

SIRE OF THE STORM



SIRE OF THE STORM

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 11TH TO 13TH LEVEL

SIRE OF THE STORM IS A FIFTH EDITION adventure for three to six characters of 11th to 13th level, optimized for a party of four 12th-level characters. High atop the Gorgoshal Heights stands an ancient temple complex, now home to the fearsome blue dragon Zolor Suneater. For generations, occupants of the Thalazzar Desert have lived in terror of his shadow passing overhead—a brief darkness that precedes destruction. Recently, Zolor has captured Mulricha Cloudspeaker, a storm sorcerer and linguist, forcing her to translate inscriptions that may unlock even greater power from the temple's storm-channeling architecture. Can the party infiltrate the dragon's lair to rescue Mulricha? This adventure takes place in Cartosia, but can be set in any remote desert region across a variety of campaign settings.

BACKGROUND

Millennia ago, the apex of the Gorgoshal Heights housed a temple to Thieng, deity of storms and revelation. The temple's architects employed crystalline matrices and enchanted stonework to channel the frequent lightning strikes that batter the mountain peaks. Though now partially ruined, the structure still hums with remnant energy during desert storms, occasionally emitting eerie blue pulses visible for miles across the Thalazzar Desert.

Zolor Suneater, a mature blue dragon with a superiority complex exceptional even by draconic standards, has claimed these ruins as his lair. The residual storm energy resonated with his innate affinity for lightning, and the elevated position provided an ideal vantage point from which to terrorize settlements across the Thalazzar. He has since expanded the complex, carving out additional chambers and reinforcing the existing structures to better suit a creature of his size and power.

Throughout his long life, Zolor has cultivated an obsession with his own image. He collects mirrors of all kinds, but particularly covets those with magical properties. His hoard includes mirrors capable of scrying, storing memories, creating illusions, and providing pathways to other planes. These varied reflective treasures line his lair's walls, allowing him to admire himself from any angle while expanding his magical capabilities. The most dangerous of these artifacts have transformed the souls of his previous victims into mirror wraiths—spectral entities bound to the reflective surfaces that serve as the dragon's unwilling sentinels.

Three months ago, Zolor attacked an archaeological expedition studying ancient desert civilizations. Among the survivors was Mulricha Cloudspeaker, a storm sorcerer whose innate magical connection to lightning intrigued the dragon. Rather than killing her, Zolor took her captive, forcing her to translate the temple's ancient inscriptions while keeping her as a servant in his lair.

Mulricha has reluctantly worked for her captor, deciphering texts that hint at the temple's original purpose. She has discovered references to rituals and architectural features that could be dangerous in Zolor's claws, though she has kept crucial details secret. Her knowledge of the lair's layout and Zolor's habits could prove invaluable to would-be rescuers—if they can reach her before the dragon makes his appearance.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are several reasons why the party might be compelled to ascend into the Gorgoshal Heights and confront Zolor in his lair. A few of these reasons are outlined below:

The Desperate Expedition. Mulricha's archaeological expedition was funded by the Antiquarian Society of Khemset, a scholarly organization with deep pockets and influential connections. Having lost contact with the expedition three months ago, they've hired the party to investigate. The Society offers 5,000 gp for proof of the expedition's fate and an additional 5,000 gp if any survivors can be rescued.

Desert Settlement's Plea. The oasis town of Qeth-Miran has suffered under Zolor's predations for years, paying tribute in gold and livestock to avoid complete destruction. Recent demands have become increasingly unreasonable, and the town's resources are nearly exhausted. The desperate townspeople pool their remaining wealth—4,000 gp and several magical items—to hire the party to end Zolor's reign of terror permanently.

The Storm Seer's Vision. A powerful diviner has experienced disturbing visions of Zolor harnessing newfound power that could extend his reach far beyond the desert. She believes the captured scholar is the key to preventing this catastrophe and offers the party a crystal ball and 3,000 gp to rescue Mulricha before Zolor can complete whatever ritual the visions foretold.

