



SORCERER-KINGMAKER

ADVENTURE PATH CONVERSION

BOOK THREE: THE DUSTHOLD

DISAPPEARANCE

The Dusthold Disappearance is the third book of the Sorcerer-Kingmaker adventure path conversion, establishing the PCs' new city in the wastes of Athas and the challenges facing them. This book will deal with the covert Wemic nation of Nomen, long hiding from the annihilation of their race during the Cleansing Wars, and the terrifying beast-headed giant, Vordakai, who has been awoken from his long psionic reverie.

Part One: Exploring the Nomen Heights

The adventure begins as the PCs hear of a mysterious loss of communication between the village of Dusthold to the east and the rest of the world. The PCs should already know that Dusthold was established at about the same time as they established their own settlement - the agents sent into the Nomen Heights by Balic consisted of a group of mercenaries led by a man named Maegar Varn, third son of one of the city's Patricians. Although the events in "the Dusthold Disappearance" are serious, they're not on a timer. The prisoners that Vordakai has taken from Dusthold are either already beyond any

aid, or able to wait for rescue for some time, so as a result you should let the PCs set the pace of the adventure. You might wish to set this adventure a year or two past the end of "Sands Stained Red", to let them expand their settlement until it reaches a respectable size, perhaps extending slightly into the Nomen Heights to the west of the Tors of Levenies) before beginning this adventure.

Exploring the Nomen Heights

- A. Fort Serenko:** This wooden trading-fort has stood for years but the soldiers here were recently recalled to Tyr. The fort itself is abandoned, but an examination reveals evidence that

it was evacuated in an orderly manner.

- B. Nivatka's Crossing:** The southernmost village in the area is an alert town of tradesmen, hunters, and trappers. The village itself is surrounded by a wooden palisade and set on the northeastern bank of the Shrike oasis, controlling the nearby source of water. It is an excellent place for the PCs to rest, shop, and trade in the area.
- C. Restov:** Restov is a chaotic but well-established large town under Balic's nominal protection. It has large olive orchards and is protected by a citizen levy under the guidance of Andopinis' Templars. This makes a good trading-point for PCs who need greater access to resources than their own settlement has currently.
- D. Crooked Cliffs:** Over a distance of about a mile, the land drops by about three hundred feet over the course of one to five cliffs. Many Kes'trekels live in this area, and will mob living creatures for food if disturbed.
- E. Dead Noble:** The body of an unfortunate and foolish man named Tomin Hanvaki, the eldest son of a minor aristocrat in one of the PCs' settlements, lies dead in a shallow gulch in the foothills here. His body has drawn carrion-eaters which might be spotted by PCs.
- F. Nomen Burial Mounds:** A number of 8-foot high mounds of loose stone, arranged in a strange spiraling pattern connected to each other by a low wall, are located here. A trio of Cilops have made this area their home, and will stealthily surround and attack the PCs if they approach.
- G. Shrike Cascade:** The Shrike Cascade is a single waterfall over 50 feet high, quite breathtaking to behold, and dropping into a safe and clean pool, currently unclaimed by any druid.
- H. Ettercap Lair:** A massive web hangs between two crags on the mountainside here. The web is 30 feet wide and hangs above a 50-foot high chasm, the walls of which are riddled with shallow caves. The web itself is not sticky and appears to be some sort of exotic rope bridge across the chasm. The area is inhabited by a clutch of six ettercaps, who will hungrily stalk any trespassers, but may jump the gun if any of their favourite food, Thri-Kreen, is present.
- I. Kiravoy Bridge:** This simple wooden bridge is a new construction, recently built by the settlers at Dusthold. The bridge itself is sturdy and well-constructed, but it doesn't show much evidence of use, as it was only finished recently.
- J. Anakore Fields:** A group of Anakores have moved into this area for hunting, and will encircle and burrow up from beneath the dunes to attack PCs who visit.
- K. Dusthold Pass:** The rugged Tors of Levenies dip low here, creating a natural pass from east to west. There are 150-foot high sheer cliffs to the north and south, making it relatively secure. A single stone watchtower sits at the top of the pass, which is currently abandoned, albeit with no signs of struggle. On a clear day, the town of Dusthold can be seen to the southeast.

