

# Tanza's Fall

by Paul Strack

This is an adventure for 3-6 first level characters using the 4th edition D&D rules. It is designed to demonstrate a few things about the new version of the game:

- First level characters are already heroes. They can be involved in dramatic events with great ramifications rather than spending their early levels grubbing for copper pieces.
- The rules are streamlined. The pre-generated characters include most of the information needed to play. Alternately, you can create your own characters for the adventure.
- Combat includes various interesting tactical options, encouraging cooperation and group play.
- Important non-combat scenes are supported through skill challenges (the difficulty of skill challenges are reduced somewhat from the official rules).

This adventure throws a group of unlikely allies together in a race to save their city from destruction. A group of guards and rogues learn of a dire threat to the wards that protect their city from the undead. They must scramble to stop a band of evil cultists in the middle of undead invasion of the city.

***Important:*** *The rivalry between the guards and rogues is supposed to provide interesting roleplaying opportunities. It is not so that the two groups actually fight one another. When explaining the adventure background, make it clear how everyone will suffer if the city falls, so the heroes will work together.*

Scaling information is included for 3 to 6 characters. The adventure includes 6 pre-generated characters, 3 guards and 3 rogues. For the adventure to work, you should have a roughly even split between the two groups. Descriptions of powers are summarized from the rules.

Powers marked with a ○ can be used once per encounter. Powers marked with a □ can be used once per day. Powers marked with a ● or a \* may be used freely or generate bonuses to other abilities. Powers marked with \* are linked to some other trait on the character sheet. Most powers are in italics. Those abilities that are not italicized count as basic attacks. Actions listed under “attacks” require a standard action. Some powers fall under another kind of action (move, minor or triggered).

If you prefer to create your own characters, make half of the characters members of the city guard and the other half members of the Red Street gang. This should let the adventure proceed as written. You could also have an established group of adventurers stumble into the adventure, though you lose some of the roleplaying opportunities that come from having characters of differing view points.

You can print out this adventure on double-sided pages. The information for each pre-generated character will be on a single page (front and back) and information on encounters will be on facing pages, so you can lay them out when running that encounter.

The adventure doesn't include any maps. Use maps for each encounter as appropriate. There are a number of suitable maps that are commercially available or you can make your own.

The adventure is designed to run in under 6 hours, suitable for a normal convention game. This includes the time needed to teach the 4th Edition rules. If you need to run a shorter game, eliminate half the skeletons in the first encounter and skip the combat in the Encounter 4, so that the heroes reach the upper city without incident. If you stay focused, you should be able to finish the abbreviated adventure in under 4 hours. If you have only an hour or two, pick an encounter and fight it out.

# The City of Tanza

Tanza is a city on the south-eastern border of the nation of Imber. It was originally settled to expand the borders of Imber into the wilderness. It also gave Imber an outpost closer to the nations of the east, improving caravan trade over the Worldspine Mountains. The city prospered and Imber pushed its frontier further south of Tanza.

Tanza's golden age ended thirty years ago. From out of the wild, the undead forces of the Shadowfell swept north through Imber's borders to the walls of the city itself. Tanza suffered six weeks of siege before the armies of Imber were able to relieve it. The same assault happened the following winter. The Shadowfell's armies of walking dead seemed endless. The city would surely have fallen were it not for the intervention of the priest's of Avandra.

Avandra, also called the lady of light, is the patron goddess of Imber. Her priests performed a powerful ritual extending the blessing of the lady over the city, preventing the undead from entering its walls. This gave Imber an unassailable military fortress from which it could harry the Shadowfell and keep them from moving further north.

The walking dead still periodically attack the city, but the blessing of Avandra keeps them at bay. The surviving settlers moved north behind the protection of the city. Some semblance of normalcy and trade have resumed. The heroes of Imber regularly sally forth into the southlands held by the forces of the Shadowfell, hoping to find a way to end its threat forever, so far without success.

Unfortunately, the protection of Avandra is not perfect. Only the upper city, on the bluffs of Tanza, is fully secure. The lower city is protected from the most powerful undead, but lesser evils are still able to slip past the weaker outer barriers. This divides the city. The wealthy and privileged citizens of the upper city are able to live without fear, while the lower city suffers regular undead incursions.

One major conflict between the upper and lower city is the location of the military. The poor of the lower city wanted the army to be housed there, on the "front lines" so to speak. The leaders of Avandra fear this would make the army too vulnerable to sneak attack. They put the barracks in the upper city instead. The lower city feels abandoned, and their resentment continues to grow.

All who can afford it have moved to the upper city. Poverty and crime are now a serious problem in the lower city. The city guard does its best to fight the problem, but since the guard is also based in the upper city, they get little help or sympathy from the locals of the lower districts. Unscrupulous eastern traders work with smugglers in the lower city to circumvent the trade tariffs and slip proscribed items past the borders of Imber.

There has been a recent outbreak of burglary in the upper city and the city council is in an uproar to have the thieves brought to justice. The gate between the upper and lower city is well guarded, so the only explanation is that someone in the lower city has found a hidden path to the top of the bluff. Perhaps someone has discovered a path through the ancient catacombs under the city. The city guard is out on the streets, rounding up the usual suspects for questioning.

And outside, the forces of Shadowfell watch, waiting for a moment of weakness...

**Racial Notes:** The noble houses of Imber include a number of elf and eldarin (high-elf) families. Humans and half-elves make up most of the common folk. The people of the east include both humans and dragonborn. Some dwarves live in the Worldspine mountains. Halflings and tieflings are rare and mixed in with the general population.

# Collwyn

*A young human fighter in the service of the city guard*

Though born in the lower city, you are loyal to leaders of Tanza. With the forces of Shadowfell threatening to overwhelm the living, you don't see how you could do otherwise. As soon as you were old enough, you volunteered for the city guard. You had visions of protecting the city from the rampages of the dead and being a hero admired by all.

The reality turned out a bit different. People from your old neighborhood thought you sold out, joining the army to live in safety in the upper city. You spend most of your time protecting wealthy merchants and hunting down petty criminals. You have taken part in a few raids on nests of undead, but this is the exception, not the rule.

You still hold to your ideals. Your logic is sound and you know the day will come when you strike a blow for your nation against its unliving enemies.

## Opinions

**Rhoswen:** Your sergeant, a noble, elf priestess of Avandra. She is honorable and devoted to the city. You admire her greatly. It makes you uncomfortable when she derides the citizens of the lower city, but you know she only wants the best of all of Tanza's people.

**Tyfid:** Your corporal, an eldarin (high elf) wizard from the School of Circles. Like most people, arcane magic makes you nervous, but he is good at what he does. He's always been friendly to you and you are warming up to him. You know he is sweet on Rhoswen, but she doesn't see it.

**Nia:** Your younger sister, a rogue in the lower city. You tried to convince her to move to the upper city with you when you joined the guard, but she refused. You worry now that she hates you and wish you had a chance to reconcile with her.

**Pecham:** A half-elf warlock and leader of the Red Street gang. You've heard rumors that Nia has fallen under his sway. You are sure he is responsible for corrupting her.

**Gryg:** Rumor has it this dragonborn foreigner is a brutish thug that will do anything his gang-leader Pecham tells him to. He is from the eastern lands, a land of mystery to you.

## Play Notes

**Roleplaying:** You are young and new to the guards. You defer to your leaders, whom you admire. You are idealistic and want to protect the city and all its citizens, low and high. You would jump at a chance to reconcile with your sister, but believe that she already hates you.

**Fighting Style:** Your job in a fight is to wade into the front lines and lock down dangerous opponents so that they cannot reach your weaker companions. When you engage such enemies, your *Combat Challenge* make it harder for them to maneuver and attack others. Against weak opponents (Minions), use your *Cleave* to take them down quickly. If you are forced to attack opponents at a distance, you can use your javelins, but you are much better in melee.

