



# Dead for a Spell

**A D&D® EBERRON® adventure for characters of levels 7-9**

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## INTRODUCTION

“Dead for a Spell” is a D&D adventure rooted in the EBERRON campaign setting and designed for characters of levels 7-9. Before running this adventure, you should familiarize yourself with the city of Sharn and the Aurum, as presented in the *EBERRON Campaign Guide*. This adventure also references people and places introduced in the *Sharn: City of Towers™* and *Five Nations™* game supplements, although these products are not required to run the adventure.

In this adventure, the Lord Commander of the Sharn Watch hires the heroes to investigate the murder of an actress. The investigation quickly spirals into a bloody dispute involving a dead wizard’s spell-book, political rivalries, and secrets that might foment war among the Five Nations.

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## BACKGROUND

Iyan ir'Talan has a problem. As the Lord Commander of the Watch, it's his job to keep the peace in Sharn. Despite his best efforts, crime is on the rise, and the Watch is rife with corruption. When prominent actress Kelani Thauram is murdered at the Stargazer Theater, Lord Iyan faces his most difficult task.

More than just a sensation in Sharn, Lady Kelani has powerful family connections in Karrnath—connections that could lead to political strife between Karrnath and Breland unless her killers are caught, and quickly. Given the importance of the case, the Dark Lanterns (spies and enforcers loyal to King Boranel of Breland) advise Lord Iyan to seek the aid of outside investigators, fearing that possible corruption will lead to a diplomatic disaster.

Once the adventurers take on the case, they discover that Lady Kelani was also a secret member of the Aurum, a primarily evil organization that influences the politics of the Five Nations for its own benefit. By stealing the lost spellbook of Krystival Valorek, a nefarious Aundairian archwizard, Kelani planned to buy her way into the ranks of the Aurum's Gold Concord. The nature of the spellbook actually makes it far more important than Kelani realizes—potentially giving its possessor the ability to destroy the uneasy peace granted by the Treaty of Thronehold.

The spellbook contains a wealth of magical lore that is valuable in its own right. But more important to those who seek it is the tragic history of the book, which was reclaimed from the ruins of Cyre where Krystival Valorek died on the Day of Mourning. Under orders from the Aundairian crown, Krystival had used powerful scrying rituals in his spellbook to spy on the war effort of Cyre's archmages. Some believe that the lingering magic of those rituals has imbued the spellbook with a record of what caused the Day of Mourning.

Lady Kelani set her sights on the spellbook through an illicit affair with Karrnathi ambassador Syra ir'Tarrn. Although Syra's spymaster, Malen Torr, kept their tryst under wraps, the ambassador was hopelessly ensnared by Kelani's charms. The actress enticed the ambitious Syra into her plots, telling her the truth of her affiliation with the Aurum. She convinced Syra to lend her the spellbook, lying when she said she would return the tome to the embassy once her position in the organization was secure.

With the spellbook no longer in the embassy's vault, Kelani's death puts Ambassador Syra in a terrible predicament. Upon learning of the murder, Syra panics and tasks Spymaster Torr with retrieving the book at all costs, before it is missed.

Before her untimely demise, Kelani had arranged a meeting with Helais ir'Lantar, a member of the Royal Eyes of Aundair, offering to sell the spellbook back to Queen Aurala once Kelani's place in the Gold Concord was established. Before Helais arrived, three warforged enforcers with connections to Sharn's notorious Boromar Clan crime syndicate killed Kelani. She told the warforged where the spellbook lay hidden, but this confession was not enough to save her life.

Although they feign loyalty to the Boromar Clan, the warforged enforcers actually work for another Silver Concordian named Drago Daarn, one of Kelani's rivals in the Aurum. After learning of Kelani's plan through a combination of spying and the actress's tendency to brag about her intentions, Drago decided to make his move against her. He sent three of his warforged thugs to her apartments to search for the book. They didn't find it (though they did steal a golden statuette that Kelani was given as an award), so he ordered them to confront Kelani, find out where the spellbook was hidden, and then kill her. He plans to use the spellbook as Kelani did—selling it back to Aundair and assuming his rightful place in the Aurum's Gold Concord.

