

SHADOWS OF THE DUSKBANE

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SHADOWS OF THE DUSKBANE

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 5TH TO 7TH LEVEL

SHADOWS OF THE DUSKBANE IS A PATHFINDER Second Edition adventure for three to six characters of 5th to 7th level, optimized for a party of four 6th-level characters. In the Plane of Shadow, a cartographer's quest to map her ancestor's tomb has gone awry. Now, she finds herself caught between a vengeful shadowfey noble and the misguided protection of her forebearer's restless spirit. Can the party navigate the treacherous shadows, rescue the cartographer, and unravel the centuries-old curse that binds these souls to their twilight prison? This adventure takes place in Cartosia, but the names of people and places can be changed to place this adventure in any setting with access to a Plane of Shadow or the equivalent across a variety of campaign settings.

BACKGROUND

Amidst the Plane of Shadow's ominous expanse, the tomb of Sir Morleth Duskbane stands as a monument to tragic love and bitter vengeance. Centuries ago, for a purpose lost to history, Morleth ventured into this umbral realm. His quest brought him face to face with Lady Cyrielle Blackbracken, the self-styled Mistress of Twilight Thorns.

Cyrielle, a capricious shadowfey noble, found herself captivated by Morleth's mortal vitality. She offered him power beyond measure and a place by her side, but Morleth's devotion to his wife, Elisandre, never wavered. Scorned, Cyrielle wove a curse of cruel precision: upon his death, Morleth's spirit would be bound to the Plane of Shadow, his tomb a prison between worlds. Separated from his beloved in death, Morleth succumbed to delusional grief.

Time passed, and myth became legend. In the Universe, the name Duskbane faded from memory, save for a few fragmented tales and a single family line. It is from this lineage that Qadira Sia, a cartographer of some renown, traces her ancestry. Driven by the whispers of her bloodline and the allure of uncharted realms, Qadira set out to map the location of Morleth's tomb and uncover the truth of her fabled forebearer.

An ancient oak, its roots straddling the threshold between planes just the walls of the town of Mistwatch, served as Qadira's gateway into the gloom. Armed with a spool of enchanted silver thread to mark their path, she and her companions stepped into the Plane of Shadow. Unbeknownst to them, Cyrielle's vigilant gaze had already fallen upon their expedition. In Qadira, the shadowfey noble saw the ghost of her centuries-old humiliation reborn, and her fury would be swift.

Some days ago, Qadira's expedition reached the tomb after being harried by Cyrielle's forces. Exhausted and desperate, they hoped to find shelter within its walls while plotting their next move. Instead, they encountered the spirit of Sir Morleth Duskbane. Upon seeing Qadira, whose resemblance

to his wife Elisandre struck something in his broken heart, Duskbane flew into a protective fury. Convinced her companions meant her harm, he attacked with devastating force. Despite Qadira's pleas, Duskbane cut down her fellow expedition members one by one, his spectral blade passing through their attempts to defend themselves. In the aftermath, he gently led a horrified Qadira into the tomb's inner chamber, speaking to her as Elisandre and promising to keep her safe from any who would separate them. He has held her there since, his grief transforming an act of violence into a cherished reunion in his mind.

Now, Morleth stands vigil over Qadira, vigilant in the expectation of another assault from Cyrielle. In his delusional state, he refuses to release his "Elisandre" back to a world he believes has already forsaken her. Trapped between Morleth's misguided guardianship and Cyrielle's vengeful pursuit, Qadira finds herself unable to act amid the centuries-old feud. As the Mistress of Twilight Thorns gathers her forces for another onslaught, Qadira's fate hangs by a thread as tenuous as the one that followed her into the darkness.

GETTING THE QUEST

The Wayfarer's Guild, housed in a grand stone building with arched windows of colorful stained glass, is a destination for explorers and cartographers in the town of Mistwatch and the surrounding region. Recently, hushed conversations and worried glances have replaced the usual buzz of excitement within its halls. The disappearance of Qadira Sia and her expedition into the Plane of Shadow weighs heavily on the guild's members.

