

Combined Monsters Statistics Table

NAME	AC	HD	HP	AT	Dmg	MV	AL	THACO	BOOK	SA	SD
Aketheti*	-1	16** ¹⁰	90	1	3d6 + poison	180' (60')	C	7	New	Yes	Yes
Aranea	7	3**	15	1	1d6 + poison	60' (20')	C	17	X1/Mast.	Yes	No
Bat, giant	6	2	12	1	1d4	120' (40') 30' (10') 180' (60')	N	18	Basic	No	No
Bear, cave	5	7	35	3	1d4(x2)/2d6	120' (40')	N	13	Basic	Yes	No
Crocodile, large	3	6	34	1	2d8	90' (30') 90' (30')	N	14	Exp.	No	No
Crocodile, giant	1	15	82	1	3d8	90' (30') 90' (30')	N	8	Exp.	No	No
Dusker*	7	2**	14	1	2d4 + special	90' (30')	C	18	New	Yes	Yes
Dusker brute*	7	4**	28	1	d8 + 2 + special	90' (30')	C	16	New	Yes	Yes
Dusker, giant*	7	8**	56	1	2d8 + special	90' (30')	C	12	New	Yes	Yes
Dragon, small black	2	7**	41	3	1d4 + 1(x2)/2d10	90' (30') 240' (80')	C	13	Basic	Yes	No
Druj, hand*	-4	14** ⁴	60	1(4)	1d4 + special	90' (30')	C	8	Comp.	Yes	Yes
Elf, warrior	5	2*	14	1	1d8	120' (40')	N	19	Basic	Yes	No
Elf, leader	2	5*	33	1	1d8	120' (40')	N	17	Basic	Yes	No
Ghoul	6	2*	9	3	1d3(x3) + special	90' (30')	C	18	Basic	Yes	Yes
Giant, stone (huna-koi)	4	9	42	1	3d6	120' (40')	C	11	Exp.	Yes	No
Golem, bone*	2	6*	40	4	1d8 + poison	90' (30')	N	14	Exp.	No	Yes
Grab grass	9	Var.	8/HD	1	Special	90' (30')	N	NA	Comp.	No	No
Marine/Soldier (any)	5	1	5	1	1d8	90' (30')	N	19	NPC	No	No
Marine Sergeant	4	5	30	1	1d8	90' (30')	L	17	NPC	No	No
Marine Lieutenant	2	7	40	1	1d8	90' (30')	L	15	NPC	No	No
Mek	-4	16**	70	2	6d10(x2) + special	90' (30')	C	7	Mast.	Yes	Yes
Mujina	4	8*	52	2	1d8(x2) + special	120' (40')	C	12	Comp.	Yes	No
Mummy*	3	5 + 1**	26	1	1d12 + special	60' (20')	C	14	Exp.	Yes	Yes
Mystic	Var.	Var.	Var.	Var.	Var.	Var.	Var.	Var.	Ma st.	Yes	Yes
Nightcrawler*	-4	30** ⁵	170	2	2d10(x2) + special	120' (40')	C	2	Mast.	Yes	Yes
Nightwalker*	-6	21** ⁵	104	2	3d10(x2) + special	150' (50')	C	5	Mast.	Yes	Yes
Nightwing*	-8	17** ⁵	83	1	1d6 + 6	30' (10') 240' (80')	C	7	Mast.	Yes	Yes
Odic	-4	16** ⁴	64	1	d12 + poison	0'	C	7	Comp.	Yes	No
Odic leaf	-4	4	1	1	Special	90' (30')	C	16	Comp.	Yes	No
Phanaton	7	1-1	5	1	1d6	90' (30') 150' (50')	L	19	X1/Mast.	No	No
Phanaton, warrior	6	2	10	1	1d6 + 1	90' (30') 150' (50')	L	18	X1/Mast.	No	No
Phanaton, shaman	7	4	15	1	1d6	90' (30') 150' (50')	L	16	X1/Mast.	Yes	Yes
Phantom, shade*	0	11***	56	1	3d4	120' (40')	C	10	Comp.	Yes	Yes
Reverer	-4	10*	50	1	Special	180' (60')	C	10	Mast.	Yes	No
Sailor	10	1	3	1	1d4	90' (30')	N	20	NPC	No	No
Skeleton	7	1	6	1	1d6	60' (20')	C	19	Basic	No	Yes
Spectre*	2	6**	33	1	1d8 + special	150' (50') 300' (100')	C	14	Exp.	Yes	Yes
Spider, giant crab	7	2*	13	1	d8 + poison	120' (40')	N	18	Basic	Yes	Yes
Spider, Night*	-1	20** ⁹	100	3	2d8 + poison/ 4d6(x2)	90' (30') 180' (60')	C	5	New	Yes	Yes
Spider, planar	6	Var.**	Var.	1	2d6 + poison	180' (60')	Var.	Var.	Mast.	Yes	Yes
Treant	2	8*	45	2	2d6(x2)	60' (20')	L	12	Exp.	Yes	Yes
Vampire*	2	7**	33	1	1d10 + special	120' (40') 180' (60')	C	13	Exp.	Yes	Yes
Vampire mystic*	-5	15** ¹⁰	77	4	4d8 + special	300' (80')	C	8	Exp./Mast.	Yes	Yes
Wight*	5	3*	14	1	Special	90' (30')	C	17	Basic	Yes	No
Wraith*	3	4**	18	1	1d6 + special	120' (40') 240' (80')	C	16	Exp.	Yes	Yes
Zombie (any)	8	2	14	1	1d8	90' (30')	C	18	Basic	No	Yes

