FLOATING ISLANDS

Two other earthmotes hover near the Neverwinter coastline, flanking the Moonstone. One is the site of much activity, and the other quite the opposite.

Fisher's Float

This island hovers over the Sea of Swords beyond the southern end of the bay. Dotted with a smattering of shacks, it is the home and workplace of fishers who have lived on this earthmote since the Spellplague. Skilled at their trade and fearless of the weather and the turbulent sea, they provide a great deal of food for the city.

For many years, rumors have spread that the fishers have thrived because of their worship of dark gods or unnatural alliances with creatures that live beneath the waves. Regardless of the veracity of these barsoom stories, the people of Neverwinter happily eat the fish and crustaceans brought to land each morn and evening.

Pirates' Skyhold

Neverwinter legends say that this high-floating earthmote served as an unsavory harbor for sky pirates in the years following the Spellplague. Because the mote floats a hundred feet up and could not be accessed by a direct path from the land, the pirates supposedly stored their treasure and their skyship on the mote—along with whatever slew them. Some people believe that a dragon has claimed the pirates' loot as its hoard, with whatever still exists up there having little to do with the city below.

Regardless of the story's truth, one thing is true—Pirates' Skyhold has long been abandoned. From the right locations in Neverwinter, one can see rotting wooden buildings poking out of the forests of the mote, but whatever still exists up there has seen little intrusion in decades.

CASTLE NEVER

An imposing fixture of Neverwinter's western end, Castle Never stands as a monument to the city's former glory. The cataclysm struck it hard, toppling towers, collapsing walls, and starting fires that burned throughout the structure. The entire royal family is thought to have perished, and the remaining servants sealed the vaults, crypts, and grounds with the hope that a worthy heir to Neverwinter would arrive one day to take his or her rightful place on the throne. On that day, it is said, the magic treasures and other resources of the castle will serve the new ruler.

In the interim, Castle Never has become a war zone. Several factions vie for dominance over the empty castle and its throne. In particular, Valindra Shadowmantine of Thay seeks to plunder one resource the castle offers: the corpses of rulers past and the legendary Neverwinter Nine, bodyguards to the kings of the city.

To the uninformed eye, Castle Never looks like a big, bulging ruin. Half its towers fell in the cataclysm, and the wall on its seaward side crumbled to rubble. Chunks of stone and fallen statues litter the windswept courtyard. Inside, the stone corridors stink of ash and dust. Rough walls swirl up around the feet of intruders. Even in their emptiness, the corridors never seem vacant. The spirits of the hundreds who died here linger on.

The castle was built on a strong foundation, however, and if the structure were purged of monsters, it could be refurbished. Many of the interior rooms collapsed, but others stand eerily intact. The least damaged parts of the castle are also the best fortified: the firmly locked armory, the great hall, and the Neverwinter dungeon.

Ghosts of Castle Never

Having died in the cataclysm that killed their city, the heirs of Alagondar and their closest servants still dwell in their palatial home, bound to its crumbling foundation. Some wall like baneshees or weep helplessly at their current existence, but others seem to have accepted their fate and offer encouragement or cryptic secrets to visitors. The ghosts are as likely to ignore intruders as attack them. Few ghosts are willing to provide hints to the location of treasure hidden in the castle, and they respond violently to perceived thieves. The ghosts might or might not know the location of the Crown of Neverwinter, and those who do are unlikely to give straight answers.

Valindra Shadowmantine has yet to find a way to control these undead vestiges of the Alagondars and their servants. If she ever succeeds, their ghostly abilities and royal secrets will greatly aid her cause.

Theme Tie-In

When confronted with ghosts, the characters' first instincts might be hostile, but the remnants of Castle Never could be a boon rather than a hindrance. Many of the ghosts are the spirits of the deceased royal family, offering reconciliation with an unknown past (for a Neverwinter noble character) and a rare opportunity to chronicle the last days of Neverwinter (for an Oghma's faithful character). However, the ghosts speak in riddles, both because it amuses them and because the strain of undying wreaks havoc on their sanity. Other adventurers can be tied to the spirits as well. One ghost might bear a similar brand to that of a devil's pawn character—in life, that ghost took part in the rituals of Azmodeus and can provide insight as to the meaning and purpose of the brand. One of the Alagondar heirs might have married an elf who perished in the castle and now holds secrets of value to an Hlyvraeian guardian. A spellscarred harbinger character might terrify the ghosts, who see the character's potential even if he or she does not.