GENERAL FEATURES

Zolor's lair is a sprawling complex atop the Gorgoshal Heights, consisting of the ancient temple ruins on the plateau and an extensive network of caverns carved into the mountain itself. The dragon has modified the original architecture extensively, carving out new caverns and adding crystal formations throughout. Unless otherwise stated, the lair's features are described as follows:

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors. The temple ruins are constructed of weathered sandstone blocks, with walls reaching 20 feet in the main chambers though all ceilings have long

ago collapsed. The cavern system features rough-hewn walls reinforced with crystalline veins that pulse with faint blue light. Cavern ceilings vary from 15 feet in the smaller chambers to 60 feet in the main hoard areas. Floors throughout are a mix of ancient stonework and natural rock, worn smooth by centuries of use.

Light. The ruins receive natural light during the day, though many areas remain in shadow due to collapsed sections. The caverns are lit by the phosphorescent glow of crystalline formations and by enchanted braziers that burn with a cold blue flame. During thunderstorms, the entire complex flickers with intermittent electrical discharges channeled through the temple's ancient architecture and the crystal formations.

Crystal Formations. The combination of the temple's residual storm energy and Zolor's concentrated electrical essence over decades has transformed sections of the cavern walls into networks of blue-white crystal veins. These formations naturally absorb and store lightning from both the frequent mountain storms and Zolor's breath weapon, creating a living battery throughout his lair. The crystals pulse with stored energy and occasionally discharge small arcs of electricity. They are brittle—shattered with a DC 15 Strength check or 15 points of damage (AC 13)—but doing so releases a burst of electrical energy in a 5-foot radius, dealing 2d6 lightning damage to all creatures in the area (DC 15 Dexterity save for half).

Zolor's Mirror Collection. Mirrors of every size and style adorn the lair, from palm-sized hand mirrors to massive wall-mounted pieces taller than a person. While many are mundane treasures of silver, gold, and precious stones, scattered throughout are mirrors with magical properties—some store memories, allow scrying upon distant places, serve as portals to other planes, and other similar capabilities.

Mirror Wraiths. One of Zolor's most prized possessions is The Anzuram Glass—an ancient artifact that captures the essence of those who die within its proximity. The souls imprisoned within manifest as mirror wraiths: ghostly entities that appear as shimmering, semi-transparent versions of their former selves, but with their features inverted as if in a reflection. Their movements leave trailing afterimages like light refracted through a prism, and their forms occasionally flicker between normal and reversed orientations. When they speak, their voices echo with a metallic, hollow quality. Mirror wraiths use **wraith** statistics with the following modifications:

- They can attack two targets simultaneously with their Life Drain attack and it has a range of 15 feet.
- They have 90 hit points.
- **New Trait: Reflective Empowerment.** When within 10 feet of an exposed reflective surface (mirror, still water, polished metal, or certain crystalline formations), mirror wraiths gain advantage on attack rolls and their Life Drain deals an additional 1d6 necrotic damage. The wraith's form appears more solid and menacing when empowered this way, its reversed features becoming sharp and clearly defined.

- When reduced to 0 hit points, a mirror wraith shatters like glass before its essence is pulled back into The Anzuram Glass, where it reforms after 24 hours.

ZOLOR'S ABSENCE

Zolor Suneater follows a predictable pattern tied to the violent storms that frequently ravage the Thalazzar Desert. When the dragon senses a particularly powerful tempest forming, he abandons his lair to ride the storm front, feeding on lightning strikes to replenish his electrical essence and revel in the raw power of nature. These storm-hunting expeditions can last anywhere from several hours to a full day, depending on the storm's intensity and duration. Desert settlements have learned to recognize the signs of Zolor's absence. When dark storm clouds gather on the horizon and the dragon's silhouette is seen flying toward them rather than circling overhead, experienced desert dwellers know they have a brief respite from his predations. This knowledge is shared among caravan masters, traders, and anyone who regularly traverses the desert, as it represents the only safe window for movement through Zolor's territory.

A powerful storm system has just drawn Zolor away from his lair, providing the party with a window of opportunity to infiltrate the complex. The exact duration of his absence depends on the storm's strength and the GM's desired pacing for the adventure. The GM should time the dragon's return based on dramatic pacing and the party's progress. Subtle warning signs can build tension: distant thunder may grow closer, or occasional tremors might begin shaking the mountain. For maximum drama and tension, consider having the dragon return when the party has just rescued Mulricha or discovered his most valuable treasures, creating an urgent need for escape or a climactic confrontation.