## Collwyn, Human Fighter

Level 1

Str 16 (+3), Con 14 (+2), Dex 14 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 10 (+0)

Hit Points: 34

Bloodied: 17      Healing Surges (+8 HP): ○○○○ ○○○○ ○      Initiative: +2

Defense: AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 13      Speed: 5

Skills: Athletics +5, Heal +7, Intimidate +5, Streetwise +5

Equipment: Javelins (3), Long Sword, Scale Armor and Large Shield, Armor Penalty -3

### Racial Features, Class Features and Feats

- *Combat Challenge*: If you attack a target, you may mark it (whether you hit or miss). The marked target suffers a -2 penalty to attack anyone other than you. If your marked target is adjacent to you, and shifts or attacks someone else, you may make an immediate attack as a reaction. This is *not* an opportunity attack.
- *Combat Superiority*: +2 to opportunity attacks. If you hit, your target stops moving.
- *Weapon Talent*: Gain +1 to attack with 1 handed weapons (bonus included).
- *Toughness*: Gain +5 hit points (bonus included).
- *Weapon Focus*: Gain +1 damage with heavy blades (bonus included).

### Attacks: Your special attacks (exploits) require the use of your sword.

- Javelin: +5 vs AC, 1d6+3 damage, range 10/20.
- Long sword: +7 vs AC, 1d8+4 damage.
- *Cleave*: +7 vs AC, 1d8+4 damage. If you hit, another adjacent enemy takes 3 damage.
- *Sure Strike*: +9 vs AC, 1d8 damage.
- *Tide of Iron*: +7 vs AC, 1d8+4 damage. If you hit, you may push target back 1 square. You may shift into the empty square if you wish.
- *Steel Serpent Strike*: +7 vs AC, 2d8+4 damage. If you hit, your target is slowed (Speed 2) and cannot shift until the end of your next turn.
- *Comeback Strike*: +7 vs AC, 2d8+4 damage. If you hit, you may spend a healing surge immediately. If you miss, you do not use up this power.

# Nia

*A human rogue from the lower city, dreaming of a better life.*

You were born in the lower city and had a hard childhood. The only thing that made it bearable was your older brother Collwyn, who did his best to take care of you. That only made it more devastating when he sold out and joined the guard, moving to the upper city. You can't understand why he would want to protect the noble snobs that have been exploiting your people for so long.

He did offer to help you move to the upper city, but you refused in disgust. Since then you've done your best to get by however you can. You've recently joined the Red Street gang, hoping to gain a better life. The gang promises to protect the lower districts rather than simply preying on its citizens. The reality does not always match this ideal, but it helps you sleep at night. You sometimes wonder if maybe your brother had your best interests in mind after all.

## Opinions

**Pecham:** A half-elf warlock and your gang leader. You are grateful he took you in and gave you a chance at a better life. You want to prove yourself to him, but he and his magic intimidate you. He has all kinds of connections in the black market, including the infamous mobster Diamond.

**Gryg:** Pecham's right hand man, a dragonborn foreigner from the eastern lands. You were afraid of the hulking man at first, but you soon learned his fierceness was just a mask. He really just wants to relax and have a good time, and is intensely loyal to his friends.

**Collwyn:** Your turncoat older brother, who left you behind. He sold out to the upper crust nobility, something you will never do. Sometimes late at night, though, you remember how he took care of you when you were kids and you ache to see him again.

**Rhoswen:** A stuck-up elf priestess of Avandra, sergeant in the city guard. She represents the worst of the upper city. You've seen her around, and know that she treats the people of the lower city like dirt.

**Tyfid:** An eldarin (high elf) wizard of the School of Circles, fulfilling his rite of service to the city guard. You don't know much about the wizards. You just know that they are creepy.

## Play Notes

**Roleplaying:** You used to be proud and stubborn. Since you turned down your brother's offer of a soft life in the upper city, you've done things you are not proud of in order to survive. The Red Street gang is your chance to make up for some of that. Their aim is to protect the locals and take advantage of the rich in the upper city. You hope they become the family that you lost.

**Fighting Style:** Your style is underhanded fighting, doing whatever you can to get Combat Advantage against your opponents so you can use your *Sneak Attack*. You can use Stealth to hide before you attack or you can flank an opponent in melee with one of your allies. Your attacks work equally well with both your shurikens and your short sword, though flanking is easier with your short sword. You are not good against large groups of weaker opponents (Minions). You want to maneuver around so you can sneak attack the more important enemies.

## **Nia, Human Rogue**

**Level 1**

**Str** 14 (+2), **Con** 12 (+1), **Dex** 18 (+4), **Int** 9 (-1), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 14 (+2)

*Hit Points:* 24

*Bloodied:* 12      *Healing Surges* (+6 HP): ○○○○○○ ○○      *Initiative:* +4

*Defense:* **AC** 16\*, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 13      *Speed:* 6

*Skills:* Athletics +7, Bluff +7, Perception +5, Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9

*Equipment:* Shurikens (10), Short Sword, Leather Armor, Thieves Tools

### **Racial Features, Class Features and Feats**

- *First Strike:* You have a combat advantage against opponents that have not acted in combat.
- \* *Artful Dodger:* Gain +2 AC vs opportunity attacks.
- *Rogue Weapon Talent:* Increase damage die for shurikens by 1 size (bonus included).
- *Sneak Attack:* Once per round, gain +2d8 damage if you have a combat advantage.
- *Backstabber:* Sneak Attack does uses d8s instead of d6s (bonus included).
- *Far Throw:* Increase range with thrown weapons by 2 squares (bonus included).
- *Hide (Stealth):* +9 vs Perception. Roll as part of another action. Your opponents must be diverted or you must be behind cover. If you move more than 2 squares, -5 to the check. You are revealed if you attack. You gain a combat advantage against targets that can't see you.

**Attacks:** Your special attacks (exploits) work with either of your weapons, except as noted.

- Shuriken: +7 vs AC, 1d6+4 damage, range 8/14.
- Short Sword: +5 vs AC, 1d6+2 damage.
- *Deft Strike:* +7 vs AC, 1d6+4 damage. Move 2 squares before your attack.
- *Piercing Strike:* +7 vs Reflex, 1d6+4 damage. May only be used with your sword.
- *Sly Flourish:* +7 vs AC, 1d6+6 damage.
- *Feint (Bluff):* +7 vs Insight. Gain a combat advantage against your target until the end of your next turn.
- *Diversion (Bluff):* +7 vs Insight. Fool opponents and make an immediate Stealth check to hide, even if you have no cover or concealment.
- *King's Castle:* +7 vs Reflex, 2d6+4 damage. You may switch places with a willing adjacent ally.
- *Easy Target:* +7 vs AC, 2d6+4 damage. If you hit, target is slowed (Speed 2) and gives you a combat advantage (lasts until a save ends). If you miss, do half damage and target gives you a combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

# Rhoswen

*An elf priestess of Avandra, sergeant in the city guard and leader of your squad.*

You were born to one of the elvish noble houses of Tanza. You could have lived a life of privilege and leisure, but chose instead to devote your life to your goddess and her city. After your apprenticeship in the temple, you joined the city guard as a sergeant, preferring to work your way up through the ranks rather than using your noble birth as a shortcut to power. You know this will make you a better leader when you earn a position in the city's vanguard.

Your devotion makes it hard for you to understand the criminals and low-lives of the lower city. Don't they know of the threat that faces the city? How can they put their greed before the well-being of the people? It makes you work even harder at your job, reigning in the scum of the lower city so that the army of Imber can do its work against the Shadowfell.

## Opinions

**Tyfid:** Your sergeant, an eldarin (high-elf) wizard. Unlike ignorant common-folk, you have no fear of magic, knowing that it is only another tool use against the enemies of light. Unfortunately, Tyfid has misinterpreted your acceptance as something more. He seems to have developed an inappropriate affection for you. So far, you've pretended not to notice.

**Collwyn:** A human guardsman under your command, born in the lower city. He is the exception that proves the rule. If all the citizens of the lower city were as loyal as Collwyn, you would be able to quit the guard and fight full-time against the Shadowfell.

**Pecham:** A half-elf and an up-and-coming criminal who founded the Red Street gang. He moved into your district soon after you cleaned up the last gang. He seems smarter than normal and has access to some kind of magic. He is much better than the murderers he has replaced, and seems to want to help the people in his neighborhood, but he is still a criminal.

