Carnival of Lost Souls

Kalakeri: The Forbidden Temple

sample file

By Eugene Mokeiev

Survive the dangers and intrigues of Kalakeri in this adventure for the world's greatest role-playing game!

GUILD

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Introduction

The carnival passes through the Mists and arrives in the next Domain of Dread, Kalakeri. The carnival's goal is to free the bard Ranjan Adwani from his curse. But accomplishing this task will be a great challenge as there are two powers at work in Kalakeri, Loyalists and Rebels. And both of them want to use the characters to destroy the opponent.

Background

What's the deal?

For the purposes of this adventure, Kalakeri is considered to be a unique domain: it has a McGuffin hidden inside it that can drag it out of the Mists - a Vochalam Orb. Naturally, The Caller has other plans for this domain and does not want the Orb to be used in this way. Arijani, leader of the Kalakeri's Rebels, wants to use the orb to heal his sister. Characters might have other plans for it (for example, restoring Syndal Svuo's heart - see Lamordia: Hardest of Hearts adventure).

Current state of the domain

The war inside the Vasavadan family tears the country apart. Arijani and his sister Reeva wage war against Ramya, who is currently holding the seat of power on the Sapphire Throne. While Arijani is mostly fine with his new nature, and his mind is busy with gathering allies and attracting more people to his cause, Reeva's fiendish form deeply troubles her. As time passes, she hates herself more and more, almost losing her mind sometimes. This results in her desire to hurt and destroy beautiful things and people. And there seems to be no cure for her condition - no matter what foul magic or dark ritual she tries, she can't revert her arcanaloth form. Arijani decides that it can't continue this way - he needs his sister sane by his side, so they can finally defeat Ramya and win this war together.

Vochalam temple history and its purpose

Long time ago, before Kalakeri fell and were dragged into the Mists, it was a beautiful prosperous country watched closely by the gods from above, and the chief among the pantheon was the mysterious goddess of fate and time - Shuruaat.

At the dawn of Kalakeri's creation, Krishran, Shuruaat's High Priest, won an extraordinary Favor from the goddess for the deeds he had done in Her name. As his reward, he chose salvation for his land in case darker times come ahead. And thus, the Vochalam Orb was created.

Shuruaat instructed him to build two temples situated on top of the highest mountains. One, Lesser Vochalam, was meant to be a decoy, which transformed thieves into wyverns. Other one, Greater Vochalam, meant to hide her greatest gift to the people of Kalakeri - the Vochalam Orb.

This orb has the power to grant a *Wish* once to a worthy person. This way, if any disaster would affect Kalakeri, the Chosen could use its power to undo the harm and save the land. Twenty-one priests sacrificed themselves so their souls would not leave this plane, but stay inside the orb instead. Their task was to lie in wait until some calamity happened to the land of Kalakeri. In this case, they should rise and seek worthy people - the Chosen in dreams and visions.

The orb can be unlocked only when the chosen person chants a specific hymn while staying in the temple room designed to hold its power.

When Krishran passed away, he received the greatest reward for his service and returned as the temple's **eidolon** - an immortal guardian against the unworthy beings.

Unfortunately, when Kalakeri fell and was dragged into the Mists by Dark Powers, most of the temple priests perished during the cataclysmic storms which ravaged the country. Only Krishran, the temple's eidolon, survived. He still guards the temple to this day, preventing any thief from laying his hands on the sacred relic.

Bard's story – the past

And here comes into play our bard, Ranjan. He was born in Kalakeri, his family was from a merchant caste, but stayed out of politics as much as possible for survival. He also distanced himself from the war and started on the path of a bard. At some point, he met another bard, Lavanya Mahanti, a woman of stunning voice and beauty, who quickly became his tutor and lover. She was allied with the Rebels, and persuaded him to join their cause to end Ramya's oppressive rule. This resulted in tragedy - Ranjan's mother was killed by the loyalists, and his family had to escape their home and live in hiding. But listening to Lavanya's words, he became even more confident that he must continue fighting.

Unknown to him, Lavanya was one of the Caller's many alter egos.

She taught him the ways of the College of Spirits, so he studied the spirit world in search of the stories that can inspire the people around him and bring new hope to the land. During such a study, he was contacted by a spirit of his great-grandfather - he was one of the souls trapped inside the orb. He decided that Ranjan was worthy, and told him what he must do to save the land. Excited, Ranjan told Lavanya about his discovery of the ancestor, and she persuaded him to bring this information to Arijani.

Ranjan was introduced to the Rebel leaders, Arijani and Reeva, and told them about the power he discovered. Arijani expressed his gratitude, explaining that his sister is suffering from a terrible curse brought upon her by Ramya, and this is the only possibility to heal her. He promised Ranjan great riches and renown and tasked him with sneaking into the temple and activating the orb. Arijani hoped that the orb could restore his sister and make her human again. Arijani and Ranjan, both charismatic personalities, quickly found common ground and liked each other.

Because of the *Forbiddance* spell cast on the temple, Arijani and Reeva weren't able to enter the temple, so they sent a party with Ranjan to defeat the guardians and claim it. Ranjan promised Lavanya that he would return and left for the journey. However, The Caller, in the guise of Ramya's close advisor, told her about the plot - so when Ranjan overcame the challenges and entered the room with the orb, he was knocked unconscious by Ramya's guards and dragged outside the temple to meet her. Ramya told him that he must take the artifact and leave this domain while she takes care of the Rebellion. If he refuses, she explained, she might as well add his skull to the Tower of Traitors, and his family will suffer greatly.

Having no other choice, bard went into exile.

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Bard's story – the present

Five years later, Ranjan is traveling with the carnival. He misses his family and mourns his lost lover and teacher. He also can't forgive himself that he betrayed his friend, Arijani. In his songs, he tells stories about Kalakeri's wonders, the majesty of the Cerulean Citadel and bravery of the people who fight the Ramya's oppression. The orb is used as a simple spellcasting focus and on rare occasions when he needs to scout something.

Ranjan now suffers from Shuruaat's curse for smuggling the only hope to save Kalakeri out of its borders. Each night, souls from the sphere visit him in his dreams and unleash terrible nightmares, accusing him of treachery and demanding the sphere to be returned to its proper place.

Caller's plan for Kalakeri

Possibility to drag the domain out of the Mists goes against all of the Caller's plans for Kalakeri. Therefore, he devised a plan to smuggle the orb out of the Kalakeri to ensure that the domain stays in the chaos.

When he learned that Ranjan could potentially be the Chosen, he befriended him and persuaded him to share his knowledge with the rebellion - and thus, shifted focus from the dangerous use of the orb to the useful distraction - restoring Reeva's form.

He warned Ramya about the orb, telling her bare minimum - that it's a powerful tool which can be used by her enemies to escape her justice, and persuaded her that it would be safe if the orb was out of her domain for good, robbing Reeva of her hope.