The following areas are keyed to the provided map of Zolor's Lair:

1. PERCH

Wind whips across an elevated stone platform that juts out from the mountain peak like a natural podium. Dominating the center of this windswept perch is a macabre trophy—a massive brass pole driven deep into the stone, from which hangs a collection of sun-bleached bones, tattered banners, and corroded weapons. The remains sway and clatter in the wind, creating a grim percussion that echoes across the mountainside.

This elevated platform serves as Zolor's primary observation post and hunting perch. From this vantage point, the dragon can survey his territory for dozens of miles in every direction, spotting movement and selecting targets for his wrath.

2. TEMPLE RUINS

Broken walls of weathered sandstone rise from the plateau like jagged teeth, all that remains of the once-

grand temple. Partial structures surround a central courtyard, their roofs long since collapsed and interiors exposed to the desert sky. Ancient glyphs and relief carvings depicting storm clouds and lightning bolts are still visible on many surfaces, though centuries of wind and sand have worn them smooth.

These ruins serve as Zolor's surface domain and the remnants of the temple's original worship spaces. The dragon uses them primarily as a landing area when returning to his lair, though he occasionally sun-bathes here during calm weather. Mulricha is sometimes brought here under guard to study specific inscriptions. Characters who examine the carvings and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check can discern that the temple's architecture was designed to channel lightning into specific focal points. A character who understands Primordial or who makes a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check recognizes references to "the Eye of Thieng"—apparently the circular opening visible in the courtyard's center.

Encounter: Mirror Wraiths. Four **mirror wraiths** wander the ruins, former adventurers who challenged Zolor and met their doom. They appear suddenly and converge on the party, stepping out of crystalline formations throughout the ruins. They fight until they are destroyed.

3. THE EYE OF THIENG

A perfectly circular shaft, like a puncture wound in the earth, is present at the courtyard's center, its diameter spanning thirty feet. The edges are lined with concentric rings of carved symbols that spiral inward, and crystalline formations cluster around the rim like frozen waterfalls of blue glass. Faint electrical discharges occasionally arc between the crystals.

This ancient ritual shaft once served as the temple's primary conduit for channeling storm energy into the mountain's depths. Now it provides access to Zolor's underground lair. The shaft descends 80 feet to a rough stone floor below.

Descent. Climbing down requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, made with advantage if using climbing gear. The crystalline formations provide numerous handholds but occasionally discharge electricity—on a failed climbing check by 5 or more, the climber takes 1d6 lightning damage from accidental contact with charged crystals and must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid losing their grip and falling to the floor below.

4. OVERLOOK

A narrow ledge juts from the cliff face fifty feet below the plateau's edge. The stone here is worn smooth by centuries of wind and the repeated passage of massive claws. A yawning cave mouth opens into darkness beyond, its entrance marked by deep gouges in the rock.

This precarious ledge serves as the primary entrance to Zolor's underground lair. The dragon can easily alight here before entering his domain, but other creatures face significant challenges reaching this point.

5. NEST

This grand chamber has been carved to accommodate a dragon of considerable size. At its center rises a marble podium, its surface draped with silk cushions and tapestries in shades of sapphire and gold. Crystalline veins streak the walls, pulsing with stored electrical energy, while ornate mirrors of varying sizes are mounted at strategic angles—ensuring the chamber's occupant can admire himself from any position. The air carries the distinct ozone scent of lightning mixed with expensive perfumes.

Zolor has transformed this natural cavern into a resting place befitting his inflated sense of self-importance. The marble podium, carved from a single massive block, bears deep grooves from his claws. When present, Zolor spends hours here between hunts, preening and admiring his reflection.

Treasure: Royal Textiles. The silk cushions and tapestries adorning the podium are valuable plunder from destroyed caravans and conquered settlements. The collection includes a prayer rug woven with gold thread (worth 1,500 gp), three silk cushions embroidered with pearls (500 gp each), and a massive tapestry depicting an ancient sultan's coronation (worth 2,000 gp).