**Gryg:** A dragonborn easterner grunt, Pecham's right-hand man.

**Nia:** Some new human girl in Pecham's gang. You don't need to know much about her. She's just another lost soul caught in the poverty of the lower city.

## Play Notes

**Roleplaying:** You are devoted to your city and your god. You are arrogant but honorable. Once you give your word, you never break it. You care for your men and try to lead them well, but you keep some distance between yourself and them to maintain discipline. By default, you assume citizens of the lower city are dishonorable thieves who care nothing for the city of Tanza, but are wise enough to change your opinion when their actions prove otherwise.

**Fighting Style:** As a leader, you fill in for whatever is needed in combat. You are good at long range with your bow, mid range with your *Sacred Flame* and in melee with your spear. You are not the best of warriors, though; leave the toughest opponents to the real fighters. You are not particular good against large groups of weak opponents (Minions) unless they are undead, in which case *Turn Undead* works very well. You are also a healer; use *Healing Word* to help companions that are close to falling. You want to stay close to your allies so that your healing can be effective when needed.

## Rhoswen, Elf Cleric of Avandra (Good)

Level 1

Str 14 (+2), Con 13 (+1), Dex 16 (+3), Int 10 (+0), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 12 (+1)

Hit Points: 25

Bloodied: 12      Healing Surges (+6 HP): ○○○○○ ○○○      Initiative: +3

Defense: AC 16, Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 15      Speed: 7

Skills: Diplomacy +6, Heal +8, Insight +8, Nature +5, Perception +5, Religion +5

Equipment: Spear, Long Bow, Hide Armor, Holy Symbol, Armor Penalty -1

### Racial Features, Class Features and Feats

- *Group Awareness*: Non-elf allies within 5 squares gain +1 to Perception.
- *Wild Step*: You ignore difficult terrain when you shift.
- *Elven Accuracy*: You may re-roll one attack roll. You use this roll, even if it is lower.
- *Divine Fortune (Channel Divinity)\**: Gain +1 to your next attack roll or save.
- *Astral Fire*: Gain +1 damage to fire and radiant attacks (bonus included).

### Attacks: Your special attacks (prayers) do not use a weapon except as noted.

- Long Bow: +5 vs AC, 1d10+3 damage, range 20/40.
- Spear: +4 vs AC, 1d8+2 damage, 1d8+3 damage if used two-handed.
- *Priest's Shield*: +4 vs AC, 1d8+3 damage. A spear attack. If you hit, you and an adjacent ally gain +1 AC until the end of your next turn.
- *Sacred Flame*: +3 vs Reflex, 1d6+4 radiant damage, range 5. If you hit, one ally you can see either gains 1 temporary hit point or may make an immediate save.
- *Divine Glow*: +3 vs Reflex, 1d8+4 radiant damage to enemies within 3 squares. Allies within 3 squares gain a +2 power bonus to their attacks until the end of your next turn.
- *Turn Undead (Channel Divinity)\**: +3 vs Will, 1d10+4 radiant damage to undead within 2 squares. Push targets 4 squares and immobilized them for 1 turn. Misses inflict half damage and do not push or immobilize.
- *Cascade of Light*: +3 vs Will, 3d8+4 radiant damage, range 10. If you hit, target gains vulnerability 5 to your attacks (save ends). Misses still inflict half damage (no vulnerability).

### Minor Actions

- *Healing Word*: You or an ally within 5 squares may use a healing surge. Your target gains an extra 1d6+3 hit points with the surge. May only be used once per round.

\* You may only use one Channel Divinity power per encounter.

# Pecham

*A half-elf warlock, founder of the Red Street gang in the lower city.*

In the lower city, a man has to make his own luck. With your natural talent for magic and connection to the Feywild, you were able to forge your own path. You got tired of working for other people, so you put together the Red Street gang. You wanted this gang to protect the locals while preying on the rich.

Your gang is still pretty new and you have a lot of trouble with other local gangs. Your biggest rival is the well-known mobster Diamond. He seems to know everyone in the underworld. Rumor has it he knows a secret way into the upper city, and is behind the recent rash of burglaries there.

The only thing you hate worse than the snobs of the upper city are the undead of Shadowfell. You still remember the night a pack of ghouls snuck into your home and slaughtered your family. You'd strike against them if you could, but what can one man do against the army of undead?

## Opinions

**Gryg:** A dragonborn warrior who used to work for Diamond but came with you when you started your gang. Gryg acts tough, but you know it's just a front. All he wants is to relax and have fun, with the occasional brawl to keep life interesting.

**Nia:** A young human rogue who just joined your gang. It makes you sick that girls like her have to take up this life, but you aren't going to turn away someone with the ambition to make a better life for herself. You know that Gryg has a soft spot for her, but you keep a tough front so that she doesn't get the wrong ideas. She shows a lot of promise and you want her to learn how to stand up for herself.

**Rhoswen:** A hard-assed elf priestess of Avandra, sergeant of the city guard for the Red Street district. She is a big thorn in your side. At least she is honorable rather than corrupt. It means you can't buy her off, but you might be able to work out some "live and let live" compromise with her.

**Tyfid:** Rhoswen's corporal and an eldarin (high-elf) wizard. Those elitist wizards have no respect for self-trained warlocks like yourself. You'd love a chance to show Tyfid what street-magic can do.

**Collwyn:** Some young human guardsmen under Rhoswen's command, nobody special.

## Play Notes

**Roleplaying:** You are on the fence between being a protecting vigilante and a local thug. You'd like to be the protector, but the realities of the underworld pull you the other way. You have nothing but disgust for the upper city. Your hatred of the undead is so strong, though, you would fight beside anyone against them, even the city guards.

**Fighting Style:** In combat, you tend to pick a specific target, hit them with a *Warlock's Curse*, then hammer them with magic until they go down. You try to avoid melee, prefer to hang back and use your ranged spells. You move around a lot to keep the balance between "close enough to attack, but far enough to avoid melee". This also lets you gain your *Shadow Walk* concealment. If you get trapped in melee, you use *Thunderwave* to clear away your foes and escape.

## **Pecham, Half-Elf Warlock with a Fey-Pact**

**Level 1**

**Str** 12 (+1), **Con** 14 (+2), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Int** 16 (+3), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 16 (+3)

*Hit Points:* 26

*Bloodied:* 13      *Healing Surges* (+6 HP): ○○○○○ ○○○      *Initiative:* +0

*Defense\*:* **AC** 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14      *Speed:* 6

*Skills:* Arcana +8, Bluff +7, Insight +5, Streetwise +7

*Equipment:* Mace, Leather Armor

### **Racial Features, Class Features and Feats**

- *Group Diplomacy:* Allies within 10 squares gain +1 to Diplomacy.
- *Dilettante:* You start with a level 1 power from a different class (*Thunderwave*).
- *Prime Shot:* If no allies are closer to your target than you, you gain +1 to attack.
- \* *Shadow Walk:* If you move at least 3 squares on your turn, you gain concealment until the end of your next turn. This gives a -2 penalty to all targeted attacks against you.
- *Jack of all Trades:* You have a +2 bonus to all untrained skill checks.

### **Attacks:** Your special attacks (spells) do not use a weapon.

- Mace: +3 vs AC, 1d8+1 damage, 1d8+2 damage if used two-handed.
- Eldritch Blast: +3 vs Reflex, 1d10+3 damage, range 10. Counts as a basic ranged attack.
- *Eyebite:* +3 vs Will, 1d6+3 physic damage, range 10. If you hit, you are invisible to that target until the start of your next turn.
- *Witchfire:* +3 vs Reflex, 2d6+3 fire damage, range 10. If you hit, your target suffers a -5 penalty to all attack until the end of your next turn.
- *Thunderwave:* +3 vs Fortitude, 1d6+3 thunder damage to everyone in an adjacent 3x3 square. Each target you hit is pushed back 1 square.
- *Curse of the Dark Dream:* +3 vs Will, 3d8+3 psychic damage, range 10. If you hit, you may immediately slide the target 3 squares. Whether you hit or miss, you may slide the target 1 square per turn as a minor action (save ends).