- L. **Dusthold:** This area is detailed in [Part two](#).
- M. **Blood Furrows:** A number of strange furrows scar the plains in this area, disrupted here and there by sinkhole-like depressions and mounds of earth and soil. This region is the territory of a single, cantankerous bulette that the Nomen wemics have called *Kankerata* ("world chewer"). Kankerata has dominated this region for decades, and by now it is part of the Dunward's landscape. The wemics are fond of daring each other to race through Kankerata's network of drifts and nests- they view this feat as a test of bravery and often use it to settle disputes.
- N. **Talon Peak:** A crumbling watchtower stands atop a low mountain here. Known locally as Talon Peak because the jagged ruins of the tower look almost like a sharp claw protruding from the peak of the steep mountain, this location has been the nesting-ground of a midnight-black Athasian Roc for years. Locals likely know the stories of the "giant black bird" that hunts in and haunts the skies above this region.
- O. **Culchek Cave:** Once the lair of the Culchek tribe of Hej-Kin, this cave is currently abandoned. The entrance is hidden from sight, but surrounded in mystical markings of ochre left by the Hej-Kin who lived here. The 15-room complex of unworked stone is now completely empty - the Hej-Kin took everything of value when they moved into Dusthold, and destroyed anything that was left behind.
- P. **Nomen Tribe:** This area is detailed in [Part three](#).
- Q. **Mud Flats:** This 3-mile long, 1,500-foot-wide swath of lakeshore is a stretch of bubbling mud and silt, heated by geothermal activity. The air is thick and muggy, and more than a little sulfurous. A nest of a dozen Mud Fiends make their home at the northern end of the mud flats, and resist anyone harvesting the fertile mud.
- R. **Sandwyrms' Grave:** The bones of a truly colossal sandwyrms lie protruding from the sands here, the curved bones forming a long series of arches sticking into the air like strange trees, and providing nesting grounds for dozens of families of Kes'trekels. Pairs of Mekillots graze this area, and the Nomen wemics sometimes hunt them for food.
- S. **The Silver Springs:** The cleanest and clearest source of water in the Stolen Lands, the Silver Springs are adjacent to the mud flats and carefully-guarded by local wildlife. Within the water can be found silver eels, which make for great tasty eating and are a local delicacy, when they can be caught.
- T. **The Ghost Stone:** A strange, grey stone monolith, its sides polished and smooth, stands at the western end of the valley here. The stone is known by locals as the Ghost Stone, for, at night, the air surrounding the stone within a 120-foot radius darkens and becomes almost impenetrable to light, and strange ghostly figures can be seen in the darkness. The stone once served as the foundation for a structure reaching into the plane of The Black, and the veil between planes is still weak here. At some point before actually reaching the stone, the PCs will be approached by a Phase Spider by the name of Zzamas, seeking help. A trio of

Shadow Giants are trying to emerge from the Black here, and their escape could be tremendously dangerous.

- U. Dragonleaf Gulch:** The Little Sellen river narrows here as it passes through a gully between two rocky hillsides, flowing around an oblong island thick with vegetation. Among the vegetation present is a single giant flytrap which will eagerly devour any living beings that venture close enough for it to eat.
- V. Ironstone Gully:** Just west of Little Sellen, a shallow cave extends into the mountainside. While to the untrained eye this cave (which currently serves as the lair of a flock of harmless cave bats) might seem unremarkable, the far wall of the cave bears an incredibly rich vein of iron ore that can be mined for a very valuable resource.
- W. Vordakai's Tomb:** This area is detailed in [Part four](#).
- X. Valley of the Dead:** The entrance to this wide valley is marked by a series of posts decorated with bones and skulls every 50-60 feet, a wall of warnings erected by the Nomen wemics that runs for the entire 6-mile opening to the valley. The Nomen call the lands beyond this valled "*Olah-Kakanket*"- the Valley of the Dead. Beyond the warning wall of bone totems, the valley doesn't seem much different than the surrounding foothills. Yet the further one travels towards the mountains, the more a strange feeling of oppression grows, the wind seems oddly muted as it flows through the sparse dead trees and rocky badlands, the sun seems dimmer, and the unusually regular crags along the surrounding mountains seem almost to crouch in

expectation of the PCs' approach.