PLATEAU



INTERIOR LAIR



6. TREASURE ROOM

This chamber houses an eclectic collection of valuables. Weapons lean against the walls, their gleam dulled by dust. Ornate furniture pieces—divans, escritoirs, and carved screens—are stacked carelessly atop one another. Several mirrors have been relegated here, their surfaces turned to face the walls as if in disgrace.

This room serves as a repository for treasures Zolor considers beneath his primary hoard—items that are valuable but lack the prestige or power he demands for his personal collection. Three large mirrors rest against the northern wall, rejected from Zolor's collection. One shows its viewer as elderly and decrepit, another reflects everything except living creatures, and the third delays its reflection by exactly three seconds.

Treasure: Semi-Precious Storage. Among the relegated items: a +1 dagger with an unfashionably plain hilt, a golden scepter worth 750 gp (its gems are merely semi-precious), four *potions of healing*, two *potions of climbing*, and a collection of silver jewelry worth 500 gp that Zolor deemed "too common" for his tastes.

7. SAND BATH

Fine golden sand fills this circular chamber to a depth of several feet. The walls here are polished to a mirror sheen, creating an endless array of reflections. Crystalline formations jut from the sand at irregular intervals, crackling occasionally with static discharge.

Zolor uses this chamber for both relaxation and maintenance, rolling in the sand to polish his scales and clean between them. The sand also serves to absorb and distribute electrical energy across his body, creating a pleasant tingling sensation the dragon finds soothing.

Hazard: Electrified Sand. The sand retains traces of Zolor's electrical essence. Any creature entering the sand must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the start of each turn or take 3d10 lightning damage as energy discharges through their body. Creatures wearing metal armor make this save with disadvantage.

Encounter: Mirror Wraiths. Three **mirror wraiths** patrol this chamber, using the polished walls to phase in and out of view. They attack immediately and fight until they are destroyed.

8. TEMPLE GREAT HALL

Massive sandstone pillars rise from the cavern floor, their surfaces carved with intricate spiraling motifs. This grand chamber opens directly to the sky through the circular shaft above, allowing shafts of desert sunlight or moonlight to illuminate the ancient floor tiles below. Each

tile bears a different symbol—lightning bolts, clouds, rain, and wind—arranged in a deliberate pattern.

Once the heart of worship in this temple, the hall now serves as Zolor's audience chamber where he receives tribute and metes out judgment upon those who displease him. The opening above allows him to enter and exit dramatically during storms, wreathed in lightning. The six pillars were designed to channel lightning safely through the temple. During storms, they become dangerous—any creature within 5 feet of a pillar when lightning strikes must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 4d10 lightning damage. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals the pillars' purpose and the danger they pose. Mulricha and the party may ritually repurpose these pillars to create a lightning cage to trap Zolor (see page 7).

9. HOARD DISPLAY

Glittering treasures carpet this vast chamber in organized splendor. Coins of every mintage form carefully arranged dunes, while gems are sorted by color and size in crystalline bowls. Weapons and armor lean against the walls. Dozens of mirrors—some as tall as a person, others small enough to fit in a palm—are positioned throughout the space at precise angles, creating an infinite corridor of reflections. Ornate pedestals display the most prized pieces: crowns, scepters, and artifacts of power.

This is Zolor's primary hoard, meticulously organized to showcase his wealth and power. The arrangement allows him to survey his treasures from multiple angles simultaneously, feeding his narcissistic need to be surrounded by beauty and value.

Treasure: Zolor's Hoard. The hoard contains:

- 15,000 gp in various coinage
- Gems and jewelry worth 5,000 gp
- Art objects and rare books worth 3,000 gp
- Magic items: 3 rare items, 1 very rare item, and 1 legendary item (GM's discretion)
- A sealed scroll case containing documents about the "Shackles of the Storm Heretic"—the manacles currently binding Mulricha. The papers reveal these were created by an order of Arcane Wardens to imprison sorcerers who channeled "forbidden" elemental magic. The command word "Velkarii" is noted, along with a warning that failed attempts to remove them can permanently damage the wearer's connection to magic.