### **Minor Actions**

- *Warlock's Curse:* You may curse the closest enemy you can see. Once per round, you may gain +1d6 damage to that enemy. The curse lasts until that enemy drops to 0 hp. You may curse multiple opponents in the same battle.

### **Triggered Actions**

- *Misty Step:* When a cursed enemies drops to 0 hp, you may teleport 3 squares.

# Tyfid

*An eldarin (high-elf) wizard of the School of Circles, corporal in the city guard*

You were deeply honored when you were chosen for the School of Circles, the citadel of wizardly learning in the upper city. As with all school-trained wizards, you must go through a rite of service after your apprenticeship. You choose to serve in the city guard. You thought it would be valuable experience for when you leave to the city to quest against the Shadowfell.

Most people are ignorant of magic and afraid of it. You were surprised that your sergeant was a noble and educated woman with no such misconceptions. She was the first person you met outside of school that you could be comfortable with. Over time your feelings for her have only deepened. You know that your growing love is inappropriate, but you can't help it.

## Opinions

**Rhoswen:** A priestess of Avandra, your leader and your love. You would do anything for her, but are afraid to tell her the truth of your feelings. She is of a noble house and you don't see any way she could feel the same way about you. Fortunately, she doesn't know of your affections.

**Collwyn:** A young guard, low-born but loyal. Like many commoners, he is leery of magic, but he can work with you. You know Rhoswen can be cold to the rank-and-file, so you've help him along. You have slipped up enough times with Collwyn that you are pretty sure he knows about your feelings towards Rhoswen, but to his credit he has said nothing.

**Pecham:** Leader of the Red Street gang and worse yet, a warlock. Self-taught spellcasters are little better than necromancers. It is only a matter of time before he turns to dark magic.

**Gryg:** Pecham's leg-breaker, an easterner. You would love a chance to grill him on the secrets of the eastern lands, but from what you hear, Gryg is likely to just smash your face in.

**Nia:** Some young girl that just joined the Red Street gang. You caught a glimpse of her once, and noticed she bore a strange resemblance to Collwyn.

## Play Notes

**Roleplaying:** Like many wizards, you are curious about the world, constantly seeking knowledge. You are loyal to your nation, and your second greatest dream is that you will be the one who learns how to overcome the Shadowfell. Your greatest dream is that you can win Rhoswen's heart, but you fear to pursue it. The best you can manage are clumsy gestures of affection.

**Fighting Style:** You prefer to use your spells at a distance, targeting opponents where you can do the most damage. You are pretty well protected, however, and do not fear to get into melee to help out an ally (for flanking, for example). If you need to escape melee, you can always Shift or *Fey Step* away. You use *Scorching Burst* against groups of minions and *Magic Missile* against individual opponents. Against more powerful opponents, you use *Chill Strike* and *Flaming Sphere* to harry them.

## Tyfid, Eldarin Wizard

Level 1

Str 12 (+1), Con 14 (+2), Dex 12 (+1), Int 18 (+4), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 9 (-1)

Hit Points: 24

Bloodied: 12      Healing Surges (+6 HP): ○○○○ ○○○      Initiative: +1

Defense\*: AC 17, Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 15\*\*      Speed: 6

Skills: Arcana +11, Dungeoneering +9, History +11, Insight +7, Religion +9

Equipment: Staff, Leather Armor

### Racial Features, Class Features and Feats

- \*\* *Eladrin Will*: +5 defense bonus against charms.
- *Fey Step*: Teleport 5 squares as a move.
- \* *Staff of Defense*: Your staff gives you +1 to AC (bonus included).
- Once per encounter, you can get an extra +2 to any defense against a single attack.
- *Spell Book*: A book of spells, allowing you re-memorize different daily spells after a 6 hour rest. Your book contains *Flaming Sphere* and *Sleep*.
- *Cantrips*: Minor at-will spells: Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation.
- *Armor Proficiency (Leather)*: You are trained to wear leather armor.

### Attacks: Your special attacks (spells) do not use a weapon.

- Staff: +4 vs AC, 1d8+1 damage.
- Magic Missile: +4 vs Reflex, 2d4+4 force damage, range 20. Counts as a basic ranged attack.
- *Scorching Burst*: +4 vs Reflex, 1d6+4 fire damage to all in a 3x3 square, centered at range 10.
- *Chill Strike*: +4 vs Fortitude, 2d8+4 cold damage, range 10. If you hit, the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.
- *Flaming Sphere*: +4 vs Reflex, 2d6+4 fire damage at range 10. You can sustain this sphere with a minor action. A creature that starts its turn next to the sphere suffers 1d4+4 fire damage. You may move the sphere 6 squares as a move action and attack with it as standard attack action.

# Gryg

*A big eastern dragonborn warlord, a “brute” with a happy spirit*

As a hulking, lizard-like foreigner from the east, people always assume you are some kind of mindless brute. You think that’s pretty funny. You like to play the part, glaring and growling at people, but sometimes its hard not to laugh at them as well. In reality, your wants are simple: wine, women and song with the occasional brawl to keep life interesting.

You could have joined the army, but don’t take well to discipline. You drifted into Tanza with one of the smugglers. You worked for the mobster Diamond for a time, but he is a serious criminal and you worried you might eventually be forced to do something unpleasant. When your friend Pecham decided to start his own gang, you joined him. Pecham understands you. So long as you look fierce and keep people from messing with the gang, Pecham let’s you live how you like.

## Opinions

**Pecham:** A half-elf warlock, your boss and gang leader. You’ve been friends for several years. You admire that Pecham tries to protect rather than steal from the locals; it makes your life easier. As an easterner, it doesn’t bother you as much that he is a warlock. Magic is too useful to turn away.

**Nia:** A young human girl who just joined the gang. She somehow reminds you of home and you’ve taken to calling her “little niece”. Pecham also likes her, but won’t show it so that she will toughen up. You think that’s a dumb way to do things, so you treat her like a friend. You love to see her laugh.

**Rhoswen:** The local sergeant of the guards. She’s noble or something. You don’t really understand local politics. She pisses off Pecham, though.

**Tyfid:** Another guard, this one is a wizard. You don’t understand the difference between wizard and warlock. They both use magic, right? Saying that to a wizard and watching him sputter is a lot of fun.

**Collwyn:** Some new kid in the local guard.

## Play Notes

**Roleplaying:** You loom and glower a lot, since your main job is gang intimidator. It’s just a act, though, and you can’t keep it up for long. Sometimes you just can’t help but laugh and make fun. You’d much rather relax with your friends. Since you are from the east, you don’t understand all the political divisions in the city. Why people bicker so much when they have undead knocking at their door is a mystery to you.

**Fighting Style:** You wade into combat against your enemies and cut them down with your great axe. You use your Dragon Breath to sweep aside weaker opponents (Minions). You are not especially concerned about getting hurt, since your *Dragonborn Frenzy* will kick in when you are bloodied. You loudly cheer on your allies in combat, inspiring them to fight better. When one of your allies is about to fall, your *Inspiring Word* can encourage them to battle on (effectively healing them).

## Gryg, Dragonborn Warlord

Level 1

Str 18 (+4), Con 14 (+2), Dex 9 (-1), Int 14 (+2), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 14 (+2)

Hit Points: 26

Bloodied: 13\*      Healing Surges (+8 HP): ○○○○ ○○○      Initiative: +1\*\*

Defense: AC 16, Fortitude 15, Reflex 12, Will 13      Speed: 5

Skills: Athletics +8, Diplomacy +7, Heal +5, Intimidate +8

Equipment: Great axe, Hand axes (3), Chain Mail, Armor Penalty -1

### Racial Features, Class Features and Feats

- \* *Dragonborn Fury*: +1 to attacks when Bloodied.
- *Draconic Heritage*: Add your Constitution bonus to your healing surges (bonus included).
- \*\* *Combat Leader*: You and allies within 10 squares gain +2 to initiative (included in your bonus).
- *Inspiring Presence* and *Inspired Recovery*: When an ally you can see spends an action point, she also regains 2 hp and may make an immediate save against one ongoing effect.

Attacks: Your special attacks (exploits) use your great axe, except for *Dragon's Breath*.

