

Tower of Kartan

Thousands of years ago, mages and warlocks of the Nameless King studied heretical texts and fueled hideous magical experiments for the ambitions of their lord. Having survived the fall of the Nameless King through an alliance with the Golden Council and the armies of the Blue Star, the mages of Kartan served their own desires for knowledge for the past thousand years. Now the Nameless King returns and his servants, long hidden in secret chambers of Kartan, emerge to channel the arcane might of the tower towards the Nameless King so he may wield it like the deadliest of swords.

“Tower of Kartan” is an adventure framework set in the City of Arches. This framework is intended to help you build your own adventures for 5th edition characters of 11th to 16th level set in the vaults of this mysterious Tower of Kartan.

Though set in the City of Arches, designed for any 5th edition ruleset, and described as part of the Rise of the Nameless King campaign outline; you can modify this adventure framework for your own system, setting, and adventure.

This Isn't a Typical Adventure

This framework isn't written like a traditional adventure. Instead, it presents a filled-out location along with secrets, histories, potential inhabitants, and story seeds you can use to build your own adventure.

Mysteries of the Tower

Kartan's history goes back tens of thousands of years – before the rise of the Nameless King. While the Nameless King shaped the world around him and used the power of the Tower of Kartan for his own evil purposes, the tower's origin is even older than he. Kartan is an institution dating back to the days of the primordials.

After the Nameless King's fall and exile, the Tower of Kartan remained. Having betrayed him and aided in his defeat, the mages of Kartan struck a deal with the Golden Council of the City of Arches that they be left alone in return for their aid when needed.

Most of the tower remains a mystery to the people of the City of Arches. While some levels of the tower are open to the public, most of its vaults, laboratories, chambers, and libraries remain private.

In this scenario, only three levels of the tower are described in detail. The tower houses dozens more. Fill out remaining levels as you need.

Assault on Kartan

This scenario assumes the Tower of Kartan has come under attack following the return of the Nameless King – his name restored to Ozymandias. In this scenario, which follows the campaign arc of the Return of the Nameless King from the *City of Arches* sourcebook, three powerful lieutenants of Ozymandias took over portions of the tower and send loyal mages and summoned creatures to destroy those disloyal to Ozymandias.

Adventure Seeds

Several situations can bring the characters to the Tower of Kartan. Choose one of the following seeds to bring the characters into the tower or use them as a model to generate your own seed.

Find Ozymandias's Soul Vessel. One of the three lieutenants of Ozymandias possesses the Night Sphere, a *crystal ball of true seeing* formed from the void and said to be a piece of the elder evil, Ourboran the Moon of Oblivion. This artifact is one of the soul vessels of Ozymandias. The displaced archmage of Kartan, Savandra Thricecurse explains the situation and asks that the characters recover the artifact. She gives the characters the arch key to her office and the pass phrases to recover the three keys to each of the three levels of the tower she needs them to access to face Ozymandias's lieutenants and recover the soul vessel.

Destroy Ozymandias's Three Lieutenants. With Ozymandias's return, three of his lieutenants took over the Tower of Kartan. Savandra Thricecurse hires the characters to enter the tower through her private archway, hunt down the three villains, and end their control over the tower. She gives the characters her arch key and the pass codes to recover the three keys required to access each of the three levels where these lieutenants reside.

Recover an Item of Power from the Corrupt Mages. To battle the forces of the Nameless King or face Ozymandias himself, the characters require an item of great power held by the mages of Kartan. Roselyn Zeshe, spymaster of the queen, gives the characters access to the Tower of Kartan with a key to the arch that leads to the archmage's office, and the pass phrases required to access the three keys to the three levels the characters must access. With the archmage sequestered, now is the time to infiltrate the tower and find the item of power.



Three Levels of Kartan

This scenario provides three levels of the Tower of Kartan. As a massive arcane tower, Kartan contains dozens of such levels above and below the tower – and several locations captured in pocket dimensions only accessible from within the tower. The three vaults covered in this scenario include:

Chambers of the Spell Weald. In this level, mages of Kartan practice evocation and elemental magic. Several small chambers allow students to practice their magic and libraries and laboratories contain books, scrolls, and devices to help students practice their craft.

Summoning Halls of Arazuun. These vaults contain several smaller summoning chambers and one large summoning chamber. Glyphs of protection ensure summoned fiends cannot break out of the circles into which they are summoned with several trapped hallways serving as a failsafe.