Whether they have an existing connection or simply inquired after local rumors, the party's involvement begins when they receive an urgent summons from Guildmaster Seldra Crowfly (she/her aiuvarin elementalist; *Pathfinder Monster Core*). Upon entering her office, they find her in deep discussion with Finch Namzanza (he/him halfling troublemaker; *Pathfinder Monster Core*), Qadira's research assistant.

- Qadira, one of the guild's most promising cartographers, embarked on an expedition to map Sir Morleth Duskbane's tomb in the Plane of Shadow.
- They entered through an ancient oak tree, known locally as the Darkoak, that grows just beyond Mistwatch's walls. Its roots straddle the threshold between planes, creating a pathway to the Plane of Shadow.
- Qadira held a lifelong fascination with her family's connection to Sir Morleth Duskbane and was determined to map his final resting place in the Plane of Shadow, which local legend held was not distant from the Darkoak. Aside from Qadira's personal motivations, the guild's interests lay in determining if conventional cartography

methods could be applied to the Plane of Shadow, potentially revealing valuable insights on extraplanar mapping.

- The expedition was expected back 48 hours earlier — it was only supposed to last five days at most.
- The longer Qadira and her team remain in the Plane of Shadow, the greater the risk to their lives and minds.

Finch, fidgeting with a spool of silver thread, adds:

- The expedition carried Dario's Thread, a magical wayfinding thread that should have guided the expedition back to safety in the event that they got lost.
- The thread creates an unbreakable, near-invisible line that can be used to retrace one's steps.
- While the thread's magic is still active as it hangs from the hole in the oak, something is presumed to be preventing Qadira and her party from returning. The Guild hopes the party can follow this thread to track down Qadira.

Seldra offers 700 gp for the safe return of Qadira and any surviving expedition members, as well as an additional 300 gp for the recovery of Qadira's maps and notes. A character who succeeds on a DC 17 Perception check to Sense Motive senses that Seldra is holding something back. If pressed with a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check to Request, she reveals that another guild team sent to investigate has also gone missing, raising fears of a greater threat within the Plane of Shadow.

INTO THE PLANE OF SHADOW

The Wayfarer's Guild provides the party with detailed directions to the Darkoak, which stands just a few-minute trek beyond Mistwatch's eastern wall. As the party approaches the ancient tree, read or paraphrase the following:

Before you stands an ancient oak tree, its massive trunk gnarled and twisted with age. Unlike the vibrant foliage surrounding it, the Darkoak's leaves are a muted grey. Deep furrows run along its bark, creating hypnotising, shadowy patterns. At its base, a hole large enough for a person to crawl through yawns open, its edges smooth and worn. From this opening, a gossamer-thin silver thread emerges, glinting faintly in the dim light.

The party can follow Dario's Thread into the Darkoak. As they pass through the trunk and into the Plane of Shadow, read or paraphrase the following:

The world around you seems to blur and shift, colors bleeding away until everything is cast in shades of grey. The air is a damp shroud. Shadows seem to move of their own accord at the corners of your vision, and sounds become muffled, as if heard through water. You emerge on the other side of the tree, but the landscape has transformed. The familiar surroundings of Mistwatch have been replaced by a twisted, shadowy reflection. The Darkoak stands behind you, but here its branches are bare and its bark is black as night. Ahead, Dario's Thread stretches out into the gloom, a thin silver lifeline.

After emerging into the Plane of Shadow, the party can begin following Dario's Thread. This silvery lifeline stretches out before them, occasionally twisting around shadowy obstacles or passing through areas of deeper darkness.

As the party travels, describe the unsettling nature of the Plane of Shadow—a muted, twisted reflection of the Universe. Familiar landmarks appear distorted, and distances seem to shift unpredictably. Sounds are muffled, and an oppressive silence hangs in the air, broken only by occasional whispers that seem to come from nowhere and everywhere at once.

PLANE OF SHADOW ENCOUNTERS

For every two hours of travel, roll a DC 18 flat check. On a success, the party triggers an encounter from the Plane of Shadow Encounters table. Additionally, at GM discretion, an encounter may be triggered if the party makes excessive noise or light in this realm of darkness.