- Hand axe: +6 vs AC, 1d6+4 damage, range 5/10.
- Great axe: +6 vs AC, 1d12+4 damage. Two handed.
- *Viper's Strike*: +6 vs AC, 1d12+4 damage. Whether you hit or miss, if the target shifts before the start of your next turn, it provokes an opportunity attack from one ally of your choice.
- *Wolf Pack Tactics*: +6 vs AC, 1d12+4 damage. Before you attack, one ally adjacent to you or the target may shift 1 square as a free action.
- *Guarding Attack*: +6 vs AC, 2d12+4 damage. If you hit, one ally adjacent to you or the target gains +3 AC against this target until the end of your next turn.
- *Bastion of Defense*: +6 vs AC, 3d12+4. Whether you hit or miss, allies within 5 squares gain 7 temporary hit points.

### Minor Actions

- *Dragon Breath*: +6 vs Reflex, 1d6+2 fire damage to all in an adjacent 3x3 square. This is still an attack, but you can use it for a minor action.
- *Inspiring Word*: You or an ally within 5 squares may use a healing surge. Your target gains an extra 1d6 hit points with the surge. May only be used once per round.

## Adventure Outline

The cult of the Shadowfell has found a curse that will break the blessing of Avandra. They plan to assault the city when Avandra's power is weakest: the night of a new moon. This will let them into the lower city so they can bring their main force to bear on the inner gates to the upper city. Their undead giants can't go farther than that, but the city's protectors won't know that. Attacking the inner gates will draw out the army and priests of Tanza, leaving Avandra's temple undefended.

The whole assault is a feint to let smaller units sneak into the upper city and desecrate Avandra's temple. These lesser servants of evil will be able to slip past the weakened barriers. Alone, they would still be blocked by wards on Avandra's temple, but they are bringing groups of captive children with them. Each dark priest will carry a child with him as he enters the temple, correctly reasoning that Avandra will not smite the servants of Shadowfell for fear of hurting these innocents.

These bands of dark priests sneak through the lower city as the main force begins its attack. At this hour, they expect the streets to be abandoned. Fortunately for the forces of good, one of the bands runs into a group of zealous guards and wily rogues bickering in the market. These heroes learn of the threat to the city, making them the only ones who can save Tanza.

**Adventure Start:** The zealous city guards (Rhoswen, Tyfid and Collwyn) have been hunting for information about the upper-city burglaries. They run into the leaders of the Red Street gang (Pecham, Gryg and Nia) on their way home from a night on the town. The guards interrogate the rogues in the closed marketplace. The confrontation should become heated. This serves to introduce the characters and give them a chance to do a bit of roleplaying, but they are not supposed to actually fight.

If they seem to be about to come to blows or if the scene is winding down, the heroes hear a massive explosion from the outer gates to the lower city. The shockwaves knock them to the ground. As they pick themselves up, they spot dark priests moving through the streets nearby (Encounter 1).

**Encounter 1:** The heroes must break off their arguments to fight together against the dark priests of the Shadowfell. When they win, they rescue some children that reveal the plans of the Shadowfell.

**Interlude 2:** If the heroes head to the main road to see what is happening, they find the way blocked by the armies of the Shadowfell, clearly too powerful to fight.

**Interlude 3:** The heroes meet with the mobster Diamond who knows the secret paths into the upper city. They must convince him to reveal what he knows for the greater good.

**Encounter 4a:** If the heroes cannot learn the secret path through the catacombs, they must climb the poorly guard walls of the upper city. Bloodthirsty stirges won't make this easy.

**Encounter 4b:** If the heroes learn the path through the catacombs, they can follow it to avoid the armies, but an ambush of magic-enraged rats waits for them in the darkness.

**Interlude 5:** If the heroes reach the upper city, they may warn the army of Tanza. The assault on the wall is too heavy, though, and no one can be spared. The heroes must protect the temple themselves.

**Encounter 6:** The heroes charge into the temple to prevent its desecration. The dark priests of the Shadowfell have killed and turned the temple servants, however, so the heroes must wade through a pack of zombies to stop the ritual.

There is time between encounters for a short rest, but taking an extended rest will let the villains win.

## Encounter 1

## Level 1 (100 XP per player)

**Setting:** Midnight in the lower city market, on the night of the new moon. The heroes see a band of dark priests drawing a group of chained children behind them.

**Starting Positions:** The servants of the Shadowfell move out from a street parallel to where the heroes stand (10 to 15 squares away). The skeletons are in front and on both sides, surrounding the cleric. The children following, and the acolytes take up the rear. No one is surprised.

### 10 decrepit skeletons; Level 1 Minion, XP 25

**Str** 15 (+2), **Con** 13 (+1), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Int** 3 (-4), **Wis** 14 (+2), **Cha** 3 (-4)

*Hit Points:* 1 (a missed attack never damages a minion) ○○○○ ○○○○

*Initiative:* +3      *Speed:* 6      Perception 12; darkvision

*Defense:* AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13

- Shortbow: +6 vs AC, 3 damage, range 15/30
- Longsword: +6 vs AC, 4 damage
- *Special:* Immunity to poison and disease

### 2 Human Dark Acolytes; Level 1 Skirmisher, XP 100

**Str** 12 (+1), **Con** 13 (+1), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Int** 10 (+0), **Wis** 11 (+1), **Cha** 12 (+1)

*Hit Points:* 29

*Hit Points:* 29

*Bloodied:* 14      *Initiative:* +6      *Speed:* 6      Perception 11

*Defense:* AC 15, **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11

- Crossbow: +5 vs AC, 1d8+3 damage, range 15/30. Reload requires minor action.
- Mace: +3 vs AC, 1d8+1 damage. The acolyte shifts 1 square on a hit.
- *Dazing Strike* (mace): As above, plus if target is hit, he or she dazed for 1 turn.
- *Special:* The acolyte deals an extra 1d6 damage if he has a combat advantage against his target.

### 1 Human Dark Cleric; Level 3 Controller/Leader, XP 150

**Str** 14 (+2), **Con** 13 (+1), **Dex** 11 (+0), **Int** 10 (+0), **Wis** 18 (+4), **Cha** 12 (+1)

*Hit Points:* 53

*Bloodied:* 26      *Initiative:* +2      *Speed:* 5      Perception 14

*Defense:* AC 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 17

- Mace: +8 vs AC, 1d8+2 damage.
- *Lance of Darkness:* +6 vs Reflex, 1d8+4 necrotic damage, range 5. If attack hits, one ally gets +2 bonus to his next attack on that target.
- *Swirling Bones:* +6 vs Reflex, 2d10+4 necrotic damage, range 10. If attack hits, one ally gets a combat advantage against that target for 1 turn.
- *Healing Words:* As a minor action, the cleric or an ally with 5 squares regains 10 hit points.
- *Bolster Undead:* For the rest of the encounter, all undead with 5 squares gain +2 defenses.

### **3 Children**

The children are so cowed that they take no action other than moving. Once per round as a minor action, any of the dark acolytes or priests can direct them to move 6 squares (speed 3). It doesn't occur to the priests to threaten the children's lives to get the heroes to back off, because they need them for their ritual. If the heroes can place themselves between the children and the dark acolytes, the children will obey their orders instead of the villains'.

### **Encounter Scaling:**

*5 Players:* 6 skeletons, 2 acolytes, 1 priest

*4 Players:* 6 skeletons, 1 acolyte, 1 priest

*3 Players:* 2 skeletons, 1 acolyte, 1 priest

**Tactics:** The priest orders the skeletons to screen the dark cultists and concentrate their fire on a few targets (3-4 skeletons per target). The acolytes try use the skeletons for flanking to get their damage bonus. Initially the cultists advance, hoping to finish off the heroes before they raise the alarm. Once half of the cultists have fallen, they start to retreat, but are hampered by the fact that they can't leave the children behind. If the heroes capture the children and the cultists are losing, they will flee.

**Aftermath:** If the heroes win, they should be able to save at least one child, Darren. Darren explains that the dark priests believed the children were the key to destroying the barriers of the goddess Avandra. His group wasn't the only sneaking into the city. There is at least one other group containing is older sister Darla, whom he begs the heroes to save.