The Anzuram Glass. Positioned prominently on a pedestal of polished obsidian stands The Anzuram Glass—a mirror three feet tall with a tarnished silver frame decorated with writhing serpentine forms. Its surface ripples constantly like disturbed water, and ghostly faces occasionally press against it from within, their mouths open in silent screams. The mirror radiates palpable cold, and frost perpetually forms on the pedestal beneath it. Any creature that touches the mirror directly must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving



throw or have their soul partially drawn into it, taking 4d10 necrotic damage and gaining one level of exhaustion. Any creature that dies within 60 feet of the The Anzuram glass has their soul trapped within it, rising as a mirror wraith in 1d4 hours. The Anzuram Glass is virtually indestructible by conventional means—it is impervious to weapons and magic. However, scattered esoteric writings suggest it can be destroyed by "the reflection of its own malice"—possibly by turning its soul-draining power against itself, or by somehow forcing it to trap the soul of its current master. Destroying the mirror would release all trapped souls but also free every mirror wraith in the lair to act independently—no longer bound to Zolor's will.

10. MULRICHA'S QUARTERS

This chamber bears the remnants of more civilized times—pillowed seating and sleeping areas, a wooden table scarred by years of use, and shelves holding basic cooking supplies and preserved foods. Sitting at the table, a middle-aged woman with prematurely silver hair looks up at your entrance, hope and fear warring in her eyes. Heavy manacles of black iron encircle her wrists, connected by a chain that glows with faint runes.

This room serves as both prison and workspace for Mulricha Cloudspeaker, who has been Zolor's captive for three months. The dragon keeps her here when she isn't translating inscriptions in the temple above.

Mulricha Cloudspeaker. This storm sorcerer (CG she/her human **mage** with 38 hit points) was captured during Zolor's attack on her archaeological expedition. Exhausted and wary, she maintains her sanity through small acts of defiance and the hope of eventual escape. Her silver-white hair occasionally emits small static discharges when she's emotional, the only sign of her suppressed powers.

Mulricha wears magical manacles that prevent her from casting spells or using magical abilities. The shackles can be removed or managed in several ways:

- Picking the lock with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools
- Using dispel magic (DC 18) to suppress their enchantment for 10 minutes
- Speaking the command word "Velkarii" (which Mulricha doesn't know, but can be found in area 9)
- Disrupting the magical matrix with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check, causing them to deactivate
- Breaking them with a successful DC 30 Strength check

Each failed attempt to pick, break, or disrupt the manacles deals 1d6 psychic damage to Mulricha. Once convinced the party isn't working for Zolor, Mulricha eagerly shares the story of her capture, as well as the following information:

- Zolor typically returns from storm-hunting at sunset, entering through the Eye of Thieng (the circular shaft, area 3)
- The dragon spends an hour each evening in his sand bath (area 7), his most vulnerable time
- She's decoded ancient texts revealing that the remnants of the temple's pillars (area 8) can create a lightning cage, though she needs freedom to perform the ritual
- An artifact Zolor refers to as The Anzuram Glass is the source of the wraiths in his lair. The dragon is possessively infatuated with the mirror and is paranoid about it being damaged—he checks on it obsessively

THE LIGHTNING CAGE RITUAL

Mulricha's translations revealed how the temple's storm-channeling pillars can be weaponized. The ritual requires preparation and precise timing:

Preparation. Setting up the ritual takes approximately 10 minutes total. Mulricha or a character who has studied her notes must inscribe storm glyphs on each of the six pillars in the great hall (area 8) using any conductive material—blood, metallic ink, or crushed crystals from the lair. Each glyph requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. These checks cannot be repeated. The ritual's effectiveness depends on successfully inscribed glyphs:

- **6 glyphs:** Perfect cage—target cannot leave by any means, has vulnerability to lightning damage, is restrained, and takes 4d10 lightning damage at the start of each turn
- **4-5 glyphs:** Strong cage—target cannot leave by any means, has disadvantage on all saving throws, and takes 2d10 lightning damage at the start of each turn

- **3 glyphs:** Moderate cage—target cannot leave the circle, movement speed is 0, and takes 1d10 lightning damage at the start of each turn
- **1-2 glyphs:** Weak cage—target's speed is halved, cannot Dash, and takes 1d10 lightning damage when trying to leave the circle
- **0 glyphs:** The ritual fails completely

Activation. Once prepared, the ritual activates when a creature of sufficient magical power is present within the circle—such as Zolor—and when someone speaks the activation phrase in Primordial: "When Thieng's eyes close, the storm turns inward". Mulricha knows the activation phrase and can share it with the party.