And thus, Ranjan's life was ruined and the land was left without hope for restoration.

In the present, prior to the character's arrival, the Caller is pissed with them coming into Kalakeri and interfering with his plans. He warns Arijani about the return of the bard and the orb with the characters. Rebels move their camp and lie in wait, ready to find the characters once they emerge from the Mists.

Overview

The Forbidden Temple is a gothic horror adventure for 4-5 characters of 7-8th level. It can be played over the course of 6-8 hours and should roughly take one playing session if the party is quick, or two if the party is progressing slowly. This is the third part of the **Carnival of Lost Souls** campaign, which can also be played as a standalone adventure.

The adventure can be summarized to the following points:

- Carnival arrives at the lake in the rainforest and settles. The characters gather together with Isolde and Ranjan to discuss how they can free him from his curse. As it gets darker, Isolde decides to make the move in the morning.
- When the night falls, the lake becomes alive as undead soldiers rise from it, chanting their loyalty oaths to Ramya and preparing to attack the party, mistaking them for rebels. Characters engage in an intense battle where they try to save other carnival members. Thankfully, soon enough they are helped by mysterious people who turn out to be Rebel soldiers. Their captain insists that his leader, Arijani, wants to speak to the PCs.
- It is the eve of the greatest battle between both sides - Arijani and Reeva summoned disguised demons to join their army and plan to attack Jadurai on the dawn of the next day. Characters arrive at the camp, Ranjan uses his circlet and hides in one of the character's pockets. Arijani introduces himself to the characters and has an intense conversation with them. He knows that they hold a Vochalam Orb, asks them about Ranjan and in the end offers them the same job he offered to the bard five years ago. Carnival can't stay in the rebels' territory, so it travels through the mountains behind the characters.
- After the journey to the temple, the characters encounter Ramya, who approaches them with a small host of soldiers. Characters must carefully navigate the conversation to avoid battle with the terrifying Darklord. Depending on the outcome, Ramya either engages in the battle or leaves the characters to attack the Rebel camp she has discovered with Caller's help. She leaves forces outside the temple to fight the characters if they do not comply.
- Once the characters survive the temple's dangers, the orb is returned to its proper place, and Wish is used, they can leave the domain. Depending on their actions and choices, there might or might not be complications, as Ramya's or Arijani's people await them outside of the temple.



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Adventure Hooks

Basic Hook - The Carnival

The basic hook assumes that players are helping Lady Isolde, leader of the domains-traveling Carnival. She is hunting the Caller – a mysterious entity from the Mists that destroyed the lives of her friends and loved ones. In order to track him down, she found a group of people, whose lives were ruined by the Caller. Isolde hopes that by helping them and setting their lives back on track, she will be able to mess with Caller's plans to lure him into direct confrontation.

Characters are helping Lady Isolde in order to get her to lead them out of the Mists, or to some specific domain they want to get to.

Additional Hooks

The Chosen

One of the souls trapped inside the Vochalam Orb contacts the character in the dream when he enters Kalakeri. For this, they must have a Good alignment and also the following conditions must be met: The character is bard, cleric or paladin They are proficient in Performance or Religion

The soul asks them to bring the Vochalam Orb to the holy temple in the mountains and teaches the hymn needed to activate it. The soul begs them to use the orb's power to save Kalakeri and free the domain from the Mists.

Kalakeri native

Kalakeri is home for the character. Consider his life before joining the carnival and his side in the war between the members of the Vasavadan family. Have they or their family suffered in the endless war? What's their reason for supporting one of the sides?

Relic hunter

Character spent their life discovering secrets in the long-forgotten dungeons, towers and temples. They join the carnival to discover the treasures of the land of Kalakeri, hearing rumors that it has an ancient history and magnificent ruins harboring old relics.

Running the Adventure

To run this adventure, you will need the fifth edition core rulebooks, as well as **Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft**. Make sure to get familiar with Chapter 3: Domains of Dread - Nature of Ravenloft, Carnival and Kalakeri entries, Travelers in the Mists - Firan Zal'honan and The Caller entries.

The adventure has a simple structure, but it has a lot of nuances depending on the player's interaction with two major parties of Kalakeri - Rebels and Loyalists and their relationships with Vasavadan siblings.

To make the adventure even more exciting and get the players more engaged in the story, make sure to deploy the Chosen adventure hook.

Social checks

Throughout the adventure, it will refer to "Social checks". These read as "Deception, Persuasion or Intimidation depending on the character's approach"

Skill Challenges

In several places, adventure refers to the option of using Skill Challenges. If you don't know what these are - don't worry!

You can check the video from Matt Colville or read the article on D&D Beyond to understand the concept.