CROWN OF NEVERWINTER

According to stories circulating in the city, the Crown of Neverwinter—enchanted to shield the wearer from the extremes of heat and cold—marks the true heir of Neverwinter, and all others who don the crown find themselves burned by frost and fire. The crown lies hidden somewhere in the ruins of the city. Place it to meet the needs of your game. Finding the crown would be an important victory in the overarching quest of a Neverwinter noble character, or it might serve to help Lord Neverember validate his leadership of the city.

ANYBODY HOME?

Pirates' Skyhold offers the characters a potentially fantastic aerial adventure site. No one knows what might be up there, so you can fill in whatever details best suit your game. Perhaps the Netherese have taken control of the mote with the aid of their feared some venerads (FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide).

Of course, the characters need a way to reach the Skyhold. They might have their own means of flight, or they might receive aid from a Neverwinter arcanist in exchange for some service.

Crown of Neverwinter

This hypedal crown radiates warmth and majesty.

Property:
- You gain resist 10 fire and resist 10 cold.
- You gain a +5 power bonus to the next Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check you make before the end of your next turn.

Effect:
- You gain resist 10 fire and resist 10 cold.
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- This hypedal crown radiates warmth and majesty.
- Item Slot: Head
- 25,000 gp
- Property: You gain resist 10 fire and resist 10 cold.
- Nashor’s Wrath (Cold, Fire) • Daily Utility (Immediate Interrupt)
- Trigger: An effect deals, stuns, or dominates you.
- Effect: The triggering effect is nullified against you. If a creature causes the effect, that creature takes 10 fire and cold damage.
- Nashor’s Tongue • Encounter Utility (Minor Action)
- Effect: You gain a +5 power bonus to the next Bluff. If a devil’s pawn character—an Iliyanbruen guardian. A spellscarred harbinger character might terrify the ghosts, who see the character’s potential even if he or she does not.

CASTLE NEVER

- Castle Never

- Chapter 4 | Gazetteer

- Campaign Guide
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Drow Encampment

The courtyard of Castle Never bears the traces of a camp that was well hidden but has become increasingly obvious from frequent use. The camp originally belonged to an infamous pair of drow: Drizzt Do’Urden, legendary ranger of the North, and the less well regarded Jarlaxle, captain of the Bregan D’aerthe mercenaries. The two drow were in the area when the cataclysm claimed Neverwinter, and they still have interests in the region. Specifically, they are looking for clues to tie up a Thayan loop end from their last mission. The drow established this camp as a base of operations in Neverwinter, enabling them to keep an eye on their schemes in the city.

At first, the camp consisted only of a few companions sharing a fire, but Drizzt’s and Jarlaxle’s occasional visits to the city encouraged young would-be adventurers to seek them out as teachers of the ways of combat and heroism. The drow, both grandmasters, have inspired a small following among the disenfranchised or ambitious youth of Neverwinter. After Drizzt and Jarlaxle’s last visit several months ago, half a dozen young citizens set up their own camp in the spot, where they practiced the ways of combat, dared one another to venture into the castle proper, and sought to make themselves apprentices to the two absent legends.

When word of this development reached Jarlaxle, he dispatched Bregan D’aerthe operatives to keep an eye on the growing camp. He hopes to turn these would-be heroes into assets that he can use for information about events in Neverwinter. For now, the camp serves as a convenient base of operations that Jarlaxle need not pay to maintain. Drizzt, on the other hand, has no idea that his simple post has turned into a small armed encampment, and he will be likely surprised when he returns.

The captain of the camp is a drow rogue named Xalbyn, who reports to Jarlaxle when he is present (which is rarely) or to Kimmuriel Oholoda. Jarlaxle’s second in command and a far more responsive leader, Xalbyn makes use of a hat of disguise to conceal his true heritage.

In the true spirit of Bregan D’Aerthe, a spy has been put in place to watch the watcher. One of Kimmuriel’s assistants, the half-drow psionist Aerlyse, keeps a close eye on Xalbyn. Their day-to-day activities include securing the camp, venturing into the crypts beneath Castle Never to fight Valindra Shadowmantle’s animated forces, and spying on events in the city.

Winning the good graces of Xalbyn (who admires quick-witted warriors after his own heart) or impressing Aerlyse (who values intelligence and charm) gains adventurers a safe place to take an extended rest. Generally, that is the extent of the camp’s benefit, unless drow characters are interested in becoming members of Bregan D’aerthe.

