

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® CAMPAIGN ADVENTURE
FORGOTTEN REALMS®

ANAUROCH

the empire of shade™

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FORGOTTEN REALMS

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INTRODUCTION

As scorching breezes swirl across the hot, burning sands of Anauroch, the very fabric of magic itself vanishes. Spells no longer work, once-powerful weapons lie inert, and even the haunted halls of long-forgotten ruins shudder as the ghosts and wraiths of their former denizens simply vanish. The Princes of Shade are preparing to march across the breadth of the land—and with the help of Shar's clergy, annihilate the Weave once and for all.

With magic silenced all across the Great Sand Sea, the Shades seem impregnable in their floating city. But someone must find a way to put a stop to their fell schemes, even if it means taking the battle into the scorching desert and confronting the shades on their own doorstep—without magical aid.

Anauroch: The Empire of Shade is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure designed for four 13th-level characters. Player characters will advance through 14th level and into 15th level during the course of the adventure, and perhaps reach 16th or 17th level by its conclusion.

preparation

You need four books to run this adventure: the *Player's Handbook* (PH), the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (DMG), the *Monster Manual* (MM), and the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting* (FR). Also, much of the information on hazards of the desert is based on rules introduced in *Sandstorm*. You don't have to have that book to enjoy the plot, but it's a good resource for desert-themed adventuring.

Throughout this book, abbreviations (often in superscript type) are used to denote game elements and other materials that appear in certain supplements. Those supplements and their abbreviations are as follows: *Complete Warrior* (CW), *Magic of Faerûn* (Mag), *Epic Level Handbook* (ELH), *Expanded Psionics Handbook* (EPH), *Fiend Folio* (FF), *Libris Mortis* (LM), *Lost Empires of Faerûn* (LE), *Monster Manual II* (MM2), *Monster Manual*

III (MM3), *Monster Manual IV* (MM4), *Monsters of Faerûn* (Mon), *Player's Guide to Faerûn* (PG), *Races of Faerûn* (Rac), *Sandstorm* (San), and *Underdark* (Und).

Although this adventure is a sequel to the previous two adventures in a series—*Cormyr: The Tearing of the Weave* and *Shadowdale: The Scouring of the Land*—you don't need to play through those adventures before running this one. *Anauroch: The Empire of Shade* works just fine as a stand-alone adventure.

We recommend that you review the information presented on Anauroch and the shades in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting* (pages 99 and 280, respectively) before running this adventure. You'll also find more detailed information about Anauroch in the appendix of this adventure.

This adventure uses a tactical format to describe encounters that are likely to result in combat. The adventure is divided into a narrative (the start of each chapter), in which encounters and location descriptions are presented in the traditional manner, and tactical encounters at the end of each chapter, in which specific battles are laid out in an easy-to-run format.

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HOW TO USE THE TACTICAL FORMAT

The keyed entries in the text present, in essence, a flowchart of the adventure. Locations or event-based encounters that result in a fight have a corresponding tactical encounter at the end of the chapter in question.

When the adventure narrative directs you to refer to a tactical encounter, simply turn to the indicated page.

The most obvious feature of each tactical encounter is the map of the room or area where the encounter occurs. A variety of text entries accompany each map: a Setup section, information to be read aloud to the players, and other details specifying features of the tactical area. Begin with the Setup section first, which describes the initial creature positions and circumstances of the battle. The remaining sections include creature descriptions and statistics, creature tactics, traps (if any), and other related information.

The encounters in this adventure are designed for use with *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® *Miniatures*. In some cases, a miniature you own might represent a character or creature perfectly. If you don't have the exact miniature, just substitute another miniature of the same size and tell the players what the miniature you're using represents.

HOW TO USE TACTICAL MAPS

As described on *DMG* 59, if a map feature covers more than half of a given square, the feature is considered to extend into that

square. If it covers less than half of a square, it doesn't extend into that square.

For example, if an area of light undergrowth skirts around the edges of a square, but the rest of the square is clear, then there's no extra movement cost to enter that square. If the undergrowth reaches past the middle of the square, the square costs 2 squares to move into.

Adventure Background

In -700 DR, while she was contributing to the Roll of Years, the seer known as Augathra the Mad began having dark visions. The *Book of the Black* was the result of those horrifying prophecies. Tormented by the Black Chronology she saw woven between the years, Augathra began wandering Faerûn, slowly being driven insane and earning her moniker.

After years of being lost, the *Book of the Black* came into the possession of the Dark Diviners of Windsong Tower, who retrieved it from the Fane of Shadows in 684 DR. Inspired by the *Book of the Black* and their own ability to see the future, the Dark Diviners of Windsong Tower deduced a coming weakness of Shar and penned their observations in a second tome, the *Leaves of One Night*.