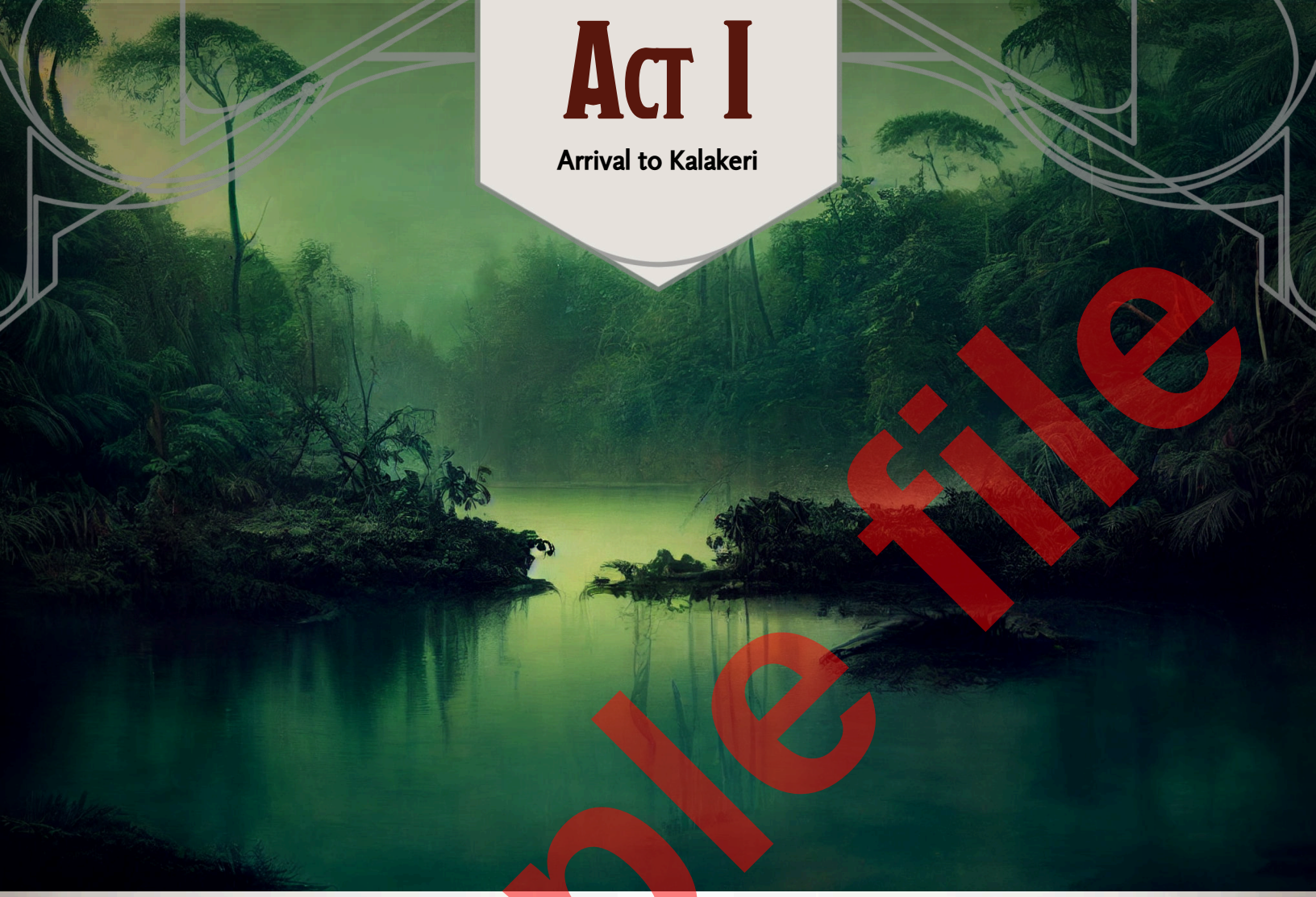
Social encounter outcomes

For several important social interactions (namely, the ones with Vasavadan family members), adventure lists possible outcomes depending on the character's actions. Exact scenarios which will happen at your table may be different, so use these as guidelines to help you determine the final outcome.

Sample file

Act I

Arrival to Kalakeri



Sample file

Setup

The carnival arrives at the lake in the lush rainforest. The water seems to be fresh, so it settles on the shore and its members begin their usual business when arriving in the wilderness - exploration and foraging.

Characters have a chance to explore the surroundings and interact with carnival NPCs. None of them, however, has been here before, except for Ranjan. Characters with a high Passive Insight (DC 16) can notice that he is unusually worried, and tries to hide it behind jokes about insects. If they press on him (Social check DC 15), Ranjan admits that some people will not be happy to see him again in Kalakeri.

If you are running this adventure as a one-shot, ask each player which NPC he has bonded with over the course of their previous travels with the Carnival. If you are running a campaign, they are likely to have contacts already.

This will help to make players comfortable with the Carnival and give them a person they can interact with.

Possible contacts include characters described in the Carnival section of **Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft**:

- Charlotte the Fire Eater
- Amelia the Vampire
- Alti the Werehare
- Professor Pacali
- Silessa the Snake

Ranjan's story

Isolde invites Ranjan and the characters to her tent in order to discuss their plan going forward in this dangerous domain. It is the time for Ranjan to explain to his carnival fellows some details about his past.

Ranjan shares the short version of his tale, explaining power balance in Kalakeri, some of the land's history, and tells that he has a complicated past with both political powers, Rebels and Loyalists. He also asks characters to escort him to the temple, so he can put the Vochalam Orb back on the pedestal and end his curse. He also explains properties of the orb: spellcasting focus, clairvoyance, and, most importantly, how the Wish can be used.

His attitude towards loyalists is hostile. He dislikes Ramya, but sees her as a tool which can be used to stop Arijani from killing him. He fears Reeva, and still likes Arijani. He feels guilty for betraying him, even though he really had no other choice in the end.

Isolde will listen to the character's plans, and provide them with additional information if needed. After that, she will declare the meeting concluded.

Optional: Payment from Isolde

If your players need additional motivation or you want to reward them, Isolde can pay them for the task. Isolde can provide for the players 600 gold beforehand and 1 uncommon or common magical item or consumable. Use your judgment as a DM whether your group needs this or not. Otherwise, she can promise 1 rare magical item for completing the mission, and 250 gold to each adventurer.

Roleplaying Ranjan

Ranjan is a halfling bard with a strong Kalakeri heritage which is obvious from his looks. He has long braided dark hair and violet eyes. He likes to dress in fine violet and gold robes, with his lute always by his right side and *Vochalam Orb* in the bag on the left side. He also wears the *Circlet of Diminution* on his head, and taps to activate it in case of trouble.

He works at the carnival as one of the performers, not having a show on his own but providing musical ambience for fire breathers, acrobats and other caravan folk (Like Amelia, Charlotte or Silessa). On the rare occasion he actually performs on his own, he sings very lyrical, somber and passionate songs about his home country, the dark doom which befell on it, tyrannical maharani who leads an army of undead and a group of brave people led by her charismatic brother who try to put an end to her rule. He charges 1 silver for his performance, and they are quite popular due to quality and rarity - even merchants from Litwick Market sometimes come to visit.

Ranjan occupies a small violet tent which stands aside from the main carnival attractions. On the inside, it is decorated in a simple, but sophisticated manner - he has comfortable hammock, ornate table engraved with the symbols of lotuses and wyverns, and a big painting which depicts Jadurai - he brought it from one of the merchants at Litwick Market.

Personality Trait. "I have a silver tongue and use it to get away even from the worst situations."

Ideal. "I want freedom for the people of Kalakeri and put an end to the endless war."

Bond. "I love my family and will do anything to protect them."

Flaw. "Sometimes I show cowardice in tense situations. I like to get away from the problems using my circlet."

The Vochalam Orb

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement by bard, cleric or paladin)

The Vochalam Orb is a heavy sphere, which seems to be made from black obsidian. It is guarded by *nystul's magic aura* - for *identify* spell it reads as a simple magic item which allows the wielder to cast *clairvoyance* spell once per day and serves as a spellcasting focus. Targeting it with *legend lore* spell reveals its true nature.

Spellcasting Focus. The Orb works as spellcasting focus.

Clairvoyance (1/Day). Creature attuned to the Orb can cast *clairvoyance* spell using it once per day.

Alter Reality (Once). If a creature attuned to the orb qualifies as Chosen and the orb is placed on the pedestal in the Vault Room of the Greater Vochalam Temple, wielder can cast *wish* spell if they sing a hymn to goddess Shuruaat and pass DC 17 Charisma (Performance) or Wisdom (Religion) check. After this property is used, the orb is destroyed.