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

Masters Game Adventure

Talons of Night

by Paul Jaquays



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INTRODUCTION

The events of *Talons of Night* may be played as a sequel to module *M3, The Vengeance of Alphaks*, or separately. The D&D® Master Set Rules are necessary to run this game.

The adventure is designed for four to eight characters of levels 25 to 30, for a sum total of 150 levels. At least one player character (PC) should rule a dominion.

If your players do not have high-level characters, or if additional non-player characters (NPCs) are needed to fill out a party, you may use the prerolled characters suggested at the end of the module in order to balance the forces. Encourage the players to further personalize these descriptions. Each character will have an additional 1d6 randomly selected potions; 1d10 × 1,000 gp in gems, jewelry or coins; and 1d4 loyal henchmen if desired (no henchman should be of less than 7th level). Each of the characters is a Master of 1d2 weapons and Expert at 1d2 more.

How to Use This Module

Talons of Night is divided into two major quests and a final challenge — role playing a peace conference. The first mission begins as a research mission at the behest of King Ericall of Norwold to obtain important information for the forthcoming peace negotiations between Thyatis and Alphatia, and ends as a quest to regain a lost artifact that could mean the difference between peace and constant strife.

The second quest takes the party beyond the Prime Plane into the Sphere of Entropy to rescue important captives and avert a war that could encompass and destroy the civilized world.

Finally, the players take on the personas of envoys from different nations to negotiate a binding peace agreement between the two empires and in so doing ensure the PCs' own prosperity.

Read the entire adventure before play starts. This module is intended to fit into an ongoing campaign in Norwold and the surrounding realms.

The Plot

Norwold, an under-populated, unimportant region bordering the frigid north, has become a political tinderbox in the D&D® game world.

The northern part of the large western continent has been colonized or conquered by Alphatia and the southern part by Alphatia's historical enemy, Thyatis. Territorial differences on the continent have become yet another irritation in a long list of frictions between the two powers.

The tempestuous relations between these expanding empires have often been the result of meddling by Immortals involved in their various "projects."

The Immortal Alphaks the Dark, of the Sphere of Entropy and Death, has been the primary cause of much strife. Once a ruler of the Alphatians, he was exiled to another world. Upon becoming an Immortal, he vowed vengeance. In some situations, only the involvement of other Immortals has allowed the mortals on this plane to survive.

Another Immortal, Koryis the Patron of Peace and Prosperity (a Lawful Celestial from the Sphere of Thought who participated in *M11, Into the Maelstrom*), is also active in Norwold and has expanded his manipulation of events to initiate a peace conference between high-ranking representatives of the two competing empires of Thyatis and Alphatia.

His hope for this project is to ensure peace as the meeting's outcome. Doubting the abilities of mere mortals to negotiate peace unaided, Koryis seeks to place a particular artifact on the person of someone at the meeting. The artifact, an alabaster dove known as the *Peaceful Periapt of Pax*, calms those in its presence, causing them to set aside selfish and nationalistic conceits and listen with an open mind.

The forces of Entropy despise this artifact, yet are unable to directly affect it or even touch it. Nevertheless, they have been able to hide it away, and it has now been lost for centuries. Its last discovery and use was in the ancient kingdom of Thothia. Generations later, it was lost

again (placed in the tomb of a dead pharaoh by his murderer/successor).