Marrow Vaults. An ancient ziggurat from days before the construction of the Tower of Kartan dominates the largest chamber in the Marrow Vaults, said to contain a skull of a primordial of pure negative energy. Smaller chambers contain raw materials for necromatic experiments and hidden libraries of forbidden lore. A branch of the river Styx flows through this level between two archways.

Secrets and Clues

Reveal the following secrets and clues as the characters learn about or explore the Dread Necropolis. Characters may learn these secrets from friendly or violent mages, captured journals, or from paintings or statue decorating the tower. You don't have to hand out every secret. You can choose how the characters learn about it as you run your game.

- For a thousand years, the mages of Kartan served the Nameless King, studying heretical texts and conducting horrid experiments.
- During the battle against the Nameless King a thousand years ago, the mages switched sides, providing assistance that led to the Nameless King's downfall. For this, they were pardoned and allowed to continue their study.
- In the past thousand years, the mages of Kartan largely isolated themselves but promised the Golden Council that the most dangerous practices had ceased.
- Three agents of the Nameless King remained hidden in the tower since his demise, reanimating and taking over their sections of the tower when he returned. They are the half-fiend **lich** Zaruvos, the **vampire archmage** Tovent, and the **high priest wraith lord** Uldrin.

- Though the tower rises high into the sky, its chambers below the surface contain the most dangerous vaults.
- Several guilds of the mages of Kartan work independently from one another –each with their own focus of study and purpose.
- The Fraternity of Tryvanus studies powerful arcane magic with a focus on evocation and elemental magic. They follow the teachings of the archage Tryvanus who slew the blue dragon Xrake in the depths of Sunken Revvia.
- The Scribes of Arazuun study demonology in all its forms, arrogant in their beliefs that they can control the creatures they summon and use their otherworldly power for themselves.
- The Necromancers of the Pale Lord study death and undeath, claiming their research helps prolong the mortal lives of those who seek it but secretly seeking eternal life without losing one's soul.

NPCs

The characters may run into one or more of the following NPCs while exploring the Dread Necropolis.

Zaruvos – Son of the Pale Lord. The half-fiend **lich** Zaruvos served the Nameless King for centuries before his fall. As the Nameless King's empire fell, Zaruvos's corporeal body was destroyed yet his soul vessel was never found. Instead of reforming physically, Zaruvos remained hidden, waiting for the time when his master returned. Zaruvos resides in the Chambers of the Spell Weald.

Tovent Bloodseeker – Archmage of Fallen Kartan. Once a powerful elven archmage, Tovent succumbed to his desire for immortality by trapping an elder vampire and forcing the vampire to turn him before destroying the vampire and becoming independent. After the Nameless King's fall, Tovent, now a **vampire archmage**, was banished from Kartan and spent his days hunting on the streets of the Lower Reaches before fleeing into the ruins below. When Ozymandias's curse was broken, Tovent infiltrated the Tower of Kartan seeking revenge against those who banished him. Tovent resides in the Summoning Halls of Arazuun.

Uldrin – High Priest of Ozymandias. Once high priest to the Nameless King, Uldrin ensured the experiments of his lord were followed carefully. Hated among the mages, he was torn apart with powerful magic and had his twisted spirit trapped in a vessel within the Marrow Vaults. On Ozymandias's return, Uldrin broke free from his bonds, destroyed his captors, and sought to follow the will of Ozymandias once again in his new form as a **high priest wraith lord** and resides in the Marrow Vaults.





Purnell Harvend. This myrad-born **mage** is third in command of the Fraternity of Tryvanus. Prunell floats through the Chambers of the Spellwield in a bubble of water permanently focused around him. He's able to use the sphere to squeeze through spaces as small as one inch.

Adrian Iceheart. The faerie **necromancer**, Adrian Iceheart, serves as custodian of the Marrow Vaults in the depths of Kartan. Adrian is fascinated by the transition of life and death but recognizes the terrible power necromancy can have on the world. He is both drawn to it and repelled by it.

Dimandia Spellbreaker. The shadow-elf **mage** Dimandia studies the arts of summoning and the power of demons and devils. She is currently one of several caretakers of the summoning vaults of Arazuun.

Savandra's Office

The characters likely infiltrate the Tower of Kartan through Savandra Thricecurse's office. As archmage to the tower, Savandra has her own private archway leading in and out of the tower. Even if sealed off by Ozymandias's magic, the characters can use Savandra's key to enter her office. Savandra might give them this key, or they might acquire it from less scrupulous means.