Curse. If taken outside the vault room of Greater Vochalam Temple, attuned creature is cursed. It cannot break the attunement by any means, cannot leave the Mists, and each night it experiences vivid nightmares from the souls contained within it. The curse ends if the sphere is returned to its proper place.

Circlet of Diminution

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This beautiful golden circlet has a violet diamond in the center. It allows its wielder to cast *enlarge / reduce* spell with Reduce effect once per day. The duration of the spell when cast from the circlet is 8 hours.

Sample file

Ranjan Adwani

Small humanoid (halfling), neutral good

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +3
Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +6, Perception +5, Performance +8, Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Halfling, telepathy 30 ft.
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Lucky. When Ranjan rolls a 1 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Brave. Ranjan has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Halfling Nimbleness. Ranjan can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than his.

Song of Rest. Ranjan can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest.

Spellcasting. Ranjan is 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, healing word, heroism, sleep, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter*

Actions

Tales from Beyond (3/Day). Ranjan rolls d6 to determine the tale he reached beyond the Veil. He can choose one creature he can see within 30 feet (including him) to be the target of the tale's effect.

Spirit Tales
1. Tale of the Clever Animal. For the next 10 minutes, whenever the target makes an Intelligence, a Wisdom, or a Charisma check, the target can roll d6 immediately after rolling the d20 and add the extra die's number to the check.
2. Tale of the Renowned Duelist. You make a melee spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 11 (2d6 + 4) force damage.
3.Tale of the Beloved Friends. The target and another creature of its choice it can see within 5 feet of it gain 7 (1d6 + 4) temporary hit points.
4.Tale of the Runaway. The target can immediately use its reaction to teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. When the target teleports, it can choose up to 4 creatures it can see within 30 feet of it to immediately use the same reaction.
5.Tale of the Avenger. For 1 minute, any creature that hits the target with a melee attack takes 3 (1d6) force damage.
6.Tale of the Traveler. The target gains 7 (1d6 + 4) temporary hit points. While it has these temporary hit points, the target's walking speed increases by 10 feet and it gains a +1 bonus to its AC.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Sample File

The Lake Battle

After the discussion finishes, everyone prepares to go to sleep. The night falls, and the rain starts pouring from the sky. If any of your characters qualify for a Chosen, this is the time when the spirit of the priest from Vochalam Orb visits them and makes them an offer.

After a couple of hours pass, a full moon rises in the sky. Ramya's warriors who were slain near the lake in the battle with the rebels two weeks ago rise and start chanting their loyalty oaths to her. As their last memory is being killed near this lake in the battle, they mistake characters for rebels and prepare for an attack. Characters can make a DC 20 Social check to convince the undead commander (**deathlock wight**) that they are loyal to Ramya and have no ties to the rebellion. If they fail, the loyalists attack them.

Encounter opposition

The loyalist forces consist of six **loyalist wights**, two **undead elephants**, and a **deathlock wight** riding the **warhorse skeleton**. Use the provided battle map to set up the encounter. As the undead begin their turns amid the lake, they are traveling at half speed until they reach the shore.

Encounter goal

The real danger of this fight is that the undead target not only characters but also regular Carnival folk - performers, workers and ordinary people who try to escape from their domains. Add eight **commoners** to the battle map. Undead target them as well as the characters. If you want to make the fight more dramatic, you can use some of the NPCs that characters have already bonded with in place of those commoners.

Rebels arrival

In the third round of combat, a host of Kalakeri rebels - eight **rebel fighters** and a **rebel commander** in traditional Kalakeri clothing - comes to the character's aid.

Ranjan immediately uses his circlet of diminution and hides in the closest character's pocket, explaining to them over telepathic contact that rebels might recognize him.

As the fight finishes, the characters are approached by the commander of the rebel host, who introduces himself as **Anuraag**. He is a dark-haired, middle-aged man with a thick mustache, dressed in black and green armor. He insists that newcomers must come with them and meet the true rulers of this land - Arijani and Reeva Vasavadan.

> **GM Note**
>
> If the characters decide to fight and kill the rebels, or escape them, Arijani will discover this later and send spies to watch their movements. Reeva together with his forces will appear after the characters finish the journey through the mountains, leading to an intense three-sided confrontation with her, Ramya and the characters.

Development

Once the characters arrive at the Rebel Camp, proceed to **Act II**. If they run from the rebel host or defeat them, proceed to the "Journey to the Temple" section of **Act II**.



Sample file

"The Lake Batlle"



sample file

Loyalist Wight

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Loyalist Wight has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Undying Loyalty. Loyalist Wight has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns Undead.

Actions

Multiattack. Loyalist Wight makes two longsword attacks or two longbow attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one longsword attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under Loyalist Wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. Loyalist Wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Undead Elephant

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 76 (8d12 + 24)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the elephant to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Trampling Charge. If the elephant moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the elephant can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Sample file

Deathlock Wight

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)
Hit Points 37 (5d8 + 15)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +4
Skills Arcana +3, Perception +4
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The wight's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic, disguise self, mage armor*
1/day each: *fear, hold person, misty step*

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the wight has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The wight attacks twice with Grave Bolt.

Grave Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) necrotic damage.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Warhorse Skeleton

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (barding scraps)
Hit Points 22 (3d10 + 6)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Sample file

Rebel Fighter

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Driven. Rebel Fighter has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened

Actions

Multiattack. Rebel Fighter makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Rebel Commander

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +6, Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Driven. Rebel Commander has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened

Actions

Multiattack. Rebel Commander makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

