Dragon's Reach

"Dragon's Reach" is an adventure scenario for 6th level 5e characters set in the underground caverns of the Endless Warrens from the *City of Arches* sourcebook. This scenario works with any 5e-based system including D&D 2014, D&D 2024, *Level Up Advanced 5e*, *Tales of the Valiant*, or others. It can also be modified to support other fantasy RPGs.

This scenario is the second of three scenarios following the Brazier of the Nameless King, one of the three braziers able to unlock the vault holding an artifact known as the Key of Worlds. This scenario is part of the Key of Worlds campaign path in the *City of Arches* sourcebook. This campaign path begins with COA-1 *Scroll of Akrave*.

You can modify this scenario to run as a stand-alone adventure in any campaign or setting.

This Isn't a Typical Adventure

This scenario isn't laid out like a traditional adventure. Instead, it presents ingredients to use and a scaffold around which to build your own adventure for your own group, campaign, and story. This scenario gives you adventure hooks, histories, secrets and clues, notable NPCs, potential encounters, locations, and potential treasure.

Each section in this scenario suggests how to use these components.

Path to the Brazier of the Nameless King

This scenario is the second of three scenarios following the Brazier of the Nameless King. Two other three-scenario paths follow the Brazier of the Betrothed and the Brazier of Grayon. At this point, the characters possess one of the two items able to light the brazier – either the Sword of Irixthius or the Staff of Servlin – and know the locations of the three braziers after completing the *Lake of Monoliths* scenario.

If this is the first brazier the characters seek, they're likely 6th level. If this is the second brazier they seek, they're likely 9th level. Feel free to modify this scenario to increase the challenge if needed.

The Key of Worlds campaign path assumes another group seeks the braziers as well and completes whichever brazier the characters chose *not* to find. Two possible rival groups include the Knights of the Nameless King or the Children of Ibraxus.

Seek the Temple of the Nameless King

In the first scenario of this arc, *The Endless Warrens*, the characters learned the secret path to Dragon's Reach from either the fire giant Lord Drakanon or the fey lord Vestabelle. Now the characters must traverse Dragon's Reach and enter the chamber containing the Temple of the Nameless King – the location of the Brazier of the Nameless King.

As they cross Dragon's Reach, the characters learn that two twin silver dragons once ruled over the draconic graveyard and that one has been ensorcelled by a cursed magic item. This cursed dragon, known as Shimmer, and his cursed minions wage war against his sibling, Shine, hoping to use terrible necromancy to raise the ancient dragons of the Reach from their graves and use them to turn the lands above into a land of the dead.

The remaining silver dragon, Shine, asks the characters to deal with his sibling – for he cannot raise a claw against his own kind, even cursed. In return, Shine offers passage to the cavern containing the Temple of the Nameless King and the blackfire brazier held within.

Scenario Background

For tens of thousands of years dragons ruled over several massive caverns in the Endless Reaches and the skies above. When they reached a certain age, these dragons found their way deep into the mountain and laid their souls to rest in Dragon's Reach. Within the past two centuries, two silver dragons, Salvenus the Shine and Verunathan the Shimmer, took it upon themselves to watch over Dragon's Reach along with several half-dragon priests and a clan of loyal kobolds known as the Silver Scales. The two dragons and their followers watch over the chambers containing the remains of the deceased wyrms and ensure their graves remain intact.

One of the draconic hoards, however, contained a cursed artifact whose malice slowly fed into Shimmer. Over decades it slowly cursed him and then, when the time was right, sent him on a new quest – to use foul necromancy to raise the ancient dragons and lead this undead draconic army against the lands above.

Shine became aware of his brother's dark transformation and used his servants to battle the corrupted forces of Shimmer but is losing the battle.

