



## EPISODE 7: HUNTING LODGE

Characters who follow Wyrmspeaker Rezmir or Azbara Jos with the aid of the teleportation circle in Castle Naerytar's dungeon are deposited high in the Greypeak Mountains. The change in climate is very stark; the portal and a nearby lodge are buffeted by chill winds, and the surrounding countryside is heavily forested. The portal is one of several that predate the Cult of the Dragon, and it helps the cult leaders gather over large distances.

Next to the portal is a hunting lodge used by a succession of local lords over the years. The lodge is a useful and central meeting place for high-ranking cultists, among them a Wearer of Purple known as Talis the White.

Talis feels strongly that she belongs in Severin's "inner circle," but Severin doesn't trust her and recently appointed a dwarf named Varram as his wyrmspeaker in charge of recovering the *White Dragon Mask*. The adventurers meet Talis and her servants, and they could end up fighting Talis and her crew in the lodge. They might also bargain and make a deal with Talis, striking against those who oppose her ascension. If they do the latter, she helps the party reach the nearby village of Parnast and aboard Skyreach Castle (see episode 8)—but negotiations are fairly hazardous and might easily result in combat rather than a deal.

If the players don't realize that the cult hopes to bring Tiamat to the Realms, this episode is the best time for that information to be revealed or confirmed. Although Talis won't mention any details such as masks or summonings, the cultists share a general belief that the time is right for Tiamat's arrival. The characters can find several clues that encourage this belief.

### GENERAL FEATURES

The lodge is built in a comfortable but rustic style, and good tapestries and some hunting trophies festoon its rooms. The wooden floors are heavily scarred by claws. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that these are not the marks of normal hunting hounds, but rather ambush drakes (see appendix B).

**Ceilings.** Most hunting lodge ceilings are 8 feet high.

**Light.** The lodge is not lit except by fireplaces and candles. The interior is dark when the shutters are closed.



## IMPORTANT NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

The cultists who meet in the lodge come and go around planned gatherings. At the moment, things are in a lull.

### TALIS

Talis believes she is the rightful bearer of the *White Dragon Mask*, and that she was deeply wronged when custody of the mask went to her hated rival, the dwarf Varram, a foolish creature whom Talis considers insultingly incompetent and worthless. She's been watching the cult's hoard grow, and she hopes to still make her move to become a major figure within the cult hierarchy—certainly she has a lot of support among cultists.

### REZMIR

Because they are enemies, Rezmir does not warn Talis that attackers might be coming through the portal on her heels, but instead slips off to Skyreach Castle (see episode 8) with the intent of letting the adventurers destroy Talis. If the characters slew Rezmir, the lodge's relative lack of watchfulness is not surprising.

If Rezmir survived the earlier episode, the half-dragon meets with Captain Othelstan in Parnast to receive a full report on the status of the cult raids and to inform the captain of the possible arrival of adventurers. Tracking her successfully requires a DC 23 Wisdom (Survival) check. If the adventurers ignore the lodge in favor of following Rezmir to Parnast, skip to episode 8.

### TREPSIN THE TROLL

This four-armed troll is a demon-worshiper and a fanatical hunter of big game: nothing pleases him so much as bringing blood and bones back to feed his ambush drakes, or the delightful terror of his more intelligent victims. Trepsin cares mostly about combat and mayhem, but he has found that serving the cult makes combat and mayhem more likely. He's very devoted to Talis, and he serves the Cult of the Dragon enthusiastically. His four arms just make it easier to claw, rip, and shred anything too slow to escape his reach. He terrifies the kobolds and the human servants of the lodge.

#### CULT SIGNS AND SIGNALS

The Cult of the Dragon uses several signs and countersigns among its members, the most common being holding the hand out with all five fingers extended, which they call the "Tiamat salute." In addition, the phrases "All hail Tiamat!" and "They shall rise!" are frequently used pass phrases.

In addition to their signals, cultists often wear a five-colored band or even use red, blue, and green stripes as coded bits of clothing. A few banners showing cult insignia also exist, but most of those are being held in reserve for the days when the dragons rise to take over. Until then, pass phrases and the salute are the recognition signals most used among Cult of the Dragon members.