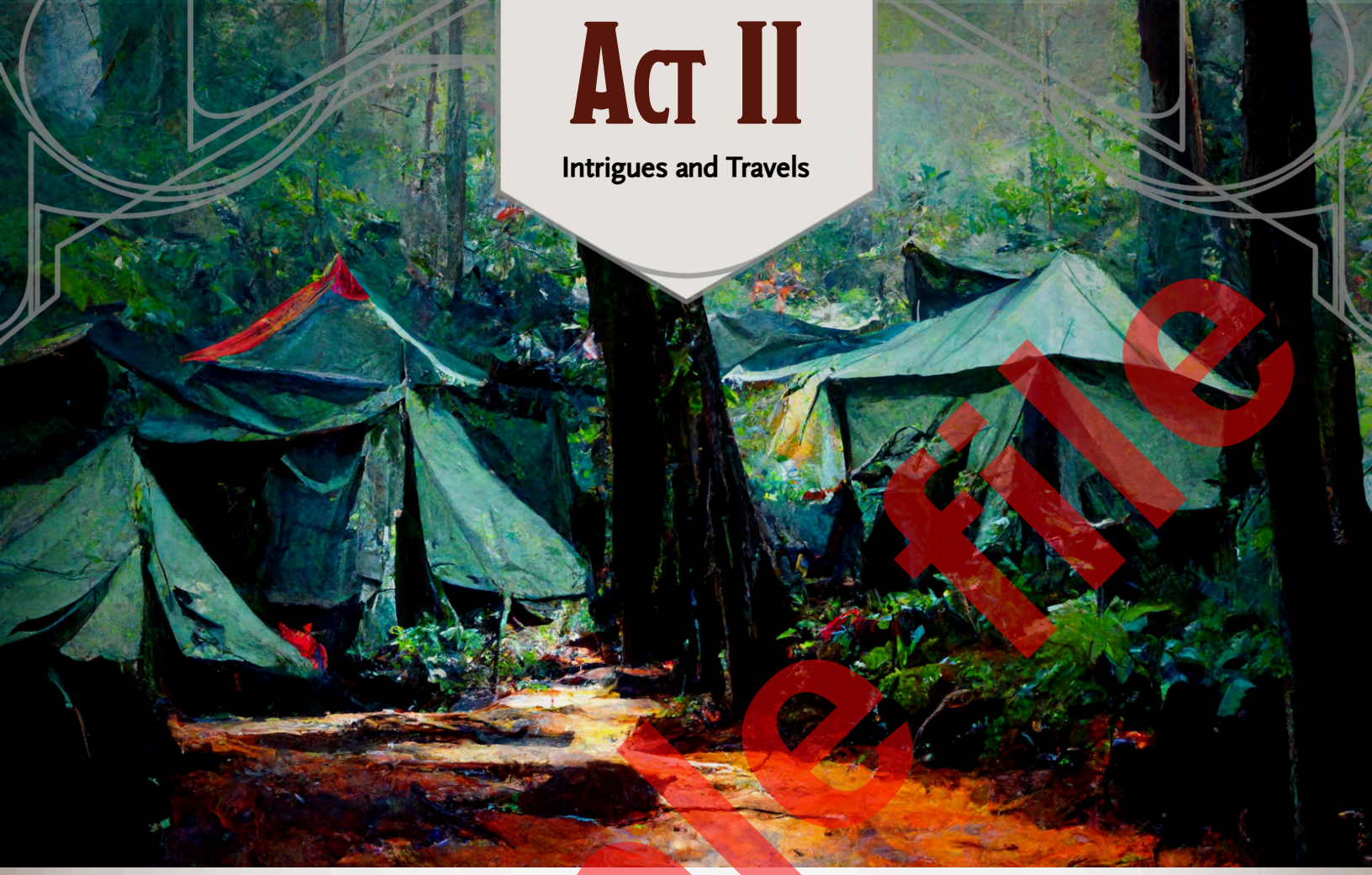
Call to Attack. Up to three allies within 120 feet of Rebel Commander that can hear it can each use their reaction to make one weapon attack.

(Bonus Action) Rally. Rebel Commander chooses one ally that can see or hear him. This ally regains 7 (1d8 + 3) hit points

Sample file

Act II

Intrigues and Travels



Sample file

The Rebel Camp

The rebel host stops, and at first, you don't see anything. But as soon as Anuraag touches air with his hand, you behold as a big war camp starts to apparate around you - tents, siege engines, horses, wagons and soldiers, people moving back and forward, officers shouting orders. Your sight catches a beautiful golden pavilion floating ten feet above the ground heavily decorated with carvings of wyverns and lotuses.

This mountain camp is the temporary base of Arijani, Reeva and their close circle. As Ramya currently holds the seat of power in the Cerulean Citadel, the rebels are not staying in one place and constantly moving around the Blackwaters. This way, she cannot find them and destroy their base. The camp has many magical wonders thanks to Reeva's immense magical knowledge and powers - the camouflage is one of them, and pavillion's ability to fly is another.

Anuraag enters the golden pavilion decorated with symbols of lotuses and wyverns in the center. He exits it after a minute and declares that Arijani and Reeva will meet the characters in half an hour - as soon as the war council finishes.

The characters have some time to spend before the meeting.

Rumors

Roll a d6 on the following table whenever the characters hear a rumor in the camp:

d6	Rumor
1	Arijani and Reeva are going to move in the morning and launch a strike on the capital, Jadurai. They were planning this operation for weeks and gathered mysterious allies from the distant regions of Kalakeri to help them. This should be a defining battle of the war.
2	The allies that Arijani and Reeva attracted to their cause are giving people chills. Most of them feel uneasy in their presence.
3	Arijani and Reeva host grand galas from time to time. Some servants have gone missing since the last one, and nobody heard of them.
4	Reeva, or Inajira, as people call her, is despised and feared by soldiers. Sometimes, when they take prisoners, she chooses the most beautiful and destroys them with her magic, which is said to be a terrifying sight to behold.

d6	Rumor
5	Arijani is said to possess great magical powers, but nobody knows what he is capable of for sure - some say he can alter reality around him, while others say he can read into people's minds, or that no foul spell can influence him.
6	Yesterday, a newcomer arrived into the camp - a mysterious mage in black robes who sought an audience with Arijani and was allowed to enter the pavilion. After that, the camp packed in mere minutes and immediately moved to the current location.

If the characters decide to listen to the conversations around the camp, they will hear one rumor. If they succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, they will hear an additional rumor. If the check succeeded by 5 or more, they will get an interesting opportunity. They overhear one of the Ramya's spies reporting the camp's position and movements over the *sending stone*.

Alternatively, the characters can learn a rumor by talking to soldiers and succeeding on the DC 20 Social check.

The Spy

The spy is a brown-haired young man named Ayaan. He has the statistics of a **spy**. If approached carefully (Dexterity (Stealth) check DC 16) the group will catch him; otherwise, he will try to run.

If catched, Ayaan will try to persuade the characters to not turn him in by telling them that Ramya's forces are huge, she will make her move soon and destroy the Rebels. If they let him go though, they will be spared.

- **If the characters turn the spy in**: It will improve their reputation with Rebels, and make negotiations with Arijani and Reeva much easier - they will get a +3 bonus to all Social checks with Rebellion leaders.
- **If the characters don't turn the spy in**: It will be easier to negotiate with Ramya later in the adventure and convince her to let the characters go. They will get a +3 bonus to all Social checks with her.

Meeting with Arijani and Reeva

The characters are finally invited into the golden pavilion. Both Arijani and Reeva appear in their human guises. Arijani never makes touch contact with anybody - his illusion is not good enough to alter his body. Reeva, however, feels more comfortable.

They both enjoy their power, so they heavily use magic. Reeva sits on the coach which is held aloft by the *tenser's floating disk*. Both of them fill their glasses with wine using *mage hand*. Both of them inspect the minds of the characters with *detect thoughts*. They will push and go deeper only if they have strong suspicions, for example if one of the characters lied very unconvincingly. In this case, make the character roll a saving throw and describe how Reeva or Arijani probes his mind.