Shar immediately cursed the Diviners' writings, and shortly thereafter, thieves in the employ of the Church of Shar stole the Diviners' copy of the *Book of the Black*, as well as the only copy of the *Leaves of One Night*. In the hope of recreating their work

coming from shadowdale

Groups who played through the adventure previous to this one—*Shadowdale: The Scouring of the Land*—might need an additional trail of bread crumbs to follow to reach the beginning of this plot. Here are some guidelines and advice on how to best achieve the transition between the two adventures.

First off, a number of clues point to the involvement of the Shadovars in the Shadowdale adventure. The most telltale of these is Esvele's letter from Prince Yder Tanthul. It not only clearly states the shades' involvement but also provides numerous clues to the next destination for the PCs—the remains of Windsong Tower in Myth Drannor. If the characters did not find the letter but managed to collect Eregul's *Windsong Towerkin ring*, it shouldn't be too hard to find a sage who can identify its origins.

If the group was unable to acquire either of these pieces of evidence, there are still obvious clues pointing to the Shadovars. The emissary Irphiina inhabits the lair of Alokkaire the lich as his guest. If the characters managed to parlay with her rather than merely slaughtering her, she readily admitted

to being a citizen of the City of Shade and in the service of Lord Telamont. If the PCs succeeded in driving off the shadow simulacrum of Prince Yder Tanthul, they might have acquired additional evidence of Shadovar meddling.

Even if the characters were unable to interact with either of these individuals, authority figures in Shadowdale ought to be able to recognize a shade corpse and deduce the complicity of the Shadovars.

What would remain at that point, then, would be an additional nudge in the direction of Windsong Tower rather than directly toward the desert. Simply arrange for the letter and ring from that adventure to fall into the characters' hands—either they find the items on another body (with the addressee's name changed on the letter) or some minor official (perhaps a military officer helping to clean up the town in the aftermath of the fighting) brings the items to the PCs as "findings of interest." If they still don't deduce where to go next, any of the remaining members of the leadership in Shadowdale can take a look at the clues and suggest that a journey to the tower is in order.

(and understanding what went wrong), the Dark Diviners left Windsong Tower. Raanaghaun Cormrael (named for a long-dead famous Netherese priest of Shar) returned to the Fane of Shadows to seek more answers. His sister, Shar Cormrael (named for the goddess herself), sought the Crypt of Augathra the Mad.

Neither returned.

In her quest to destroy the Weave and replace it with the Shadow Weave—and thereby destroy Mystra—Shar has instructed her followers to establish dead magic zones throughout Faerûn. In the first adventures in this trilogy, Shar's clergy attempted to establish dead magic zones in the Vast Swamp and in Shadowdale; both times, the PCs thwarted their plans.

Undaunted, Shar has guided her followers into an alliance with the shades, who also have little use for the Weave. Intrigued by what the Sharrans have proposed, the Princes of Shade decided to let them create their most ambitious dead magic zone yet—right atop Anauroch, covering all but the fringes of the great desert. Fascinated by the zone and interested in expanding it, the shades decide to seek out more information on their own. In the course of doing so, they stumble upon an intact set of the *Nether Scrolls* (just as Shar had intended all along). With the scrolls in hand, the shades are now ready to begin their conquest of all of Faerûn.

Adventure synopsis

Anauroch: The Empire of Shade offers PCs the opportunity to at last confront the ambitious machinations of the Princes of Shade, who have the power of Karsus himself within their grasp. The PCs must sift through history to determine what threat looms over the land, and then overcome the challenge of trekking through a hostile environment without the comfort of the Weave and its magic to aid them. To stop the shades from advancing their ambitions against the rest of the world, the characters must penetrate the very heart of the Empire of Shadow. Only by scattering the pages of the *Nether Scrolls* can they put a halt to the Shadovar scheme and prevent Shar from shattering magic forever.

Chapter 1: Windsong Tower. The characters explore the ruins of Windsong Tower in ancient Myth Drannor and learn that agents of the Shadovars were there very recently, searching for information on the Dark Diviners, the *Book of the Black*, and the *Leaves of the One Night*. The PCs discover that the shades accidentally found a set of the *Nether Scrolls*, in the form of a magic beech tree known as the *Quess Ar Teranthvar*, and took it back to their floating city.

Chapter 2: The Crypt of Augathra the Mad. Following some clues received by an ancient denizen of Windsong Tower, the PCs set off in search of the last known resting place of the famed seer who initially scribed the dark secrets of Shar's magic. They discover that Augathra has not died, but has existed as a prisoner of the terrible phaerimms for many centuries. After defeating the magic-eaters and speaking with Augathra, the PCs

determine that they must find the fabled Terraseer if they hope to stop the shades.

Chapter 3: Research and Developments. After combing through some of Faerûn's most complete libraries, the PCs at last know their next destination—the lost city of Oreme, a remnant of a civilization in Anauroch that predates even Netheril. Knowing they cannot brave the heat-scoured and magic-dead landscape of the desert without proper equipment, the characters visit Biradon, a traveling caravan city that roams the fringes of the sandy wasteland. Then they set out, seeking the hidden abode of the Terraseer.