Hall of Ashen Mirrors

Full length mirrors once adorned the walls of this long corridor, wherein young heirs of Alagondar practiced their noble gait and posture. The mirrors shattered in the cataclysm, instantly killing anyone in the corridor at the time, just before a wave of searing gas blasted through the huge windows and turned the corpses to ash. This double catastrophe left the hallway a wasteland of splottered glass.

Charged with the spiritual energy of those who died here, the chamber’s ash and broken glass are capable of rising up, recreating the mirrors and the people present at the time of the final explosion. This process begins immediately when any living creature enters the corridor. Although the reenactment plays out slowly, an infiltrator who tries in the hall will witness a replaying of the horrific events—complete with flying glass shards and burning doom.

Voracious Nobility

A portion of Castle Never’s staterooms collapsed when the area was the site of a battle involving servants of Valindra Shadowmantle against the beholder Talgath. This destruction sealed off a number of ghouls in service to Thay. The creatures relive the fact of their existence by playing at nobility. They dress in threadbare clothes left behind by the former inhabitants, hold feasts and dances in the gathering halls, and play all sorts of crude and ugly games until such time as Valindra reclaim them (which is unlikely) or entertaining explorers free them.

Fungal Bloom

This attic once housed all manner of pretty birds and flowers. Since the cataclysm, they have been reduced to skeletons in gilded cages and rotted, desiccated blossoms. Boarded over to keep out the sunlight and trap the heat of rot inside, the cavernous chamber is suffused with dim blue light from glowing lichen. Fiercely territorial myconids (Monster Manual 2) dwell here, having spawned from spores accidentally brought to the chamber by an ancient plant collector. The myconids are happy to supplement their food supply with the bodies of creatures they hunt in the castle.

Web-Strewn Spires

Cobwebs fill the upper halls of Castle Never, and scratching noises can be heard in its high towers. Only the boldest explorers—their way forward to the castle may be blocked by the long-dead guards. The spiders (see the Monster Manual) have occupied Castle Never for years, since long before the cataclysm. When the castle fell into disuse, the creatures emerged from the darkness and rose to claim their places as kings of the palace. But their reign was not to last—before long, Valindra and her undead move in, pushing the ettercaps upward. The Thayans leave the beasts alone as long as they stay out of Valindra’s way; her interests lie mostly below the castle.

Recently, however, a beholder moved in to conquer the castle for itself, and it has decided that the spiderfolk would make excellent slaves. This threat has put the once complacent ettercaps on their guard.

Rysfib, ettercap leader, the webspinner leader of the ettercaps, fancies itself a mystic prophet. It has foreseen a time when others will come to Castle Never and deliver them from the beholder, and the characters might be those for whom the tribe has been waiting.

Watcher of Castle Never

Talgath the beholder (see Monster Vault) does not consider humanoid intruders worthy of its attention. The creature believes that any creatures it encounters should be used as a resource, not as a contender in its dominion.

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defeat Valindra Shadowmantle and take her place as master of the city. The other is trained.

To Valindra, who likely could smash both the drow encampment and the ettercaps if she put her mind to it, the beholder is a spear thrust through her plans. She has made describing Talgaith a priority, but so far, the beholder has defeated all those sent against it.

Through regular applications of its charm ray, the beholder controls a coven of harpies (Monster Manual), a pack of displacer beasts (Monster Vault), and all sorts of would-be Challengers to its rule.

Neverneath, Endless Maze

The catacombs beneath Castle Never came through the cataclysm mostly untouched. Thanks to a warding spell commissioned in times past to maintain the structural integrity of the castle, however, the Spell-plague wrought strange changes upon the ward, which has grown in strength as a result of the seeping influence of the active plague deep under the earth. What once protected the catacombs now traps intruders. The complex beneath Castle Never, called Neverneath by locals, closes around trespassers. Corridors lead back around to themselves, and dead ends appear where tunnels led only moments before. Explorers can step through a door, turn around, and go back through the same door, and end up in a different part of the dungeon. They can wander the abandoned halls and chambers for days without finding an exit.

Gargoyles (Monster Vault) plague the maze, attacking at will and without warning. Dozens of traps lie in wait, all capable of resetting themselves. The dungeon seems to have a mind of its own.

Several months ago, a clan of goliath explorers under the command of a minotaur soldier (see Monster Vault for both creatures) were trapped in Neverneath and have yet to find their way out. They make their lair in the former dungeon of Neverwinter and spend their days seeking an exit and wandering whatever they can find. Half mad with hunger, they stalk and slay any creature that enters their domain.