Arijani can start his speech with something along the lines of:

> Hello, friends, and welcome to the land of Kalakeri, my rightful domain! I sense a very dangerous item you are carrying with you... might I ask, how did it come into your possession? It belonged to a friend of mine a long time ago, before he ran away and betrayed me.

Arijani asks each of the characters about themselves, what they believe in, and whose side they are on. The characters should come up with a believable story to appease maharani and not give away Ranjan. The bard uses his telepathy trait to help the characters come up with convincing explanations.

Possible arguments to come out of this encounter:

- The bard is not with us, but we want to return the orb to the temple on his behalf to free him from his curse.
- The orb came into our possession during our travels and we wanted to use Wish for ourselves.

Maharani is ready to offer characters some magic items and gold if they are willing to complete his task. He can make an offer as large as 4000 gp in coins and art objects, as well as +1 armor, weapons and **figurines of wondrous power**.

He subtly hints that they have really no other choice than to accept his offer - and better to do it willingly. At the end of the conversation, Arijani spreads his arms in a wide gesture, gesturing to the mountains and the land beyond, and says:

> This land was truly beautiful once. It will rise to its glory again after we defeat Ramya and I'll take my rightful place as the ruler of Jadurai. You will help me, and do the same thing that my friend started long ago. But you must understand, I hope - my captain and his men will escort you to the temple. There might be some difficulties on the way, and this land is full of dangers.

Domain's downfall history

When asked how the war in the domain came to pass, Arijani's story will be centered on claiming that Ramya usurped his throne which belonged to him by birthright. He says that she charmed their father into giving the power of the Sapphire Throne to her. Characters can catch him lying by passing Wisdom (Insight) check contested by Arijani's Charisma (Deception) check.

Option: Skill challenge

If you want to make this negotiation an even greater challenge, consider turning it into a skill challenge - for example, **five** successes before **three** failures.

Sample file

Arijani Vasavadan

Arijani is charimastic leader of the Rebels. He is **rakshasa**. For more details about him, check "Vasavadan Traitors" entry in **Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft**.

Personality Trait. "I like to make an impression of a decadent person. Makes it easy for my enemies to underestimate me."

Ideal. "Power. I will put an end to my sister's rule and take the Sapphire Throne, no matter the price."

Bond. "I enjoy fine things in life: good drinks, interesting conversations and tasty meals."

Flaw. "I cannot trust anyone around me, only Reeva."



Arijani Vasavadan

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (13d8 + 52)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

Skills Deception +10, Insight +8
Damage Vulnerabilities piercing from magic weapons wielded by good creatures
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Limited Magic Immunity. The rakshasa can't be affected or detected by spells of 6th level or lower unless it wishes to be. It has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. The rakshasa's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). The rakshasa can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect thoughts, disguise self, mage hand, minor illusion*
3/day each: *charm person, detect magic, invisibility, major image, suggestion*
1/day each: *dominate person, fly, plane shift, true seeing*

Actions

Multiattack. The rakshasa makes two claw attacks

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage, and the target is cursed if it is a creature. The magical curse takes effect whenever the target takes a short or long rest, filling the target's thoughts with horrible images and dreams. The cursed target gains no benefit from finishing a short or long rest. The curse lasts until it is lifted by a remove curse spell or similar magic.

sample file

Reeva Vasavadan

Medium fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +9, Wis +7, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +13, Deception +11, Insight +11, Perception +7
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages All, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The arcanaloth's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *alter self, darkness, heat metal, invisibility (self only), magic missile*

Magic Resistance. The arcanaloth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The arcanaloth's weapon attacks are magical.

Spellcasting. The arcanaloth is a 16th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The arcanaloth has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, identify, shield, Tenser's floating disk*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, mirror image, phantasmal force, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fear, fireball*
4th level (3 slots): *banishment, dimension door*
5th level (2 slots): *contact other plane, hold monster*
6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning*
7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*
8th level (1 slot): *mind blank*

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Teleport. The arcanaloth magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Reeva Vasavadan, "Inajira"

Reeva is Rebel's mastermind and arcane expert. She is **arcanaloth**. For more details about her, check "Vasavadan Traitors" entry in **Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft**.

Personality Trait. "Wars cannot be won by power alone. You have to study your enemy and act subtly."

Ideal. "Knowledge. I want to learn all the secrets of the magic in this world."

Bond. "Library beneath the Cerulean Citadel. This place is amazing, and I wish to return here."

Flaw. "I hate my arcanaloth form and envy beautiful people. I want to see them destroyed."



Sample file

Bard Revealed

If Ranjan is revealed for some reason, the bard explains himself and tells Arijani part of his story about meeting Ramya in the temple. He apologizes and explains that Ramya promised to kill him and execute his remaining family. He asks Arijani if they are okay, and rakshasa slowly nods.

"I see. Don't worry, we moved them out of Jadurai. Both as a sign of respect for the old friend... and as a measure to take in case of your possible return. They are safe in the mountains - for now. Your lover disappeared the same day as you, however. I always wondered if you escaped together."

Depending on the negotiations and the way the characters interact with Arijani and Reeva, this meeting can end in one of the following ways:

- **if Ranjan was not discovered and the characters were careful and not lied too much.** The characters are followed by a small host (6 **rebel fighters**) of Anuraag's soldiers, and Anuraag himself (**rebel commander**).
- **if Ranjan was not discovered, but Reeva or Arijani suspected something during the meeting.** The characters are escorted by a larger host (8 **rebel fighters**) and Anuraag (**rebel commander**) who keeps an eye on them at all times. This host is also joined by two invisible **nycaloths** which do not reveal their presence unless the group gets in trouble.
- **if Ranjan was discovered, or the characters were caught lying multiple times.** In addition to the forces above, Reeva personally joins the host to escort characters to the temple and waits for them outside to ensure they make the right decision.

Camp services

Once the meeting is concluded, the characters gain access to the camp's services. These include possibilities to purchase healing from the medic, adventuring gear, armor and weapons from the blacksmith and anything else you might want to provide for your players.

Of course, while shopping the characters can also listen to rumors.

Journey to the Temple

Once the characters conclude their business in the camp, they are ready to go to the temple. Ranjan and Arijani's people know the way. The bard continues to remain hidden in one of the character's pockets for the whole trip if the characters are accompanied by the Rebels and he was not revealed during the meeting.

The journey through the mountains takes roughly 7 to 8 hours. The road runs through the lush rainforests, small rivers and lakes of Blackwaters and eventually comes to foothills which lead to the Vochalam temple grounds. As the characters travel through the land, roll twice a d10 on the Traveling Kalakeri table to determine what they encounter on the way.