A mile past the bone totems, the first of the gravestones appears. These 6- to 11-foot high steles are badly weathered, and many are partially or wholly collapsed, each bearing strange runes that glow in sunlight, and list ancient names in the tonue of Giants. There are thousands of gravestones in the valley, but the bodies beneath them have long since decayed into soil - all that remains are the fragments of bones.

Guarding the throat of the stairs is a Giant Meorty who was tasked, thousands of years ago, with ensuring that only the worthy could pass into the crypt.

- Y. Whispering Grotto:** A strange and somewhat unsettling sound almost as if the sound of whispering conspirators were carried on the wind, blows through an otherwise unremarkable dale between two hills. Careful investigation reveals numerous small holes and fissures, generating the bizarre noise. Carefully digging into these fissures will uncover glittering tangles of crystals, leading to subterranean deposits of gemstones, likely guarded by earth elementals and crystal beings, but worth a considerable value to a settlement.
- Z. Dead Drake's Lair:** Deep in the trackless reaches of the Tors of Levenies lies a large cave entrance. Within, a 50-foot wide tunnel stretches 30 feet into the mountain before opening into a large vaulted chamber around 140 feet in diameter. Yet more impressive are the dry bones of an elemental earth drake itself, which lie sprawled in the center of the cavern, and the signs of

cataclysmic damage done to the surrounding area, as if two like titans had done battle. The drake's remains are missing the right forearm and claw, as if removed altogether. No sign of the drake's skull remains, as if taken as a trophy.

Part Two: Dusthold

The town was founded by Maegar Varn, third son of one of Balic's Patricians, at about the same time as the PCs arrived in the Verdant Belt. Dusthold is a plain little town with not much to show for its hundred or so inhabitants, but is peaceful and organized enough. The PCs' settlement may have had a contact or two with Dusthold's agents coming to explore the area and trade, but are unlikely to have ventured out to find the town themselves.

The town's trouble began perhaps a year ago, when a treasure-hunter named Uriusyne Ganus, another native of Balic, reached Dusthold. He possessed an ancient map claiming to lead to a long-forgotten crypt in the mountains southwest of the new colony. Yet, when he finally located the tomb, he gained naught but a single jade bracelet before awakening an ancient evil. Eager to cover up his foolish brush with death, Ganus adjusted his story and claimed he had found the jade bracelet abandoned in an desert grove while scouting the Tors.

Lord Varn, being something of an amateur historian, took a great interest in the jade bracelet, and sent for one of Balic's philosopher-scholars (and a secret member of the Veiled Alliance), a man named Ervil Pendrod. This sage was able to recognize the bracelet by its description and the drawing sent as being a relic of the long-forsaken Wemic culture, thought to have been

annihilated by the Sorcerer-King Tectuktitlay during the Cleansing Wars. However, he was not the only one to show an interest.

In times long past, the beast-headed giants of the Tors of Levenies ruled this land unopposed, headed by the terrifyingly powerful Vordakai, whose psionic might threatened even a Sorcerer-King. He was trapped eventually by one of his own apprentices who lured him into a psionic torpor, and imprisoned him in a complex that Vordakai had built to help focus his mind. For thousands of years, his mind has wandered the planes, unattached to his physical body. However, the theft of the jade bracelet awakened him and returned the antediluvian psionic lich to his crumbling body, his powers significantly weakened by the vast stretches of time since he lived.

Following his awakening, he armed many of the psionic enchantments guarding his complex, and then set out to learn about the changes to the world. Following his senses to the town of Dusthold, he unleashed ancient psionic power and emptied the settlement of its inhabitants in a single night of horror, trapping them in obsidian orbs holding their soul energy. Now, Vordakai studies the lore he has learned from Dusthold's disappearance and draws up his plans to establish a new empire.

The empty village has, in the meantime, been taken over by the Culchek tribe of Hej-Kin, and will be dangerous for explorers to venture into. A flock of Kes-trekel can be seen over the town, circling the

1. The Kank Farm: The Kank farm here on the outskirts of Dusthold has been overrun by a dire Crodllu which has slaughtered all of the Kanks and made itself a nest within the farmhouse. It viciously lashes out at anyone

approaching, guarding its valuable clutch of eggs.

4. The Selenford: A horrid Chuul dwells in the muddy oasis here, and has attacked several of the Hej-Kin which have approached already.