If the heroes are unlucky and lose, the cultists will move on once most of the heroes are down. The villains are on a time table, so they don't finish off the fallen heroes. This should give the heroes a chance to regroup and recover. The heroes can't catch up to the cultists, but one of the children (Darren) will have used the confusion to escape. The heroes find him, so he can tell his story.

The heroes should realize that the cultists are headed to the temple of Avandra in the upper city, and the heroes may be the only ones who know of this threat. Both the guards and the Red Street gang are cut off from their allies. The rest of the guards are in the upper city and the rest of the gang is on the other side of the lower city, with an undead army in the way. The heroes should realize their best hope for saving the city is to cooperate.

The heroes should easily be able to find someplace safe to stash Darren and the other children before they move on.

## Interlude 2: Army of the Dead

**Setting:** The main road of the lower city leading from the outer to the inner gates.

If the heroes want to investigate the explosion or see the invading army, the only logical place to go is the main road of the lower city. This road links the outer gate of the lower city to the inner gate of the upper city. The heroes can approach the road stealthily if they want, but the army of the undead isn't concerned with the inhabitants of the lower city just yet. Unless the heroes attack the undead horde, the forces of Shadowfell leave them alone.

When the heroes get within sight of the road, they can see that the outer gate has been destroyed by some massive explosion. A swarm of undead has poured into the lower city and has already advanced most of the way down the main road. The main force is clearly a major threat. Leading the undead army are dark priests and wizards, with a dozen undead giants ready to assault the gates to the upper city. The heroes have no hope of beating the army to the upper city.

If the heroes persist on trying, set up a battle map and have them fight groups of skeletons and zombies minions (from Encounters 1 and 6). These minor undead are screening the main forces of the Shadowfell army. A new group of undead equal in size to the players enters the board every turn and there is no end to them. If the heroes retreat, the undead won't pursue. The heroes earn no XP for this pointless battle.

**Getting to the Upper City:** It should be clear the heroes need to find another way to the upper city. Talking to the local criminals about the secret way into the upper city is one option (Interlude 3). Finding a spot where there is less fighting and climbing the city wall is another (Encounter 4b).

If the heroes head for the wall, they must still evade or fight off the outliers of the undead army. Each hero must make two skill checks to avoid damage. The heroes can use either Stealth (to sneak) or Athletics (to scramble up paths that the undead can't follow), both DC 15. Each failure costs the hero a healing surge, as he or she takes damage from a few attacks before eventually escaping.

If the heroes come up with other clever ideas, let them use secondary skills for the checks instead of Stealth or Athletics, as described under "Reward Clever Ideas" on p. 75 of the DMG. The difficulty for secondary skills is DC 20, however, and each trick only works once.

If the players come up with an alternate plan for getting into the upper city, let them try it out. You can use the stirges from Encounter 4b to cause problems as they implement their plan.

## Interlude 3: Diamond's Lair

**Setting:** The lair of the notorious lower-city mobster Diamond.

Several of the characters have background information indicating that the human mobster Diamond is likely to know a secret way into the upper city. If the players don't think of this option themselves, a successful Streetwise roll (DC 10) lets them figure it out. Diamond's lair is well away from the fighting by the main road, so the heroes can reach it safely. Since Diamond is a rival, the Red Street gang has no particular reason to protect him.

When they arrive, they find Diamond and his guards packing up to leave the city. The heroes are outnumbered three to one, so they will certainly lose a fight. They may be able to negotiate with the

criminal to get him to tell them what they need to know. Diamond is reluctant to reveal his secrets. If Tanza falls, it won't matter, but if the city survives, he plans to come back and he is giving up a valuable information. Diamond is a pragmatist and doesn't want to give away anything for free. His time is limited as well: he wants to get away before the undead reach this part of the city.

This is a Skill Challenge. The heroes must roll 7 successful skill checks against DC 15 before they roll 5 failures. The heroes roll initiative, as usual. On their turns, each hero picks a skill, describes what he or she is doing and rolls. The DM should roleplay Diamond's response, based on the hero's roll. The primary skills for the challenge are Insight, Diplomacy and Intimidate (DC 15). Other skills are secondary: the player must justify why they are using the skill, and the difficulty increases to DC 20.

*Diplomacy (DC 15):* Heroes can use this skill to persuade Diamond, calling on his patriotism and offer him rewards. Diamond doesn't trust the promises of the guards and they suffer a -2 penalty, but his fellow rogues get a +2 bonus to this check.

*Intimidate (DC 15):* Heroes can use this skill to threaten Diamond with punishment. Diamond reacts poorly to threats from his fellow rogues, see it as a threat to his territory. They suffer a -2 penalty to these checks. The city guards, though, are backed by the Tanza military and get a +2 bonus.

*Bluff (DC 20):* Heroes can use this skill to deceive Diamond, but he is shrewd and see through most lies easily. As a result, this skill has a greater difficulty.

*Insight (DC 15):* The hero tries to empathize with the criminal and figure out what motivates him. The first success reveals the bonuses and penalties to the Diplomacy and Intimidate checks. A second success reveals his shrewdness and the greater difficulty to Bluff checks. A third success reveals lingering religious sentiments and unlocks the use of Religion. The hero who succeeds on these checks can share the information with the other players. Successful (and failed) Insight checks still count toward the completion of the challenge. After three successful checks, Insight can no longer be used.

*Religion (DC 10):* A third successful Insight check reveals that Diamond has a lingering fondness for the goddess Avandra from when he was a child. This allows a single Religion check to appeal to those sentiments. Religion checks that don't specifically mention Avandra are DC 20.

**Roleplaying the Challenge:** The players should speak on behalf of their character before they roll, making their arguments. Give the player a +2 bonus if they play their role. Diamond doesn't roll, but he does respond appropriately to the players' arguments, conceding points if they succeed and dismissing arguments if they fail. Diamond is gruff, caustic and cynical, but has enough concern for the city to hear the heroes out. If they win the challenge (earn 7 successes) he agrees to help them. If they lose (get 5 failures) he says he doesn't have time for this, and leaves.

**If they fight:** If the heroes fight, either before the challenge or after losing, make 3 attack checks for each character against a DC 20. The heroes lose a healing surge for each failed attack from damage by Diamond's guards. If the heroes succeed on more than half their checks, Diamond decides discretion is the better part of valor and agrees to help. Otherwise, he and his guards leave the beaten heroes behind.

**If they win:** Diamond will pick one of his cronies, a skulking minion named Gramm, to guide them through the catacombs. Gramm is a whiner and a coward, but knows the way to the upper city and is otherwise expendable. Diamond sends Gramm with the heroes, then leaves the city with his guards. The heroes can proceed to Encounter 4a.

**If they lose:** The heroes are forced to find another way into the upper city. They will need to make their way to the inner walls and climb them, as described previously in Interlude 2 and Encounter 4b.

## Encounter 4a

## Level 1 (100 XP each)

**Setting:** In the catacombs beneath the upper city.

Our heroes wend their way through the catacombs, led by Gramm, the guide provided by Diamond. Unknown to the heroes, they follow the path taken by another group of dark priests. A Perception check (DC 20) may notice signs of their passage. The priests have cursed the rats of the catacombs to lay a trap for those who follow.

Spend some describing the fetid and dank catacombs and its winding passages, but don't bother to map it out. The tunnels are too lengthy to map out, and Gramm knows the way. You only need to bring out a map when the heroes run into the ambush.

Establish how the heroes are moving through the catacombs, since their marching order will determine how they are arranged when they are ambushed. Gramm insists on being in the middle of the group.

**Starting Positions:** Set up a catacomb or sewer map. Each hero must make a DC 15 Perception check to avoid surprise. If any hero rolls a total of 25 or better, the heroes are attacked by the rats before they are surrounded: place the rats in the center of the board and the heroes in front of them (5 squares in front). If none of the heroes rolls this well, the rats attack the heroes as they pass: place the heroes in the center of the board and the rats to the left and right of them (5 squares away on either side).