## THROUGH THE GATE

The gate from Castle Naerytar closes as soon as the party steps through. The gate cannot be reopened without the proper password.

Dark pine woods are all around on the slopes of a mountain valley; the air is cold and fresh. Two ancient stones stand to either side of you, and no more than a bowshot ahead along a path is a large house, with stone on the ground floor, timbers above. Within sight are more standing stones.

Pine branches shift and sway in a gusting, fitful wind. A squirrel chitters and then falls silent.

The portal stands between stone markers (see area 1).

## OUTSIDE THE LODGE

This ancient building has a wood and plaster upper floor over a fieldstone lower floor: its shuttered windows are all closed. The roof is completely overgrown with moss. A single door stands slightly open. Smoke pours from one of three large chimneys.

The lodge stands in a distant woodland, among tall pines and in excellent hunting territory. The building can be accessed through the front door, kitchen door, the shuttered windows (DC 10 Dexterity check or a shutter bangs), or a hole in the moss-covered roof (above area 17) that's visible from the kennel and stables. Climbing up to the hole requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

The drake kennel (area 2) and wyvern stables (area 3) are stone outbuildings located behind the lodge, near a well and a woodpile. Investigating the kennel rouses the loud hissing and peculiar deep growl of drakes, and is one sure way to get the entire lodge's attention.

There's also the peryton nest on the roof (see area 22), directly above area 18.

## OUTDOOR PATROL

If the party lingers outside the lodge or explores the woods nearby, it finds company. Those with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or higher are not surprised by the rush of a group of two **trolls** and three **ambush drakes** (see appendix B) that has been wandering the area. The combat alerts Talis that she has company. The trolls serve as the lodge's bouncers, and anyone who is not expected is eaten.

## TROLL PURSUIT

If the party is forced to retreat from the lodge, the four-armed **troll** Trepsin (see area 2) pursues them and tries to bring at least one of them back to the lodge for questioning.

## 1. PORTAL STONES

The mossy stones are old and weathered; lichen covers most of their surfaces, but traces of white paint remain in a few of the grooves.

The magical gate to Castle Naerytar sits between a pair of moss-covered standing stones visible from all the front rooms of the lodge. Three other portals near the lodge stand between similar stones, and the cultists have re-tuned their destinations to suit their own ends. One of them connects to the distant north (where Talis visits white dragon allies), one leads to a heavily guarded chamber in Thay, and one leads to the desert of Mulhorand, near a blue dragon lair.

These additional portals should not be a major part of the adventure, but they can introduce cultist nonplayer characters coming to “do business at the lodge” if the characters decide to dawdle at the lodge for many days. Activating any of these portal stones is unlikely without the lore available in distant libraries or in Rath Modar’s chambers in Skyreach Castle (see episode 8).



The grooves are Draconic letters that spell out words in Loross, the language of Netheril. They mention the “snowy lands,” an “unquiet swamp of mournful croaking,” and the lands of the “red sun,” but provide no place names. Over time, the stones have been used to reach many sites within the Realms.

## 2. HUNTING KENNEL

The stone outbuilding has a mossy roof and no windows. The solid oak doors at either end are 9 feet tall; the whole thing resembles a small barn.

Opening the door requires a *knock* spell or a successful DC 20 Strength check; hammering on it brings the occupants over to open it, but they might be a surprise. When the door opens, read:

The door opens and the smell of rotting flesh wafts out. The creature just inside the door is a four-armed troll in a muddy cloak, holding the leash of a small dragon. “What you want?” it asks. “Show the sign.”

The four-armed **troll**, Trepsin, is asking for the cult’s recognition signal. If the characters don’t know it or just don’t provide it, the troll attacks.

The kennel contains six **ambush drakes**, which the cultists use to track and kill game and intruders. The drakes obey Trepsin as the leader of their pack.

Trepsin wears a mossy and filthy cape that he soaks in water from the well; this provides both good camouflage and partial protection against fire. The muddy cape allows him to ignore the first 10 points of fire damage from any attack or source.

If the characters investigate the interior of the kennels, they find a disturbing altar.

At the back of the kennels, three boar spears have been lashed together in a rough and strong tripod. An animal carcass hangs from the tripod by a rope: probably a young boar, though the flies make it hard to tell. Beneath it is a bowl circled by runes written in blood.