The key is an astral crystalline spike pulled out of an unknown world deep in the astral sea. A character possessing this key can cast the spell *dimension door* once.

When they enter Savandra's office, one or more factions might be battling over the office, attempting to open Savandra's heavily trapped desk, chests, and cabinets. These factions might simply be corrupt mages or agents of Ozymandias.

When the characters have dealt with these agents, they can seek Savandra's keys in her desk to reach the three levels in this scenario. A single magical drawer has access to Savandra's keys – each key requiring a special code word to appear. Savandra or another NPC should have given the characters these code words when the quest began.

- The Chambers of the Spell Weald – a golden cup of fire able to cast the spell *fireball* once (DC 19, 12d6 fire damage). The code phrase is "Auvel Has Fallen".
- The Summoning Halls of Arazuun – An eldritch ink pen able to cast the spell *dimension door* once. The code phrase is "gates of Koramvor, open".
- The Marrow Vaults – A glass bone able to cast the spell *finger of death* once (DC 19). The code phrase is "death is a doorway only the pale lord can close".

The phrases above give the characters access to each of the three levels of Kartan in this scenario through the same archway the characters used to enter Savandra's office.

The Night Sphere

If the characters come to the Tower of Kartan during its assault by the forces of Ozymandias to receive the Night Sphere, you can decide which one of the three lieutenants of Ozymandias possesses the sphere or choose randomly.

The characters might learn who holds the sphere as they explore the three levels of the tower.

Treasure

Throughout their explorations of the Tower of Kartan, the characters may run into several chambers containing treasure. You can break up the following treasure parcel and distribute it where you think it makes the most sense in the tower and the characters path to explore it.

Monetary Treasure

- 18,787 GP, 284 PP
- 5 x 250 GP bloodstone gemstones
- 5,000 GP unholy sapphire goblet

Consumable Magic Items

Give out one or more of the following consumable magic items.

- Spell Scroll *Imprisonment* (9th level, DC 19)
- Spell Scroll *Gate* (9th level, DC 19)
- Spell Scroll *Plane Shift* (7th level)
- Spell Scroll *Maze* (8th level)
- Shadow-touched necrotic sphere that casts *Banishment* once (4th level, DC 15, +7 Spell Attack)
- Bestial musical jeweled egg that casts *True Polymorph* once (DC 19).

Permanent Magic Items

Give out one of the following permanent magic items if desired.

- +3 *Wand of the war mage*
- *Wand of fireballs*
- *Staff of power*

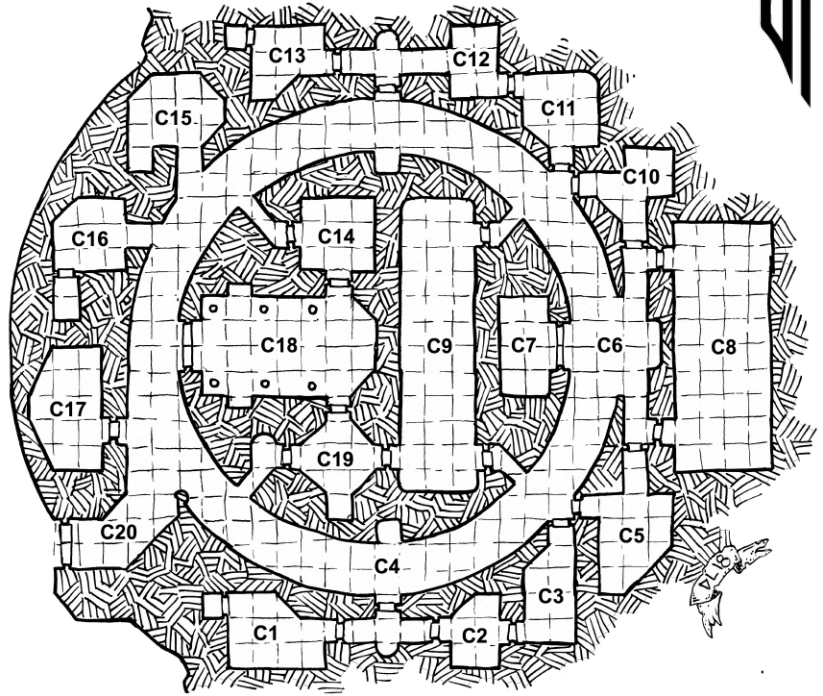


Chambers of the Spell Weald

Evokers and elementalists practice their arts in these well-protected chambers. Individual chambers ensure that the flames, frosts, and bolts of lightning don't inadvertently blast their way through the rest of the tower.