### 6 Giant Rats; Level 1 Minion, XP 25

*Hit Points:* 1 (a missed attack never damages a minion) ○○○○○○

*Initiative:* +3      *Speed:* 6 (climb 3)      Perception 15; low-light vision

*Defense:* AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12

- Bite: +6 vs AC, 3 damage

### 2 Rat Swarms; Level 2 Skirmisher, XP 125

*Hit Points:* 36

*Hit Points:* 36

*Bloodied:* 18      *Initiative:* +3      *Speed:* 4 (climb 2)      Perception 16; low-light

*Defense:* AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11

- Bite: +6 vs AC, 1d6+3 damage. Ongoing 3 damage (save ends).
- *Swarm Attack* (Aura 1): The swarm makes a free basic attack against any enemy that starts its turn in a square adjacent to the swarm.
- *Special:* Half damage from melee and ranged attacks. +5 damage from close and area attacks.

### 2 Dire Rats; Level 1 Brute, XP 100

*Hit Points:* 38

*Hit Points:* 38

*Bloodied:* 19      *Initiative:* +3      *Speed:* 6 (climb 3)      Perception 15; low-light vision

*Defense:* AC 15, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11

- Bite: +4 vs AC, 1d6+2 damage. After fight, save (10+) or contract Filth Fever (see MM p. 219).

## **Gramm**

Gramm will cower in fear during the fight. Once per round as a minor action, a hero can direct Gramm to move 6 squares, but he will refuse if that puts him into danger. Gramm has AC 13 and any hit by a rat will put him down (he is effectively a Minion). At the end of each turn, Gramm must roll a Save (10+) or die. Any healing magic will revive him. The heroes should do their best to keep Gramm alive, and the rats won't target him unless he happens to be closer than any of the heroes.

## **Encounter Scaling:**

*5 Players:* 2 giant rats, 2 rat swarms, 2 dire rats

*4 Players:* 3 giant rats, 1 rat swarm, 2 dire rats

*3 Players:* 3 giant rats, 1 rat swarm, 1 dire rat

**Tactics:** The rats are in a magic-induced frenzy. They do their best to surround the heroes so they can't escape. Other than that, they attack the nearest opponent, charging into melee range. They fight to the death. A DC 15 Nature check indicates the rats are acting unnaturally and may be magically influenced.

In opposite corners of the area, cursed runes activate when the battle starts. If a character passes near these runes, he or she may spot the rune. If a character moves within a number of squares equal to his or her Perception bonus, the runes are barely visible as a flickering of magic energy. Effectively, the hero is making a passive Perception check against DC 10 to spot the rune, with a -1 penalty per square of distance. Place the runes so there is a good chance the heroes will pass near them.

If a character stands on the square of the rune and spends a minor action examining it, it is clear the rune is magical in nature. Once revealed, any adjacent character may make Religion or Arcane checks (DC 15) as a standard action to safely disable the runes. These checks can be made at either location. Two successes will disable the runes and the rats will immediately flee. Two failures will release the magic into the rats, so that nothing will stop their frenzy short of death.

After the battle, a cursory examination of the battle field uncovers the runes and a successful Arcane or Religion check reveals their (now defunct) purpose.

**Aftermath:** Assuming Gramm lives, he can guide the heroes the rest of the way through the catacombs, muttering that his reward better be big after all this. Go on to Interlude 5.

Any hero that was bitten by a Dire Rat must make a Save (10+) or contract Filth Fever. The only immediate effect is that the hero will lose a healing surge. The adventure won't last long enough for the more advanced effects of the fever. The DM can add a bit of dramatic tension by describing how the ailing hero is red, sweating and short of breath, with occasional spots in their eyes and dizziness. None of this actually penalizes the hero, though, and the priests of Avarda will cure them after the adventure.

If Gramm dies, the heroes are in major trouble. They must make their own way through the catacombs. This is skill challenge requiring 6 successes on Athletics, Dungeoneering or Nature checks, DC 15. Dungeoneering is used to maneuver through the catacombs. Nature is used to follow the trail of the priest that the heroes know passed this way. Athletics is used to clamber over obstacles.

Characters must take turns rolling. Failing does not end the challenge, but costs the character a healing surge due to exhaustion or some minor injury. If a hero runs out of healing surges, he loses 1/4 his total hit points for each failure. This continues until the group accumulates 6 successes. As the heroes roll, the DM should describe their desperate scrambling in the dark, trying to guess the best way out of the catacombs.

## Encounter 4b

## Level 1 (100 XP per player)

**Setting:** The heroes must climb the bluff and walls into the upper city. The best spot is the base of a tower near the mountains, far from the fighting.

The bluff to the base of the tower is 6 squares high (30 feet), two DC 15 Athletics checks. The wall is another 6 squares high, two DC 20 Athletics checks. There is a lip 5 feet wide around the tower. One or two heroes should free-climb the wall and lower ropes for the rest to climb (DC 10).

The tower itself extends 6 squares out from the wall in a semi-circle. The wall is level with the tower and 3 squares wide. There are a 1 square-wide crenellations facing outward at the top of the wall.

Their climb is interrupted by a swarm of stirges looking for easy prey. The stirges followed the undead army to feed on the fallen, but there is not yet enough meat in the main battle. Instead, they find the heroes when they stuck halfway up a wall.

**Starting Position:** The stirges will attack when the first group of heroes climbs the ropes, halfway up (at the lip). The stirges fly stealthily in the moonless night, starting only 10 squares away. Each hero must make a DC 18 Perception check to avoid surprise.

### 6 Stirges; Level 1 Lurkers, XP 100

*Hit Points: 22*

*Bloodied: 11      Initiative: +7      Speed: 6 (fly)      Perception 10; darkvision*

*Defense: \* AC 15/20, Fortitude 12, Reflex 13/18, Will 10*

\* Gain +5 AC and Reflex defense when it has grabbed a target.

- Bite: +6 vs AC, 1d4 damage and grab. It does 5 damage per turn automatically to the victim it has grabbed until the victim escapes.
- Skills: Stealth +8

### Encounter Scaling:

Stirges equal to the number of players.

**Tactics:** The stirges gang up on any weak-seeming targets, no more than 3 per target. They start with heroes trapped halfway up the wall. They switch targets when their victim collapses (drops to 0 hp). Any stirge that is Bloodied will flee.

Escaping from a stirges grip requires a successful Athletics vs. Fortitude check or Acrobatics vs Reflex, which the heroes can make as a move action. Each stirge requires a separate escape check. A successful escape also lets the character shift 1 square.

With ropes, it is a DC 10 Athletics check to climb (half movement). For most characters, it requires two successful climb actions to reach the lip, and another two to reach the top of the tower. A character may slide down a rope 6 squares as a single move action if he makes a DC 10 Athletics check.

**Aftermath:** If the heroes climb successfully and survive the stirges, they make it into the upper city.

## Interlude 5: The Upper City

**Setting 1:** Near the gates to the upper city, inside the walls.

When the heroes are in the upper city, they may choose to go to the military authorities rather than directly to the temple. The fighting near the walls is very fierce, and no one has time for a group of city guards with wild tales to tell, especially since they are followed by a gaggle of low-city rogues.

With a little work, the heroes are able to locate Captain Belin, the commanding officers of the guards. Unfortunately, the battle on the Captain's section of wall is as fierce as it is elsewhere. The Captain is inclined to believe the heroes, but he can't give them any support without disobeying his own orders and risking the undead overwhelming his section.

If the heroes want more aid, they can choose a spokesman to make a Diplomacy check (DC 10):

*Failure:* Their demands anger the Captain and he orders the guards on the walls. The heroes have to run if they want to go to the temple. The Captain won't stop them, but yell out that they are deserters.

*Success:* The Captain sympathizes, but can't do more. He won't order the heroes to stay, but he can't give them any help. He tells them that stopping the cultists is up to the heroes.

*Success by 10:* As above, plus the Captain gives the heroes some healing magic, letting them each regain 1 healing surge.

If the heroes insist on dithering behind the walls and working their way up the chain of command, the cultists will complete their ritual. The barriers fall, undead swarm into the upper city and Tanza falls. Each hero must make a Save (10+) to survive the battle and live on with their shame.

