6 piercing damage, DC 16 Dex save for half). The trap can be disarmed (DC 18 Thieves' Tools). Additionally, a *dispel magic* spell can disable the trap for one minute.

The Magic Jar. This magical jar's interior can contain 300 cubic feet of any liquid or gas. It requires attunement. With a magic word, its user can activate a vacuum function and suck 5 cubic feet of liquid or gas per round, or release a liquid or gas at the same speed. This jar can be used to remove the poison gas in area B12.



B11. THE ETERNAL GUARDIANS

This irregular shaped contains three armored elvish statues that stand still on circular granite bases.

The elvish statues are in truth constructs. These battle golems were created to protect the temple if needed. The **shield guardians** animate and attack the characters in waves. A single one attacks at once. When the first shield guardian drops to half HP, another one comes to life and attacks. When one of the guardians is destroyed, the third one awakens and fights until destroyed.

The characters can avoid this encounter in its entirety if they activate the switches in the alcoves of area B8.

B12. THE ENERGY ORB

The passageways feature well-conserved frescoes of the ancient elves and their astral studies. The violet crystal orb on the stone pedestal glows faintly while white smoke swirls inside the shimmering sphere.

The tiles in the corridor are pressure plates that release green gas. It reduces line of sight to two feet (see below).

The violet orb at the end of the corridor is the arcane implement that grants energy to the guardian statues in area B13. Destroying the orb removes all magic from the sculptures and turns them into regular stone statues.

Poison Gas. It burns the lungs (4d6 poison damage, DC 17 Con save for half damage). The jar from area B10 removes all this gas with its vacuum ability.

Sleep Darts. Whoever passes by the marked tile on the map triggers the darts (DC 17 Con save or fall asleep for one minute). Breathing the poisoned gas does not wake up sleeping characters. If the gas is removed by any means, the characters might see the holes on the wall and avoid the trap (DC 16 Perception).

Treasure at a Cost. The orb has a value of 5,000 gp. If the characters wish to keep it, the guardians in area B13 remain operational. A magic-user notices the connection between the orb and the statues (DC 18 Arcana).

B13. THE BOTTOM

Three adjacent rooms with a **shield guardian** each surround the central chamber at the bottom of the shaft. They attack in waves like the ones in area B11. They remain still if the orb from area B12 has been destroyed.

Keys' Attraction. Gadino shares with the characters the sensation of attraction from the key to certain walls. He points out the secret doors' locations in the area. The key is drawn toward the chambers with the other keys.

B14. THE MISSING KEY.

Regardless of who has Gadino's key, it is drawn to its former pedestal and the other two keys in the same manner.

B15. CHAMBER OF THE SECOND KEY

The second key glows brighter the closer it gets to the first key. The two keys form two-thirds of a beautiful elven pattern engraved on them when put together.

B16. CHAMBER OF THE THIRD KEY

The third key makes the lot glow even brighter when put together as the elven rune pattern becomes complete.

Treasure. The three keys can be sold as relics to a scholar or researcher for 1,500 gp. If sold separately they are worth 200 gp each.

OPENING THE GATE OF STARS

THE SURFACE OF the Gate of Stars looks like a liquid translucent sheet. It projects scenes of the universe, the stars, and other planes on its shimmery surface. The elves knew the chances of someone coming were slim but not inexistent. Hence, knowing about the greed of humans and other humanoids, they placed one last warning at the Gate of Stars. The moment the three keys come within 10 feet from the gate, the two elvish knight statues north and south of it speak in ancient Elvish:

“Stranger, foreigner, intruder. Heed our message, hear our words. Stop. Go no further. Lest the Starry Guardian of the Gate and the Eternal Guardians end your lives. We shall accomplish our duty, even after death.”

When the three keys are inserted in the gate, the whole gate along with the keys disappear at the same time the spectral voices of a thousand elves say *“You have been warned”* just before complete silence takes over. The place remains open and the keys are gone, forever.



THE THRONE ROOM



Those who ignore warnings and the past shall be put to death immediately. No exceptions!