The walls of these halls and chambers are seamless stone, unable to be damage except by the most powerful magics. Halls are 20 feet wide with 20-foot ceilings and chambers have 30-foot ceilings. Gemstones embedded in the rock walls illuminate the halls and chambers in several colors.

- C1.** Administration office containing an archway to Savandra's office. A storage closet holds several spell foci.
- C2.** Robe closet with several potions of resistance.
- C3.** Preparation classroom. Murals depict gruesome ways practitioners have died in these chambers.
- C4.** Main hallway connecting various chambers together. A small shrine to Gan, goddess of the elements, rests in an alcove.
- C5.** Chamber of dummies damaged by magic missiles that sometimes cast *shield* and fire back.
- C6.** Hall with a statue of the Weaver of the Fabric – the goddess of knowledge known as Kryssa.
- C7.** Library of books on the studies of elemental and evocation magic.
- C8.** Arena of the war wizards. Floating platforms and stone blocks create a dynamic battle environment.
- C9.** Arena where powerful elementals are summoned to do battle.
- C10.** Chamber of summoned spheres where mages practice summoning various chromatic orbs.
- C11.** Iron rods stuck into the ground arc lightning from one to the other.
- C12.** Chamber filled with magical webs.
- C13.** Scorched chamber used to practice *fireball*. A doorway on the western wall houses a water elemental that puts out stray fires.
- C14.** High proctor's office and study. The doors are locked with the proctor's key and heavily warded.
- C15.** Chamber of elemental summoning.
- C16.** Chamber of minor elemental summoning. Closet filled with cleaning supplies.
- C17.** Chamber of frost containing animated constructs.
- C18.** Audience hall of the elementalists. Pillars animated like each of the elements.
- C19.** Locked vault of elemental tomes and magic items.
- C20.** Doorway to balcony overseeing the City of Arches below.



Encounters

While under assault from the forces of Ozymandias, the lich Zaruvos sends mages loyal to Ozymandias, both living and dead, to hunt down those who do not bend the knee.

- 1. **Mages** losing a battle against **elementals**.
- 2. **Mages** loyal to Ozymandias spying for Zaruvos.
- 3. Rampaging **elementals** chase several **commoner** servants.
- 4. A living ball of lighting arcs through the halls.
- 5. **Wights** of Ozymandias hunt for disloyal mages.
- 6. **Cult fanatics** of Zaruvos protected by **clay guardians** conduct vile rituals.
- 7. A petrified mage reaches for a *stone to flesh scroll*.
- 8. A **mage** is trapped on the high ceiling under the effects of a *reverse gravity* spell.

The Proctor's Key

Entrance into C18 requires the Proctor's Key. You can decide where to place this key either before or during play as the characters explore the level to extend or shorten their adventures in these chambers.

Zaruvos – Son of the Pale Lord

The **lich** Zaruvos commands his loyal **mages**, **wights**, and several **flesh** and **clay guardians** to kill unloyal mages or followers throughout the level. Zaruvos resides in area C18, locked using the Proctor's Key and heavily warded.

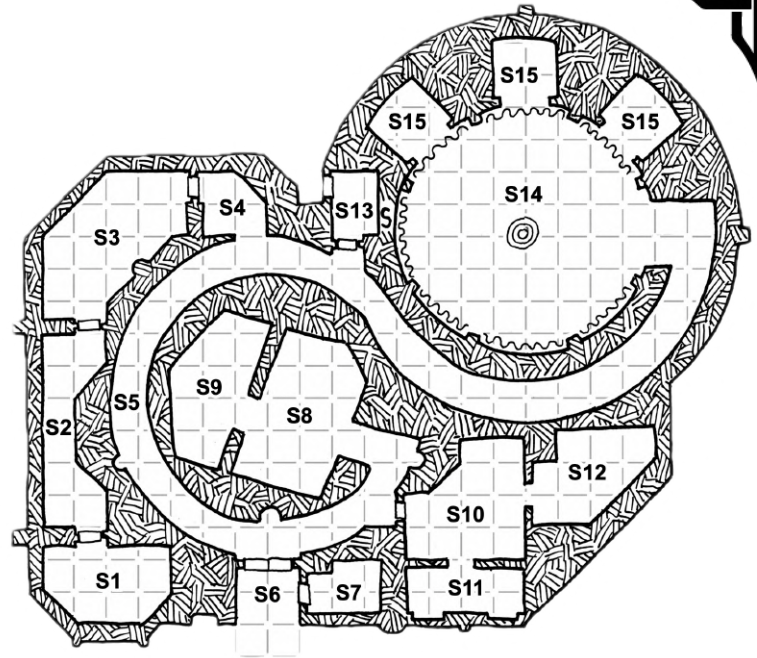
If Zaruvos has the Night Sphere, he looks upon it longingly as it floats above his skeletal hand while he sits atop a throne built from all four elements.