8. Outfitters: The long, low building in the middle of town has several slaughtered livestock, picked at by a vast flock of Kes'trekels. If disturbed, the hundreds of carrion-eaters rise in several swarms and descend on the unlucky explorers.

12. The Siltbeast: The town's inn has a 'door' of lizard scales threaded on string, half torn down. The inn's sign, on a ceramic shingle, hangs uneasily, and on the wall is carved a single word- "NOMEN". This is the last sign left by Ervil Pendrod before his mind failed to Vordakai's will. Inside can be found a single Hej-Kin that stands, silent and perfectly still, facing a paper-strewn desk in one corner of the common room, one hand clutching a book. This unlucky creature stumbled upon Pendrod's trapped spellbook which bore a *Glyph of Warding*, which slew it instantly. Among the scrolls and clay tablets which Pendrod had among his possessions can be found some writings about the Nomen wemics and some very slight details about the beast-headed giants who once lived in the area, and the name 'Vordakai'.

13. Sacred Spring: The sanctified spring has been thoroughly looted, and the waters muddied and befouled by the Hej-Kin. In a cask weighted with rocks and sealed with pitch can be found several recently-written parchment spell scrolls.

15. Grange: Since the disappearance, the beetles which have long plagued the town's grain storage have reached crisis level. Fiercely territorial and aggressive, the beetles swarm to attack anything they perceive as trespassing, pursuing foes outside the grange for 1d4 rounds before they return to continue their feeding. At this stage, the town's grain is hopelessly befouled without magical

intervention.

18-37: Dusthold Stockade: The stockade and manor-house of Maegar Varn have been siezed by almost two dozen Hej-Kin of the Culchek tribe, including their skilled hunters and some skilled with clerical earthen magic. They are clearly uncomfortable making their home above the ground, but have found the lure of ready water and food just too good to resist.

The Hej-Kin have a pack of four leashed Jhakar which they will loose on foes if threatened. Their chieftain Agai is a mighty cleric of the Earth, and has powerful magic which he will use to defend his tribe.

Within the stockade can be found several magical items, including Agai's *Bag of Holding*, a magical ring matching the one on Vordakai's hand itself, and *Skybolt*- a beautifully-crafted longbow of incredibly heavy pull, inlaid with ivory panels. This was stolen from the Nomen wemics by the Hej-Kin many months ago, and they will recognize it and welcome its return. In Maegar Varn's quarters can be found a mosaic map built into the wall, detailing the area within around twenty to thirty miles of town, including the location of the Wemics' hunting grounds.

From here, the clues point the PCs in search of the missing townsfolk towards the pridelands of the Nomen wemics, a race thought extinct.

Part Three: The Nomen Wemics

Part three begins with the PCs on the trail of a race long thought not only dead, but annihilated at the hands of the sorcerer-king Tectuktitlay. This seems like one of the largest changes to the adventure path so far, as the Wemics are canonically all dead. However,

they fit the flavour of Dark Sun much better than keeping the Centaurs, and the last surviving members of an almost-extinct race can make for some great storytelling.

Overall

Wemics and Centaurs are a lot alike, statistics-wise, and probably don't need any changes made from the Monster Manual, except making their natural attacks claws instead of hooves, and inflicting slashing damage.

Narratively, they can substitute in pretty easily, inhabiting open plains areas and taking up the same kind of niche, the major difference being their supposed extinction.

While knowledge of their existence might interest and/or irk the mighty Tectuktitlay, he likely has other things on his mind than chasing up a valley of creatures that he won a title for exterminating over three millennia ago. Templars who serve him might be commanded, should they choose to send him word, to slay them in his name, but even their reduced numbers do not leave them weak. Draj is far enough away that even should Tectuktitlay wish to bring a final end to these last few Wemics, he could never mobilize an army all the way across the Tablelands through the territories of the other Sorcerer-Kings.

The Nomen tribe are matriarchal and not friendly to humanoids, driven by millennia of cultural fear of their extinction. The tribe is made up of perhaps 200 Wemics, who are well-organized and hunt sparingly in their tribal lands, not overburdening the resources of the area. Their numbers have dwindled over time, and they have perhaps another three or four generations before their genetic diversity curdles.