Starry Guardian of the Gate

THRONE ROOM FEATURES

The following features apply to the throne room and the hallway that leads to it, after the three-keys door.

Light. The throne and the two large granite slabs beside it produce bright light. The astral water is also luminescent but it is overshadowed by the throne. Strands of arcane energies in the room dance and swirl in the air as if reacting to an inaudible rhythm.

Spells and Magic. Magic items have a 2-in-6 chance of not working when a character attempts to use them. The Convergence Zone has a direct effect on all spells cast within 100 feet from the Starry Throne. Roll a d6 with this table each time a character casts a spell in the area:

1. The spell is unaffected by the Convergence Zone
2. The spell works on a random target (if possible)
3. The spell fails and the spell slot is lost
4. The spell works, its effect is doubled (if possible)
5. The spell misfires, 4d6 damage to the caster
6. A different random spell is cast, random target

Secret Door. A section of the stone wall by the southwest corner of the throne room is made from a different lighter material and can be pulled to the side to reveal a secret passage to area C4 (DC 16 Perception).

Astral Water. The majority of area C2 is flooded with a substance similar to water native to the Astral Sea. The physical properties of this quasi-liquid change from moment to moment. Each combat round, the 2-foot-deep Astral Sea water has a 3-in-6 chance of behaving like normal water and become difficult terrain.

C1. THE HALL OF WORLDS

An otherworldly sight lies beyond the large door. Three alcoves per side house squat pedestals with full-body brass statues. The six statues depict different elvish warriors in combat postures.

The walls of this hallway are in an incredible state of preservation despite the passage of time. The walls are an astounding work of art by the elven artisans that built the throne room. The bas-reliefs' level of detail is such that a magnifying glass is needed to appreciate the finest marks on the stone. These reliefs depict sceneries from different dimensions and the Astral Sea itself. If Gadi-no Veren is present, he claims that he recognizes some of the scenes from old elvish tomes he researched before coming here. They must be from the outer planes. A knowledgeable character may confirm these claims from their own investigations (DC 16 Arcana).

The six elvish brass statues depict the six warriors that offered their souls in eternal servitude to the guarding of the Convergence Zone and the Starry Throne so that no one would ever use it again. The statues are not magical.

There is an engraved brass plaque on the base of each of the statues. The plaque names the elvish warrior and lists some of their accomplishments and deeds of valor in life. At least half of them are veterans of a war that occurred thousands of years ago. The six elvish warriors are Gadder Firanna, Attia Vido, Artemis Harinni, Tarnus Viarlis, Hareikki Balori, and Cardenni Yiarlus.

Magic. The west half of this hallway is affected by the Convergence Zone's influence on spells and magic.

C2. THE THRONE ROOM

Two rows of four fifty-foot-tall, carved pillars hold the throne room's domed ceiling. Most of the room is submerged in a 2-foot-deep layer of a water-like, iridescent substance that swirls like oil in water.

The throne room is a marvel of the world in terms of architecture, arcana, and artistry. A treasure hidden from the world buried 900 feet under the Red Desert.

The pillars, walls, and the domed ceiling of the throne room are decorated with carvings and well-preserved frescoes. They depict intricate scenes of the ancient elvish culture that built and used the Starry Throne. Priest-like figures hold obtuse rituals in the throne room and use the Starry Throne to open a gate to the Astral Sea.

The Eternal Guardians. Coming within 20 feet of the Starry Throne triggers the final confrontation of this adventure. The **starry guardian of the gate** appears next to the jade throne and claims that the characters' trespassing equals a death sentence for each of them. The guardian is not immediately hostile and may answer questions. However, his talkative demeanor does not excuse him of his duty: all trespassers must perish. When the battle begins, the six **eternal elven guardians** appear in the steps of the throne dais and rejoice in battle to fulfill their eternal commitment.