## SYNOPSIS

What begins as a murder investigation quickly escalates into a struggle between various major players and organizations operating within Sharn. As the investigation into Kelani's death unfolds, the heroes learn of a wizard's spellbook that might contain clues to what happened in Cyre on the Day of Mourning—information that various forces will kill to obtain or conceal.

This adventure is designed as a free-form narrative in which the decisions of the players and the information they uncover shape the flow of events. In general, these events are most likely to unfold as follows.

**The Stargazer Incident:** Lady Kelani is dead. Tasked with finding her killer, the adventurers arrive at the Stargazer Theater under the supervision of Commander Iyan ir'Talan of the Sharn Watch and the King's Dark Lanterns. Kelani's corpse testifies to the brutality of her murder and hides secrets that become the focus of an extended skill challenge. The investigation is interrupted by the attack of a beholder, sent by Drago Daarn's allies in House Tarkanan to shut down the investigation before it begins.

The unexpected arrival of Helais ir'Lantar of Aundair raises even more questions, but the ambassador is less than forthcoming with answers. He remains out of the picture until Drago Daarn contacts him, offering to deal for the spellbook as Kelani had.

**Uninvited Guests:** The characters investigate Kelani's residence, encountering Karrnathi agents sent by Spymaster Malen Torr to retrieve the spellbook. Their leader, a vampire named Zanifer Karissa, prefers to kill first and ask questions later. Assuming they survive, the heroes find an extradimensional vault in Kelani's tower where she once hid her valuables, but the spellbook is long gone.

**Embassy Showdown:** Evidence found in Kelani's residence of a connection between her and Ambassador Syra ir'Tarrn draw the characters to the Karrnath

embassy. If they intimidate or threaten the ambassador, she hides behind her diplomatic immunity. If the encounter turns hostile, Spymaster Torr has the embassy sealed and attempts to dispose of the heroes as neatly as possible.

With some careful roleplaying, the adventurers can entice Syra to share what she knows. Moreover, she arranges for Kelani to be raised from the dead before her father arrives to whisk her body away.

**Kelani Speaks:** The heroes have a chance to speak with the murder victim in the flesh. Her recent demise convinces Kelani to abandon her plots, but she is eager for revenge. Recognizing one of her killers, she points an accusing finger at the Boromar Clan. She suspects that Saidan Boromar, the crime syndicate's patriarch and a member of the Gold Concord, had her eliminated to halt her rise through the ranks of the Aurum.

**Rumble at the Lucky Lady:** The characters meet with Saidan Boromar at his tavern, the Lucky Lady. He assures them that the Boromar Clan did not kill Kelani. But what Saidan doesn't know is that some of his warforged enforcers have betrayed him by taking assignments from another member of the Aurum—Drago Daarn. The heroes end up at the center of the fight when they expose the treacherous warforged.

By questioning the warforged, the adventurers learn of Drago Daarn and his plots—and they discover that those plots are reaching their conclusion. Drago has a meeting set with Aundairian ambassador Helais ir'Lantar to negotiate terms of sale for the spellbook.

**The Silver Concordian:** The adventurers use their newfound connections with the Boromar Clan to discover the location of Drago's meeting with Helais ir'Lantar—an abandoned ruin deep beneath Sharn, used by House Tarkanan assassins as a refuge. Drago has enlisted House Tarkanan to his cause, and the adventurers must fight their way through

a gauntlet of trained killers and aberrant monsters before their showdown with the Silver Concordian.

**The Spellbook:** The final battle with Drago allows the adventurers to claim the spellbook of Krystival Valorek. But they are not the only ones who want it. Agents of Aundair, Karrnath, and Breland all arrive in the aftermath, demanding that the heroes turn over the relic. It's up to the adventurers to choose their enemies, decide the spellbook's fate, and possibly determine the future of Khorvaire.