**Setting 2:** Outside the temple of Avandra.

Once the heroes reach the temple of Avandra, they may pause and investigate before entering. In the street outside the temple there is some splashes of blood and several strange scorch marks.

A Nature or Perception check (DC 15) reveals that the blood is likely from several slain humans, whose bodies were then dragged into the temple. An Arcana or Religion check (DC 15) reveals that the scorch marks were from a flare of power that was somehow redirected downward. It also reveals that the aura of protection around the temple has been suppressed. If the players remember Darren's story, they can figure out that the barrier's usual destructive force against servants of evil was redirected to the ground instead, probably to avoid hurting the children carried by the dark priests. The resulting power conflict has temporarily disabled the wards around the temple, making it vulnerable.

Examining the temple doors from a distance reveals some movement: there is something guarding the entrance. With some effort, one or more of the heroes might be able to enter through a window, but they have no hope of surprising the dark cultists if they enter as a large group. They can learn no more without entering the temple. They can either all enter through the front, or one group can burst through the front while another sneaks in through a window. Let the heroes decide how they enter into the temple before moving to the final encounter.

If the heroes followed Gramm out of the catacombs and went directly to the temple, the ritual of desecration is just beginning and the cultists are forced to rush to finish it. If they visited the wall or got lost in the catacombs, the ritual is nearly complete when they arrive.

## Encounter 6

## Level 3 (150 XP per player)

**Setting:** Temple of Avandra. The heroes burst through the doors, interrupting the ritual desecration.

**Starting Positions:** Zombies (slain temple servants and a couple fallen acolytes) guard the door, making it impossible to surprise the cultists. One priest is at the alter, performing the ritual. The children are trussed up next to him. The other dark cultists linger in the middle of the temple.

### 8 Zombie Rotters; Level 3 Minion, XP 38

**Str** 14 (+2), **Con** 10 (+0), **Dex** 6 (-2), **Int** 1 (-4), **Wis** 8 (+0), **Cha** 3 (-3)

*Hit Points:* 1 (a missed attack never damages a minion) ○○○○○ ○○○

*Initiative:* -2      *Speed:* 4      Perception 9; darkvision

*Defense:* **AC** 13, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 9, **Will** 10

- Slam: +6 vs AC, 5 damage
- *Special:* Immunity to poison and disease

### 3 Human Dark Acolytes; Level 1 Skirmisher, XP 100

**Str** 12 (+1), **Con** 13 (+1), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Int** 10 (+0), **Wis** 11 (+1), **Cha** 12 (+1)

*Hit Points:* 29

*Hit Points:* 29

*Hit Points:* 29

*Bloodied:* 14      *Initiative:* +6      *Speed:* 6      Perception 11

*Defense:* **AC** 15, **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11

- Crossbow: +5 vs AC, 1d8+3 damage, range 15/30. Reload requires minor action.
- Mace: +3 vs AC, 1d8+1 damage. The acolyte shifts 1 square on a hit.
- *Dazing Strike* (mace): As above, plus target is dazed 1 turn if hit.
- *Special:* The acolyte deals an extra 1d6 damage if he has a combat advantage against his target.

### 2 Human Dark Clerics; Level 3 Controller/Leader, XP 150

**Str** 14 (+2), **Con** 13 (+1), **Dex** 11 (+0), **Int** 10 (+0), **Wis** 18 (+4), **Cha** 12 (+1)

*Hit Points:* 53

*Hit Points:* 53

*Bloodied:* 26      *Initiative:* +2      *Speed:* 5      Perception 14

*Defense:* **AC** 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 17

- Mace: +8 vs AC, 1d8+2 damage.
- *Lance of Darkness:* +6 vs Reflex, 1d8+4 necrotic damage, range 5. If attack hits, one ally gets +2 bonus to his next attack on that target.
- *Swirling Bones:* +6 vs Reflex, 2d10+4 necrotic damage, range 10. If attack hits, one ally gets a combat advantage against that target for 1 turn.
- *Healing Words:* As a minor action, the cleric or an ally with 5 squares regains 10 hit points.
- *Bolster Undead:* For the rest of the encounter, all undead with 5 squares gain +2 defenses.

### **3 Children**

The children are trussed up and cannot move. The priest performing the ritual will lift one onto the alter on his initial turn. On his next turn, he will intone ritual words over the child. On his third turn, he will smash the child's head like a pumpkin. This means the priest kills a child every 3 rounds until someone engages him in melee. Darla, the sister of the child Darren from Encounter 1, is the last to die.

#### **Encounter Scaling:**

*5 Players:* 6 zombies, 2 acolytes, 2 priests

*4 Players:* 6 zombies, 2 acolytes, 1 priest

*3 Players:* 5 zombies, 1 acolyte, 1 priest

**Tactics:** One priest must continue the ritual, using the alter as cover. He only stops if he is engaged directly in melee. If there is a second priest, he moves up to bolster the zombies by the entrance. The acolytes use each other and the zombies to get flanking attacks. The zombies engage the nearest hero in melee, trying to keep them from moving. The main goal of the cultists is keeping the heroes away from the priest performing the ritual.

The heroes win if they defeat all the priests and acolytes. They lose if they are knocked unconscious or retreat or if the priest slays all the children (after 9 rounds).

**Aftermath:** If the priests and the acolytes fall, the power of Avandra surges back into the temple. Any surviving zombies are immediately destroyed. The heroes will hear roars of pain from the distant undead army, followed shortly by cheers from the army of Tanza. Avandra's renewed power has slain the undead giants, crippling the army of Shadowfell and forcing it to retreat.

If the heroes lost but went directly from the catacombs to the temple, there is a 50% chance the rushed ritual was botched and fails. If so, Avandra's power rushes in as above. If not, the ritual is successful. The ritual is automatically successful if the heroes were delayed and then lose the fight.

If the ritual is successful, Avandra's alter is desecrated, her power fails, the undead army swarms into the upper city and Tanza falls. Any hero still surviving at this point must make a Save to survive the fall of the city, but at least they know they tried their best. If you prefer, you can put together a followup adventure in which the heroes sneak and fight their way out of the fallen city.

Assuming the heroes win, the city council will ask them not to reveal what happened. The city came too close to falling and the council doesn't want to panic the public (or admit to its own mistakes). They reward the victorious heroes, though. Give the heroes Level 1 treasure parcels equal to the number of players (DMG p. 126).

# Glossary

## *Places*

**Imber:** The nation containing the city of Tanza.

**Shadowfell:** Otherworldly realm that empowers the undead. Gates to that realm lie to the south.

**Tanza:** A city in the south-east corner of Tanza, beset by undead.

**Lower City Market:** Where the guards and rogues first meet, closed because it is late at night.

**The Outer Gate:** Destroyed in the initial attack of the undead.

**The Inner Gate:** Where the bulk of the fighting is, too dangerous to approach.

**The Inner Wall:** What the heroes must reach and climb if they don't get information from Diamond.

**Diamond's Lair:** The home of the mobster Diamond and his gang.

**The Catacombs:** Secret way from the lower city to the upper city.

**Temple of Avandra:** Heart of the enchantment that protects the city. The goal of the Dark Cultists.

## *People*

**Rhoswen:** PC, an elf cleric of Avandra, sergeant of the city guard.

**Tyfid:** PC, an eldarin (high-elf) wizard, corporal of the city guard.

**Collwyn:** PC, a human warrior, member of the city guard.

**Pecham:** PC, a half-elf warlock, leader of the Red Street gang.

**Gryg:** PC, a dragonborn warlord, easterner and second in command in the Red Street gang.

**Nia:** PC, a human rogue, member of the Red Street gang.

**Dark Cultists:** Priests and acolytes of the Shadowfell working to destroy the city.

**Darren:** A child rescued from the Dark Cultists in the market. He reveals the plan to destroy Avandra's protection for the city.

**Diamond:** A local mobster with information on how to reach the upper city.

**Gramm:** A sniveling crony of Diamond, tasked to lead the heroes into the upper city.

**Captain Belin:** Commanding officer of the city guards, who unfortunately can't help because he is ordered to stay fighting at the wall.

**Darla:** Darren's sister, the final sacrifice the Dark Cultists will use to desecrate Avandra's temple.