Thayans

These people haven’t the slightest understanding of the power accumulating in the earth beneath them—power we must have. A pity that they stand in our way, but who knows? After some time under the earth, perhaps they, too, can be useful to us. —Valindra Shadowmantle

No nation is as loathed or feared throughout Faerûn as the necromantic magocracy of Thay. In the remote Neverwinter region, far west of Thay’s borders, opposition to Szass Tam’s empire takes many forms. Upstanding citizens and would-be tyrants find themselves on the same side in an effort to fend off and repel the shambling undead creatures that slink through forests and brush along the outskirts of urban areas. Whispers course through the region’s cityfolk, nomadic tribes, and wandering travelers. No one feels safe. Thay is watching, Thay is plotting, and Thayan operatives are working inside the city. How much more fear—how much more hate—would the people feel if they knew Thay was responsible for Neverwinter’s devastation? What if they knew Thay still sought to take advantage of its earlier failures, to squeeze the region’s remaining resources at the expense of more lives?

Valindra Shadowmantle—wizard, lich, and hand of Szass Tam—oversees Thay’s interests in the region. And even though many locals know Thayans are skulking about, none realize how large Valindra’s force is, nor how far reaching her machinations.

GOALS

Plenty of power remains to be harvested in northwestern Faerûn—some that was partly unleashed when the primordial rose and Neverwinter fell, and some that lies quiescent beneath the region’s soil. Valindra intends to mine both sources and deliver the bounty to her master.

Restore the Ring

A circular fortress of broken stones and jagged, shattered towers stands deep in Neverwinter Wood. This Dread Ring (detailed further in the FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide) was intentionally constructed atop a site leaking powerful magic into the world. Szass Tam, Thay’s regent, had this and other rings built to act as a focus in his scheme to attain godhood. Tam needed an abundance of magic to power such an involved ritual, so Thayan agents awoke the primordial buried deep in the region’s earth. The regent hoped its rise would cause enough death to power the ring. At the last minute, Tam’s plan was foiled, which sent the primordial back into slumber. Of course, much of Neverwinter was destroyed despite Thay’s failure.

To date, it has proved impossible for any Dread Ring to be used twice. The ritual that empowers each does not allow for second chances. The ring in Neverwinter Wood is also severely damaged. However, Valindra makes use of the fortress’s usable areas, and her dedicated rebuilding crew (see “Writhing Walls,” page 181) works tirelessly to repair its damaged sections.

In her spare time, Valindra studies the Dread Ring’s nature and the broken currents of power still flowing through it. She is determined to restore the ring to its former purpose or find it a new one.

Wake the Dead

One of Valindra’s many sanctums lies hidden within the shaded, echoing crypts beneath Castle Never. Here, the lich and her servants carefully prepare the bodies of local heroes, the Neverwinter Nine (page 108), for a special sort of animation. Elsewhere, such as in Neverwinter’s graveyard, they animate dozens of bodies at a time. Then they use a ritual to march the undead through the Shadowfell to join the ever-growing labor force at the Dread Ring or the fighting forces battling the Nerathere in the Shadowfell and Szass Tam’s borders.

But for all of Valindra’s attentions, these necromantic horrors are a means, not an end. Her shining vision isn’t about a mere human. The vessel for her crowning reanimation rests in his grave far below the Dread Ring.

Valindra discovered a while ago why this location was perfect for the Dread Ring’s construction, why the land surged with magical energy. Deep in the soil lie the bones of Lorragauth, a black dragon of incalculable age. For centuries, his body has leaked magic into the earth. Now Valindra wants to dig up his remains and, with the reluctant aid of the Cult of the Dragon, raise Lorragauth as a mighty dracolich fettered to her will.

As terrifying as the notion of a dracolich beholden to Szass Tam’s servant might be, even this is not the limit of Valindra’s vision. She intends not only to use others’ knowledge and magic to raise the wyrm, but to master such techniques herself. Lorragauth is to be the first in an undead flight that will one day sweep Faerûn’s skies and obliterate everyone who stands against Thay. Valindra’s agents scour the land in search of dragons, so they can be ready when that grand day arrives.

Perhaps the single biggest obstacle to Valindra’s success is that the ritual to create a dracolich cannot be used on a dead dragon. She must either find a way to alter the ritual, or she must resurrect a creature that has been dead for ages before transforming it into an undead.