## IMPORTANT NPCs

During the adventure, the heroes interact with a number of intriguing nonplayer characters, many of whom are fixtures in the EBBRON campaign setting.

**Kelani Thauram (female half-elf):** A famous actress in Sharn, Kelani is the daughter of a Karrnathi war hero. *Secret:* She is a member of the Aurum's Silver Concord who meant to use Krystival Valorek's spellbook as a ticket into the Gold Concord, then sell the book.

**Drago Daarn (male dwarf):** Drago is the main villain of the adventure. *Secret:* A member of the Aurum's Silver Concord, Drago murdered Kelani, took the spellbook, and made the actress's plan his own.

**Helais ir'Lantar (male human):** Helais is the Aundairian ambassador in Sharn. *Secret:* Not only is Helais a high-ranking member of the Royal Eyes of Aundair (spies loyal to Queen Aurala), he is also a rakshasa noble with ties to the Lords of Dust.

**Iyan ir'Talan (male human):** The Lord Commander of the Watch in Sharn, Iyan hires the party to investigate Kelani Thauram's murder. *Secret:* He reports to the King's Dark Lanterns of Breland.

**Malen Torr (male human):** Outwardly, Malen serves as attaché to the Karrnathi ambassador, Syra ir'Tarrn. *Secret:* Spymaster Torr oversees a network of Karrnathi rogues and assassins in Sharn.

**Saidan Boromar (male halfling):** Saidan is leader of the Boromar Clan, a halfling crime syndicate in Sharn. *Secret:* He's also a high-ranking member of the Aurum's Gold Concord.

**Syra ir'Tarrn (female human):** Syra is the Karrnathi ambassador in Sharn. *Secret:* She betrayed King Kaius III's trust by giving Krystival Valorek's spellbook to Kelani Thauram.

**Thora Tarkanan (female human):** A dragon-marked assassin, Thora is the former leader of House Tarkanan. *Secret:* She has pledged the aid of House Tarkanan to Drago Daarn.

**Vink Boromar (male halfling):** Another member of the Boromar Clan, Vink is Saidan Boromar's nephew. *Secret:* He's a murderous thug.

**Zanifer Karissa (female human):** This Karrnathi femme fatale works for Malen Torr. *Secret:* She's a vampire.

## QUESTS

In addition to the challenges of combat and investigation offered in the main story line, the adventurers can pick up the following quests.

### Major Quest: Solve Kelani's Murder

#### Level 7 Major Quest (300 XP/character)

The characters complete this quest when they turn Drago Daarn (or his body) over to the King's Dark Lanterns, allowing them to close the case quietly and prevent a major diplomatic incident.

### Major Quest: Obtain the Spellbook

#### Level 8 Major Quest (350 XP/character)

With the spellbook of Krystival Valorek in hand, the characters find themselves in a tense standoff at the adventure's end. It is up to them to determine the fate of the book—and to accept the repercussions of that decision, both for themselves and for Khorvaire.

## TREASURE

Assign treasure appropriate for the party's level using the parcel technique of treasure distribution described in the *Rules Compendium*™ (page 298). Use the bulk of any gold as Lord Iyan ir'Talan's payment to the adventurers (see "Lord Iyan's Offer," page 5). Place art objects in Kelani's tower (see event 2) or the refuge beneath Sharn (see event 6) and use the gems for the jewelry stolen by Kelani's warforged killers (see event 5). You can also treat the gold plating of the warforged Aurax (see event 6) as an art object of appropriate value.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

This free-form investigation adventure features plenty of roleplaying opportunities as the characters interact with the various NPCs caught up in the plots that cost Kelani her life. Unlike a combat-oriented adventure in which the encounters occur in a set order, this adventure is designed to allow for more flexibility. Event 1: The Stargazer Incident and Event 6: The Silver Concordian (followed by Event 7: The Spellbook) serve as the bookends to the narrative. The characters' actions and the players' decisions determine the order of the events in between.