Vault of the Nine

Beneath the center of Neverneath lies a vault built especially for the legendary bodyguards of House Alagondar—the Neverwinter Nine. These great warriors served their beloved city in life, and they lie entombed with honor at her very foundation. Knowing the prowess and fame of these nine warriors, Valindra Shadowmantle wants to animate them to serve as her personal bodyguards. The first task she intends for them: assassinate Lord Nevermere and any who be heirs to the throne.

The Outer Chamber

Stairs from Neverneath lead down to an outer chamber nearly 200 feet in diameter that encircles the great stone doors. Within, nine marble coffins ring a central throne emblazoned with a sun; the coffins stand as its rays. The throne and the coffins glimmer with dim, warm light to illuminate a chamber carved with idyllic images of summer. In the vault, winter never falls, just as it never did during the time of the nine heroes here entombed.

The room is sealed by powerful wards, which Valindra wants to unravel. She actively searches for a means to gain entry to the tomb.

AWAKENING THE NINE

One of Valindra’s dearest desires is to animate the Neverwinter Nine for her own twisted ends. If the characters venture to the Vault of the Nine, they most likely do so to thwart her effort and restore peace to the city’s great heroes.

However, gaining motivations might hook the characters in a quest concerning the Nine. Perhaps Valindra cannot open the wards that seal the inner vault because they require someone pure of heart or intention (neither of which describes the Thayans) or a blood heir of House Alagondar. Maybe Valindra has the power to break the wards, but she believes that intruding on the Nine in this fashion will turn them against her, spoiling her chances of binding them to her will.

Always adept at playing on the fears and desires of others, Valindra might dupe the characters into accessing the vault. She could suggest through a proxy that the Neverwinter Nine are needed to defend the city against a dire threat or that the town’s Nine bear insignia or other tokens (such as swords, shields, or amulets) that allow them to pass through various magical barriers in the city. If the characters take possession of one of these items, they need not fear the entrapment maze of Neverneath.

If nothing else, the vault can be a challenge for the party. Defeat they are awakened, the Nine gladly stand vigil over the characters while they rest.

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defeat Valindra Shadowmante and take her place as master of all the undead ever raised.

To Valindra, who likely could smash both the drog encumbrance and the ettercaps if she put her mind to it, the beholder is a spear thrust through her plans. She has made describing Talgath a priority, but so far, the beholder has defeated all those sent against it. Through regular applications of its charm ray, the beholder controls a swarm of displacer beasts (Monster Vault), a pack of displacer beasts (Monster Vault), and all sorts of would-be challengers to its rule.

Neverneath, Endless Maze

The catacombs beneath Castle Never came through the cataclysm mostly untouched, thanks to a warding spell commissioned in times past to maintain the structural integrity of the castle. However, the Spell-plague wrought strange changes upon the ward, which has grown in strength as a result of the seeping influence of the active plague deep under the earth. What once protected the catacombs now traps intruders.
The complex beneath Castle Never, called Neverneath by locals, closes around trespassers. Corridors lead back around to themselves, and dead ends appear where tunnels led only moments before. Explorers can step through a door, turn around, and go back through the same door, and end up in a different part of the dungeon. They can wander the abandoned halls and chambers for days without finding an exit.

Gargoyles (Monster Vault) plague the maze, attacking at will and without warning. Dozens of traps lie in wait, all capable of resetting themselves. The dungeon seems to have lived a long life.

Several months ago, a clan of goblin explorers under the command of a minotaur soldier (see Monster Vault for both creatures) were trapped in Neverneath and have yet to find their way out. They make their lair in the former dungeon of Neverwinter and spend their days scavenging through an exit they can find. Half mad with hunger, they stalk and slay any creature that enters their domain.

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Always adept at playing on the fears and desires of others, Valindra might duplicit the characters into accessing the vault. She could suggest through a proxy that the Neverwinter Nine are needed to defend the city against a dire threat or that the Nine can guide the Council of Neverwinter lies within the vault. She might attack the characters once they enter or wait until they leave to work her will.

Another force in the city might want access to the Neverwinter Nine for its own purposes. A more subtle faction, such as the Ashmadai, might attempt the characters into accessing the vault. They could suggest through a proxy that the Neverwinter Nine are needed to defend the city against a dire threat or that the Nine can guide the Council of Neverwinter lies within the vault. They might attack the characters once they enter or wait until they leave to work her will.

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If nothing else, the vault can be a sanctuary for those who have been slayed in the wake of a vicious battle, as though rewarding the wake of a vicious battle, as though rewarding...