Option: Combat encounter resolution

If the characters have Rebels accompanying them, then every combat encounter is an opportunity for them to abandon their temporary allies (or jailers? It might be complicated). If the characters decide to do it, you can play it as a full combat encounter or bring it down to one skill check to escape depending on their company:

- Anuraag's soldiers: **DC 13** check
- Anuraag's soldiers and nycaloths: **DC 15** check
- Anuraag' soldiers, nycaloths and Reeva: **DC 17** check

Each character can choose how they escape the encounter - it can be Stealth, Athletics, Deception, creative use of abilities or magic items, etc. This is also a perfect opportunity for utilizing the **skill challenge** mechanic - in this instance, set the difficulty as **five** successes before **three** failures.

The rebel soldiers, as well as nycaloths, are damaged after handling the encounter alone - each of them receives full encounter damage. However, if Reeva is present everybody comes from the encounter unscathed.

Rebels will catch up to the characters during their encounter with Ramya at the Vochalam temple grounds.

If the characters stay, you can play these encounters as full combat scenarios or, if you are short on time, bring them down to one check and roleplay between the two parties.

Each of the characters has to make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take damage, depending on the accompanying party. You can find encounter damage listed in each encounter.

- Anuraag's soldiers: full encounter damage on failure, half on success
- Anuraag's soldiers and nycaloths: half encounter damage on failure, quarter on success
- Anuraag's soldiers, nycaloths and Reeva: zero damage as Reeva uses her magical powers to effectively get rid of the opposition



Sample file

Traveling Kalakeri table

d10	Encounter
1	The group encounters a group of monks from the Ashram of Niranjan. They speak of the noble sadhu Niranjan who can grant the characters enlightenment and help them escape from the Mists. If the characters are interested, the monks give each of them one philosophical work about Ramsana. If somebody tries to read it, he has to make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or gain the following **flaw**: "I'm obsessed with the idea of visiting Niranjan and gaining enlightenment."
2	The characters pass a small ruined village. Most of the people hide when they hear strangers approaching. Others look at the passing forces with fear in their eyes. It is clear from the state of the village that it was nearly reduced to rubble several times over the past decade. If the characters ask any villager about the situation, they will reluctantly say that the village is in an unstable area (constantly passing between the Loyalists and Rebels), so they keep their allegiance to whoever owns it at the time, and they are sick of it. They are also very short on food - rice fields were burned during the recent battles, so they are thankful for any nourishment the characters can provide. If the characters feed the villagers (they will need at least 15 rations or some other means to get food), they give them a small item in return - a *rope of mending*.
3	The characters spot another host of Ramya's forces moving along the road. It consists of eight soldiers - four **loyalist wights**, and four **veterans**. If the group wants to bypass them or set up an ambush, they have to make a DC 13 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. Otherwise, resolve the combat as normal. **Encounter damage:** 2d8 plus d6 slashing and 2d6 necrotic damage.
4	The characters encounter a **stone giant** guru Jalendu. He offers them to pass his test and open their minds to enlightenment. But he also warns that the price of failure is hard - petrification. A willing character can roll three subsequent Wisdom saving throws with DC 15. If they pass at least two of them, they receive the benefits of the Intellect Fortress spell for eight hours. If they fail, they are subjected to the Flesh to Stone spell, save DC 15. **Tip:** if the characters have no means to save their friend from petrification, you can include a short quest to find basilisk's blood in the rainforest nearby so they can be restored to normal.
5	The characters and their companions are attacked by a hungry **hydra** while passing the Lake of Saffron. **Encounter damage:** 5d10 slashing damage
6	The characters find a pile of dead bodies left after one of the battles between loyalists and rebels. If they search the corpses for anything useful, they find 50 gp, a ring with malachite gemstone and two vials of **serpent venom**. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
7	The group suffers from mosquitos as they pass the dense rainforest. Characters must succeed on DC 12 Constitution saving throw or contract **seizure**. The creature is overcome with shaking. The creature has disadvantage on Dexterity checks, Dexterity saving throws, and attack rolls that use Dexterity. It lasts until removed with spell like *lesser restoration* or if the creature succeeds on the save, which is repeated after short or long rest.
8	The group meets mysterious traveling merchant Estavan (**oni** in disguise), a planar traveling merchant who is searching for rare spices, but also has several interesting things to sell. Estavan has the following items in his shop: - **bag of tricks, grey** - 550 gold - **dust of dryness** - 250 gold - **immovable rod** - 800 gold - **rope of climbing** - 500 gold - **wind fan** - 450 hold Estavan is not really interested in Kalakeri's politics, and when asked about his opinion will say something like "Eh, all Domains are the same... Reflections of the twisted creatures punished for their sins. But some of them hold remarkable stuff if you know where to look. Do you have anything unusual for trade or see anything you like in my wares?"
9	Guerillas who oppose both loyalists and rebels try to ambush the characters. The group consists of three **gladiators** lead by an **assassin**. They lay an ambush in thick bushes alongside the road. If the character passes a DC 14 Perception check, they spot an ambush. If the characters capture any of them alive, guerillas will tell that they are part of the true Rebellion - the one which was formed by the people of Kalakeri and opposes all Vasavadan siblings, who brought nothing but destruction to this land. **Encounter damage:** 2d8 plus 2d6 piercing and 2d6 poison damage.
10	Characters stumble upon old ruins in the forest. If they examine them, with a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check they can ascertain that the ruins are decades old and a small village used to stand here, destroyed in the fire. As they explore the ruined village, a **gallows speaker** rises from the ground and starts retelling the fate of the villagers in many different voices while attacking the characters. This village pledged their loyalty to Arijani, and when the Loyalists captured it, Ramya gave the order to put each living being inside to the sword and set the houses on fire. **Encounter damage:** 3d8 psychic damage

Sample file

Nycaloth

Large fiend (yugoloth), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 123 (13d10 + 52)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Intimidation +6, Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Abyssal, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The nycaloth's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. The nycaloth can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *darkness, detect magic, dispel magic, invisibility (self only), mirror image*

Magic Resistance. The nycaloth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The nycaloth's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The nycaloth makes two melee attacks, or it makes one melee attack and teleports before or after the attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (2d4) slashing damage at the start of each of its turns due to a fiendish wound. Each time the nycaloth hits the wounded target with this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 5 (2d4). Any creature can take an action to stanch the wound with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) slashing damage.

Teleport. The nycaloth magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Gallows Speaker

Medium undead, any alignment

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 85 (19d8)
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4
Skills Perception +7
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages any languages its component spirits knew in life
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Divination Senses. The gallows speaker can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane and vice versa.

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

Unusual Nature. The gallows speaker doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Foretelling Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage, and the target must roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from the next attack roll or saving throw it makes before the start of the gallows speaker's next turn.

Suffering Echoes. The gallows speaker targets a creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 19 (3d12) psychic damage, and waves of painful memories leap from the target to up to three other creatures of the gallows speaker's choice that are within 30 feet of the target, each of which takes 13 (3d8) psychic damage.