PLANE OF SHADOW ENCOUNTERS

d6 Encounter

The path ahead is choked with shadowy, thorned vines. The area is difficult terrain, and creatures moving through it take 4d6 piercing damage with a DC 22 basic Reflex save (a level 4 simple hazard). These vines seem to react to emotions, growing more aggressive when exposed to fear or anger. A creature can move through the vines unharmed by succeeding at a DC 25 Survival check, a DC 25 Acrobatics check, or a DC 18 Occultism check to control their emotions.

Powerful winds carry disembodied whispers that attempt to lead the party astray. Each character takes 4d8 mental with a DC 21 basic Will save, hearing the voices of their deepest fears.

Two [tomb jellies](#) (*Pathfinder Monster Core*) begin to silently trail the party, disguised as their own shadows. If unnoticed, they wait for an opportune moment, such as when the party stops for a brief rest, to launch a surprise attack.

The party stumbles into a nesting ground for web lurkers. The route directly ahead of them is trapped with a [web lurker noose](#) (*Pathfinder Bestiary*). Six [web lurkers](#) (*Pathfinder Bestiary*) then emerge from the gloom and attack the party.

The party is pursued by five [dire wolves](#) (*Pathfinder Monster Core*). One of the wolves' eyes glow bright orange, and it drips a steady stream of foam from its jaws.

A faceless rider atop a [nightmare](#) (*Pathfinder Monster Core*) blocks the path, gesturing for tribute. If the party offers an item worth at least 15 gp or more value, the rider nods and disappears into the shadows; if they refuse, the rider attacks. The rider uses [wight](#) (*Pathfinder Monster Core*) statistics but can cast darkness at will, and both rider and nightmare can move through shadows as if by translocate once per round.

THE WATCHTOWER

After approximately six hours of travel, Dario's Thread leads the party to an ancient watchtower. As the party first approaches, read aloud:

An ancient watchtower is perched upon a squat hilltop before you, its walls of stone and wood weathered to a uniform ashen grey. Strange pink-blossomed trees surround the structure, their petals seeming to absorb what little light filters through the gloom. Dark, thorny vines snake up the watchtower's walls, their barbs gleaming with an unnatural sheen. Nearby, a cold firepit and some empty containers suggest this area was once a campsite.

The vines growing here are manifestations of the Mistress of Thorns's influence—her energy lingers. Evidence of violence becomes clear as the party enters the structure. Read aloud:

Wooden ladders ascend to an elevated walkway that runs around the tower's interior perimeter. A body dangles lifelessly from one of the ladders, its ankle caught between the rungs, while two more bodies lie crumpled on the platform above and three more cluster at its base. Their grey, desiccated flesh looks to bear numerous puncture wounds, and dark vines have entangled their forms. Discharged ration packs and other debris are further evidence of temporary settlement, though a wispy layer of shadow-stuff has settled over everything like dark frost.

The watchtower was the first major waypoint for both Qadira's expedition and the initial search party sent by the Wayfarer's Guild to find them. The remains belong to the search party, who arrived long after Qadira's party had moved onward and were ambushed here by Cyrielle's servants—shadowfey warriors who command thorny, poisonous vines. Their puncture wounds and desiccated flesh are courtesy of massive thorns and shadowfey poison, respectively, which can be learned by a party member who makes a successful DC 25 Medicine check or a DC 22 Nature check to Recall Knowledge.

Moderate Encounter: Animated Search Party. Shortly after the party reaches the scene, tendrils of shadow energy pulse through the vines surrounding the tower and the corpses. The bodies twitch, and then rise as six wights (*Pathfinder Monster Core*), their flesh interwoven with thorny growths. They attack immediately, stumbling forward in lurching movements until they are destroyed. During combat, the wights occasionally cry out in their former voices, shouting fragmented warnings about "the thorned ones" and "her servants" between attacks.