Koryis knows the *Periapt* to be hidden somewhere in the southern wilderness of the Isle of Dawn, guarded by yet another Immortal — the Night Spider, a Temporal of Entropy exiled and marooned on the Prime Plane by her own kind.

Koryis cannot directly reveal the presence or location of the *Periapt* to mortals. To do so would reveal his hand in this project and fully awaken the forces of Death to his plans. To cover himself, he has arranged circumstances to personally involve the PCs in the negotiations and make peace imperative to their own prosperity.

Yet, the Immortal Alphaks the Dark, archenemy of Alphatia in particular and mankind in general, is quite aware of Koryis's plans. Even the possibility of a peace conference defies all his goals and he has Koryis's known agents spied upon. Although personally banished from the Prime Plane, Alphaks is bound to get involved; and when he does, all chaos breaks loose as the minions of Death open the doors into the dark heartworlds of Immortal Night.

The quest to bring peace to Norwold will take the PCs across the Astral Plane to worlds within the control of the Sphere of Entropy and Death. To survive in those worlds, the characters will undergo eerie transformations.

Monster Statistics and Random Encounters

All spells in this module marked with an asterisk (*) are reversible.

The statistics of any monster mentioned in this adventure can be found in the Combined Monster Statistics Table on the inside of the module cover. When required, each chapter will have its own Random Encounters Table.

PART I: THE QUEST FOR PEACE

A. Stalking Shadow

Encounter Setting

Run this adventure when the party is resting, such as after an expedition. The adventure begins with a summons from King Ericall of Norwold. Once again, he has need of the party's services.

NOTE: Because of the events of previous modules, the political situation in Norwold may be different than described here. You may need to modify the situation presented by the king to represent your own world.

The five chapters of part one play in sequential order, beginning with the journey to Edairo in Stalking Shadow and ending with the playing of the Spider's Web game at the Temple of Dawn. To succeed at this part of the adventure, the party must accept King Ericall's mission to bring peace to Norwold; travel by sea with Finnister McAlister (the king's adviser) to ancient Edairo on the Isle of Dawn; enter the library at Edairo and discover forbidden information; flee up the Aurora river to the Temple of the Dawn in search of an ancient artifact, the *Periapt of Pax*; and play an ancient board game called Spider's Web with Ramenhotep X, the mystical undead king of ancient Thothia.

Beginning the Adventure

Each of you who rules a dominion receives a mysterious offer from an unnamed source to buy your dominion. Delivered by a messenger in black, who excuses himself and disappears, the offer is equivalent to 20 months Tax and Resource income for your dominion. You have five months to consider this "generous" offer, but the implication is that it would be dangerous to refuse it.

The offer comes from Tralkar Fenn, a powerful, unpleasant nobleman who is a secret ally of the empire that is least

friendly to the current regime in Norwold (and an unwitting pawn of the Immortal Koryis). Though seemingly intended to cause unrest amongst dominion holders, Tralkar's offer has been initiated by the Immortal Koryis, who wishes to involve the party in the peace negotiations by threatening their property and livelihood.

Not long thereafter, messengers from the king arrive at the homes of each party member. The envoys leave sealed parchments with each PC and then ride onward in obvious haste.

To read the parchment, you break open King Ericall's wax seal. His royal message reads, *Your dominions are threatened. Great events are afoot and your skills are again needed. Come with trusted followers and be prepared for action.*

1. In Quest of Peace

King Ericall of Norwold has summoned the PCs to his impressive palace in the capital city of Albia. In private, accompanied by his personal counselor Finnister McAlister (a secret minion of the Immortal Koryis),

King Ericall greets you as friends. Although glad to see you, his face reveals confusion and concern. He bears ill tidings: not only is he aware of the offers to buy your dominions, but also, his adviser, Finnister McAlister, has received a grim vision from the crones of Crystakk, the three women who gaze upon Norwold's present and future.

Finnister saw the sun dawn over the neutral city of Helskir, but the sunrise was suddenly blotted out by great clouds from the east and west hurling lightning at each other above your fortresses, which lay in smoking ruin — your dominions plundered and ravaged beyond repair.

Finnister believes this means that the war to end all wars is brewing between Thyatis and Alphatia, the

war that could finally destroy Norwold. However, events seem to hinge on your group and the city of Helskir. It may be that you can play a key role in bringing lasting peace and in so doing, save Norwold and the world.

King Ericall explains that due to insistent demands from the powerful provinces of both empires, peace negotiations have been arranged in the neutral city of Helskir on the Isle of Dawn. In five months time, high ranking ambassadors of both empires and their chief provinces will meet to discuss their differences and if possible, hammer out a peace accord.