C3. THE GREAT STARRY PORTAL

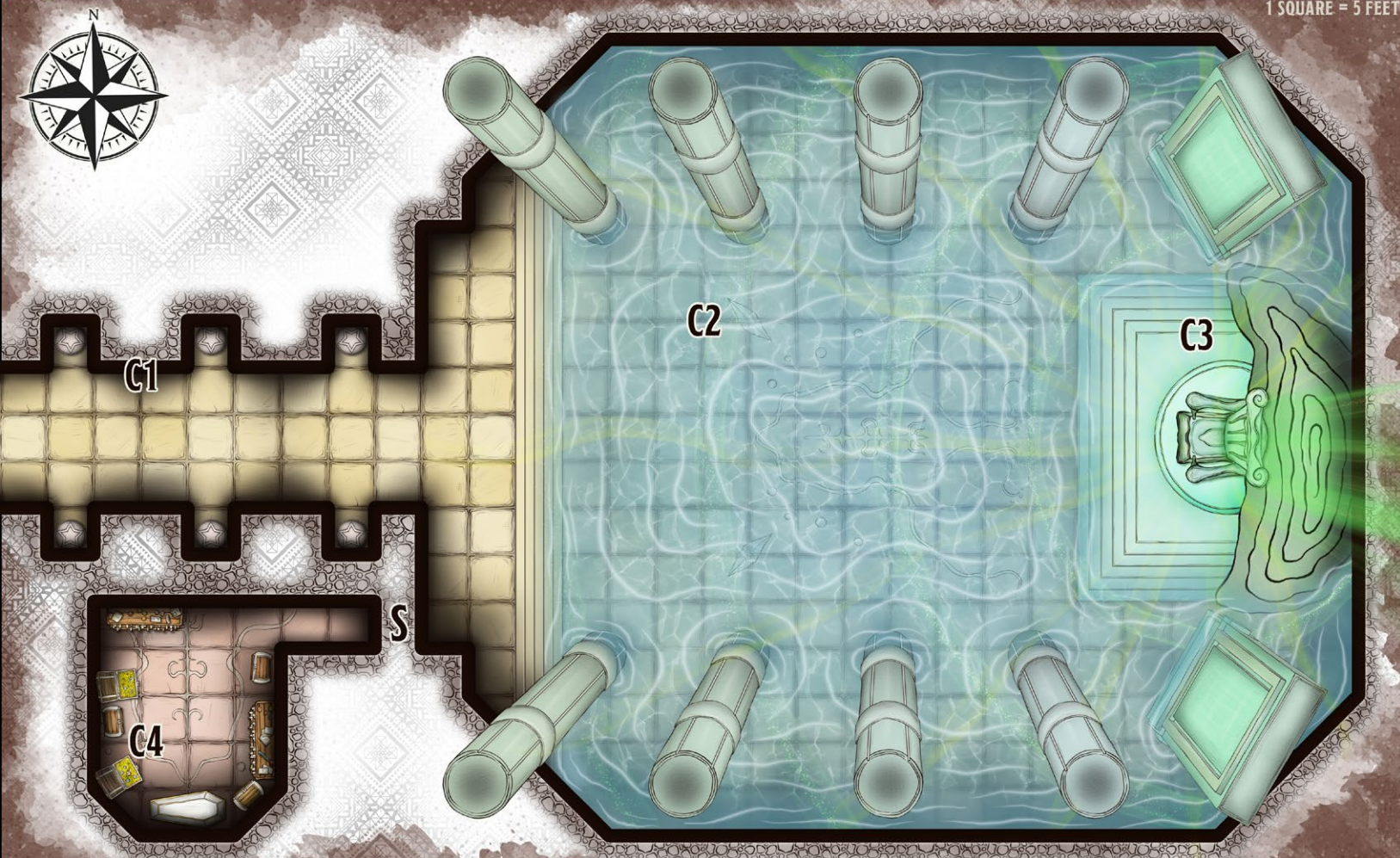
The fabled Starry Throne stands on top of a six-step dais. Behind it, a seemingly natural volcanic rock formation hides the west wall. Two 30-foot-tall stone slabs of green-hue soapstone flank the throne.