The PCs' first encounter with them is likely to be trespassing into their lands and encountering a hunting-party of eight

warriors, who will cross the plains with frightening speed, and challenge the PCs with wood and stone weapons ready. Diplomacy is a wise option here, as the hunting-party will be quite a challenge, using clever tactics-circling in a widespread skirmish formation, or darting in and out to eliminate weaker members of the PCs' "pack". They hate psions, and will attack anyone they witness manifesting powers.

If the PCs come peacefully, and especially if they present the relic weapon 'Skybolt', found in Dusthold, they will be led to the Nomen camp, where a series of tents rings a bountiful oasis, and young and old Wemics can be seen lounging, playing, or practicing warfare with vicious efficiency. There, they can meet Aecora Silverfire, a scarred and irritable Druid who has guided her tribe for many years, and her family. She is concerned about the disappearance of Dusthold, and worried that this could happen to her people as well. However, she does not trust strangers easily, and her eldest son Dehkgan is itching to test them. If they have not returned and given over the bow Skybolt, she allows the armoured warrior Dehkgan to challenge the PCs, and depending on their conduct, to perhaps slay one in combat. However, if they are respectful and show mercy to her son if the chance arises, she calls off the challenge.

Eventually, the PCs may win Aecora's grudging trust, and perhaps even a glimmer of respect from the reckless but doughty Dehkgan. They can tell of the name "Vordakai", a slumbering warlord from the time of the mother tribes. She tells of the valley they call "Olah-Kakanket, and that it is forbidden to her people, although one of her hunters spied a lumbering figure up a narrow mountain trail leading up into the mountains. With some persuasion, she may admit that this hunter was her own daughter, the headstrong and

wilful Xamanthe. She worries (correctly) that her daughter has violated taboo and ventured into Olah-Kakanket, and asks them to keep their nostrils wide for any sign of her daughter.

If one of your PCs has died, or dies at a point in the future, a Wemic from the Nomen tribe makes an ideal, if exotic, PC choice. If you have access to Mythic Odysseys of Theros, you can combine some of the elements of the Centaur and Leonin PC races to create something that seems appropriate.

Part Four: Vordakai's Tomb

Part four deals with the psionic lich beast-headed giant, Vordakai. Not truly the first of his name, this psionic warlord of days past assumed the identity of his master, and was imprisoned by the wemics of the Iobarian lands before their annihilation at the hands of Tektuktitlay. Imprisoned in his tomb, the psionic warlord placed himself in a torpor, to rest until he could be freed. The last surviving wemics of Athas, the Nomen tribe, have guarded his tomb for three and a half thousand years. However, they missed an explorer who slipped through their territory not too long ago- one who chanced upon Vordakai's tomb and tripped an alarm before escaping with one piece of treasure- a jade giant-size ring, mistaken for a bracelet by the humans. This alarm was enough to awaken the now-atrophied Vordakai, his powers much lessened due to his long, long absence. Nevertheless, his power and his collection of artefacts and servant have been enough to utterly empty the town of Dusthold in one horrid evening, and may cast a longer shadow across the Stolen Lands yet...

Vordakai stays in his tomb absorbing the knowledge of the inhabitants of Dusthold, unless he psionically observes an opportunity

to expand his territory and crush his enemies. He will use one of his artefacts, an ancient obsidian orb known as the Lens of Abaddon, to summon up a Caller in the Darkness and send it after his foes. These incorporeal psionic monsters steal the essence of their victims and devour them, and the PCs are likely to be the victims of one such attack soon after they learn any hint of his existence.

Locations of the Tomb:

Locating Vordakai's tomb within a hundred-foot-tall bluff on an island in the silt is not an easy task, but following Xamanthe's trail through Olah-Kakanket may be the easiest way.

W3 - Wyvern Bluff: Atop the bluff lair a pair of Desert Wyverns, sandy-coloured and aggressive.

W6 - Cairn Entrance: The cairn's entrance has had some collapse in the stonework over the past few millennia, but contains some shattered amphorae spilling golden coins and another giant-sized jade ring, matching the one that Uriusyne Ganus stole away with.

W7 - Sepulcher: A pair of Vordakai's servants, giants imprisoned within their own decaying bodies for millennia, guard the region. Their minds have rotted away to near-dust, but some elements of his commands remain. These giants overcame Xamanthe, and bore her away upstairs to area W15.

W8 - Pool: The giants' source of water has stayed here for many long years, kept safe from the devastation outside. Within can be found several swarms of Quippers, which will feast on anyone dipping more than a hand or bucket into the silty water.