Valindra hopes to use the Dread Ring’s remaining power or the imprisoned primordial’s energy to “supercharge” her magic so she can raise Lorragauth despite the corpse’s incredible age. A practical and thorough planner, Valindra also acknowledges that neither path might win her the day; so she and her lieutenants continue searching for other powerful magic sources and new ways to achieve her goals.

Control the Cult

Valindra needs help fulfilling her plans. And what she needs, she takes. The lich has “acquired” the services of a cell of the Cult of the Dragon. These zealots are the only people in the region who know how to create dracoliches. Normally, the fanatics refuse to aid outsiders, but the cell’s leader, Adimond Kroskas, has reluctantly agreed to assist Valindra. Of course, she does possess his symbol of office, a ring of dragons.

Kroskas cannot afford to let Valindra damage the ring, nor does he want his superiors to learn she took it. Losing the ring was a dire failure, but giving Valindra the power to raise dracoliches under her control would be far worse. The cultists that Kroskas commands know this. So he plays a dangerous game, pitting their loyalty to him and their fear of Valindra against their convictions. For the time being, he and his underlings live in shame as they work for the hand of Szass Tam. Despite his ignoble position, Kroskas can take comfort in the little setbacks and inconspicuous incidents he orchestrates to delay Valindra’s efforts. Under his charge, ritual preparations and the gathering of reagents and components proceed unexpectedly slowly, and unusual ingredients prove almost impossible to find. Desperate to find some way out of his predicament, Kroskas
might be willing to ally with other enemies of Thay, such as the adventurers. Of course, characters who fully trust a cultist are fools. While Kroskus would rather wear his own entrails than see Thay gain the services of a drow (p. 66), he would be thrilled to have Lorgarath appear under the aegis of the Cult of the Dragon. And he’d betray anyone to make it so.

**RING OF DRAGONS**

A ring of dragons is a status symbol that leaders among the Cult of the Dragon don to display their status. A ring enables its bearer to call and commu-

nicate with dragons. Of course, summoned dragons might not be interested in conversation, and closely allied dragons will still follow their own timelorn.

So the ring can also create the illusion of a dragon to deceive foes or challengers to the wearer’s authority.

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**Themes**

**Chromatic Summons**

This simple brass ring looks like a dragon circling to bite its own tail.

**Effect:**

Evil dragons within a day’s travel know the direction and distance to the ring for 24 hours.

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**Ring of Dragons**

*Level 7 Rare*

**Properties**

- You can speak, read, and write Draconic.
- You gain telekinesis, works within line of sight, but only to converse with dragons.

**Chromatic Summons**

- Daily Utility (Free Action)

**Effect:**

Evil dragons within a day’s travel know the direction and distance to the ring for 24 hours.

---

**Theme Tie-In**

**A Neverwinter noble or Oghma’s faithful character could find citizens pressing him or her to halt the graveyards desecration and prevent Thayan necromancers from envoicing their deceased friends and relatives.**

**If the adventurers fail or move too slowly, they might find the populace turning against them, putting their faith in alternative leaders and gods.**

An Uthgardbar character might feel similar societal pressures to pre-

vent further violation of the natural order.

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**Valindra’s Plots**

If the heroes locate the path to Gauntlgrym’s Great Forge (page 199) or if the Netherese manage to restore the mythal in Xintenal (page 184), Valindra might try to usurp control over one or both of those power sources. Clever characters can use Valindra’s obsession with raising the Chained Wynn (page 109) to create or heighten conflict between various enemy factions.

Alternatively, Valindra might send operatives to raid the secluded libraries beneath Oghma’s temple or to kidnap Adventurers (page 145) for the libraries’ care.

Although Valindra has ties to the Ashmadai, she is unaware that they secretly control the abogwround.

Thus, she might use attacks on Neverwinter’s citizens, assuming the priests would turn over their ancient texts to save people’s lives. Since such a tactic likely wouldn’t sway the Ashma-

dai, her heroes’ intervention might be needed to prevent substantial bloodshed.

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**Seek out the Primordial**

Although Maergara returned to slumber before it could fully awaken, the Undead assume during its brief period of semi-consciousness lingers in the region and in the Dread Ring. If Valindra cannot refuel the ring, she might be able to build devices to tap into its remaining energies. Perhaps she could follow Gauntlgryn’s example and draw power directly from the entombed primordial.

She would have to find a new way into Gauntlgryn to do this, though, because the path she previously took to the lost city before the cataclysm has since collapsed.

