

The Shards Call

A Dungeons & Dragons module based
on the novel

Whispers of the Underdark



By Adrian Hungate

Background

The sun dips below the jagged peaks of the Sword Mountains, casting long shadows across the land. In the distance, the city of Neverwinter glows like a beacon, its bustling streets oblivious to the darkness stirring beneath the surface. Across the Sword Coast, whispers of unease ripple through the land: farmers speak of crops withering overnight, miners murmur of unnatural tremors, and sailors swear the sea itself seems restless.

At the heart of this unrest lies an ancient ruin—Brynrun's Tower—long thought abandoned, but now the site of disturbing activity. Livestock have been slaughtered in strange patterns, crops have been seared by unnatural frost, and eerie chanting drifts through the night air. The people of Phandalin, fearing something sinister, have called upon brave souls to investigate the source of these disturbances.

The party, whether through fate or misfortune, has answered this call. They are drawn together by different motives—justice, curiosity, duty, or the lure of treasure. What they uncover within the ruins of Brynrun's Tower, however, will prove to be far greater than any of them anticipated.

The tower is not merely home to rogue mages or forgotten spirits. Deep within its crumbling walls, an ancient power stirs. The adventurers will face perilous trials, unravel dark secrets, and ultimately come into possession of a mysterious black crystalline shard—an artifact that seems to pulse with a sinister energy of its own.

What starts as a simple investigation will lead the party into the depths of the Underdark, where forces beyond their comprehension scheme in the shadows. The shard is only the beginning. It whispers to them, pulling them toward an unknown fate. And once they listen, there may be no turning back.

Act 1: The Journey to Brynrun's Tower

The road to Brynrun's Tower is fraught with peril, stretching through treacherous wilderness and forgotten pathways. The journey itself is a test of endurance, skill, and camaraderie as the party navigates rugged terrain and encounters the dangers that lurk along the way.

Encounters Along the Way

1. **Worg Ambush:** On the second night of travel, as the party rests under the moonlit sky, a pack of hungry worgs descends upon them. Drawn by the scent of their camp, these cunning beasts attempt to separate and overwhelm their prey. The adventurers must work together to fend off the attack. Adjust the number of worgs to the experience and ability of your party.

Worg (Large Beast, CR 2)

- **Armor Class:** 13
 - **Hit Points:** 26 (4d10+4)
 - **Speed:** 50 ft.
 - **Skills:** Perception +4, Stealth +3
 - **Keen Hearing & Smell:** Advantage on Perception checks relying on smell or hearing.
 - **Pack Tactics:** Gains advantage on attack rolls if an ally is within 5 ft.
 - **Bite (Melee Weapon Attack):** +5 to hit, 5 ft. reach, one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) piercing damage. Target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
2. **Environmental Hazard:** A sudden rockslide threatens the party as they traverse a steep mountain pass. Quick thinking and reflexes are required to avoid disaster, with characters making Dexterity saving throws to dodge falling debris or using Strength to secure a safe path.
 3. **Mysterious Omen:** A lone, hooded traveler appears along the road, speaking in riddles about the darkness growing beneath the earth. They warn of an ancient force awakening but vanish into the night before any questions can be answered. The encounter leaves the party with more questions than answers. Should the party choose to attack, they quickly realize their mistake.

Hooded Traveler (High-Level NPC, CR 15)

- **Armor Class:** 19 (Magical Protections)
- **Hit Points:** 210 (20d8+100)
- **Speed:** 40 ft.
- **Abilities:** Strength 18, Dexterity 16, Constitution 20, Intelligence 18, Wisdom 22, Charisma 20
- **Legendary Resistances (3/day):** Automatically succeeds a failed save
- **Legendary Actions (3 per round):** Can cast spells, teleport, or attack out of turn.
- **Spellcasting:** Casts spells as a 15th-level wizard, with access to powerful divination and illusion magic.

- **Reaction: Disappear in Shadows:** If attacked, the traveler vanishes in a swirl of shadows, teleporting 120 ft. away.
- 4. **Lost Supplies - The Mimic's Trap:** The party stumbles upon the remnants of a ruined caravan. Signs of struggle hint at a violent skirmish, and among the wreckage, they find abandoned goods and scattered personal belongings. Investigation reveals faint tracks leading into the wilderness—could someone still be alive? However, among the abandoned crates lurks a **Mimic**, waiting for unsuspecting adventurers to get too close.
Mimic (Medium Monstrosity, CR 2)
 - **Armor Class:** 12
 - **Hit Points:** 58 (9d8+18)
 - **Speed:** 15 ft.
 - **Damage Resistances:** Acid
 - **Shapechanger:** Can appear as an ordinary object, indistinguishable unless detected.
 - **Adhesive:** Any creature that touches the mimic is grappled (DC 13).
 - **Bite (Melee Weapon Attack):** +5 to hit, 5 ft. reach, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

As the party nears the tower, the air grows colder, and an unnatural silence blankets the land. The feeling of being watched lingers, setting the stage for the mysteries awaiting them within the ruins of Brynrun's Tower.