The key issue seems to be who has the right to control Norwold. Apparently the ownership of the lands now known as Norwold and the Isle of Dawn was determined centuries ago. Unfortunately, all known copies of these treaties have disappeared.

Finnister is certain that any existing copies of these documents are sealed in the vaults of the library of Edairo, the capital of Thothia on the Isle of Dawn.

Finnister is to be Ericall's representative at the peace conference, but he needs that information from the Edairo library. Ericall wants you to journey to Edairo and scour the library for ancient history and information about ownership of the Isle of Dawn and Norwold. Armed with this knowledge and acting as Ericall's negotiators at the Helskir Summit, you and Finnister may be able to bring about peace and ensure a free Norwold.

Finnister then sighs, "Still, if only we had the dove, the *Periapt of Pax*, peace would be ensured."

Finnister will answer some questions about the *Periapt*, speaking only of its peaceful uses and its resemblance to a white dove (see Appendix II: Artifacts). His vision actually came from Koryis. For more about the crones of Crystakk, see *CM1, The Test of the Warlords*.

PART I: THE QUEST FOR PEACE

NPC Capsule

Finnister McAlister

Lawful 10th-level Cleric

S 10, D 9, I 17, C 12, W 18, Ch 14

AC 2 hp 33 Basic THAC0: 15

Armor: *Robe of protection* AC 2.

Equipment: *Mace* +2, scroll of *protection from magic*, map of the Isle of Dawn (Players' Aid 1).

Spells: 4/4/3/2/1

Notes: Finnister McAlister, as Koryis's minion, has arranged for himself to be Ericall's representative at the peace conference. While supposed to journey only as far as Helskir with the PCs, he decides to stay on board and travels with them to Edairo and beyond.

Finnister will not fight. If attacked, he makes saving throws as a 20th level cleric because of Koryis's special influence. To all appearances, he leads a charmed life.

Although he began as an adventurer, Finnister found his true calling as an adviser to rulers. Normally quiet, he speaks out when he feels he must.

Take good care of Finnister. He is your voice within the party, a source of hints, guidance and demands (especially to continue searching for the *Periapt*).

2. A Spy in the Dark

As the audience with king Ericall ends, secretly make a normal listening roll for each PC. Read the following to those who succeed.

A draft seems to come from nowhere and you sense something near the ceiling, flitting towards the exit.

The something is a pair of giant bats hidden among the great rafters and clerestory arches of the throne room ceiling. The bats are under the control of one of Alphaks' nightwings lurking nearby. One of the bats automatically escapes to inform the nightwing of Ericall's plans.

The second bat can be captured or killed. If killed, it reverts back to human form, becoming Theena, a pretty young

woman from Norwold. If the girl is freed from her *polymorphed* form or brought back from death (she reverts to human form upon dying), she tells of her last conscious memories of being chilled by a giant winged shadow. The other bat is her brother Thoring.

3. The Journey to Edairo

Unless a character has some means of instantaneous transportation back to his or her dominion, the king will demand that the party leave instantly on his mission, taking only what they have brought with them. Ericall provides a letter of introduction (marked with his seal); mundane supplies (food, normal weapons, travel gear); 10 squads of 10 1st-level marines, each led by a 5th-level fighter; and *Bethilda's Star* (a large sailing ship), its captain and navigator (Captain Traegar and Mate Mullos, both normal men), and a crew of 20 sailors for the journey to Edairo.

Although King Ericall wants the party to leave immediately, tides are not right until early morning. The party has one day to obtain personal supplies.

At this point, Finnister McAlister gives the party a map of the Isle of Dawn (Players' Aid 1). This should help them better visualize their journey. If the party still seems unsure of where to go, have Finnister point out their destination (Edairo) near the southern end of the Isle of Dawn.

The journey to Edairo on the Isle of Dawn takes place aboard the large sailing ship, *Bethilda's Star*. The '*Star*' is capable of moving 72 miles per day (3 hexes on Players' Aid 1) and has one catapult on its fore and aft castles (20 normal rounds and 10 flaming pitch rounds each).

Nineteen days out of Alpha, the first port of call is Helskir (at the Isle's northernmost point), already bustling in preparation for the summit meeting.

After leaving Helskir, let the players plot the *Star's* course for the journey to Edairo. The ship now carries 42 days worth of supplies.