A thorough search of the area reveals clear signs of both groups. A character who makes a successful DC 17 Survival check or DC 20 Perception check can gather the following information:

A thorough search of the area reveals clear signs of both groups. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check can gather the following information:

- There is evidence of two separate campsites.
- Qadira's expedition left a fairly organized campsite, suggesting they departed in good order. Their firepit was properly extinguished, and supplies were cached systematically.
- The search party's camp shows signs of a hasty setup—they had just arrived when they were attacked.

Adjusting the Encounter. Add a wight for each PC beyond four; remove one if there are only three PCs. If the party is 5th level, the creatures have weak adjustments. If the party is 7th level, the creatures have elite adjustments.

Treasure: Search Party Supplies. The animated search party members carried useful items that remain on their persons. Among their possessions, the party can find two *moderate healing potions*, a *scroll of locate*, and 50 gp worth of various coins and small gems. Each member of the search party also carries a badge—a bronze compass rose with a stylized map etched onto its surface with geometric patterns—that identifies them as members of the Wayfinder's Guild. The backside of each badge is inscribed with the guild's motto: "Beyond Every Horizon."

THE CLIFFTOP

After following Dario's Thread for another eight hours worth of travel into the Plane of Shadow at a typical pace, the party discovers that the thread abruptly terminates near a ruined structure atop a cliff's edge. Read aloud the following:

WATCHTOWER



CLIFFTOP



The thread leads you to the edge of a sheer cliff face, where a weathered wooden structure perches, overlooking the gloom beyond. The shack lists slightly to one side, its walls warped by endless exposure to the shadow realm's oppressive atmosphere. The thread terminates at the shack's threshold. As you approach, three figures step out of the deeper shadows between the trees. They wear armor that seems woven from living thorns, writhing and shifting with their movements. Their faces are obscured by helm-like growths of black bark.

If the party does not immediately attack, read aloud:

"You tread where you do not belong," one of them speaks, voice like rustling leaves. "The others did not heed our warnings. Neither the cartographer, nor those who followed. Turn back now, or join them in their fate."

Moderate Encounter: The Thornweavers. The shadowy figures are shadowfey servants of Cyrielle. They will engage in brief dialogue if the party attempts to negotiate, at most potentially explaining that the party finds themselves in the territory belonging to the Mistress of Twilight Thorns and her Court, and that the cartographer they seek meddles in their Mistress's love affairs (an unforgivable transgression). Ultimately, however, the Thornweavers have a limit to their patience and a diplomatic resolution is not possible here; combat can only be avoided if the party agrees to retreat back the way they came. Sneaking past these guards requires all party members to succeed at DC 20 Stealth checks. The Thornweavers visually appear as dark gray-skinned elves, and use **duskwalker ghost hunter** (*Pathfinder Monster Core*) statistics with the following changes:

- They have the fey trait instead of the human or humanoid traits.
- Their weapons are wreathed in thorny shadow-stuff, dealing an additional 2 void damage.
- They can cast ranger's bramble (DC 21) once per day.
- They can Sneak at their full Speed in areas of dim light or darkness.

Adjusting the Encounter. Add a Thornweaver for each PC beyond four; remove one if there are only three PCs. If the party is 5th level, the creatures have **weak adjustments**. If the party is 7th level, the creatures have **elite adjustments**.

Morale. When all but one Thornweaver is defeated, the final Thornweaver attempts to flee into the darkness. If captured and interrogated, a Thornweaver might reveal the following information:

- Qadira escaped their pursuit, fleeing toward Duskbane's tomb. "The knight's spirit shields her now, though his protection is... misguided."
- The party is trespassing in the lands of Cyrielle, Mistress of Twilight Thorns.
- Cyrielle's obsession with Sir Duskbane is well-known among her servants. She visits his tomb often, trying to break his will. "Even in death, his rejection burns her."

- The Mouth of Cyrielle, their mistress's most powerful servant, has been dispatched to claim Qadira. "She who speaks with our lady's voice comes. The knight's protection will not last."
- A Thornweaver will only reveal directions to Duskbane's tomb if thoroughly deceived with a successful DC 25 Deception check. Even then, they provide this information with obvious reluctance, as if fighting against a compulsion to keep the tomb's location secret.