The runes are written in Giant. Trepsin is a follower of the demon lord Baphomet, lord of hunters and slayers. The strange and rusted spear-altar has rotted meat on it as a sacrifice to the demon lord.

### TREASURE

Trepsin keeps some items for himself. These include six ermine pelts (100 gp each), three fox pelts (25 gp each), and the prize of his collection: a full winter wolf cloak (250 gp) with a mithral clasp in the shape of a paw used to secure the cloak (750 gp).



### THE FOUR-ARMED TROLL

Sometimes when a troll loses a limb, it regenerates two limbs to replace the one it lost. This can result in trolls with multiple arms. A four-armed troll uses the **troll** stat block, except that it is a Challenge Rating 6 monster (2,300 XP) and has the following action instead of the troll's normal Multiattack action:

**Multiattack.** The troll attacks five times, once with its bite and four times with its claws. If two or more claws hit the same target, the troll rends the target, dealing an extra 2d6 slashing damage.

## 3. STABLES AND WELL

The stables sometimes hold a wyvern or three, but they are empty at the moment. The well has a hoist, a bucket, and cold water, and it seems to have been carved magically through stone. It is otherwise unremarkable.

## LODGE GROUND FLOOR

The lower floor has heavy, mud-stained carpets and dark wooden walls. These are the common spaces for visitors and for servants. Characters can enter the lodge through the front door, the kitchen door, or a shuttered window. Opening a shutter without alerting the lodge's occupants requires a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

The lodge is currently empty of most senior cultists other than Talis, who is on the upper floor (see area 16). She expects only fellow cultists as visitors. Most servants will expect that friendly visitors are here to see her.

## 4. CLOAK ROOM AND GUARD POST

The entryway is empty most of the time.

Just inside the front door is a chamber with pegs and benches for cloaks and boots. A set of rusty spears rests in one corner, held in the claw of a small drake statue.

The guard post to the right of this entryway is unoccupied except when large groups of rival cultists gather. Two small arrow slits make it easy to fire into the entry hall with three-quarters cover.

## 5. SMALL HALL

This central hallway has stairs, large wooden doors, and a set of fine plate armor. Flanking the main entrance are two freestanding suits of elven plate armor, both coated in chipped green paint. Man-sized demonic statues stand near the base of the stairs.

The heavy carpet near the entryway is stained with the muddy boots of returning hunters. The two demonic statues are **gargoyles**, and they attack creatures that enter the hall with weapons drawn.

## TREASURE

The freestanding suits of elven armor are warded with freezing runes that can be detected with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. Any character that touches one of the suits or passes between them must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character takes 1d12 cold damage and is restrained (frozen in place) for 1 minute. The character may use an action on his or her turn to make a DC 15 Strength check, ending the effect early on a success.

Each suit of plate armor is mounted on a crude wooden stand vaguely shaped like a headless elf. A freezing rune can be removed with *dispel magic* (DC 15), whereupon the armor becomes nonmagical.

## 6. THREE HOUNDS PARLOR

The stout beams overhead are stained black with smoke. A comfortable table and chairs, a small wardrobe, and suit of dull black armor stand in the room. A large tapestry shows three hounds dragging down a white boar, and it shimmers with strange light.

The black armor is a **helmed horror** built to serve the cult, and disguised by an illusion to appear as ordinary armor. It detects as magical and attacks if disturbed or if commanded to do so by Talis or someone else wearing purple Cult of the Dragon robes.

The helmed horror has an *Evard's black tentacles* spell stored in it. It is programmed to cast this spell when confronted by three or more adversaries, and can do so only once. (See the helmed horror's stat block for details on its Spell Storing trait.)

The tapestry is magical and transports those who step through it into the surrounding forest, about five miles from the lodge. It often places the travelers near a deer, mountain goat, or other wild game.