Summoning Halls of Arazuun

For thousands of years summoners of Kartan used these chambers to practice calling beings from other worlds. Some they called for advice, some for service, some to bind them into eternal prisons.

As the forces of Ozymandias invaded the tower, many of these summoned creatures broke free and rampage through this level and others. The vampire archmage Tovent Bloodseeker sends his vampiric brood throughout the tower hunting for summoners disloyal to Ozymandias and upon other mortals to feed or convert into more vampires loyal to Tovent.



- S1.** Archway to Savandra's office. Paintings of the summoning of powerful celestials, devils, and demons.
- S2.** Hall of murals depicting the battle of the Blue Star in which Ozymandias was banished. Cracked paint reveals a mural beneath showing the rise of Ozymandias a thousand years earlier.
- S3.** Archway to the abyssal planes typically used for demonstrations.
- S4.** Demonic containment circle for lesser demons.
- S5.** Hallway with glyphs of warding preventing summoned creatures breaking free.
- S6.** Heavily warded doorway with balcony overseeing the City of Arches.
- S7.** Vault of spell scrolls and magic items for emergencies.
- S8.** Several summoning circles used to summon smaller beings from the outer planes.
- S9.** Larger summoning circle used to summon larger beings from the outer planes.
- S10.** Summoning circle for archdevils – used for conversations.
- S11.** Heavily warded library of true names.
- S12.** Library of journals outlining conversations with archdevils.
- S13.** Secret observation chamber peering into S14. Heavily warded door
- S14.** Primary summoning chamber for the most powerful demons or devils.
- S15.** Protected vaults for **iron guardians** should summoning go awry.

- 1. A rogue **goristro** roars through the halls killing a couple of **vampire spawn**.
- 2. A **glabrezu** bargains with a wounded **mage** for his life.
- 3. A **swarm of imps** fly through harassing the mage who summoned them.
- 4. An **archmage** loyal to Ozymandias leads several **cambions** to the main summoning chamber in an attempt to summon Arazuun the demon lord.
- 5. Several **vampire spawn mages** and **warriors** loyal to Tovent hunt for fresh blood.
- 6. Several wounded **mag**es of Kartan fight a force of **bearded devils**.
- 7. A mage is trapped in his own summoning circle while being poked by a **marilith**.
- 8. A former mage apprentice, now a **vampire spawn**, doesn't know what he has become.

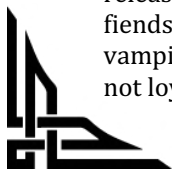
Tovent Bloodseeker

Tovent Bloodseeker, a **vampire archmage**, resides in the summoning chamber in S14 along with several **vampire spawn mages**. He attempts to summon the previously slain archfiend, Arazuun (**a pit fiend**), using a scroll with the archfiend's true name. Three **iron guardians** reside in three protected alcoves – typically used to guard against a summoning gone awry.

If Tovent has the Night Sphere, he uses it to call the power of Ozymandias to aid him in his summoning.