Chapter 4: Beneath the White Towers. Next, the PCs must defeat a terrible abomination that has taken the Terraseer prisoner, and then learn what is needed to put a stop to the shades' scheme. Their success relies on an artifact that they must secure from well-guarded vaults deep beneath the desert. After battling the legendary thalud, they at last have the tools to complete their quest.

Chapter 5: Shadow Seashore. The characters' final confrontation leads them into the very heart of shade territory. They must find the *Quess Ar Teranthvar* and destroy it before the shades can complete their ritual. If they succeed, it is a mixed blessing, though for the same act that scatters the pages of the *Nether Scrolls*, they also destroy the last remnants of the Sharn Wall (see page 10), freeing the phaerimms completely.

Appendix 1: Anauroch describes the features of the Great Desert.

Appendix 2: Magic and Monsters contains new monsters, magic items, and other information useful in running the adventure.

Adventure hooks

Characters might become entangled in this adventure through a wide variety of methods.

Out of Shadowdale: Assuming that you have just played through *Cormyr: The Tearing of the Weave* and/or *Shadowdale: The Scouring of the Land*, the PCs have presumably recovered a *Windsong Towerkin ring* and are still following up on a scrap of parchment from a Sharran tome known as the *Book of the Black*. Clues they gathered there about the *Book of the Black* have led them to Windsong Tower.

Detour: The PCs have discovered a magic ring among some other treasure they recently acquired, and through their attempts to use it, they inadvertently whisk themselves to Windsong Tower.

Desperate Summons: Player characters with some allegiance or connection to a good-aligned organization (the reformed elf kingdom of Myth Drannor, the Harpers, the Purple Dragons of Cormyr, the Church of Lathander, or a prestigious order such as the Knights of the Chalice) receive a summons from an ally or superior. This person has learned from a reliable source that the shades are up to no good in Myth Drannor, and he asks (or orders) the characters to go to Windsong Tower and find out what they're up to.

WINDSONG TOWER

Myth Drannor, once known far and wide as the City of Song, has lain in ruins for centuries in the depths of Cormanthor Forest. Sheltered by blueleaf, shadowtop oak, and weirwood trees, the silent stones have waited, serving as homes to small creatures as well as monstrous beings of various kinds. But at long last, living beings have come to reclaim the fabled city and restore it—if not to its former glory, then at least to a functioning settlement. The moon elves, descendants of Myth Drannor's founders, have returned to Cormanthor to raise it once again as the capital of that nation.

But their efforts have not gone unchallenged. The Army of Darkhope, led by Scyllua Darkhope, Castellan of Zhentil Keep and High Captain of the Zhentarim, was charged with the destruction of the newly risen Myth Drannor. With its allies—first the Masked Brigades (the combined forces of the drow House Jaelre and the Auzkovyn clan), and later the Church of Shar and the drow of House Dhuurniv—a portion of Scyllua's army fought numerous engagements with the recently formed Army of Myth Drannor in a conflict known as the Cormanthor War. Skirmishing in the forest around Myth Drannor has been constant, and when the two Chosen of Mystra who were aiding Myth Drannor's forces left to lend support to Shadowdale, the war began to turn against the elves. But the defeat of the Zhents and their allies at Shadowdale has rallied the troops of Myth Drannor, and with their forces once again bolstered, they have resumed their zealous defense of the rebuilding city.

Now that they have defeated the Zhents and the Shadovars (see *Shadowdale: The Scouring of the Land*), the PCs must keep

the enemies from utilizing the *Nether Scrolls* in their nefarious plans. Thus, their next stop is Myth Drannor, where the only remaining full set of the *Nether Scrolls* lies below Windsong Tower. The Shadovars have beaten the PCs to the punch, however, and the scrolls are already gone. The scrolls' last remaining guardian, Darcassan the Farseer, has been using *dream* spells to project a cryptic message of loss, in the hope of attracting adventurers who will return the scrolls.

(For those who are interested, *Lost Empires of Faerûn* contains detailed information about the *Nether Scrolls*. None of that information, however, is important to how this adventure plays out.)

The PCs are assumed to possess one or more *Windsong Towerkin rings*. Each of these rings causes any *portal* within 5 miles of Myth Drannor's center to transport the wearer to Windsong Tower rather than to its usual destination. Thus, all the PCs need to do is find a functioning *portal* in order to enter the tower (see page 11).

EVENT 1: Arrival at Myth Drannor

Myth Drannor has again become a bustling place. Graceful spires rise above the treeline, and a few of the outlying structures on the forest floor appear to have been fully restored or replaced with newer buildings. Much of the city seems covered in tents—a testament to the number of troops stationed here these days. Tents of all sizes, shapes, and colors stand in most open spaces inside the city. Smoke rises from cookfires here and there, and some tent flaps stand open to reveal eateries, makeshift shops, and the workplaces of crafters. Armed patrols move through the restored streets and byways between tent rows and walk the perimeter of the city, keeping a sharp eye out for enemies.