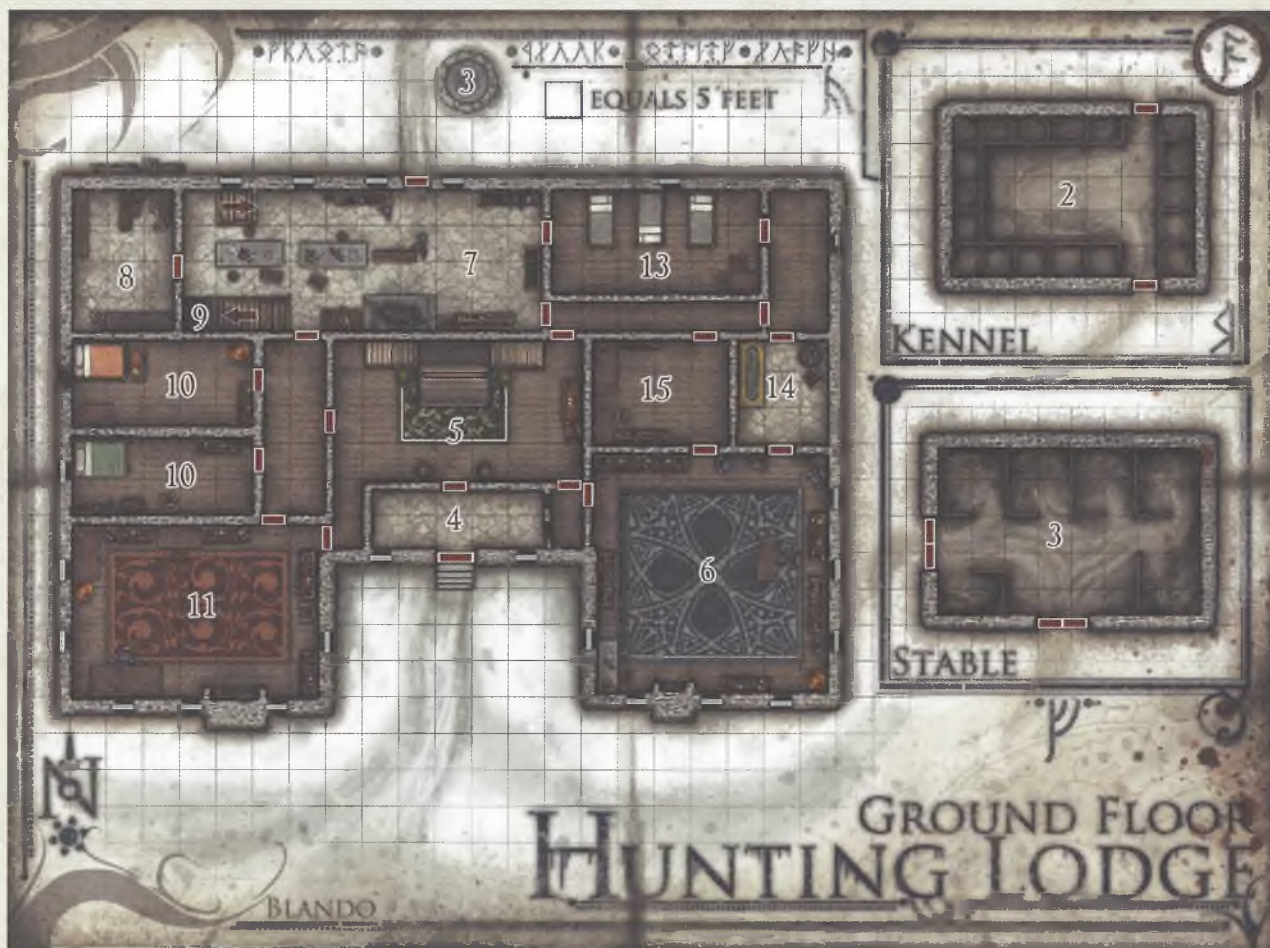
The tapestry weighs about 50 pounds and works only when it is hanging on a wall, teleporting creatures to a random location out to a range of five miles; it does not work if placed on the floor like a carpet and loses its magical property if damaged in any way. It is worth 2,500 gp, or 400 gp if it loses its teleportation property.

## 7. KITCHEN

There is a door out to the drake kennels (area 2) and well (area 3) here.

This spacious kitchen is a hive of activity. A large stove against one wall contains a roaring fire with a bubbling stew pot and shanks of venison suspended above it. Strings of onions and herbs crisscross the ceiling like webs above cluttered tables. Preparing meals are four humans: two men and two women. All are within arm's reach of boiling water, cleavers, and knives, and their stares make it quite clear they don't like company.