W10 - River trap: This trap originally vented the river above into the chamber. However, the river was long ago replaced with silt, and the trap mechanisms jam open, dropping portcullises at either end and flooding the room with dry, dense sand. This will leave the chamber filling with silt, choking and crushing

anyone trapped within, including the two thinking zombie giants. A variety of infant silt horrors, the size of a human's hand, flop about and attack anyone slow enough not to escape.

W12 - Psionic focus chamber: This room is made of elegantly-hewn and polished slabs of marble, and decorated with several crystal orbs resting on tripods of polished brass. The orbs can be used to aid concentration, giving advantage on any psychic checks but increasing the time taken to one minute. The doors are inlaid with psionic circuitry, requiring that a user attune themselves to the door using a Charisma saving throw, or be telepathically confronted with a premonition of their own death, taking 10d10 psychic damage. This trap is powerful but can be avoided by using one of the crystal orbs to assist.

W14 - Guard chamber: Vordakai entrusted his prisoners to the guardianship of a great crystalline golem built in an age past. It stands down on hearing his name, but will not allow anyone to pass with a prisoner from area W15, no matter how many times they mention his name. Its structure absorbs any psionic power directed its way harmlessly, but it is affected by magical effects.

W15 - Prison: Xamanthe has been imprisoned and held paralyzed here since her capture. If freed from her paralysis, she can tell that she has only flashes of memories—periodic visits by other undead giants who brought her foul-tasting food, pain filled dreams and nightmares, and a growing sense of despair. She does say that she has a particularly disturbing memory of a nearly skeletal cyclops with a glowing gem wedged in his otherwise-empty eye socket, who whispered the following to her at some point during her ordeal after she'd been imprisoned here: *"You should be honored to be a guest of Vordakai, beastwoman. I shall return once your fear and dread drive all semblance of will and self from*

your mind, at which point you will thank me for these gifts of pain."

If invited, the headstrong Xamanthe readily joins the PCs in exploring the tomb, but she knows she may well be out of her depth here. Although she has no reward to give them, she describes the spear she brought with her, tipped in a leaf-shaped cold iron blade, and says that they are welcome to it if they can find it in the tomb (currently amid the other treasures at area W27).

W16 - Central crypt: Vordakai's minions arose from their repose when Uriusyne Ganus disturbed the tomb. Two *Callers in the Darkness* have been bound to guard this area, and float in the darkness of the vaulted ceiling.

W19 - Lens focus: This chamber is empty. Its walls bear eye-shaped patterns and carvings, all of which seem to be looking at a point on the eastern wall where a single carving of a giant, stylized eye looms. The eye's pupil is an intricately ingraved relief roughly the size of a human palm. The eye carving is actually part of an intricate psionic enchantment binding Vordakai's intellect, and linked to the Lens of Abaddon which he carries. If it is destroyed, Vordakai receives a searing jolt of pain and inflicts a 20% failure chance on an psionic powers he manifests, as well as disabling the powers of the Lens. If this happens, he will immediately mobilize and seek out the PCs, calling up another Seeker in the Darkness if he has time.

W20 - Hell pool: This wide chamber is filled with boiling-hot volcanic tar and noxious sulfurous gases, and guarded by Ervil Pendrod—once a member of the Veiled Alliance who had come to Dusthold to study the bracelet recovered by Uriusyne Ganus. He was interrogated by Vordakai and brutally murdered, finding himself transformed unwillingly into a tortured undead monster who needs to feed on humanoid brains to sustain himself. He will attack any living

creature travelling through the room, muttering mixed apologies and growls of hunger for brains.

W22 - Secondary crypts: This crypt, strewn with rubble and grave-filth, stretches into darkness. Sprawled on the floor is the corpse of a man wearing a Balican toga over leather armour. This was Uriusyne Ganus, who recovered from Vordakai's beckoning just as the feast began, and ran for his life. He fought valiantly for his life with the stone dagger in his hands, but was overcome and his brains devoured by the giants at Vordakai's service. His horror and the madness of the situation caused Ganus's spirit to flee and become a Spectre.