Your first game session should focus on event 1, so you need to read at least that material thoroughly to prepare. You'll be doing everyone a big favor if you familiarize yourself with the entire adventure ahead of time. Doing so will provide a sense of what effect the players' actions during event 1 might have on the flow of the narrative, and on how you could change the details of subsequent events to make the story your own.

See the "Order of Events" sidebars throughout the adventure for suggestions on how to alter the

narrative if the players take the story in a different direction.

## Rests

The characters can take short rests between most encounters. Lord Iyan stresses repeatedly, however, that they must complete the investigation before Kelani's father arrives in Sharn. The characters can take an extended rest during event 4, and they have a chance to take another extended rest before the final encounters in event 6 and event 7. It is important that they take this final extended rest, since the encounters in those events will seriously challenge even a fully rested party.

## Adventure Features

Many events in the adventure feature expanded area descriptions—particularly Event 2: Uninvited Guests and Event 3: Embassy Showdown. Combat encounters in these events are not fixed to any particular area, so use the full range of available space to create a memorable running fight.

Blocks of *italic text* in the adventure are meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Descriptions for key areas mentioned in event 1, event 2, and event 3 should be paraphrased from the location key for those events.

## Roleplaying Encounters

Some of the events in this adventure are set up as roleplaying encounters. Adjust the XP reward for such encounters according to your sense of how well the characters engage the NPCs, and how successful they are at obtaining the clues and information presented in the encounter. Award only partial XP if the players insist on falling back on skill checks rather than roleplaying the interactions with NPCs, or if they rely too much on allied NPCs to do their talking for them. Alternatively, you can award additional XP

if you think that the players' successful roleplaying warrants doing so.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

You can draw the adventurers into the murder mystery in a number of ways, three of which are suggested below. Whatever approach you take, if you are planning to incorporate this adventure into a campaign already set in Sharn, think about giving Iyan ir'Talan and other NPCs "walk-on roles" in earlier adventures. If the disgruntled Lord Commander of the Watch is already aware of the adventurers and their abilities, it makes perfect sense for him to call on them now.

Even if the heroes' only previous experience with the Sharn Watch or the King's Dark Lanterns has involved fighting those organizations, Lord Iyan can use that history as a way to entice the characters to his service. He can promise to expunge their records or provide them with future favors in exchange for investigating Kelani's murder.

## Adventure Hooks

Below are three hooks that you can use to bring the heroes into the action.

### Heroes for Hire

The adventurers' reputation as heroes with a knack for investigation and the ability to take care of themselves comes to the attention of Iyan ir'Talan. Representatives of the King's Dark Lanterns working with the Sharn Watch approach the characters, asking them to meet with Lord Iyan regarding a time-sensitive and diplomatically tricky assignment.



## Wrong Place, Right Time

The characters pass by the Stargazer Theater shortly after the discovery of Kelani's murder. The Sharn Watch and the King's Dark Lanterns are out in force, with orders to detain and question any armed groups in the area. As soon as the officers establish who the characters are and that they have no connection to the murder, one of the Dark Lanterns decides that they are ideal candidates to undertake the investigation. He orders them to accompany him and takes them to meet with Iyan ir'Talan.

## A Fallen Friend

One of the adventurers knows Lady Kelani, either in Sharn or through family connections in Karrnath. News of her murder comes from a mutual friend with contacts at the Karrnath embassy, who suggests that the corrupt Sharn Watch cannot be trusted to find the killers. Concerned parties urge the characters to visit the Stargazer Theater and offer their assistance, and Iyan ir'Talan is happy to accept such an offer.