These four **cultists** are Talis's servants. They know how to cook, and they can put up a fight. If attacked, one cultist runs to the drake kennels (area 2) to fetch Trepsin and his drakes. Those reinforcements arrive 3 rounds later.

## 8. PANTRY

This pantry is well-stocked with beans, butter, smoked hams, hard biscuits, fresh apples, eggs, sacks of flour, and barrels of ale. There's enough food here to last a long winter.

A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a hollow space under the floorboards that contains a strongbox, inside which is stored the lodge's fine dining silver: 24 place settings of butter knife, soup spoon, fork, and dessert spoon—but no knives. The silver is worth 300 gp all told, and it weighs 50 pounds.

## 9. BASEMENT

The cellar is damp and smells like apples and vinegar. Bags of apples and sacks of potatoes line one wall. Three prisoners are chained along another wall: a dwarf with a chopped and singed beard, and two humans—a man and a woman. The woman is wounded. Their chains are secured to iron rings, keeping them just out of reach of the food.

They are all shackled with iron chains and malnourished, and two of the captives are clearly whipped and beaten. The cultists captured them and brought them to the lodge for interrogation.

**Craggnor the Dwarf.** Craggnor is a member of the cult and a friend of the dwarf Varram the White, the cultist whom Talis hates above all others. She captured Craggnor hoping to learn a weakness she can exploit, but so far he has resisted various bribes, enchantments, and physical torments. She intends to try a more powerful form of mind-reading after she can pull together materials.

**Miresella.** This young woman from Baldur's Gate came to Parnast with a caravan, stumbled upon the cult's doings here, and was captured. She is terrified of Talis, who comes down to beat her and Craggnor from



time to time. She has bruises and cuts along her neck and shoulder. Treat her as a human **scout** with just 1 hit point to start. She's grateful to escape but not eager to tangle with the cult unless healed and equipped.

**Brother Caemon.** This human **priest** of Amaunator has not been scourged, beaten, enchanted, or otherwise abused, which frankly seems to make him a little nervous. He says he arrived here from Hillsfar to the east, as part of a pilgrimage to a shrine on the coast, and this is why Talis singled him out for good treatment—he's unlikely to know anything useful.

Brother Caemon suspects that Talis is trying to win him over to the cult, but he also fears that Talis plans to sacrifice him as part of a summoning ritual and is trying the "catch more flies with honey" approach to win his freedom. Talis's kindness is entirely false, but it might confuse the characters as a red herring. Caemon doesn't know much, and he is a bit of a kind-hearted fool.

## 10. GUEST CHAMBER

This room is dark and cold. Furnishings include a bed covered with blankets and furs, a small desk with an unlit oil lamp atop it, a washstand, a chamberpot, and a brazier of coals. The window is shuttered.

This room is ready for guests, but unoccupied. There are no valuables beyond bedding, furs, and similar items.

## 11. WHITE STAG PARLOR

This room is warm and comfortable, with a large fireplace, stuffed leather chairs, and a table set with smoked sausages and candles. A tapestry displays a magnificent white stag above a valley, with a pair of green dragons soaring overhead and deer, boars, and hedgehogs hiding among the leaves and trees below.

The walls each have a trophy or two, including two fine mountain goat heads, an elk's head with a 10-point rack, a giant eagle's head and talons, a metallic bull's head, a griffon's head and foreclaws, and the head of a white-furred boar with tusks as long as daggers. The room seems otherwise deserted.

The tapestry here is worth about 400 gp, but weighs 40 pounds. The metallic bull's head is a gorgon, and the trophies are all real, though not especially valuable except as curiosities. The griffon's head does contain something unusual: a stash of two *potions of healing*.

## 12. KOBOLD SERVANTS

A foul odor permeates this unfurnished room, which is filled with more than twenty kobolds, half sleeping and half awake.

The twenty-four **kobold servants** are the lodge's maids, grooms, sweeps, laundry, and cooks. They work primarily at night. The servants avoid combat, but they spy on every visitor and report back to Talis if they see anything suspicious.