W23 - Feasthall: Four of Vordakai's giant thinking zombies stand guard over the corpses of their victims here. More than thirty of Dusthold's inhabitants were horrifically slain here, and their brains devoured by Vordakai and his servants. The victims include Maegar Varn and some other faces, but not everyone known to be missing from Dusthold—many have been imprisoned in Vordakai's *Vitality Orbs*.

W26 - Pool guardian: In ages long past, Vordakai's will dominated a powerful water elemental and imprisoned it here as his final guardian. It has no moral alignment, but after

such a long time of imprisonment, it finds a great deal of enjoyment in crushing and drowning mortals.

W27 - Throne of Bones: Vordakai's throne room is dominated by a giant-sized throne of thousands of ancient bones, strengthened to take his weight. He spends much of his time here gazing outward and using the Lens of Abaddon to scry the surrounding territories. His arrogance, even with his reduced power, might surprise the PCs and allow them a chance to overwhelm him if they are quick. However, his psionic powers are by no means weak, and facing him may be their hardest challenge so far.

W28 - Dungeon of vitality: This room contains rack upon rack of fist-sized obsidian orbs, lit from within by dim sparks. The sight is eerie and beautiful, and contains the remaining population of Dusthold, their intellect and animating spirits trapped forever in these orbs. When at the peak of his power, Vordakai would have used these to fuel his more powerful psionic enchantments, and any of the Sorcerer-Kings would be willing to pay a small fortune for this hoard. However, even the vilest PCs might balk at the option, as handling one of the orbs gives a small empathic connection to the intellect imprisoned inside.

Dehkgan, Wemic champion

Large monstrosity, Chaotic Neutral

Armour Class 15 (scale armour)

Hit Points 110 (17d8+34)

Speed 50ft.

Str 19 (+4); **Dex** 12 (+1); **Con** 14 (+2); **Int** 9 (-1); **Wis** 14 (+2); **Cha** 14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dexterity +4, Constitution +5, Wisdom +5, Charisma +5

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +5, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Sylvan, Wemic

Challenge 5 (1,800xp)

Champion Charge. If Dehkgan moves at least 30 feet straight forward towards a target and then hits it with a spear attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) piercing damage.

Pack Tactics. Dehkgan has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't disadvantaged.

Actions

Multiattack. Dehkgan makes two attacks: one with his spear and one with his claws, or two with his longbow.

Spear. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee weapon attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged weapon attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

Rearing Strike (Recharge 5-6). Dehkgan rears back and slashes nearby attackers with his claws. He can make two claw attacks. If a target is hit by two claw attacks, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Dehkgan can make one additional claw attack against them as a bonus action. This causes Dehkgan to take a -2 penalty to his Armour Class until the start of his next turn.

Vordakai, atrophied psionic lich beast-headed giant

Large undead, neutral evil

Armour Class 16 (natural armour)

Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)

Speed 30ft.

Str 22 (+6); **Dex** 11 (+0); **Con** 17 (+3); **Int** 16 (+3); **Wis** 14 (+2); **Cha** 20 (+5)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +6, Charisma +9

Skills Arcana +7, History +11, Insight +6, Perception +6

Damage resistances cold, lightning, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from non-obsidian weapons

Condition immunities charmed, exhausted, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses truesight 60ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Giant, telepathy (60ft.)

Challenge 12 (8,400 xp)

Legendary Resistance (1/day). If Vordakai fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Limited depth perception. Vordakai takes disadvantage on any ranged attack rolls more than 30 feet away.

Rejuvenation. If destroyed, Vordakai can psionically reform himself in 1d10 days, regaining all his hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of his phylactery and focus, at area W19.

Psionics. Vordakai's power has atrophied significantly due to his thousands of years out of his body, and his current power level is that of a 12th-level psion. His manifesting ability is Charisma (power save DC 17, +9 to hit with power attacks). Vordakai prefers telepathic powers, which are augmented by the Lens of Abaddon. (Sorry for no specific psionics rules, Tasha's Cauldron hasn't yet released at the time of this publication where I live)

Turn Resistance. Vordakai has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Actions

Paralyzing Touch. *Melee spell attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) cold damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be restrained. A creature which is already restrained instead becomes paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Legendary Actions

Vordakai can take 1 legendary action, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Vordakai regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Talent: Vordakai can manifest a talent (usually *Mind Sliver* or *Mystic Charm*)

Recharge: Vordakai regains 1d4 psi points