Act 2: The Ruins of Brynrun's Tower

The ruins of Brynrun's Tower loom before the party, a shattered monument of dark stone clawing at the sky. The air is unnaturally still, the silence pressing like an unseen weight. Jagged remnants of the tower's former grandeur dot the landscape, while twisted roots and encroaching vines consume what remains. The once-proud structure is now but a graveyard of forgotten secrets.

Key Areas & Challenges

1. The Outer Courtyard

- **Description:** A skeletal battlefield littered with rusted weapons and shattered bones. The faint glow of arcane runes flickers in the fading twilight. A shifting fog drapes over the area, obscuring movement.
- **Enemies:** 3-6 **Skeletons (AC 13, HP 13)** or **Shadows (AC 12, HP 16)** emerge from the ruins, their hollow eyes glowing with undead malice.

2. The Ritual Chamber

- **Description:** At the center of the chamber, a blood-stained altar pulsates with malevolent energy. Hooded figures chant in a guttural tongue, the air thick with the stench of decay.
- **Enemies:** 2-5 **Cultists (AC 12, HP 9)** and **Cult Fanatics (AC 15, HP 33)** spring into action.

3. The Spire's Collapse

- **Description:** The shattered tower spire trembles as the cult's dark leader completes his incantation. The walls fracture, debris crashing down as the structure crumbles.
- **Final Boss:** **Cult Leader (AC 16, HP 90, CR 6-8, Warlock or Sorcerer).**

Act 3: The Shard's Awakening

The dust settles around the party as they clutch the black crystalline shard recovered from the ruined tower. The object is cold to the touch, its surface reflecting no light. As they hold it, a whisper slithers through their minds, ancient and full of unknowable malice. This is no ordinary relic—it is a beacon calling to something in the depths of the world.

Key Events & Challenges

1. **The Whispering Visions:** As the party rests, they experience shared visions of an immense cavern deep below the earth. Dark figures watch from unseen corners, and a voice beckons them to the unknown. Their minds are filled with images of ancient cities carved from obsidian, shadowy beings moving with unnatural grace, and an overwhelming sense of being hunted.
2. **Pursuers in the Night:** The party is not alone. A faction of **Elite Drow Hunters**, drawn by the shard's reawakening, arrives to claim it for their dark masters. The drow do not offer negotiation—only death or surrender.
 - **Enemies:** 4-6 **Drow Elite Warriors (CR 10 each, AC: 18, HP: 45)**, led by a **Drow Shadowblade Commander (CR 12, AC: 22, HP: 118)**.
 - **Enemy Abilities:** The drow fight using darkness, poisoned weapons, and shadow magic. They are vastly stronger than the party, making a direct fight nearly impossible to win.
3. **The Only Escape – Descent into the Underdark:** As the battle rages, the ground shakes violently. The shard pulses stronger as the adventurers approach an underground passage hidden within a collapsed section of the tower. The ancient stone gives way, revealing a **yawning abyss into the Underdark**. With the drow closing in, the adventurers have only one choice—escape into the abyss or be overwhelmed.

As the journey into darkness begins you hear Whispers of the Underdark...

Pre-Rolled Player Characters

Here are the stats of the characters from the book *Whispers of the Underdark*. Why not play as the Party of Five, and get a feel for what led them to the underdark on that fateful day?

Lyara Thalorin (*Half-Elf Bard, Level 4*)

Medium humanoid (half-elf), Chaotic Good

Armor Class: 14 (Studded Leather)

Hit Points: 31 (4d8+8)

Speed: 30 ft.

Abilities

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dexterity +5, Charisma +6

Skills Deception +6, Performance +8, Persuasion +7, Sleight of Hand +5

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Innate Features

- **Fey Ancestry:** Advantage on saving throws against being charmed.
- **Bardic Inspiration (d6, 3/short rest):** As a bonus action, a creature within 60 ft. gains an extra d6 to add to attack rolls, ability checks, or saving throws.
- **Jack of All Trades:** Add half proficiency bonus to all ability checks that don't already include proficiency.
- **Song of Rest:** If allies regain hit points during a short rest, they gain an additional 1d6 hit points.

