

The Wholesomeverse: A Ten-Year Tyranny of Dragons Campaign

We did it.

After almost ten years...

Tiamat is dead.

The Dragon Queen has fallen.

What started as a group of strangers defending the small town of Greenest from kobolds and cultists ended with some of those same heroes standing before a goddess herself...

...and somehow surviving.

When we rolled initiative for that very first session, I never imagined that almost a decade later we'd still be sitting around the same table, telling the same story.

But here we are.

This isn't just the story of one campaign though.

Over the past ten years, I've been running three campaigns that all take place in the same version of the Forgotten Realms.

Alongside this **Tyranny of Dragons** campaign, I've also been running a heavily modified **Out of the Abyss** campaign that is almost as old, and a homebrew campaign set around the Moonsea that has now been running for seven years.

As a joke, we started calling this shared setting:

The Wholesomeverse.

Which is funny...

Because very little about it is actually wholesome. 😊

Across these three campaigns, the same world kept moving forward. The same timeline. The same history.

The actions of one group affected the others.

A dragon slain by one party could leave a power vacuum another group had to deal with years later.

An artifact recovered by one group could become the key to another group's mystery.

An NPC mentioned in passing could suddenly make another player stop mid-sentence and say:

"Wait... YOU know them too?!"

And honestly, some of my favourite moments didn't even happen during sessions.

Whenever my friends get together—birthdays, barbecues, board game nights—the conversation inevitably turns to D&D.

Someone mentions an NPC.

Someone else recognizes the name.

Another person remembers a strange event they witnessed years ago.

And suddenly...

"Wait... that's what happened?!"

You can literally watch people connect the dots in real time as they realize they haven't been playing separate campaigns.

They've been experiencing different parts of the same story.

Those moments are magical.

They make the world feel bigger than any single campaign ever could.

And that's what this post is about.

The campaign that started it all.

The one that began with **Hoard of the Dragon Queen**.

The one that slowly grew into something none of us could have predicted.

The one that, after almost ten years, ended with the death of Tiamat.

I wanted to write this for a few reasons.

First, to celebrate my players.

Because without them, none of this would exist.

Second, to preserve the memories before time inevitably starts blurring all the little moments that made this campaign special.

And finally, because throughout this journey I've met so many people online who were also running **Tyranny of Dragons**.

Some asked for advice.

Some followed along through comments.

Some simply wanted to know:

"Did you ever actually finish it?"

Well...

We did.

So grab a cup of coffee, because this is the story of how a published adventure became the greatest campaign I've ever had the privilege of running.

Meet the Heroes

Like every great D&D campaign, it all started with a handful of adventurers who had absolutely no idea what they were getting themselves into.

Liv

A dragonborn fighter who arrived in Greenest searching for the person who had raised her—her master, mentor, and only real family. What began as a simple search slowly unraveled into one of the biggest mysteries of the campaign. Liv eventually discovered she wasn't even from *this* timeline and carried an extra heart belonging to an emerald gem dragon. Her personal story became deeply intertwined with the history of the world itself.

Rillifane

A wood elf cleric who came to Greenest for one reason: to rescue her childhood friend, Talis, who she believed had been captured by the Cult of the Dragon.

At the start of the campaign, Rillifane's own past was almost completely unknown—even to her player, as this was their very first D&D character. Rather than treating that as a problem, we embraced it. Over the years, forgotten memories, family secrets, and shocking revelations transformed her into one of the campaign's central characters.

Suria (formerly Dalia, the soul of the Gold dragon Dalis)

Suria wasn't part of the original party. The group rescued them from captivity in the Dragon Hatchery, where they had been imprisoned as a dragonologist.

As the story unfolded, Suria discovered they weren't an ordinary mortal at all, but the reincarnated soul of a gold dragon, punished by Bahamut to live a mortal life. The campaign slowly uncovered *why* that punishment had been given, and the answer would end up reshaping the history of dragons, gods, and the entire world.

Lucky

Lucky made perhaps the best entrance of any character I've ever had at my table.

He literally fell through the ceiling of the Tomb of Diderius.

A gnome wizard wielding an enormous axe named Aremdina, he had absolutely no memories of who he was or where he'd come from. For years, his identity remained one of the campaign's greatest mysteries. Eventually, the truth came to light: he was Vern Copperboot, a simple gnome and devoted follower of Garl Glittergold... but, as with everything in this campaign, there was far more to that story than anyone could have imagined.

Book One: *Hoard of the Dragon Queen*

When I started this campaign almost ten years ago, I had no idea it would become this big

Looking back, *Hoard of the Dragon Queen* is actually the part we stayed closest to the published adventure. But even here, the campaign slowly started becoming our own.

One last thing before we begin.

This campaign lasted almost ten years.

That means there are **hundreds** of sessions, dozens of major NPCs, countless side stories, and more memories than I could ever fit into a single Reddit post. I'll have to leave out a *lot*, and I'll mostly focus on the events and characters that carried us all the way to the end.

