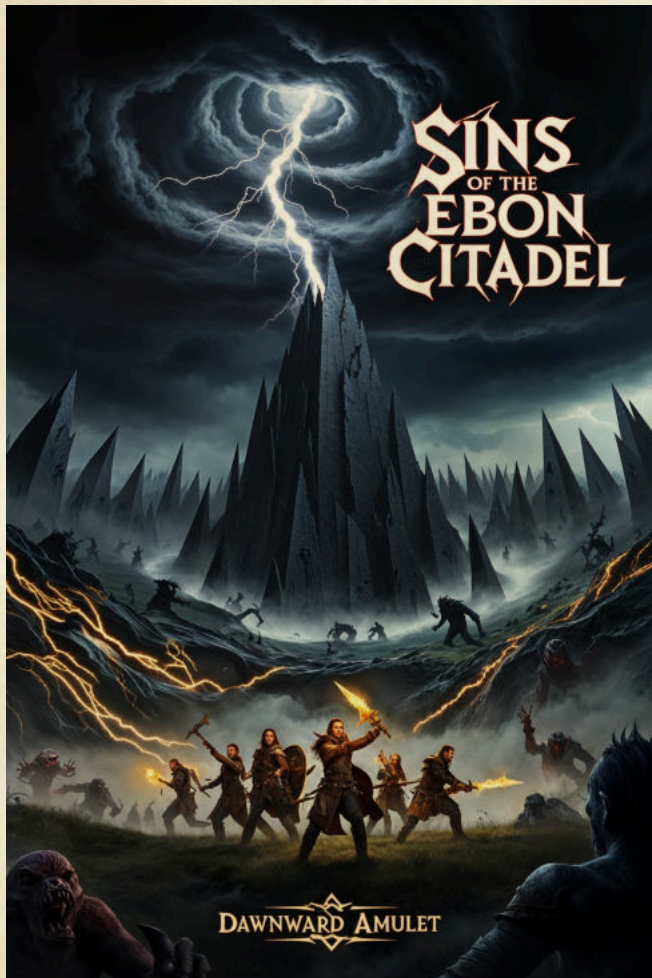


SINS OF THE EBON CITADEL



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

- **Title:** Sins of the Ebon Citadel
- **Theme/Genre:** Dark Fantasy, Mystery, Intrigue
- **Tone:** Grim and foreboding, with moments of moral ambiguity
- **Target Level:** Level 5
- **Expected Duration:** 2 hours
- **Player Focus Preferences:**
 - Combat: Medium
 - Roleplay: High
 - Exploration: Medium

BACKSTORY AND SETTING

The once-grand **Ebon Citadel**, perched atop a jagged black cliff, has stood as a silent sentinel over the mist-drenched Vale of Eridath for centuries. It was abandoned after the enigmatic **Chorum Dynasty** vanished during a night of fire, betrayal, and forbidden magic over a hundred years ago. Some say the halls of the citadel are cursed; others claim the atrocities once committed there summoned something unspeakable into the world.

Recently, the citadel has returned to prominence for all the wrong reasons. **The Blackburst**, an unholy twilight storm of writhing shadow, has erupted around the citadel, spreading fear and mutating the land with strange, unnatural phenomena. The small town of **Pelor's Refuge**, nestled at the base of the cliffs, has become the front line in surviving the storm's creeping influence.

The **local Baron Eremond Valcain** has set a high bounty for anyone brave enough to trek to the Ebon Citadel and halt the storm. Rumors persist that ancient secrets lie within the halls—secrets of Chorum's sins that should have remained buried.

IMPORTANT NPCs

1. Baron Eremond Valcain

- *Description:* The pragmatic but desperate ruler of Pelor's Refuge. With furrowed brows and a voice tinged with urgency, he exudes both authority and desperation.
- *Motivation:* Guard his people and save his lands at any cost.
- *Quote:* "The storm threatens all that we hold dear. Stop it, and you will have the gratitude of these lands and a bounty worthy of your courage."

2. Jada Thornfoot

- *Description:* A mysterious herbalist in the town, with sharp features and knowing eyes, who provides cryptic hints about the storm and its origins.
- *Motivation:* Guard a dark secret tied to the Ebon Citadel's fall.
- *Quote:* "The winds whisper secrets long forgotten. Tread carefully where shadows linger."

3. Zarresh, the Hollow Sentinel

- *Description:* A corrupted construct of the Chorum Dynasty that now roams the citadel, a towering figure of twisted metal and magic.
- *Motivation:* Execute its duty of protecting the citadel's legacy.
- *Quote:* "Trespassers in sacred halls... turn back or face the remnants of the past."

PLOT HOOK

The party is seated together in the **Mossy Flagon Inn** in Pelor's Refuge. The air is thick with tension when the door bursts open, letting in a biting wind. A desperate villager shouts, "It's happened again! Another of the livestock, twisted and rotting—what's left of it is glowing with those awful glyphs!"

Moments later, Baron Valcain enters. His voice is urgent and forceful, "Brave souls, we are in dire need. The Blackburst swells, and its horrors grow bolder. Even now, a hunter is found... frozen, a grotesque testament to the storm's wrath." He offers an enchanted relic from his family vault: **The Dawnward Amulet**, a charm that repels shadow magics.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Uncover the source of the Blackburst within the Ebon Citadel and end the storm before it consumes the Vale of Eridath.