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Scenario Start

Beyond coming to Dragon's Reach to reach the Temple of the Nameless King, the characters might come to Dragon's Reach in several ways:

- One of the characters who deals in arcane or divine magic has a powerful dream showing the rise of several powerful undead dragons rising from the mountain and laying waste to the City of Arches. They see a particular cavern in their mind which they discover are the caverns of Dragon's Reach.
- Danvon of Duskwater, sage of Kartan, seeks a powerful magical relic of power held in Dragon's Reach. He knows it is cursed and wishes to acquire it before the curse spreads. He gives the characters a particular *bag of holding* capable of holding the cursed relic without the curse further spreading. Roselyn Zeshe thinks it's dangerous for the mages of Kartan to hold such a powerful relic and suggests they bring the artifact back to her.

Secrets and Clues

Reveal the following secrets and clues as the characters investigate Dragon's Reach. Characters might discover clues from ancient gravestones, crumbling monuments, carvings on draconic statues, discarded journals, or from the draconic servants of the two dragons. The characters need not discover every secret – drop in secrets as it makes sense during the game.

- For millennia, dragons have come to Dragon's Reach to rest their souls here. None know why dragons come to this place.
- Two dragons, Salvenus the Shine and Verunathan the Shimmer, and their servants took it upon themselves to protect and care for the draconic graveyard.
- Something corrupted Verunathan the Shimmer and his followers who now seek to destroy his brother and use terrible necromancy to raise the ancient dragons into horrible undead monsters.
- A doorway in Dragon's Reach leads to a cavern where stands one of the last temples of the Nameless King. Salvenus the Shine is willing to allow passage to those who end his brother's threat.
- Buried beneath the bones of dead dragons was a cursed artifact – a spear plunged into the heart of the ancient red dragon Xereth, who later turned into the undead mount of the Nameless King. A splinter of the wrath of Xereth still lies in the spear known as Hell's Heart and cursed Shimmer.
- The half-dragon priest, Vesterys, is a secret follower of the Knights of the Nameless King and wants to use Shimmer's newfound bloodlust to further the ends of the Nameless King.
- Over the past few months, Vesterys and Shimmer have built several altars to Thrasys the Queen of Dragons – an evil deity and one of the Lower Twelve forgotten gods.

Key NPCs

The following is a list of key NPCs for this adventure.

- **Salvenus the Shine.** A **young silver dragon** (or **adult silver dragon** if the characters are 9th level) who cares for the souls of the dragons of Dragon's Reach.
- **Stelva of the Silver Scale**. Kobold **priest** and advisor to Salvenus who seeks to restore peace and order in Dragon's Reach. She commands the kobolds loyal to Shine.
- **Verunathan the Shimmer.** Corrupted **young silver dragon** (or **adult silver dragon** if the characters are 9th level) who has been cursed by the spear "Oblivion's Heartpiercer" and now wishes to use foul necromancy to raise the interred dragons into undead horrors.
- **Vesterys Bluevein**. A blue half-dragon **mage** who serves as Shimmer's advisor but secretly follows the Knights of the Nameless King.

Dragon's Reach Encounters

You can include the following encounters as the characters explore Dragon's Reach.