ZOLOR'S RETURN

Zolor's arrival should create immediate tension and potentially force difficult decisions. The dragon's approach is heralded by several signs. Ten minutes before Zolor arrives, the crystals throughout the lair begin pulsing more rapidly. Five minutes later, distant thunder grows louder and the entire complex trembles. Finally, his massive shadow passes over the Eye of Thieng as he circles above.

Zolor enters through the Eye of Thieng (area 3) or the overlook (area 4), depending on where the party is located. He doesn't attack immediately—his ego demands he understand who dares invade his domain. He speaks in a voice like rolling thunder:

"Thieves? Assassins? Or merely fools? Speak quickly—I am curious which category of corpse you'll become."

If Mulricha is Present. Zolor's demeanor shifts to cold amusement. "Ah, my little scholar. Have you finally decoded the temple's greater mysteries? Or have these insects come to steal you away?" Mulricha might:

- Reveal she's discovered something valuable to buy time ("The temple holds power you haven't imagined")
- Defiantly claim she's "told the party everything," goading Zolor's paranoia
- Pretend to betray the party to maintain her cover ("They forced me to guide them to your treasures, master")
- Stay low and follow the party's lead, on their instruction

Potential Bargains. Zolor's arrogance and obsessions create openings for an extended dialogue. He might spare those who reveal the location of other dragon lairs or ancient storm temples. If the party claims expertise in magical mirrors, he could test them on his collection—failure means death, but success buys time. Mentioning his prized Anzuram Glass mirror provokes immediate engagement; claiming to know its true history intrigues him. Alternatively, engaging in subject-matter-expert conversation about local storm patterns impresses him enough for extended dialogue.

If negotiation fails (e.g. any conversational check such as Persuasion, Intimidation, Deception fails by 5 or more) or combat begins, Zolor fights tactically. He uses his lair actions

to channel lightning through crystals, flies through areas to force pursuit, retreats to the skies if reduced below half hit points. Zolor uses adult blue dragon statistics. As combat begins, The Anzuram Glass responds to its master's will, releasing three mirror wraiths that aid the dragon in combat.

AFTERMATH

The resolution of this adventure hinges on whether the party successfully rescues Mulricha and how they deal with Zolor. If Zolor is slain, his reign of terror over the Thalazzar Desert ends. Desert settlements can resume normal trade routes, and the tribute demands cease. The Antiquarian Society of Khemset pays the promised reward for Mulricha's rescue and proof of the expedition's fate. Should the party escape with Mulricha but leave Zolor alive, the dragon's fury intensifies. He increases his predations on desert settlements, blaming them for harboring his enemies. Mulricha's knowledge of the temple's defenses makes her invaluable to any future attempts against Zolor, and she willingly shares her insights with those brave enough to make another attempt. If Mulricha perishes during the escape, the secrets of the temple's rituals may die with her—unless the party recovered her notes. The Antiquarian Society pays only the lesser reward for confirming the expedition's fate. Without Mulricha's translations, Zolor cannot fully unlock the temple's power, buying the region time before he finds another scholar to enslave. The temple itself remains a place of power. If the lightning cage ritual was successfully demonstrated, word of this ancient defense might attract other interested parties—both those who would use it for protection and those who would exploit it for conquest.



REFERENCES

This work includes material taken from the System Reference Document 5.1 ("SRD 5.1") by Wizards of the Coast LLC and available at <https://dnd.wizards.com/resources/systems-reference-document>. The SRD 5.1 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>.

CREDITS

Written by: Alexander LeFort of Tavern Tales
Map by: Tom Cartos
Other Art: Shutterstock
Lamp, Dragon Art: Publisher's Choice Stock Art
InDesign Base Template: Nathaniel Roux