At Helskir, Finnister McAlister stays on board. At the same time, Alphak's nightwing returns to ethereally follow the

PCs' ship and cause hidden havoc. It is responsible for many of the Random Encounters below. The keyed encounters occur at specific times and places.

Table 1. Random Encounters

Beginning the third day out from Helskir, roll a d20 for a Random Encounter every two days.

d20	Result
1-8	No encounter
9-10	Spoiled!*
11-14	Off Course
15-16	Plague Ship!*
17	Cloudkill*
18	Before the Storm
19-20	Mysterious Doom*

* All food on board is spoiled by this encounter.

Spoiled!* All food, drinking water, and potions on the ship are spoiled by the nightwing. Within two days, the food must be replaced at major cities or by hunting and foraging, or ship speed drops by a third and all persons aboard the ship make all subsequent rolls at -2 for each two days of no food (penalties are cumulative).

Off Course. After dark, the nightwing *charms* the helmsman into sailing the ship off course for 24 miles. Do not indicate this to the party and do not reveal their true location to them. Plot their true position on your map (DM Map 1). Should the ship run aground, a day is lost until the next high tide and the ship loses 1d20 hull points.

Plague ship!* An outbreak of a horrid wasting disease (*cause disease* cast by the nightwing) breaks out amongst the sailors and marines. The disease affects 2d20 men, plus 1d3 PCs and NPCs (although these characters are allowed saving throws). Each day, 1d6 of the afflicted will die unless cured.

Cloudkill.* At night, the nightwing casts a deadly *cloudkill* spell into the troop barracks, affecting 50% of the marines. Make saving throws vs. Poison for the marines in groups of five.

Before the Storm. A sudden (natural)



storm rises on the horizon. If the ship is in a shoreline hex or adjacent to one, the storm's fury can be avoided by waiting 1d4 days for it to pass. If farther out to sea, the ship is blown 100 miles a day for 1d4 days in a randomly selected direction (changing each day). Roll a d8 to determine direction (see DM Map 1). If the selected direction would force the ship ashore, the group's leader must make an Intelligence ability check on a d20. Failure means the ship runs aground. 1d6 × 10% of the crew is killed in the wreck (not including PCs and henchmen).

Mysterious Doom. * Roll a d6. On a roll of 1-3 a marine dies mysteriously (*finger of death*); on a roll of 4-5, a sailor dies; but on a roll of 6, the victim is an NPC follower of a PC (up to a 7th-level character).

4. Night Discovered

If the party discovers the nightwing and can engage it in combat, it fights for 1d6 + 1 rounds, then flees ethereally. If

destroyed, it contains 10,000 gp in miscellaneous gems, a *crystal ball of clairvoyance*, and a *two-handed sword* + 4.

If the nightwing remains undiscovered, it assists the undead when the ghost ship attacks the *Star*.

5. Ghost Ship

As your lookout sights the Aurora River delta, a dark, eerie fog rolls across the sea and the wind drops to almost nothing. Before you, a huge, dark shape cuts through the mist. It is a mighty war galley, and clutching the ironclad hulk's seaweed-draped rigging are scores of undead raiders.

The *Star's* speed drops to $\frac{1}{3}$ in the extreme light breeze. The black ship is one of Alphaks' *Dreadnaughts of Death* (a colossal, ironclad war galley from module *M1, Into the Maelstrom*), dredged up from the depths. The ship is 200 yards from the *Star* and its crew.

The *Star* is a large sailing ship with 170

hull points; AC 7; MV 120'/round; two catapults (total of 60 rounds); and an original crew of 22 sailors and 110 marines. The catapults fire once every five rounds and hit as 4th-level fighters (if fully manned) and do 3d6 points of hull damage. Flaming pitch cannot burn the waterlogged *Dreadnaught*.

The *Dreadnaught* is a large, magical galley with 200 hull points; AC 2; MV 180'/round; an artillery ram (for $[1d6 + 5] \times 10$ hull points of damage attacking as a 1st-level fighter) and a crew consisting of 50 skeletons, 20 zombies, 15 ghouls, 7 wights, 5 wraiths, 5 spectres, and a hand druj in command.

Damage-causing magics do 1 point of hull damage for every 5 points of rolled damage (a 20 die *fire ball* would do an average of 35 points of hull damage). However, flame magics will not be able to set the waterlogged ship on fire.

See pages 42-44 of the D&D® Expert Rulebook for specific rules on waterborne combat.

The *Dreadnaught* seeks to ram the *Star* and then board her. If the two ships col-