ENCOUNTER A1: DEATH CALLS

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 20 (15,600 XP)

SETUP

Ghovran Akti (riding a shadowclaw)
Tannerli, Ebon Rider Magus (T)
2 Ebon Riders (riding shadowclaws)
3 Shadowclaws (S)

After establishing one or more of the hooks presented on page 4, use this encounter to kick off this adventure. Only the adventurers begin on the map, as they wander near the fountain, the encounter begins.

Fresh from amazing exploits (perhaps even the defeat of the dragon Urishtar, as detailed in the P3: Assault on Nightwyrm Fortress adventure), the adventurers have come to the attention of the Raven Queen. While they are resting and restocking at a town or city, they receive a strange visitor. With a sound like ravens taking flight, a marut concordant (see Monster Manual, page 185), servant of the Raven Queen, appears in the presence of the party. It appears in the center of the city street, replacing the statue that just moments before adorned the fountain.

In Supernal, which every character present hears in his or her native tongue, it says:

“You are honored above all others, for you have earned an audience with the spinner of fate and the patron of winter. She who marks the end of each mortal life would meet with you over a matter of extraordinary significance. Time is of the essence—tarry not overlong in your coming. I leave you with a passage to the doorstep of Zvomarana, high temple of the Raven Queen and the gateway to Letherna. When you come, come prepared, lest the capriciousness of fate overwhelm you.”

The concordant gives the adventurers a bone scroll case with the symbol of the Raven Queen seared into its cap. It holds a ritual scroll of Planar Portal keyed to carry the adventurers to the teleportation circle of Zvomarana (see page 10).

The marut departs as it came, the statue once again in place above the fountain.

Minor Quest: 3,200 XP (minor quest) if the adventurers answer the summons and eventually speak with the Raven Queen.

As soon as the marut departs, the Ebon Riders attack. They ride in from the north and west. Place the attackers on the map as shown at this point and roll initiative. Ghovran and an Ebon Rider, each atop a shadowclaw, approach from the north. An Ebon Rider atop a shadowclaw approaches from the west, as Tannerli flies in behind him.

When the Ebon Riders attack, read:

The clatter of claws on stone attracts your attention as riders on large shadow creatures come hurtling into view from two directions. From the north, a gaunt eladrin in black robes and a knight in black plate carrying a blood-red shield emblazoned with a black dragon. From the west, another black knight and a woman with dark crimson skin, leathery wings, and the horns of a devil. Instead of riding, the woman flies.

The eladrin points and rasps, “They are the ones we seek. For the glory of the Ebon Riders and the Covenant, slay them all!”

TACTICS

Tannerli begins the battle by hurling a soul burn into the midst of the adventurers. Then she lands on a rooftop to fire balefire ray attacks until soul burn recharges.

The Ebon Riders charge in with longsword attacks, gaining +10 to damage. Then the riders maneuver to protect Ghovran and Tannerli. At this point, the riders dismount and their mounts move to set up flanks with their riders. Note that the shadowclaws require two hits to take down, unlike most minions.

Ghovran rides close to the party, using a move action while atop his shadowclaw. He then uses deadwinter step to teleport to a place from which he can spend his action point to use lifesapping hate. On his next turn, he fearlessly makes melee or ranged attacks.
### Features of the Area

**Illumination:** Bright light from the daytime sky.

**Market Stalls:** The stalls of the various vendors are difficult terrain.

**Buildings:** The various shops and residences are blocking terrain. Characters can enter a building as a move action. Climbing to a rooftop requires a DC 15 Athletics check. Flat-top buildings are 10 feet high. Slanted-roof buildings are 20 feet high.

### Conclusion

The adventurers might not know their attackers, but they can investigate to find out more. The rider’s shields, words and language, and names all provide clues (see page 6). Ghovran’s phylactery resides with Mauglurien, so the adventurers will need to battle the lich again later in the adventure. With the battle ended, they can use the Planar Portal ritual to travel to Zvomarana as soon as they are ready to depart. Go to Encounter Z1: Doom’s Approach, on page 4 of Adventure Book Two.