KEY LOCATIONS

PELOR'S REFUGE (STARTING AREA)

- **Atmosphere:** The village is cloaked in a somber gloom. The people whisper of curses and monsters, and glyph-marked cattle corpses line the fields. The smell of damp earth mingles with the scent of burnt warding herbs.
- **NPCs:**
 - **Innkeeper Tabra Gale:** Eager to serve loud tales but quick to quiet down when speaking of the Chorum's curse.
 - **Jada Thornfoot:** Offers the party a vital clue: glyphs similar to those in the storm were last seen in the Chorum priests' inscriptions—deep in the citadel's Chapel of Ash.
- **Encounters:**
 - A frightened villager begs the party to save her son who wandered toward the cliffs, leading to a potential moral dilemma and quick decision-making situation.

THE SHADOWED CLIFFS (INTERMEDIATE AREA)

- **Atmosphere:** The pathway to the citadel is choked with unnatural winds, whispering voices, and shadowy imprints of those who last walked here. Occasional flashes of light from the Blackburst above illuminate jagged rocks and twisted trees.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Combat Encounter:** The cliffs are guarded by **Shadowed Wolves**—mutated monstrosities with glowing glyphs that strike from the shifting gloom.
 - *Stat Block:*
 - **AC:** 15
 - **HP:** 22
 - **Abilities:** Pack Tactics, Shadow Leap (can teleport to an enemy within 30 feet as a bonus action).
 - **Puzzle/Trap:** A shattered bridge with glowing runes requires solving three riddles tied to the sins of the Chorum rulers. Failure summons shadowy hands that threaten to drag the unwary toward the cliffs.

THE EBON CITADEL (FINAL AREA)

- **Atmosphere:** The great blackstone citadel is cold, damp, and filled with lingering whispers of the damned. Shadowy glyphs pulse along walls and floors, bathing everything in eerie twilight. The Chapel of Ash is defiled, and the storm pulses visibly overhead.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Roleplay Encounter:** Zarresh, the Hollow Sentinel, appears in a cracked hall. Its fragmented memories reveal major sins of the Chorum Dynasty—they summoned an entity through forbidden magic but failed to contain it. Zarresh warns the party yet fights if pressed.
 - **Puzzle:** The **Glyph Altar Puzzle** requires piecing together glowing runes in the right order based on cryptic diary entries from a Chorum priest. Solving it correctly weakens the final boss.
 - **Boss Fight: The Chained Wyrn** (CR 6) is the corrupted manifestation of the Chorum's summoned entity, bound in a weakened state but breaking free. It lashes out with shadowy tendrils and curses that sap vitality.

CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION

- **Final Challenge:** The party must defeat the Chained Wyrms while enduring waves of shadowy storms that damage and disorient them. Solving a secondary phase of the puzzle mid-fight helps prevent the regeneration of glyphs that empower the Wyrms.
- **Stakes:** If the party fails, the Blackburst will expand uncontrollably, plunging the Vale of Eridath into eternal shadow.

NARRATIVE CONCLUSION

If victorious, the storm dissipates, and the once-tormented skies clear as sunlight pierces through. The people of Pelor's Refuge celebrate their salvation, but whispers persist about what other sins the Chorum Dynasty might have hidden.

REWARDS

- **Loot:**
 - *The Dawnward Amulet* (provides greater shadow resistance).
 - *Chorum Signet Ring* (grants advantage on persuasion checks with nobles).
 - 700 GP worth of relics scavenged from the citadel's vaults.
- **Story Rewards:**
 - Fame and gratitude in the Vale of Eridath.
 - Jada Thornfoot's cautious allegiance, potentially offering rare alchemical items or assistance in future quests.
- **Experience Points:** Enough to nearly level to 6, incentivizing continued adventures.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

- **Stat Blocks:** Custom stats for **Zarresh**, **Shadowed Wolves**, and **The Chained Wyrms**.
- **Maps:**
 - Town map of Pelor's Refuge.
 - Pathway map to depict the Shadowed Cliffs.
 - Detailed map of the Ebon Citadel's key areas.
- **Handouts:**
 - A fragment of the Chorum priest's diary detailing cryptic messages.
 - A sketch of the runes relevant to the Glyph Altar Puzzle.
- **Atmosphere:** Creeping wind and distant whispers akin to "Blade Runner 2049"-inspired tones enhance the ominous vibe.

FLEXIBLE OUTCOMES

- **Negotiation Potential:** If players attempt to negotiate with Zarresh or the Chained Wyrms, offer alternate outcomes: perhaps the Wyrms wish only vengeance on the Chorum and could be bound to serve the party's goals—or it could simply be lying to escape.
- **Missing Puzzle Consequences:** If puzzles are skipped, increase the final boss's power or deploy additional waves of shadow enemies for a heightened challenge.

POST-GAME WRAP-UP

- **Debrief Questions:**
 - What moment did you find most exciting or intense?
 - How did you feel about the mix of combat, puzzles, and roleplay?
 - Did you feel that your choices mattered in the story?
- **Epilogue Options:**
 - Did the players leave the citadel standing, or did they accidentally unleash a new threat?
 - Seeds for further adventures: Strange glowing glyphs appear in distant towns, hinting that the Chorum's darkness might not be entirely erased.

This document provides a complete one-shot campaign for Dungeons & Dragons, ensuring a memorable and immersive adventure in the Vale of Eridath. Adapt as needed for your playgroup's unique dynamics and enjoy the twists and turns of "Sins of the Ebon Citadel."