The stone slabs shine as hundreds of tiny arcane characters appear and disappear on their surfaces.

The Convergence Zone is located directly beneath the throne. See **Throne Room Features** for its effect on spells and magic items. An inscription in old elvish on the throne's top rail reads: *We have harnessed the power of the planes. It shall remain ours for eternity. Protecting the gate to the stars and the planes shall be our legacy.*

The Starry Throne. It is a magical artifact that harnesses the power of the Convergence Zone around it. It is not possible to use it without first defeating the immortal guardians that protect it. Sitting on the Starry Throne for an hour allows the user to access its powers. Any user can cast the *scrying* spell (5/day). This version is not limited to functioning on the same plane.

A spellcaster can access the real power of the Starry Throne and use it to cast *gate* once a day. The user must sit on the throne for 6 hours to do this. This version of the *gate* spell remains open for up to an hour and does not require the material components to cast the spell.





C4. SECRET VAULT

The narrow hallway leads to a 20-by-25 foot chamber that contains two bookcases, five wooden chests, and a single stone coffin; the fine curves of elvish scripture etched on the coffin's lid.

This chamber contains the only documents, tomes, and scrolls about the construction and use of the Starry Throne to harness the power of the Convergence Zone. They were left here just in case future generations of the elves that built the throne ever decided to operate it again; the descendants of that culture are long gone. All texts are written in an old dialect of elvish and explain the lore of the Starry Throne. There's a 2-in-6 chance that a character that speaks elvish can understand them.

Treasure. The chests contain a sizable amount of treasure. Some of the scrolls in the bookcases are magical. Collectively, the treasure vault contains the following objects of monetary or magical value: 900 cp, 6,000 sp, 2,900 gp, and 130 pp. A porcelain vase carved with the image of an elvish knight (250 gp), a small carpet (250 gp), an ornate silver mirror set with eye agate (350 gp), a carved, wooden, platinum-studded staff (250 gp), a bronze choker with an elvish rune (250 gp), a carved ivory drinking horn studded with pearls (250 gp), a ceremonial bone dagger of goblinoid craftsmanship (120 gp), a *+1 shortsword*, a *spell scroll of gate*, three *spell scrolls of fireball*, a *spell scroll of scrying*, two *spell scrolls of mind blank*, and a *spell scroll of true polymorph*.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF this adventure is open-ended in nature. The adventurers have delved into the depths of the elvish temple and gained access to the Starry Throne. The artifact controls a gateway to the outer planes. If the characters' ambitions require their presence in other planes of existence, this is their path.

THE EXPLORER'S GOALS

If Gadino Veren survives the adventure and explores the throne room, he later writes a book about the place and becomes a renowned scholar. If the characters robbed him of the key, he attempts to retrieve it when they exit the temple in the desert or return to town, accompanied by ten hired **thugs** and a **veteran**.

A GIRL AND HER FATHER

If Yanna d'Ariel retrieves her father's remains, she buries him in the family crypt a week later in the desert town.

THE ETERNAL GUARDIANS

The guardians of the throne room cannot be truly destroyed, they reform after a week of being defeated.

USING THE STARRY THRONE

The characters' use of the Starry Throne draws the attention of powerful entities in the multiverse. The jade throne's reactivation causes the inevitable maruts from the outer planes to take notice of the characters.

STATBLOCKS

STARRY GUARDIAN OF THE GATE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

HP 86 (11d8 + 36)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-1)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder;

bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Ancient Elven

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Starry Sight. The guardian can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

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

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0

Etherealness. The guardian enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Legendary Actions

Actions. The Starry Guardian of the Gate can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The guardian regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

Detect. The guardian makes a Perception check.

Ethereal Jump. The guardian enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.