Sample file

Peril at the temple grounds

Once the characters reach the temple grounds, read to them:

> Your long and exhausting journey is finally rewarded. As you turn your heads up, you see a dark spot amidst surrounding lush mountains - the fabled Greater Vochalam Temple. The visible part of the temple shows the significant wear of time, but the statues at the entrance look intact. Above, you see shadows of wyverns soaring through the skies.

If the characters are accompanied by the Rebels, read also:

> You see a soldier clad in golden armor decorated with wyverns and lotuses who suddenly dives from above on a wyvern. She unleashes a powerful wave of necrotic energy from her hands which destroys all of the rebels who accompanied you. Shocked, you see as she steps down, dismisses the wyvern, pulls the helmet off and reveals her face - a middle aged, dark-haired woman with olive skin, intricate jewelry and intense look in her eyes.
> "Let me introduce myself", she says. "My name is Ramya, and I am maharani of this land. Now that we have some privacy, I intend to ask you - what business do you have at the sacred grounds?"

If the characters are alone, read only the introduction as Ramya descends from the sky on a wyvern.

Ramya's forces were watching the temple closely since Ranjan's departure, and her spies inside the rebel's forces warned her about the character's arrival with the Orb. She decided to handle the matter personally, and arrived at the temple grounds riding a wyvern. She also called reinforcements - a small host of loyal soldiers, who were in positions to observe the temple nearby and will arrive in ten minutes. Seeing the return of the Orb, she understands that her solution of keeping the power off the hands of her enemies is not working - and thus, decides to use its power for herself to end the war.

Ramya stands with her blade drawn during the conversation.

- If nycaloths accompany the characters, they remain hidden and attack Ramya if the conversation ends poorly.
- If Reeva is accompanying the characters, she will stand by their side, fiercely looking at her sister.

The characters should find their way out of this new peril. The conversation depends greatly on their companions and how convincing they are. Ranjan will help by telling the characters that Ramya values loyalty above all other things in the world.

Remember, if the characters let go of Ramya's spy earlier, they get a +3 bonus to their Social checks with her. If there is a paladin in the group, his oath of loyalty to Ramya can also help the characters to end the conversation in their favor.

If the characters admit they are working for Rebels, and mention taking money from Arijani, Ramya will be furious - she assumes everybody should be loyal to her as the rightful heir to the throne and is unlikely to let the characters go peacefully.

If the characters were accompanied by Rebels, and successfully pass Social check versus Ramya's Insight (depending on their approach to the conversation), claiming they were forced to serve them, and express interest in working for her instead, she can make them a counter-offer - as much as Arijani promised and more.

Domain's downfall history

If asked about who started the war, Ramya will tell that she was proclaimed the rightful ruler by her father, and the land prospered under her rule, right until Arijani took it from her by betraying and murdering her. Characters can ascertain that she is telling the truth with DC 15 Insight check.

Option: Skill challenge

If you want to make this negotiation an even greater challenge, consider turning it into a skill challenge - for example, **five** successes against **three** failures.

At the end of the conversation, if it ended peacefully, Ramya says something like this:

> It was a nice talk, but I have other things to do. I located the rebel camp and my army is moving here. Now, I'm tired of this orb making a threat to my rule and being weaponized by my treacherous siblings. So listen to what you will do - you return this damned thing to its proper place to appease the Shuruaat, and then you use wish to make my brother and sister bow before my rule to end this war, once and for all. Do we have a deal?

If the characters ask Ramya how she learned about the orb in the first place, she will reply that, "a loyal arcane advisor with whom I consult from time to time told me that". Attentive players can suspect Caller's machinations here.

Sample file

Ramya Vasavadan

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)
Hit Points 180 (19d8 + 95)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +9, Cha +10
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Abyssal, Common
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. The death knight has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Marshal Undead. Unless the death knight is incapacitated, it and undead creatures of its choice within 60 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against features that turn undead.

Spellcasting. The death knight is a 19th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command, compelled duel, searing smite*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, magic weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, elemental weapon*
4th level (3 slots): *banishment, staggering smite*
5th level (2 slots): *destructive wave (necrotic)*

Actions

Multiattack. The death knight makes three longsword attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.

Hellfire Orb (1/Day). The death knight hurls a magical ball of fire that explodes at a point it can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. The sphere spreads around corners. A creature takes 35 (10d6) fire damage and 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reactions

Parry. The death knight adds 6 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the death knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Roleplaying Ramya Vasavadan

Ramya is driven maharani of Kalakeri and leader of the Loyalists. She is **death knight**. For more details about her, check "Ramya Vasavadan" entry in **Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft**.

Personality Trait. "There is loyalty, and there is treachery. In rule, there are no half measures."

Ideal. "I will regain my deserved glory even if I must scour the world with my wrath."

Bond. "I still love those who oppose me. The flames of righteousness provide the swiftest path to renewal."

Flaw. "None are truly trustworthy. I am utterly alone."



Sample file

Depending on the character's choices and their companions, the conversation can end in one of the following ways:

- **If Reeva is not present and the conversation ends with Ramya satisfied.** Ramya is satisfied with the group's answers and lets the characters go to the temple. One host of undead soldiers - eight **loyalist wights** led by **loyalist wight champion**, however, remains at the exit with orders to attack and kill the characters if they betray her.
- **If Reeva is present.** Ramya and Reeva attack each other and a spectacular battle ensues - Reeva is flying and throwing spells at Ramya, who swings with her sword and returns the favor. If the characters wish, they could join the fray or use the battle as a possibility to retreat into the temple. If the characters do not engage, Ramya wins the battle, but is gravely wounded (30 hp left and all spell slots of 3-5 levels are used). Nycaloths are defeated, and Reeva escapes using her invisibility and teleport, barely alive (10 hp left).
- **If nycaloths are present and the conversation ends poorly.** Nycaloths appear and attack Ramya in full force. The characters are free to join the fray or retreat to the temple. Nycaloths are destroyed, and Ramya is left with half hp and all spell slots of 4-5 levels gone.
- **If the conversation ends poorly, and no Rebels are left by the character's side**, Ramya attacks in full force, and the characters have very few chances. They can retreat to the temple - Ranjan tells them that the temple is warded with powerful divine magic and members of Vasavadan family cannot enter it.

GM Tip

Ramya, a **death knight** in full power is an incredibly dangerous opponent for the party. When running combat with her, keep in mind that she already used one 5-th level slot for destructive wave, and she will not use hellfire orb until her life is threatened. She has big plans for it - to set the Rebel camp on fire when she attacks it.

Development

Once the characters deal with Ramya and do their last preparations, they are ready to enter the Forbidden Temple of the Greater Vochalam. Proceed to **Act III**.

Sample file