To everyone whose character didn't make it to the finale, or who had to leave the campaign somewhere along the journey:

I'm sorry. ❤️

You were all part of what made this campaign special, even if I can't give every story the attention it deserves in one post.

So consider this the "extended highlights" version of a ten-year adventure.

Now then...

Let's go back to Greenest.

Chapter 1 – Greenest in Flames

Like many parties, ours began as complete strangers.

There was **Liv**, a dragonborn fighter searching for the mysterious master who had raised her. There was **Rillifane**, a young wood elf cleric travelling to Greenest in search of her missing childhood friend, Talis, who she believed had been kidnapped by the Cult of the Dragon.

Neither of them had any idea how deeply their own stories were connected to the world around them.

The attack on Greenest was the perfect opening to a campaign. Chaos everywhere, dragons in the sky, kobolds in the streets, and a cult that seemed far more organized than anyone expected.

The party crossed blades with Cyanwrath, saw Rezmir for the first time, and caught a glimpse of one of the Dragon Masks.

At the time, it was just another magical artifact.

Years later, it would become one of the most important objects in the entire campaign.

Chapter 2 – Raiders' Camp

The party infiltrated the Cult's camp, trying to figure out what exactly they were dealing with.

It became clear that Greenest wasn't an isolated attack.

The Cult was gathering treasure on a massive scale, and whatever they were planning, it was much bigger than anyone had imagined.

Chapter 3 – Dragon Hatchery

This was the first point where real life changed the campaign.

A couple of our original players decided to leave, and two new players joined the group.

One of them would still be there almost ten years later, standing before Tiamat herself.

This was also where one of my favourite NPCs was born.

The party met a strange magical sheep named **Shinebright**.

At first he was mostly comic relief.

Nobody—not even I—expected him to become one of the emotional hearts of the campaign.

Chapter 4 – On the Road

The caravan chapter is one of those chapters that people either absolutely love...

...or absolutely hate.

My group?

We **loved** it.

This section of the campaign took us almost a year to play through. Instead of treating it as "travel," I treated every stop along the road as its own little adventure.

I printed out every caravan NPC from the book and made sure the players got to know almost all of them. Every session revolved around something memorable happening on the road. We used nearly every encounter and little story hook the book suggested, expanding them into full evenings of roleplay, mystery, or action.

Looking back, it almost felt like twelve one-shots strung together into one long journey.

Some sessions were tense investigations. Others were social encounters where the party had to maintain their cover while slowly earning the trust of the other travelers. Sometimes they had to solve problems without revealing they were spying on the Cult. Sometimes they simply spent the evening getting to know the people around their campfire.

The important thing was that the road never felt like "the bit between adventures."

The road was the adventure.

Because the journey lasted so long, the caravan itself became its own little community. The players made friends, made enemies, learned who they could trust, and slowly pieced together what the Cult was actually trying to accomplish.

By the time they finally reached Waterdeep, they weren't just adventurers following a trail anymore.

Chapter 5 – Construction Ahead

Arriving in Waterdeep completely changed the feeling of the campaign.

Up until this point, the story had been about chasing the Cult. Following clues. Staying one step behind the enemy.

Waterdeep changed all of that.

For the first time, the party found themselves surrounded by the people who would eventually decide the fate of the Sword Coast. Lords, faction leaders, famous adventurers, powerful mages... people who understood that the Cult of the Dragon wasn't just causing trouble—it was preparing for war.

This was also where the party first met **Lady Silverhand**.

She quickly became one of their closest allies and one of the campaign's most important NPCs. She wasn't someone who solved their problems for them, but she became a mentor and a guiding voice as the stakes continued to rise.

One of the biggest additions I made to the campaign was something I called **the Small Council**.

Long before the official Council of Waterdeep appears in *The Rise of Tiamat*, I wanted my players to get to know the people behind the titles. Instead of waiting until

Book Two to introduce half a dozen important NPCs all at once, I let the party spend time with them early.

They attended strategy meetings, discussed rumors, debated possible responses to the Cult's actions, and slowly built relationships with the people who would one day become their greatest allies.

At the time, my players probably thought these were just fun political roleplaying sessions.

In reality, I was quietly teaching them how the Council worked.

Years later, when the official Council sessions began, everyone around the table already knew these characters. They weren't quest-givers anymore—they were friends, rivals, and people whose respect had to be earned.

Looking back, introducing the Small Council was one of the best decisions I made as a DM.

It turned the Council of Waterdeep from "the meeting where the NPCs tell you what to do" into "the meeting where your friends ask for your opinion."

That completely changed the dynamic.

It also marked the moment the campaign stopped feeling local.

The heroes who once defended a single town were now helping shape the future of the entire Sword Coast.