Actions

- **Rapier.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8+3 piercing.
- **Vicious Mockery.** (Cantrip, 60 ft.) Target makes a **DC 14 Wisdom save** or takes **2d4 psychic damage** and has disadvantage on its next attack.

Spellcasting (*DC 14, +6 to hit*)

- **Cantrips:** Vicious Mockery, Mage Hand, Minor Illusion
- **1st Level (4 slots):** Cure Wounds, Charm Person, Detect Magic

- **2nd Level (3 slots):** Hold Person, Suggestion
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Dain Ironfoot (*Dwarf Fighter, Level 4*)

Medium humanoid (dwarf), Lawful Neutral

Armor Class: 18 (Chain Mail, Shield)

Hit Points: 42 (4d10+12)

Speed: 25 ft.

Abilities

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Strength +6, Constitution +5

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +4, Intimidation +2, Smith's Tools +5

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Dwarvish

Innate Features

- **Dwarven Resilience:** Advantage on saves vs. poison; resistance to poison damage.
- **Second Wind (1/short rest):** Regain **1d10+4 HP** as a bonus action.
- **Action Surge (1/short rest):** Take an additional action on your turn.

Actions

- **Greataxe.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d12+4 slashing.
 - **Hammer & Shield Bash.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8+4 bludgeoning; target must make **DC 14 Strength save** or be knocked prone.
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Elandra "El" Dawnspire (*Human Cleric of Lathander, Level 4*)

Medium humanoid (human), Neutral Good

Armor Class: 16 (Chain Shirt, Shield)

Hit Points: 35 (4d8+12)

Speed: 30 ft.

Abilities

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wisdom +6, Charisma +4

Skills Insight +6, Medicine +6, Religion +4, Persuasion +4

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Celestial

Innate Features

- **Channel Divinity (1/short rest):**
 - **Radiance of Dawn:** Each hostile creature within 30 ft. makes a **DC 14 Con save** or takes **2d10+4 radiant damage** (half on success).
- **Blessed Healer:** When she casts **Cure Wounds** or **Healing Word**, she also heals herself for 2+spell level.

Actions

- **Mace.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6+1 bludgeoning.
- **Sacred Flame.** (Cantrip, 60 ft.) Target makes a **DC 14 Dex save** or takes **2d8 radiant damage**.

Spellcasting (DC 14, +6 to hit)

- **Cantrips:** Sacred Flame, Guidance, Thaumaturgy
- **1st Level (4 slots):** Cure Wounds, Shield of Faith, Bless
- **2nd Level (3 slots):** Lesser Restoration, Spiritual Weapon

Toskri Greycloak (Tiefling Rogue, Level 4)

Medium humanoid (tiefling), Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class: 15 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points: 29 (4d8+4)

Speed: 30 ft.

Abilities

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Features & Traits

- **Sneak Attack (+2d6):** Once per turn, deal extra damage if she has advantage or an ally is within 5 ft.
- **Cunning Action:** Bonus action to Dash, Disengage, or Hide.

Actions

- **Dagger.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, *Hit:* 1d4+4 piercing.
 - **Fire Bolt.** (Cantrip, 60 ft.) *Hit:* 2d10 fire damage.
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Kael Vorenthar (*Silver Dragonborn Sorcerer, Level 4*)

Medium humanoid (dragonborn), Neutral Good

Armor Class: 13 (Mage Armor)

Hit Points: 30 (4d6+12)

Speed: 30 ft.

Abilities

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

Innate Features

- **Draconic Resistance (Cold):** Kael has resistance to cold damage.
- **Breath Weapon (3d6 Cold, 15 ft. cone, DC 13 Dex save, 1/short rest):** Creatures in the area take half damage on a successful save.
- **Draconic Resilience:** Kael's skin is naturally tough, giving him a base AC of 13 when not wearing armor.

Features & Traits

- **Draconic Resistance (Cold):** Resistant to cold damage.
- **Breath Weapon (3d6 cold, 15 ft. cone, DC 13 Dex save).**
- **Metamagic: Quickened Spell (1/long rest):** Cast a spell as a bonus action.

Spellcasting (*DC 15, +7 to hit*)

- **Cantrips:** Ray of Frost, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation
- **1st Level (4 slots):** Magic Missile, Mage Armor
- **2nd Level (3 slots):** Scorching Ray, Misty Step