This outpost served as a temporary camp for Qadira's expedition during their journey to Duskbane's tomb and the location of the expedition's first major confrontation with Cyrielle's forces four days ago. Though Qadira's group managed to fend off the assault, one of the retreating Thornweavers escaped with their spool of Dario's Thread. Recklessly, the expedition decided to press onward toward the tomb, despite the setback. As the party surveys the area, they notice similar signs of camp are present here, as they were at the watchtower.

When the party enters the shack, read aloud:

The weathered structure consists of two connected rooms. Various supplies and equipment are scattered about—broken surveying tools, discarded ration packs, and a few empty barrels. In the larger room, faint silvery threads of magic trace geometric patterns across the wooden floorboards, their glow pulsing weakly in the gloom. The patterns seem to spiral toward a central point.

The silvery threads are part of a traditional Guild spell of protection magic, used to create a small pocket dimension for securing valuable items. As a failsafe, Qadira used this spell to leave behind a note for any pursuing Guild members who may be sent after her. If the party collected a guild badge from the search party at the watchtower, they may quickly realize that the pattern on the floor is consistent with the pattern of the stylized map etched onto the guild badges. If a badge is placed at the centre of the spell's pattern and the Guild's motto (Beyond Every Horizon) is spoken aloud, a shoebox-sized tear opens in reality to reveal a pocket dimension, within which a single folded piece of paper lies. The paper reads:

To my fellow Wayfarers,

If you're reading this, our expedition has met trouble. We were ambushed at this outpost by servants of some shadowfey noble—creatures with armor of living thorns. Though we drove them back, one of them stole our thread, and so its line was severed. While we could follow what remains back to the Darkoak, I cannot bear the thought of failure when we've come so far.

Local legend places the tomb within a day's travel northeast of this cliff. The tales speak of three distinct rocky outcrops we must pass—each taller than the last—followed by a valley thick with those strange pink-blossomed trees. Beyond this, they say, stands a sepulcher of black stone. We've glimpsed such landmarks through

the gloom. It's a fool's gambit to trust such signs, but they're all we have.

I know pressing onward is reckless. If you find this message, I'm sorry for not choosing the safer path. But we're close—I feel it. Though I fear we're being deliberately herded toward something. I do not fault anyone who no longer wishes to follow.

Gods guard your path. -Qadira

Alternatively, if the party does not possess a Guild badge or is unable to connect the dots, the pocket dimension can be forced open with a successful casting of dispel magic (3rd rank; counteract DC 20).

DUSKBANE'S TOMB

If the party was able to read Qadira's note, they can reach Duskbane's tomb after approximately eight hours at full speed on foot with a successful DC 15 Survival check. This check can be repeated, but failure adds an additional two hours of travel time with a corresponding likelihood of an encounter from the Plane of Shadow Encounters table. If the party has not read Qadira's note, the difficulty of the Survival check is 25.

When the party first approaches the tomb, read aloud:

A sepulcher of grey stone rises before you. The structure consists of two chambers—a rectangular antechamber adorned with a massive relief of a robed figure, and a larger circular chamber beyond. Four stone obelisks rise from opposite points of the sepulcher's facade, stretching toward the colorless sky. Several bodies lie scattered about the entrance.

The bodies here belong to the members of Qadira's expedition who were slain by Duskbane when they arrived.