Encounters

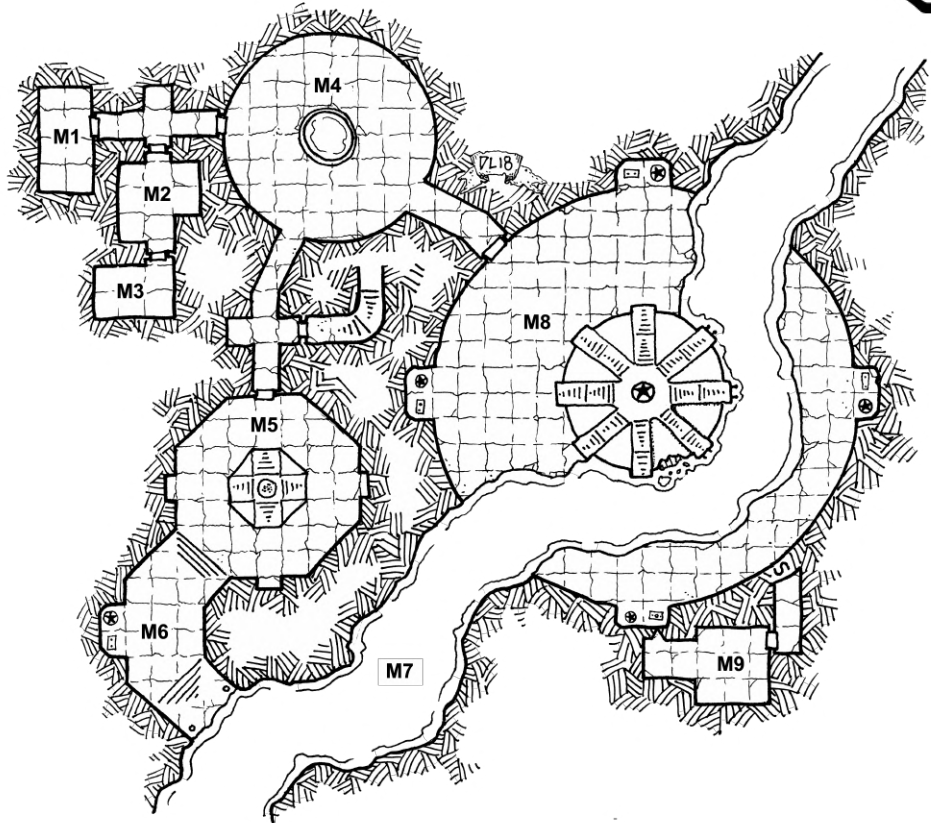
While Ozymandias's forces rage through the Tower of Kartan, minions of Tovent Bloodseeker attempt to release trapped demons or force wizards to summon fiends from below. Chaos rages through the halls as vampires and demons alike threaten those few mages not loyal to Ozymandias.



The Marrow Vaults

The Marrow Vaults reside far below the tower, touching the ruined city of Sunken Revvia. These vaults are hidden away from most of the mages of Kartan, and the rest of the world, open only to a small sect of necromancers trusted to study the dark art without breaking the pact of the Golden Council. Whether they do so or not is often debated.

Now the Marrow Vaults are under the control of necromancers in league with Ozymandias and Uldrin, the high priest wraith in service to his dark lord. Uldrin and the necromancers use their powers to reanimate an army of the dead and hulking undead beasts to unleash on the city above.



- M1.** Archway to Savantra's office. Bone piles lie in corners.
- M2.** Necromatic laboratory. Instruments of undead study. A dissected skeletal demon hangs from the ceiling.
- M3.** Refuse pit of squirming bones.
- M4.** Pool of liquified undead ooze. Necromancers use this as a bonding agent for powerful undead beasts.
- M5.** Shattered ziggurat prison of Uldrin. A broken obsidian sarcophagus sits atop the cracked ziggurat. Necrotic energy flows down the ziggurat, empowering several dozen **skeletons**.
- M6.** Shrine to the Pale Lord – one of the names of the forgotten god Father Grimskull. Dock to M7.
- M7.** Tributary of the river Styx called through ancient archways up and down river.
- M8.** Newly constructed ziggurat surrounding an ancient monolith older than the Tower of Kartan which hums with necrotic energy empowering powerful undead horrors.
- M9.** Hidden vault and observatory. Contains forbidden texts and artifacts outlawed by the Golden Council.

Encounters

1. **Bone guardians** (reskin clay guardians) lumber through dragging dead or dying **mages** of Kartan.
2. **Mages** of the Fraternity of Tryvanus battle necromancers of the Pale Lord.
3. A swarm of **flameskulls** whirl through hurling **fireballs**.
4. Bodies impaled on bone spikes animate into **zombies**.
5. Several **specters**, unaware that they have died, beg for help.
6. A **zombie storm giant** rages.
7. A **revenant** villain of the characters hunts them down along with several **wights**.
8. **Cult fanatics** of the Pale Lord drag captured servants and apprentices to a soul-stealing ritual.

Uldrin – High Priest of Ozymandias

Uldrin, a **high priest wraith** (use the **high priest** or **archmage** stat block and traits of a **wraith**) currently spends his time in area M8, having broken free from his captivity in the obsidian sarcophagus in area M5. He calls forth several undead hulks (use **fire giant** stat blocks with the undead type). Piles of bones litter the area – bones which Uldrin forms into these undead horrors.

If Uldrin is the keeper of the Night Sphere, it swirls around within his wraithlike form where his heart should be.