

ASHES OF THE BURNING WORLD



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

THEME/GENRE

- **Apocalyptic Fantasy, Mystery, Survival**

TONE

- **Dark, Foreboding, with moments of desperate heroism**

TARGET LEVEL

- **Level 5**

EXPECTED DURATION

- **2 hours**

PLAYER FOCUS PREFERENCES

- **Combat:** High
- **Roleplay:** Medium
- **Exploration:** High

BACKSTORY AND SETTING

THE WORLD

The once-thriving land of **Elmenos** now lies under the suffocating grip of perpetual fire. Ten years ago, a catastrophic event known as the Calamity Rift tore the sky asunder, releasing endless flamestorms from the Elemental Plane of Fire. Once green and fertile, Elmenos has deteriorated into a charred wasteland where survival is a luxury few can afford.

Remnants of pre-cataclysm societies and mysterious artifacts, known as **Ember Shards**, are scattered within the ash-ridden ruins. They whisper the potential to close the rift or cataclysmically widen it further.

THE LOCAL AREA

Emberhold, a precarious bastion marooned amidst jagged mountains, is one of the last holdouts for those clinging to life. Surrounded by the rolling planes of ash and protected by the great underground structure, the **Vault**, survival here is harsh and resources thin. The community is beset by the ominous presence of “Ash Revenants,” fiery specters that seem to target bastions of hope.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Long ago, the nefarious mage cult known as the **Scions of Emberlight** invoked forbidden magic that triggered the Calamity Rift. Their potentially world-ending artifacts, the **Ember Shards**, remain hidden, believed to control the fate of the rift.

IMPORTANT NPCs

1. **Elandra Morcain:** Emberhold’s pragmatic leader, torn between her duty to keep her people safe and the desperate need for redemption.
 - *Motivation:* Survival above heroics, wary of risking anything without certainty.
2. **Sorel Fintash:** A charismatic wanderer and scavenger woven in tales of lost knowledge and relics. He speaks of an Ember Shard lost within the ruins.
 - *Motivation:* Gain leverage and fame; prefers to motivate from the sidelines.
3. **Ash Revenant Priest:** A terrifying leader of the Ash Revenants, half-sane and locked in communion with the Elemental Plane of Fire.
 - *Motivation:* Obliterate Elmenos to ensure dominion for elemental forces.

PLOT HOOK

Opening Scene

Ashes drift through Emberhold's central plaza as the community gathers under overcast skies for Elandra's grim announcement. The air swelters with heat, mirroring the troubles beleaguering the settlement—scavenger attacks, plummeting resources, and whispers of fiery fiends.

In a dramatic interrupt, a battered scavenger stumbles forward, collapsing in the dust. Before his breath runs out, he tells a tale of a strange glowing shard north of Emberhold, potent enough to reverse or invoke the calamity.

Call to Action

Galvanized by hope mingled with desperation, Elandra seeks volunteers to unravel the truth of the Shard, retrieve it from the haunted ruins, and deliver a chance for salvation.

Primary Objective

- Retrieve the Ember Shard.
- Expose the nature and plans of the Ash Revenants.

KEY LOCATIONS

LOCATION 1: EMBERHOLD (STARTING AREA)

Atmosphere

A barricaded community sitting atop searing rocks and forgotten woods—a testament to perseverance amidst doom.

Encounters

- **Social Interaction:** Discuss strategies with Elandra; extract cryptic lore and warnings from Sorel.
- **Information Gathering:** Culled tales from villagers highlight glowing phantoms and eerie voices.

Details

- Heat is bearable with care; acquisition strictly limited due to critical supplies.

LOCATION 2: CHARRED RUINS OF KALLENDOR

Atmosphere

A silent shadow of a city, rumors whisper through flickering embers and streets strewn with ash to mask the secrets of old.

Encounters

- **Combat:**
 - **Ash Revenants (Special):** Fiery undead entities wielding blades forged from combusted matter.
 - **Tactics:** Pairs ignite debris to outmaneuver players, creating deadly traps amidst falling ruins (DC 13 Dexterity saves).
- **Puzzle:**
 - A vault sealed by embers; glowing reliefs reveal key symbols (DC 14 Perception).
- **Treasure:**
 - Suits of journals document the Scions' dark exploits, hinting at the Ember Shard's intent.

LOCATION 3: THE EMBERHEART SANCTUM (FINAL AREA)

Atmosphere

An enigmatic cavern where obsidian melds with volatile flares; a sanguine shard emits radiance, watched over by the Ash Priest.

Encounters

- **Boss Fight:**
 - **Ash Revenant Priest** uses Fire Priest stats with additional legendary traits (summons fire elementals).
 - **Tactics:** Manipulate environment; use fire pools for healing; minions delay and distract players.
 - **Hazards:** Room temperature spikes by round 3 (DC 14 Constitution saves).
- **Choices:**
 - Negotiate the deal of dominion; the Priest sees rift expansion as inevitable purgation.

ENCOUNTERS AND CHALLENGES

1. Combat Encounters

- **Ash Revenants:** Fire-themed ghosts with volatile traits—explode on death.
- **Ember Mimics:** Fiery deceivers disguising themselves as opulent relics.

2. Roleplay Encounters

- Convincing dissenting Elandra to allow audacious risks.
- Scavenger interrogation for shard nuances.

3. Puzzle

- At Emberheart, correct sigil alignment channels the shard's energies; missteps trigger an inferno (journals hint sequences).

CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION

Final Challenge

Secure the Ember Shard amidst fiery ravagers and the Priest's conjurations. Contemplate the fate of the artifact—risky entrapment or rift-closing sacrifice?

Stakes

- *Success:* Retrieve the shard; move toward closing the rift or leverage its potential to stabilize/reclaim Emberhold.
- *Failure:* The shard remains or is demolished; countdown to obliteration shortens.

Narrative Conclusion

A defining decision:

1. Partner with Elandra to safeguard Emberhold's shards of hope.
2. Unleash the shard's chaotic potential for individual purpose.
3. Sacrifice to seal the rift; bear existential cost.

REWARDS

- **Loot:** Ember Shard (unique magical relic), 100-200 gold valuables, flame-resistant cloak (+1 protection).
- **Story Rewards:** Characters prompt Emberhold's trajectory, as saviors or instigators of transformation.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

1. **Stat Blocks:** Additional specifics for Ash Revenants and Ash Revenant Priest.
2. **Simple Maps:** Illustrated depictions of the key locations—Emberhold, Kallendor, Emberheart Sanctum.
3. **Player Handouts:** Archival documents, sigil puzzle sketches, and scavenger notations.
4. **Atmosphere:** Auditory enhancements create immersion—background crackles, distant collapses, ritualistic chants.

FLEXIBLE OUTCOMES

- Engage in shard heists with Sorel or pursue alternate paths.
- Early shard destruction incites overwhelming Revenant retaliation.
- Enable inventive strategies against the Priest—diplomacy, strategic collapse, magic manipulations.

POST-GAME WRAP-UP

1. Engage Players:

- What decision resonated most?
- How did themes and choices align with their expectations?

Let this serve as a beacon of intensity, charting a course through apocalypse-fraught paths towards fractured peace or ambition's edge. Embrace the flames; carve a destiny amidst the **Ashes of the Burning World**.