Tactical Life Drain (Costs 2 Actions). The guardian makes a life drain attack and moves half its flying speed. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

ETERNAL ELVEN GUARDIAN

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

HP 27 (6d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder;

bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Ancient Elven

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Starry Sight. The guardian can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

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

Actions

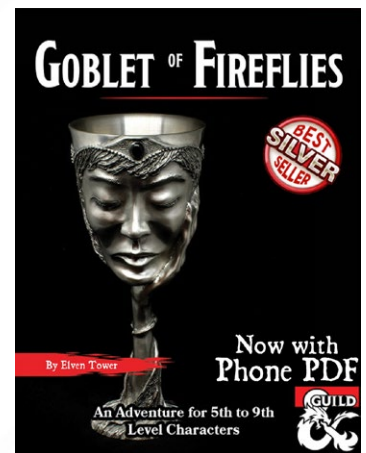
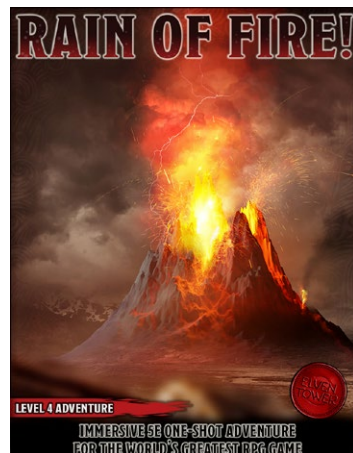
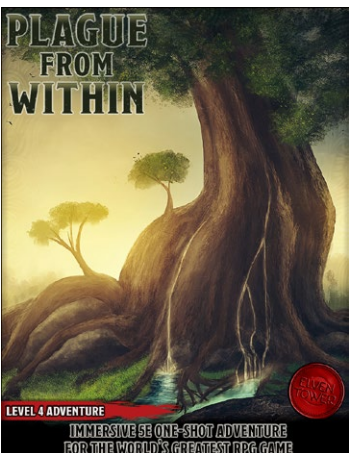
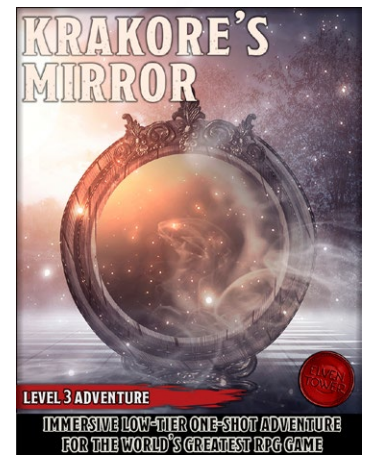
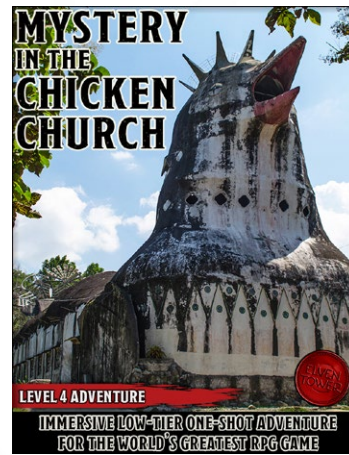
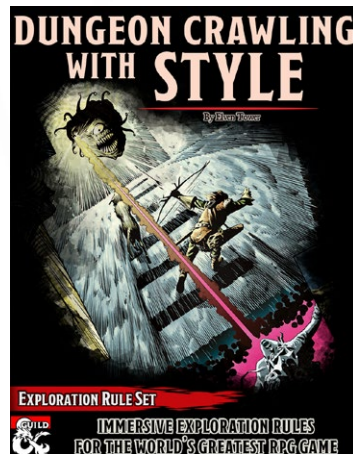
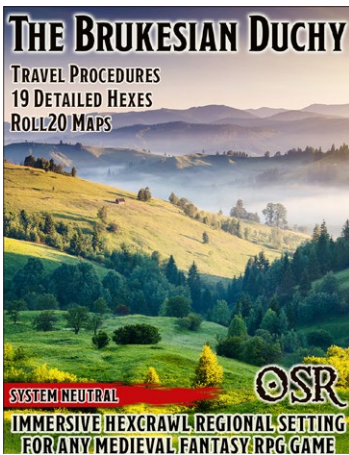
Withering Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (2d6) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The guardian enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

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