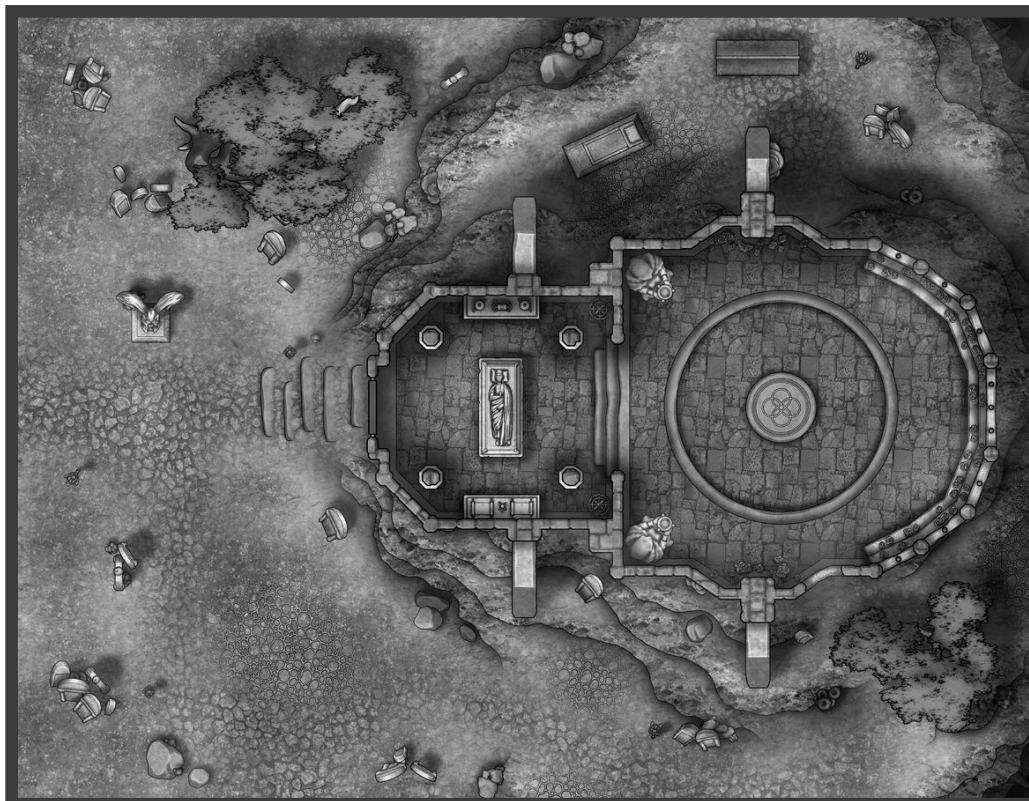
This encounter can play out in several different ways, depending especially on whether or not the party reaches Duskbane's tomb in good time (without failing a single Survival check). If the party makes it to the tomb in good time, only the spirit of Duskbane and Qadira are present at the tomb when they arrive, though the Mouth of Cyrielle is fast approaching. If the party instead is delayed in reaching the tomb, they arrive to find Duskbane and the Mouth of Cyrielle already engaged in a tense stand-off.

The rest of this section provides an overview of the key NPCs and their motivations so that the GM can be flexible in adapting to the actions of the party.

KEY NPCs

Qadira Sia (she/her human **guide**; Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide) is chained to a stone altar in the circular chamber within the tomb by chains of shadow. These chains can only be broken if Duskbane is destroyed (temporarily), Duskbane

DUSKBANE'S TOMB



is convinced to release Qadira, or if dispelled with a casting of dispel magic (5th rank; counteract DC 26). Her practical explorer's attire is stained with blood—not all of it her own. Despite witnessing the slaughter of her companions by Duskbane's hand, she maintains a remarkable composure, understanding that her survival depends on carefully navigating his delusions.

Qadira is primarily an academic, driven more by curiosity than adventure. She speaks precisely and often uses cartographic metaphors ("we need to triangulate our position here," "let's map out our options"), though now she chooses her words with extreme care, having seen how quickly Duskbane's mood can turn. She carries the guilt of leading her team to their deaths, yet still believes the knowledge gained here is worth preserving—a perspective that might frustrate more practical minds.

When interacting with the party, she'll try to subtly convey information without triggering Duskbane's paranoia. She's particularly haunted by how quickly her expedition's situation deteriorated, transforming from a scholarly pursuit into a blood-soaked nightmare.

