Encounter Level 20 (14,000 XP)

If the adventurers take more than one extended rest between exploring the Teeth (Encounter Z3) and entering the Keep (Encounter K3A), Urishtar learns that her fortress has been invaded. The next time the adventurers attempt to cross the catwalk, Urishtar comes to investigate the situation.

Note that if the adventurers attempt to sneak across the catwalk using Stealth, their checks are opposed by Urishtar’s passive Perception (DC 30). Any PCs with a Stealth check result of 30 or better avoids Urishtar’s notice. Any who get a result of less than 30 are spotted and Urishtar arrives to investigate.

Setup

Urishtar, shadow dragon (U)

Once one or more of the noticed adventurers make it halfway across the catwalk (whether heading toward or away from the central keep), Urishtar drops out of the cloud-filled sky and surprises the party. She lands at location marked on the map and glares at the adventurers with malice-filled eyes.

When the adventurers step onto the catwalk, read:

A slender span of fossilized bone extends to the central tower that rises into the whirling vortex. The catwalk seems solid enough, though here and there pieces have crumbled away, forming large gaps.

As the adventurers reach the halfway point, read:

A huge, night-black dragon shrouded in darkness drops from the sky, trailing shadows in its wake. Its shimmering scales seem almost translucent. The dragon roars, rocking the catwalk as it lands. Pieces of petrified bone crumble and fall away into the darkness. The dragon challenges you in Draconic. “Who seeks to enter my domain while still encased in living flesh?”

Talking with Urishtar

Urishtar is more interested in determining who the intruders are and what capabilities they possess at this point in the adventure. She is as curious as she is concerned about how they were able to get so far through her defenses. She eagerly speaks with talkative adventurers, perhaps even seeming to warm to them or believe whatever effort of Diplomacy or Bluff they might attempt. However, she merely seeks to learn as much from them as possible before destroying them.

“Who are you and why have you trespassed against me?” Urishtar asks. “Who has sent you? What is your mission? Why do you think you can challenge me?”

During her own interrogation of the adventurers, Urishtar reveals the following information as the conversation unfolds, assuming one of the adventurers speaks Draconic. While Urishtar can speak and understand Common, she considers it a vulgar and inferior language, and she won’t resort to using it with these invaders.

**Who are you?** "I am Urishtar Nightwyrm. I am the Shadowfell. The dead serve me, and souls nourish me."

**Do you know why the dead cannot return to the world?** “All souls belong to me! Why should I not keep them? They have such excellent uses.”

**How do you steal souls?** “My children have the ability to divert newly formed souls, allowing the Vortex to take them.”

**You use souls?** “Souls can nourish my eggs, thus creating draconic wraiths without the tedious necessity of allowing them to age and die naturally first. The Vortex also demands souls, and in exchange it grants me visions and powers that you could never hope to match.”

**Visions?** “I see a place beyond. I see into the Deep Shadowfell. It is a place where the fundamental aspects of life and death unfold in ways that not even the Raven Queen knows or understands. I learn from these visions. I grow more powerful. And soon, I shall take the place of the Raven Queen and usher in a new age!”
### Encounters

#### Encounter K0: Catwalk Attack

**Urishtar, Shadow Dragon (U) Level 20 Solo Lurker**

**Huge shadow magical beast (dragon) XP 14,000**

**Initiative**: +24  **Senses**: Perception +20; darkvision

**HP**: 730; **Bloodied**: 365; **see also bloodied breath**

**AC**: 36; **Fortitude**: 34, **Reflex**: 36, **Will**: 32

**Resist**: 30 necrotic; **Vulnerable**: radiant (whenever a shadow dragon takes radiant damage, one of its globes of darkness ends)

**Saving Throws**: +5

**Speed**: 10, fly 10 (hover), overland flight 20, swim 10; see also shadow walk

**Action Points**: 2

- **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
  - Reach 3; +25 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

- **Claw** (standard; at-will)
  - Reach 3; +25 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.

- **Draconic Frenzy** (standard; at-will)
  - The dragon makes a bite attack and a claw attack.

- **Tail Slash** (immediate reaction, when an enemy misses the dragon with a melee attack; at-will)
  - The dragon attacks the enemy that missed it; +25 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.

- **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚅) ✦ **Necrotic**
  - Close burst 5; +23 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses one healing surge and is weakened (save ends).  
  - **Aftereffect**: The target's necrotic resistance is negated until the end of the encounter. **Miss**: Half damage, and the target does not lose a healing surge and is not weakened.

- **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Necrotic**
  - The dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

- **Frightful Presence** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
  - Close burst 10; targets enemies; +23 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn.  
  - **Aftereffect**: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

- **Globe of Darkness** (minor 1/rd; sustain minor; at-will) ✦ **Zone**
  - Area burst 2 within 20; this power creates a zone of darkness that remains in place until the end of the dragon's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the dragon. Any creature entirely within the area (except the dragon) is blinded.

**Combat Advantage**

The shadow dragon deals an extra 4d6 damage against a target it has combat advantage against.

**Bloodied Rage**

The dragon deals an extra 2d6 damage with all attacks while it is bloodied.

**Shadow Walk** (move; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**

A shadow dragon that is in at least one square of a globe of darkness can teleport to any other globe of darkness within line of sight. It must end this move in at least one square of that globe of darkness.

**Alignment**: Evil  **Languages**: Common, Draconic

**Proficiencies**: Intimidate +18, Stealth +24  
**Str**: 24 (+17)  
**Dex**: 28 (+19)  
**Wis**: 21 (+15)  
**Con**: 20 (+15)  
**Int**: 18 (+14)  
**Cha**: 17 (+13)

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**Tactics**

Urishtar is content to start out by talking to the adventurers, as described above. If the adventurers refuse to talk, if they attack her, or if the conversation goes badly, Urishtar turns to combat. Even then, she is more interested in testing the adventurers and discovering their capabilities than fighting them to the death. She engages the PCs in conversation, attempting to allay their fear of attack, only to strike suddenly and viciously just as the situation seems to be turning in their favor.

Urishtar doesn’t know the meaning of a fair fight. She begins by breathing on as many adventurers as possible, then takes a minor action to drop a globe of darkness so they can’t see her. Then she spends her first action point to use draconic frenzy against one target who can’t see her (though she can see it), gaining combat advantage.

If the adventurers use the Skull of Sartine or the Shadowfell sword against Urishtar, or if they bloody her, the dragon breaks off combat and escapes using shadow walk (spending her second action point if necessary). She retreats to the topmost level of Urishtar’s Keep and begins aligning her defenses appropriately to deal with this threat. The adventurers have impressed her, perhaps even frightened her a little, for she never saw this outcome in any of her visions.

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**Features of the Area**

**Illumination**: Dim light from the shrouded sky above.

**Chasm**: A fall from the catwalk sends characters plunging into the dark chasm and deals 16d10 damage. Any who fall land in a stagnant moat of lifeless water (50 feet deep) that surrounds the central tower. Over 700 feet of climbing (Athletics DC 22) is required to return to the lowest catwalk.

**Development**

This is not meant to be the grand battle between the adventurers and Urishtar. Use this encounter to allow the adventurers to meet the shadow dragon, have a brief interaction, and engage in enough combat to be frightened by the prospect of a more prolonged battle. In the end, Urishtar learns what she had hoped and departs to prepare her keep for a more proper welcome for the insolent intruders.