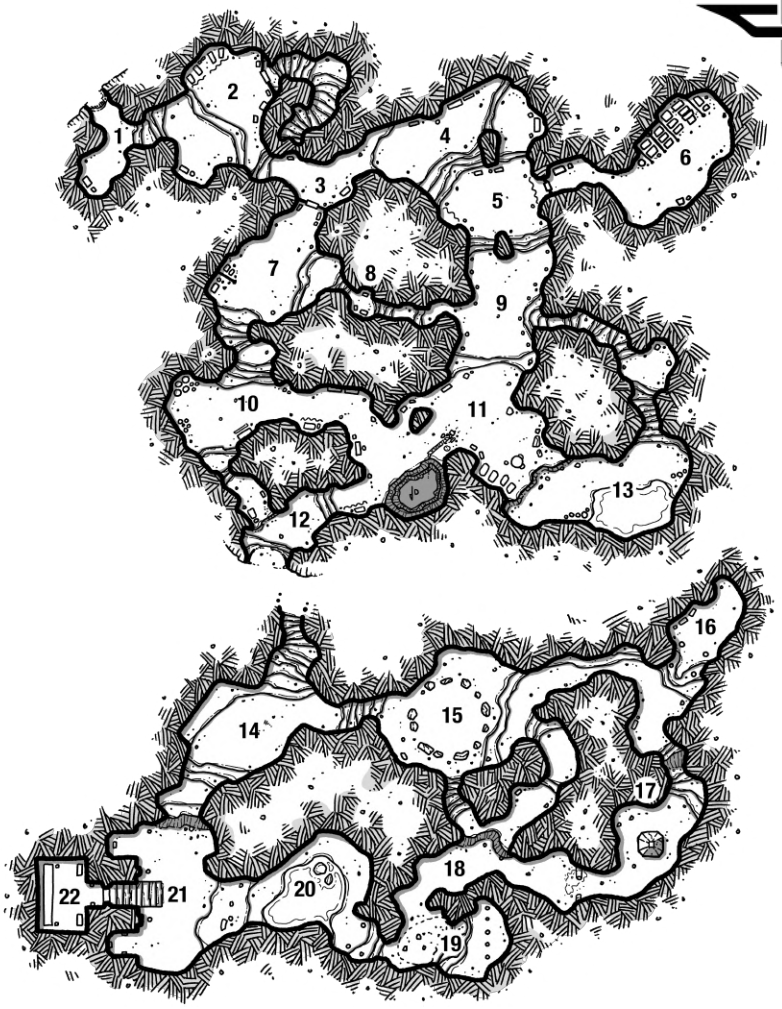
1. **Skeletal minotaur** guardians rise and attack.
2. Fell **mages** and **veterans** of the Knights of the Nameless King seek entrance to the Temple of the Nameless King.
3. A **guardian naga** (potentially protected by **clay guardians** if the characters are 9th level) believes the characters threaten the treasures of the Reach.
4. Hapless **bandit** explorers are lost and want to go home.
5. **Kobold** guards and dragonborn **veterans** loyal to one dragon (choose or roll randomly) hunt for spies of the other.
6. **Cult fanatics** of the Children of Ibraxus seek the entrance to the lost temple of their liege.
7. Several **specters** follow a **banshee** as she makes an eternal pilgrimage to the grave of her lost draconic lover.
8. Several **veteran** and **cult fanatic** primeval humanoids sit in a circle around an ancient bone monument of a lost draconic god.

Locations

The following descriptions outline locations throughout Dragon's Reach. Populate locations with your own monsters or use the encounters above.

Tunnels are 25 feet wide and have 25-foot ceilings. Chambers have 50-foot ceilings. Several shafts lead up out of the mountain, eventually reaching the skies above. The halls of these winding shafts are 25 feet wide.

Unless otherwise noted, these caverns are unlit.