Sir Morleth Duskbane. Duskbane appears as a tall knight in archaic ceremonial armor, its surface etched with scenes of his mortal victories that shift and change as he moves, sometimes depicting events as they were, other times as his broken mind remembers them. Thorny vines writhe through gaps in his spectral plate, evidence of Cyrielle's lingering curse. His eyes burn with pale violet fire beneath his helm, and his voice carries the weight of centuries.

Duskbane's madness manifests as an absolute conviction that Qadira is his wife Elisandre. He believes he rescued her from "shadow-touched brigands" (actually her fellow expedition members) who meant her harm. He paces throughout the interior of the tomb and around its perimeter endlessly, occasionally speaking to "Elisandre" about their imagined past together, or proudly recounting how he "saved" her from her companions. His memories of actual events are fractured—he remembers Cyrielle's betrayal but confuses the order of events, sometimes speaking as if it happened yesterday, other times as if recounting ancient history.

Typical phrases include:

- "The gardens bloom beautifully this year, my love. Though the roses seem... darker than I remember."
- "We must remain vigilant. The Mistress's thorns seek ever to pierce our walls."
- "Why do you speak of mapping, Elisandre? You know these grounds by heart."

Despite his madness, Duskbane retains his knightly bearing and courtesy. He refers to male party members as "good sir" and female members as "my lady," and may be reasoned with if approached respectfully. However, a clumsy suggestion

that "Elisandre" is Qadira is likely to send him into a cold fury. Duskbane uses **wraith** (*Pathfinder Monster Core*) statistics with the following changes:

- He treats any success on a saving throw against fear as a critical success and reduces the value of any frightened condition he gains by 1.
- His wraith touch appears as a spectral blade.
- He can cast *shield* and *dimensional assault* (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic*) at will but cannot use Grip of Fear.

If reduced to 0 HP, Duskbane is temporarily destroyed, reforming at the tomb after 24 hours.

The Mouth of Cyrielle. The Mouth of Cyrielle appears as a graceful but unsettling figure in flowing robes woven from black silk and thorny vines. Her face is a blank mask of polished obsidian that occasionally morphs to display symbolic expressions. She speaks with multiple voices layered together—her own and Cyrielle's among others. She uses **necromancer** (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*) statistics with **elite adjustments** (*Pathfinder Monster Core*) and the fey trait instead of the human or humanoid traits, though she has 2 Focus Points and can also cast *ranger's bramble* and wields a *staff of the dead* that can summon plants and fey using *summon undead* and adds the undead trait to any it summons.

The Mouth serves as Cyrielle's will made manifest. She speaks in royal we and often refers to her mistress in the third person ("Our Lady's patience wears thin," "The Mistress of Thorns claims what is hers"). She approaches every situation with cold calculation, seeking to exploit weaknesses in relationships and loyalties.

Typical phrases include:

- "How long will you play nursemaid to a madman's delusion, dear cartographer?"
- "Our Lady's thorns can embrace or imprison. The choice is yours."
- "Such persistence. Our Lady appreciates determination... when properly directed."

The Mouth seeks to eliminate Qadira on behalf of her Mistress's jealousy. While they may initially make an appearance of negotiation, the Mouth and the Thornweavers will not abide by a diplomatic resolution.

CONFRONTATIONS

If the party reaches the tomb without delay, they find Duskbane pacing the antechamber while Qadira remains bound in the circular chamber. Duskbane initially meets intruders with hostile suspicion but can be engaged in dialogue. Several approaches might succeed, though critically failing any of these checks causes Duskbane to become violently hostile:

- Revealing Qadira's true identity requires both evidence (such as her maps or guild badge) and two successful

checks, one DC 20 Diplomacy to Make an Impression and one DC 22 using any of Survival, Occultism, or Religion. Duskbane initially rejects such claims as "cruel deceptions."

- Presenting evidence of Cyrielle's manipulation (DC 27 Deception or DC 25 Perception to Sense Motive) might work, but Duskbane must be convinced that Cyrielle's curse is affecting his perception of reality.
- Offering to help break Cyrielle's curse (DC 27 Diplomacy or DC 25 Occultism) appeals to his desire for redemption, though he fears leaving "Elisandre" unprotected.