## 13. HUMAN SERVANTS

This room contains three beds and a simple writing desk. The room smells clean, and the floorboards are swept spotless.

Three human servants (**commoners**) sleep here when they are not working as the lodge's waiters and greeters. They were hired by the lodge's prior owner, one Lord Marsten, a noble slain by the cult. They are confined to this chamber when not serving Talis. These resentful servants are the chief butler Gastyn, head maid Arlaenga, and former chief hunter and now chief groom Angrath Woodwise. They resent the cultists, especially Trepstin the troll.

The human servants avoid combat, but they spy on every visitor. Arlaenga is trying to ingratiate herself, and she reports back to Talis if she sees anything suspicious.

The servants are willing to tell the adventurers about the troll in the kennels (area 2) and the room where the whole cult comes to plot (area 20). They also know that the perytons can be placated with food (area 22), and that the cult keeps a valuable banner in the linens (area 15). Most of all, though, they say they've seen "a castle in the sky near Parnast."

## 14. BATH

This small chamber has a large bathtub in it. The lower bath doubles as a laundry for the servants to wash linens, bedding, and so forth.

## 15. LINENS

This room is stacked with blankets, sheets, various animal furs, tablecloths, flags, banners, and rolled-up rugs.

There's nothing of exceptional value here, but one of the banners has five stripes colored black, blue, green, red, and white, respectively. The banner is meant to be flown on a lance or spear as a signal when approaching Skyreach Castle, to show that the bearer is friendly. Any captured cultist can explain the banner's purpose.

## LODGE UPPER FLOOR

The second floor includes sleeping quarters for guests, the armory, a feast hall used for cult gatherings, and Talis's private room.

### 16. TALIS'S HALL

What looks to be a well-appointed chamber is filled with furniture and can serve as a place to eat food or discuss important matters. Three men in the room wear scale mail and carry swords; a woman wears robes over white scale mail, and she holds a wand set with a blue gemstone. "Welcome. I consider you to be my guests. Perhaps we can do business."

This encounter is the classic scene where the villain explains herself if the players are willing to pause.

**Talis the White** is a dangerous foe. She stands behind her bodyguards and uses a *wand of winter* (see appendix C). Talis's bodyguards include two human **veterans** named Maelgot and Sorvic, and a **dragonclaw** (see appendix B) named Kusphia. If Talis is slain, the veterans surrender, but Kusphia fights to the death to avenge her slain mistress.

Talis expects to meet some co-conspirators at the lodge to discuss various matters of her own ascendancy in the ranks. If the characters can be turned to her advantage, she would much rather send them against her rival than fight them. At the same time, she knows she cannot be seen as disloyal to the cult's interests.

**Negotiating with Talis.** Talis is wary of the characters but offers them hospitality to see whether they might be useful tools. An observer will note that she is polite but not warm. She seems wary but is clearly looking for something.

- **What Talis Wants.** Talis wants to move up in the ranks by causing her rivals to fail spectacularly.
- **What Talis Offers.** She urges the characters to thwart the transport of a large treasure hoard. Cultists under Rezmir's command are using a cloud giant's flying castle to expedite the delivery. Talis offers to help the characters get aboard Skyreach Castle before it departs (see episode 8) and provides them with a banner (see area 15) and a useful pass-phrase ("Tiamat, our Mother and Strength") that will allow them to reach the castle unharmed.
- **Accepting the Deal.** If the party accepts the deal, Talis prefers to remain behind so that she can use her magic to check on them from time to time. If the characters insist that she join them, she acquiesces but might turn against them depending on how events play out in Skyreach Castle.
- **Rejecting the Deal.** Refusing Talis's generous offer triggers a fight. Talis shouts for reinforcements, which brings the gargoyles from area 5, the helmed horror from area 6, and the kobolds from area 12 running, and even yells out the window for Trepsin the troll. Pull out all the stops—and if things go badly, Talis climbs out a window and flees into the woods or through a portal (see area 1).

**Talis Surrenders.** Talis is not a to-the-death sort of villain; she is a survivor and willing to surrender and ask for mercy. Indeed, she uses her rivalry and her recent setbacks within the cult hierarchy to paint herself as a "disgruntled cultist" who is perhaps not eager but willing to provide information.