1. Entryway to the caverns of Dragon's Reach surrounded by a large dragon skull. Kobold guards often reside in the alcove to the southwest.
2. First altar of the dragon gods. Offerings lay on the altars. A heavy adamantine door blocks passage to the lower tunnels locked with a key held by Stelva of the Silver Scale.
3. Shrine to the long-dead kobold priest Yveer Longtail often given offerings of food for luck. A heavy stone door blocks passage to 7.
4. Sarcophagi of long-dead kobold knights who worshipped the dragons of old.
5. Gold-woven tapestries depicting battles between the platinum king and the queen of dragons decorate this communal hall.
6. A crypt contains sarcophagi and urns of kobolds and other humanoids who worshipped the dragons of old.
7. Cavern containing bones of Berytherix the Befallen – bronze dragon protector.
8. Shrine to Typhela the Wanderer – dragonkin adventurer and sage.
9. Chamber containing pillars carved from draconic ribs. Large skull of Uvonedel the White Flame – a venerable and beloved gold dragon sage.
10. Quarters and storerooms for the kobolds loyal to Salvenus the Shine. Raised platform for audiences with Stelva the Silver Scale.
11. Audience hall of Stelva the Silver Scale. Large pit down to area 19. Sarcophagi of former lieutenants of Stelva.
12. Hallway to the chambers of the Temple of the Nameless King protected by a *prismatic wall* passable with a token and keyword given by Stelva.
13. Stelva the Silver Scale's lair. Large scintillating pool of healing waters and high shaft leading outside of the mountain.
14. Guardroom of Verunathan the Shimmer. Raised platform offering an advantageous position over foes below.
15. The teeth of Kolverun Worldburner, an ancient red dragon, surround an altar to the powerful dragon considered a child of Thrasys the Queen of Dragons.
16. Lair of the kobold and humanoid worshippers of Verunathan the Shimmer.
17. Hut of Vesterys Bluevein, advisor to Shimmer. The hut contains several alchemical agents and books of terrible necromancy the mage hopes to use to raise the dragons of the Reach as a new devastating army in service of the Nameless King.
18. Cliffs where guards have high ground over those traveling the passages to the north.
19. Sacrificial pit overlooked by a platform with ornately carved. Here Bluevein regularly conducts sacrifices to Shimmer and the god Thrasys.
20. Pool of necrotic waters filled with draconic bones with a shaft leading to the skies above the mountains. Shimmer often lairs here.
21. Temple to Thrasys with carved pillars and ornate stairs. Shimmer and Bluevein often address their followers here.
22. Shrine of Thrasys with an archway to the draconic world of Drakeholm – the World of Dragons.

Traps and Hazards

Characters who travel through Dragon's Reach may run into one or more of the following traps or hazards. Kobold protectors of the dragons often mix multiple traps together. Roll twice when desired to mix trap effects.

DCs for detecting or disarming these hazards are all DC 15. Damaging hazards inflict 27 (5d10) for single-target traps and 16 (3d10) for multi-target hazards.

1. Magical glyphs explode into fire, cold, lightning, acid, poison, necrotic, psionic, or radiant damage.
2. Dragon's head statue spews forth an elemental blast.
3. The ground collapses into a deep shaft filled with acid-covered spears.
4. Poisonous bolts fire out of the walls.
5. A ghostly dragon swipes at living beings before fading away.
6. Skulls embedded in the wall all scream in one's mind.

Shimmer's Curse

Shimmer has been cursed for several months, coveting the spear Hell's Heart. When Shimmer is reduced to zero hit points, he does not die. Instead, a character can attempt to break him of the curse by casting *remove curse* or equivalent magic or succeeding on a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check. When the curse is removed, Hell's Heart loses its ability to corrupt its wielder and Shimmer is happy to reward it to the group.

Hell's Heart is actually a key to the archway in Shimmer's lair, allowing passage to the draconic realm of Drakeholm, but the dragon fears to step inside. A part of Shimmer's original personality still exists in the silver dragon, fighting against the curse. Hell's Heart can also disrupt the prismatic wall in area 12 should the characters not seek Shine's help with it.

Treasures

While Shine frowns upon the looting of draconic hoards in Dragon's Reach, he does offer the following rewards to the characters from his own hoard should the succeed on the quest to free Shimmer.

Monetary Treasure

- 98 SP, 2,766 GP, 106 PP
- 5 × 100 GP amber gemstones
- 200 GP draconic gold and ruby warhorn

Consumable Magic Items

You can also include the following consumable magic items somewhere in the tower.

- 2 × *Potions of Greater Healing*
- *Potion of Water Breathing*
- Unholy shadowy candle that casts *True Seeing* once

Permanent Magic Items

Choose one of the following permanent magic items as a reward:

- *Helm of Comprehend Languages*
- *"Hell's Heart", +2 infernal spear*. A character attuned to Hells' Heart can use an action to cast the spell *cone of cold*, replacing cold damage with either fire or necrotic damage. Once used this ability recharges at the next dawn. A character attuned to Hell's Heart can also speak draconic and hears the whispering of a splinter of the ancient red dragon, Xereth, the former mount of the Nameless King.

To the Temple of the Namless King

Once the characters learn the location of Dragon's Reach, they can make their way to the next scenario in their quest to light the Brazier of the Nameless King.