The Mouth arrives with four Thornweavers (see page 6) as the party resolves negotiations with Duskbane. If Duskbane has been convinced of the truth, he fights alongside the party. If not, the party faces both threats. If given the chance for discussion, the Mouth attempts to manipulate the situation:

- She offers the party significant rewards for helping "free" Qadira from Duskbane's madness, Lying that the cartographer is only needed temporarily, and will not be harmed.
- She claims Duskbane's presence perpetuates blight on the region, and will continue to do so until he accepts Cyrielle's love.
- She Lies that Qadira's maps could bring order to the surrounding region.

The Mouth is not afraid of combat with Duskbane risking Cyrielle's wrath, as his spirit cannot be permanently destroyed in this fashion. Siding with the Mouth dooms Qadira to Cyrielle's vengeance. If the party is delayed in reaching the tomb, they arrive to find the Mouth already confronting Duskbane, each claiming rightful protection of Qadira.

In the event that the party faces off against both Duskbane and Cyrielle's forces, Duskbane and Cyrielle's forces generally attack each other first before the party, unless party members force their hand (such as if a combatant notices the party freeing Qadira and isn't in melee).

Fighting with Duskbane's assistance makes this a moderate encounter. Facing Duskbane as well makes this an extreme encounter. If the party distracts all the combatants, Qadira slips her bonds and either assists them with a *healing potion* or draws combatants away as they chase her. Facing Duskbane with the Mouth's assistance is a trivial encounter.

Adjusting the Encounter. Add a Thornweaver for each PC beyond four; remove one if there are only three PCs. If the party is 5th level, the Thornweavers and Duskbane have weak adjustments and the Mouth lacks **elite adjustments**. If the party is 7th level, the Thornweavers and Duskbane have **elite adjustments** and the Mouth instead has the statistics of a **demonologist** (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*); as a demonologist, she lacks adjustments, has power over fey and undead instead of demons, and instead of the *staff of the dead*

she wields a *greater mentalist's staff* that also has *entangling flora* as a 2nd-rank spell.

PUTTING DUSKBANE TO REST

A prominent relief on the tomb's wall depicts Duskbane taking a knightly oath, his sword raised toward a source of light—a clue suggestive of one of the means of Duskbane's salvation. If Duskbane can be convinced of Qadira's true identity, thus piercing his shroud of madness with a moment of clarity, a holy character who makes any act of casting divine magic (like even divine lance) upon his sword while he holds it, alongside a successful DC 18 Religion or DC 22 Occultism check, would give him a chance to break free. The thorny vines that entangle his form would burn away, and he could choose to finally rest. A character who surveys the tomb and makes a successful DC 17 Perception check or DC 20 Occultism or Religion check can infer this potential method of Duskbane's rescue.

AFTERMATH

The resolution of this adventure depends heavily on how the party handled the confrontation at Duskbane's tomb. If they managed to break Cyrielle's curse and allow Duskbane to find peace, his spirit finally departs for its eternal rest. If Duskbane was destroyed without breaking his curse, his spirit may eventually reform elsewhere in the Plane of Shadow, still bound to Cyrielle's will. The Mistress of Twilight Thorns might seek revenge against those who interfered in her affairs, potentially leading to future conflicts.

Should Qadira survive, her maps provide the Wayfarer's Guild with invaluable insights into the Plane of Shadow's geography. However, her experience leaves her changed—while still dedicated to cartography, she now focuses on safer pursuits within the Universe. The Guild strengthens its protocols regarding shadow realm exploration, implementing new safety measures based on the expedition's tragic outcome.

If the party sided with the Mouth of Cyrielle or failed to protect Qadira, they may find themselves marked by the Wayfarer's Guild as untrustworthy. Cyrielle's influence grows stronger in the region around Mistwatch, and more pink-blossomed trees begin appearing near the Darkoak.

If the party brings back Qadira or proof of her demise, the Wayfarer's Guild rewards the party as promised, though Guildmaster Crowfly may offer additional compensation for any recovered maps or journals.

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