If the characters accept her surrender, she shares the following information as long as the character questioning her continues to make a sequence of successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) rolls. Once a roll is failed, she clams up—at least until she is bribed, threatened, or offered other information in exchange.

- Talis identifies the five leaders of the cult as "wyrmspeakers," each of whom has an affinity for a particular kind of chromatic dragon. The leaders' names are Severin the Red, Galvan the Blue, Neronvain the Green, Rezmir the Black, and Varram the White.
- She explains the significance of the banner in area 15 and reveals the various cult signs and signals (see the sidebar at the start of the episode).
- If that is not sufficient, she tells them that the cult has an enormous hoard of valuables in a flying castle hidden nearby—but not for long. If pressed for details, Talis reveals that castle belongs to a cloud giant allied with the cult. The castle, she says, is hidden near the village of Parnast, which is under the cult's control.
- If all that is not enough, she tells the party, in glowing and worshipful tones, that a great white dragon inhabits the castle. She refers to the dragon as "snow-white Glazhael, the Cloudchaser, a handsome dragon of the pure northern breed." She sounds like a fanatic when discussing dragonkind.
- She doesn't know much about the Red Wizards but reveals that a Red Wizard liaison has been sent to help arrange the hoard's transport to the cult's headquarters.
- She might be willing to tell the party the cult and its allies are building an army in the Sunset Mountains far to the south, in anticipation of Tiamat's arrival.

### REWARDS

Regardless of the outcome of the party's interaction with Talis, the characters reach 7th level for dealing with her if you are using the milestone experience rule.

### 17. ARMORY

A gaping hole in the roof exposes this armory to the elements. Very few weapons are stored here at present. Shelves to the north lie mostly bare, and a poorly maintained weapon rack standing against the south wall holds three rusty spears and a frayed net. Nearby is a closed cabinet.

A search of the shelves and weapon rack yields a longsword, a box of 20 crossbow bolts, a box of 10 arrows, three spears, and a net. The cabinet is unlocked and contains two heavy crossbows and two longbows.



### TREASURE

One of the rusty spears is decorated with inlaid mithral (50 gp), and another, named *Dragongleam*, is enchanted with 10 charges of a *daylight* spell for use in twilight or dark forest underbrush. The command phrase is "Tiamat's eyes shine," written in Draconic runes on the spear's crossguard.

## 18. TALIS'S BEDCHAMBER

An enormous bed is covered in a soft burgundy bedspread, and a fire crackles in the fireplace, lending the room warmth and an atmosphere of comfort.

### TREASURE

Talis keeps a locked chest in this room and she carries the only key. It can also be opened by a character using thieves' tools with a successful DC 21 Dexterity check. When opened, light spills out from the +1 *chain mail* within it. The armor's light also shines on the chest's 4,000 gp and a *scroll of scorching ray*.

The two veterans carry 20 gp each, and Kuspia carries a symbol of the cult worked in silver worth 40 gp.

## 19. BODYGUARDS' CHAMBER

The shutters are open, allowing light to shine in. Four unmade beds line the south wall, and other furnishings include a table with four chairs and a wine rack containing a multitude of bottles, most of them uncorked and empty.

The veterans who serve Talis have taken these well-furnished quarters for their own: they are Maelgot, Sorvic, and Wessic the Wizeden. Wessic, a human **veteran** of sixty years, is resting here the first time the characters show up; the others are in area 16. Wessic sleeps in his armor and keeps his weapon stowed under his bed, within easy reach. If awakened, he fights fiercely and shouts loudly for help; this usually brings Talis and the other guards, but not the Trepzin the troll or the lodge's human and kobold servants. If reduced to half his hit points, he attempts to surrender.

### TREASURE

Most of the wine bottles are empty, but the twelve full ones that remain are worth 15 gp each. In addition, one of the empty bottles contains a stolen gold necklace worth 250 gp.

## 20. QUEEN OF DRAGONS CHAMBER

A roaring fireplace churns out heat and light at one end of this spacious, 30-foot-high chamber, the ceiling of which is buttressed by ten wooden pillars carved as dragons. Five large tapestries hang along the walls—two on the west wall flanking a door, two on the east wall hanging side by side, and a particularly grand one dominating the south wall next to the fireplace.