## Lord Iyan's Offer

Iyan ir'Talan is not as corrupt as many of his officers, but he has little real interest in purging Sharn of evil. He is comfortable in his position, and as long as the wealthy elite in the city are safe and happy, he feels that he has done his duty. He lacks the spine to oppose the King's Dark Lanterns, so he does whatever they ask of him without fuss as long as the jeopardy to his person or his reputation remains minimal.

**When the Sharn Watch or the King's Dark Lanterns bring the heroes before Iyan ir'Talan, read:** *You are led to a uniformed man whose bearing suggests that he's more of an aristocrat than a warrior. "I am Iyan ir'Talan, Lord Commander of the Sharn Watch," he says, "and I have need of a group of independent investigators. A*

*murder needs solving, but the victim has . . . political connections best served by an outside investigation."*

Lord Iyan has no idea how deep the secrecy and danger surrounding Kelani's death ultimately run. All he cares about is bringing in a group of independent investigators powerful enough that the King's Dark Lanterns can have no cause for complaint.

*"Given time, I'm sure I could find others capable of undertaking the task," he continues. "The matter does require some haste, though. Consider yourselves deputized if you must, or revel in the fact that the Lord Commander of the Watch must beg favors from adventurers. Either way, though, Sharn needs your aid."*

When the adventurers talk to Lord Iyan, use the following material as guidelines for both his responses and the characters' ability to read between the lines.

**Who was murdered?** An actress at the Stargazer Theater. Lady Kelani Thauram was the half-elf daughter of an influential Karrnathi war hero and military general, Yorin Thauram.

**History (DC 16):** General Yorin Thauram commands the White Lion Brigade, Karrnath's most decorated legion. Like his daughter, he's a half-elf.

**Streetwise (DC 16):** Kelani is a sensation in Sharn, respected for her acting talent and gifted with great beauty, poise, and intelligence. She has many admirers and suitors, and apparently some enemies as well. Although she's known as "Lady Kelani Thauram" in diplomatic and aristocratic circles, her stage name is "Kelani," and most common folk refer to her as such.

**Why the need for outside investigators?** "Lady Kelani's death could have grave consequences unless the murderer is found and swiftly brought to justice. Although her fame and her father's rank make Kelani's resurrection all but certain, the Dark Lanterns believe that General Thauram's reaction to the murder might sour relations between Breland and

Karrnath. Solving the case before Thauram arrives to claim his daughter's body is likely the only way to prevent a diplomatic disaster."

Lord Iyan presents the characters with credentials marking them as investigators in the service of the Sharn Watch. Each receives a silver badge bearing the growling bear's head emblem of Breland and a three-digit identification number. He offers the adventurers payment in gold and gems for taking on the investigation, with a bonus if they catch Kelani's killer. See "Treasure" (page 4) for details.

| Iyan ir'Talan   | Level 8 Soldier (Leader) |
|---|--------------------------|
| Medium natural humanoid, human  | XP 350                   |
| <b>HP 88; Bloodied 44</b>   | <b>Initiative +8</b>     |
| <b>AC 24, Fortitude 21, Reflex 19, Will 21</b>  | <b>Perception +6</b>     |
| <b>Speed 5</b>  |                          |
| TRAITS  |                          |
| ☼ <b>Aristocratic Authority</b> ◆ <b>Aura 3</b>   |                          |
| Each minion ally that starts its turn in the aura gains 5 temporary hit points.                 |                          |
| STANDARD ACTIONS  |                          |
| Ⓢ <b>Longsword</b> (weapon) ◆ <b>At-Will</b>  |                          |
| Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC  |                          |
| Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage.  |                          |
| Effect: The target is marked until the end of Iyan's next turn.                                 |                          |
| TRIGGERED ACTIONS   |                          |
| <b>Aristocrat's Favor</b> ◆ <b>Encounter</b>  |                          |
| Trigger: Iyan is first bloodied.  |                          |
| Effect (No Action): Iyan gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of the encounter. |                          |
| <b>Skills</b> Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +13, Streetwise +13                                     |                          |
| <b>Str</b> 18 (+8)  | <b>Dex</b> 14 (+6)       |
| <b>Con</b> 16 (+7)  | <b>Int</b> 11 (+4)       |
|   | <b>Wis</b> 14 (+6)       |
|   | <b>Cha</b> 18 (+8)       |
| <b>Alignment</b> unaligned  |                          |
| <b>Languages</b> Common   |                          |
| <b>Equipment</b> chainmail, longsword   |                          |

## THE ACTION

Begin play with event 1, and end with event 7. The order of the events in between depends on the actions of the characters (see “Running the Adventure,” page 4).