Even though it’s not high on her list, Valindra nonetheless has several lieutenants researching ele-

mental energy, particularly around Mount Henoten and the Neverwinter River.

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**Theme Tie-In**

**A renegade Red Wizard character has plenty of reasons to wish to have an Uthgardtr barbarian—one of those not saddled with the tribe’s magical prejudices—might see a spiri-

tual path toward the primordial.**

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**Thay Encounters**

The adventurers face hordes of undead if they try to go up against Valindra Shadowmantine. If you want to supplement the choices on the table, other humans and undead from any source are entirely appropriate. Consider re-flavoring some of them as ash zombies (page 109). Characters facing the Thayans might also confront Ashmadai and Cult of the Dragon members, so the tables on pages 100 and 127 are also fair game.

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**Thayans**

**Encounters**

- **Level and Role**
- **Source**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Level</strong></th>
<th><strong>Role</strong></th>
<th><strong>Source</strong></th>
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| 1-10      | Thayan Necromancer | MVN: | *
| 11-20     | Thayan Necromancer 1 | MV: |

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**Valindra Shadowmantine, the Hand of Szass Tam**

Like all liches, Valindra Shadowmantine is exceed-

ingly strong willed, deeply ambitious, and utterly ruthless. She is devoted to her quest for more power, and it suits her, for now, to serve Szass Tam. Although she is highly intelligent and adept at predicting her enemy’s actions, Valindra’s extreme arrogance makes her prone to underestimating her opposition.
The Neverwinter Nine

The Neverwinter Nine—famous heroes, soldiers and bodyguards who protected Lord Nasher Alagדור in the past century—are honorably entombed within Castle Never’s crypt. Through careful preparation and necromantic rites, Valindra intends to raise them as special shapechanging undead. Then she wants to loose them on Neverwinter’s new government.

If Valindra succeeds in raising them, model the Neverwinter Nine after deathlock wights from the Monster Manual and unhallored wights (page 109), or choose undead more appropriate to the characters’ level. Also give each of the Neverwinter Nine the shapechanger keyword and the following abilities.

**Move Actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trigger</th>
<th>Power Type</th>
<th>Encounter</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hallow</td>
<td>At-Will</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>This creature teleports, swapping positions with another of the Neverwinter Nine within 20 squares.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>At-Will</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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**Standard Actions**

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<th>Trigger</th>
<th>Power Type</th>
<th>Encounter</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>At-Will</td>
<td>-</td>
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**Rage Actions**

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<th>Power Type</th>
<th>Encounter</th>
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Because her phylactery is so well secreted away as to be undiscoverable, Valindra doesn’t fear destruction and takes seemingly suicidal steps to safeguard her plans.

**As a Character of Evil**

Because her phylactery is so well secreted away as to be undiscoverable, Valindra doesn’t fear destruction and takes seemingly suicidal steps to safeguard her plans.

**STANDARD ACTIONS**

- **Vampiric Touch** (healing, necrotic) **At-Will**
  
  Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. Fortitude
  
  Hit: 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and Valindra regains hit points equal to the damage dealt.

- **Phantom Claw** (necrotic, psychic) **At-Will**
  
  Attack: Ranged 10 (one or two creatures); +12 vs. Reflex
  
  Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

- **Eldenser, and the possibility of finding that dragon’s body in Waterdeep’s City of the Dead could lend validity to such a deception. The heroes might, through the best intentions, supply Valindra with the ancient lore she needs to make her plans a reality.**

**Faction and Foes**

**Ash Zombie**

When the cataclysm hit Neverwinter, the air thickened with the burning city’s ashes. The flames consumed structures and people at random, and the stink of death merged with the blood and ash streaming through the ruins. In the tumult, ash zombies arose.

Thay’s Red Wizards were delighted to discover this new kind of zombie and set about researching how to create more. They discovered that an ash zombie is attracted to the scent of fresh life—the younger, the more alluring. When an ash zombie shambles after such creatures, it leaves a trail of ash in its wake.

To create an ash zombie, add the following power to any zombie (or other corporeal undead, such as a ghoul or a wight). Also increase the creature’s speed by 2, to a maximum of 8.

**Unhallowed Wight**

The body of a priest, a religious figure, or a person blessed after death is unearthed to create an unhallowed wight.

** dhcp f 000**

**Encounter**

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**Encounter**

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