Once a feast hall, this room is now set aside for cult gatherings and is currently unoccupied. A set of double doors in the north wall pulls open to reveal a stone balcony overlooking the stables, kennel, and well (see areas 2 and 3 for details).

**Tapestries.** Four of the five tapestries each show dragons hunting, killing, and feasting on lesser creatures, with blue dragons attacking a desert caravan, elves succumbing to a green dragon's gaseous breath weapon, a red dragon burning down what might be the Castle Ward of Waterdeep, and a black and white dragon circling over a cold swamp dotted with ruins. Each is worth at least 500 gp to the right buyer, but each also weighs about 75 pounds and is extremely cumbersome.

The fifth tapestry shows Tiamat, the queen of evil dragons, in all her glory, crowned in gold and silver, and worked with gemstones and gold and silver thread. Fully 35 feet wide and 20 feet tall, it shows Tiamat crushing cities and surrounded by adoring followers. The tapestry weighs about 200 pounds and is worth 2,500 gp. Simply removing the semiprecious stones provides garnets, agates, moonstones, and others worth about 800 gp.

Close examination of the tapestries and a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check reveals their locations in the Sword Coast region. The blue dragons are attacking a caravan crossing the desert of Anauroch, the white and black dragons are circling above the Mere

of Dead Men, the red dragon is near Waterdeep, and the green dragon is clearly rampaging among the High Forest elves, based on the mountains in the background. Tiamat herself is shown with what are clearly Waterdeep, Neverwinter, and Baldur's Gate in her claws.

**Secret Door.** The outline of a hidden door can be found with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. The door opens into the trophy room (area 21).

## 21. TROPHY ROOM

Three open windows let in light and air; the room's walls are adorned with stuffed animal heads, including a large 14-point stag, a mountain goat, a bear, two winter wolves, and what can only be an ankheg's head. Two tattered banners hang from the ceiling, and two leather chairs and a handful of braziers complete the comfortable parlor.

This is very much a hunter's bragging room.

**Secret Door.** A secret door can be discovered between the eastern tapestries with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigate) check. The door is cunningly hidden among the room's wooden panels, and pulls open to reveal area 20. It can also be discovered by pulling on the edge of the wood panel between the tapestries.



## 22. PERYTON ROOST

This large nest on the roof is made of woven sticks, leaves, and feathers intermingled with the sun-bleached bones of sizable animals: deer, bear, or mountain goat, perhaps.

The nest abuts a chimney that leads down to Talis's bedchamber (area 18) and belongs to a mated pair of **perytors**. Several times during the day, the perytons leave their nest to hunt for food. There's a 50 percent chance that the nest is empty during the day; at night, both perytons are roosting here.

The perytons are allies of the cult and have a clear view of the portals in front of the lodge (area 1). They cannot see the stables or kennels (areas 2 and 3) from the nest.

**Combat on the Rooftop.** The nest provides reasonable traction and a good perch for the perytons, but the sloped roof is tricky to stand on. At the start of its turn or whenever it takes damage, a creature standing on the roof must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature falls prone on the roof; if the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature slips and falls off the roof, taking 2d6 bludgeoning damage and landing prone on the ground.

### TREASURE

The nest contains bones, old bits of armor, a punctured helmet, and other detritus. Digging around for 1 minute or more also reveals two treasures: an ancient *arrow-catching shield* and a bag of tarnished silverware worth 100 gp.

## TRAVELING TO PARNAST

If you are using the milestone experience rule, the characters reach 7th level after clearing out the hunting lodge and either defeating Talis or forging a tenuous alliance with her.

**Walking to Parnast.** The village of Parnast and the castle is a five-mile hike from the lodge, on the far side of the mountain, through forested hills, over logs and rushing creeks, and along muddy trails. It's at least a half day's walk.

**Missing the Castle.** If the characters kill Talis and all her servants and guardians, there's no one to tell the characters about Skyreach Castle, and the party may well delay too long healing up or investigating the lodge. Consider leaving a paper trail in Talis's personal effects, or have a villager (most villagers are cultists) show up at the lodge with a delivery of food and supplies.