### Event 1: The Stargazer Incident

**Combat Encounter Level 9 (2,000 XP) and Skill Challenge (900 XP)**

Assuming the characters agree to help solve Kelani’s murder, a skycoach brings them and Lord Iyan to the portico of the Stargazer Theater, where four Dark Lantern agents are standing guard. These low-ranking members of the King’s Dark Lanterns follow Iyan wherever he goes, although they don’t report to him.

**Streetwise (DC 16):** The Stargazer is neither the largest nor the most prestigious theater in Sharn, but it delivers high-quality productions, and its shows regularly sell out. Built on the rooftop of a great tower in Upper Menthis, the theater is open to the sky and protected from the elements by a force dome.

**When the adventurers arrive, read:**

*Plush seats rise in tiers around a circular stage of burnished black wood that rises three feet above the theater floor. The seating area and the stage are open to the air, and a faintly shimmering dome of magical force stirs the light of the moons and stars above.*

*Upon the stage is a grisly sight. A body sprawls on its back in a pool of blood—a young woman, brutally beaten to death. Her hands show marks where rings once were, and her bare neck bears the bloody crease of a necklace harshly ripped away. An empty purse lies a few feet from the corpse. The woman’s sightless eyes are open wide, and you recognize her face from the marquee posters along the foyer wall. The renowned actress Kelani lies dead before you.*

### ORDER OF EVENTS

If the adventurers have access to the Raise Dead ritual or the *resurrection* or *restore life* powers, they might elect to raise Kelani from the dead on their own right from the start. The time requirements of the Raise Dead ritual and the need to take an extended rest before using *resurrection* or *restore life* mean that the characters must take the body to a secure location, such as Kelani’s residence (see event 2). Iyan ir’Talan strongly objects, but he has no real power to stop the characters if they want to pursue this course of action. Raising Kelani does, however, make the adventurers enemies of the Karrnathi spymaster Melen Torr, who is charged with finding and retrieving the body. See the “Order of Events” sidebar for other events for more information.

Likewise, savvy rogues might infer that the beholder attack points to a possible connection with House Tuckman and the aberrant creatures it recruits to its cause. Following that lead can take the characters to Event 5: Rumble at the Lucky Lady, since the Boromar Clan is the best source of information regarding the actions of a rival criminal guild.

restaurants and boutiques in the tower’s lower levels (not depicted on the map).

**1B. Foyer:** Paintings and mementoes of past productions greet theatergoers as they enter the Stargazer Theater. Kelani headlined several of these productions, including *The Queen of Stone*, *Lost in a Dream*, *Day of Mourning*, *Lhazaar*, and *Howl of the Crimson Wolf*.

**1C. Stage:** Climbing onto the 3-foot-high stage requires 1 extra square of movement.

Proceed with the skill challenge, below, when the characters inspect Kelani’s body. In addition to the details of her murder, any Perception check made to examine the body notes the clue that the killers left behind.

### The Stargazer Theater

The scene before the adventurers seems obvious at first glance—a wealthy actress was targeted for theft and assault, with deadly consequences. The characters must utilize both keen perception and strong investigative instincts to discover what really happened in the Stargazer.

**Light:** Magical lamps throughout the theater fill all areas with bright light.

**1A. Portico:** Skycoaches dock at this open-sided columned porch, loading and off-loading theater patrons every evening. Stairs lead down to exclusive