Chapter 6 – Castle Naerytar

Castle Naerytar was the chapter where my version of *Hoard of the Dragon Queen* truly became something different.

The party entered the Mere of Dead Men expecting another Cult stronghold.

Instead, they walked into one of the defining moments of the entire Wholesomeverse.

The first major revelation was **Voaraghamanthar**, the ancient black dragon.

Unlike the book, I decided to make him much more than a dragon guarding a swamp. From the moment he appeared, it was clear that he knew far more than he was willing to tell. He wasn't just another villain.

He was part of something ancient.

But for Liv, this chapter wasn't about dragons.

It was about finally finding the person she'd been searching for since the very first session.

Her master.

The one who had raised her.

The reunion lasted only moments.

He looked at Liv, smiled, and began explaining a piece of forgotten history. He spoke about the ancient rulers of the Mere of Dead Men.

Voaraghamanthar... and his twin, Waervaerendor.

The instant those names left his lips...

Reality itself reacted.

There was a deafening clap that echoed across the swamp.

A towering golden construct appeared out of nowhere.

A Marut.

It looked at Liv's master without anger, without hesitation, and simply said:

"You have broken contract."

Then...

One punch.

That was all it took.

Liv's master was dead before anyone around the table even understood what had happened.

The Marut disappeared as suddenly as it had arrived.

The party stood in complete silence.

Who was this creature?

What contract had been broken?

Why were two dragon names forbidden knowledge?

Those questions haunted the players for years.

Looking back now, that single scene became one of the most important moments in every campaign I've run. It was the first glimpse that the world wasn't just ruled by dragons, gods, and kings.

There were older laws.

And something existed to enforce them.

As if that wasn't enough, real life also caught up with our table around this chapter.

One of the original players had to leave the campaign. It is always a strange moment in a long-running game when someone who has been part of the story from the beginning has to step away.

But the adventure continued.

A new player joined the group, bringing with them a new character: a lizardfolk from the Mere of Dead Men.

The party welcomed their new companion, and together they entered Castle Naerytar.

Nobody knew how important this new character would become.

During the battle inside the castle, things went terribly wrong. The fight was brutal, and the lizardfolk made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their life so the rest of the party could survive.

The table went quiet.

A new character had joined the campaign...

And already they were gone.

Then the player reached into their bag.

They pulled out a laminated character sheet.

The name on it was:

Shinebright.

And the truth was revealed.

The polymorph was broken.

The sheep transformed back into the wizard who had been hiding underneath all along.

The new player wasn't introducing a replacement character.

They were taking over one of the party's most beloved companions.

Chapter 7 – Hunting Lodge

If Chapter 6 belonged to Liv...

Chapter 7 belonged to Rillifane.

She had travelled all the way from Greenest believing she was going to rescue her childhood friend.

Instead...

She found Talis standing with the Cult.

Not as a prisoner.

As one of them.

Then came another devastating revelation.

Because Rillifane had disappeared years ago, Talis had been chosen to take her place.

Nobody—not even the player—understood what that actually meant.

Not yet.

Their confrontation ended with Talis' death.

Her final words made absolutely no sense.

Years later...

They became one of the biggest payoffs of the campaign.

Chapter 8 – Castle in the Clouds

The party had followed the Cult's treasure all the way to the flying fortress, but they quickly discovered that taking Skyreach would not be as simple as fighting their way through.

The giant who commanded the castle, **Blagothkus**, was not just another servant of the Cult.

He had his own reasons for being there.

Blagothkus wanted to see the old world return.

The age when giants and dragons stood among the greatest powers in the world.

He wanted giantkind to rise again. In a strange way, he was almost a "Make Giants Great Again" kind of character. The Cult of the Dragon was not his cause—he simply saw them as a way to create the kind of world he wanted to see.

For a long time, he tolerated the party.

As long as they promised him one thing:

A truly worthy battle.

A battle against dragons.

The party slowly realized they weren't dealing with a simple enemy. Blagothkus wasn't driven by evil. He was driven by pride, history, and a desire to see his people return to greatness.

Eventually, they convinced him that the Cult wasn't bringing back the glory of giants.

They were using him.

With the situation inside Skyreach turning against the Cult, the party fought their way through the fortress.

The white dragon fell.

Rezmir was finally cornered.

After everything they had been through since Greenest, the party finally defeated one of the Cult's leaders.

But even in defeat, Rezmir had one final trick.

She managed to teleport one of her fingers back to the Well of Dragons, hoping that even a small piece of herself could one day be enough to bring her back.

The party had won a massive victory.

They had claimed the **Black Dragon Mask**.

But the battle for Skyreach was not over yet.

The castle itself was dying.

The ancient mythal that kept Skyreach flying was failing, and without it the entire fortress would eventually be lost.

And that was when Shinebright made his final choice.

He knew what needed to happen.

Someone had to restore the mythal.

Someone had to give everything to save the castle.

And Shinebright did it.

The wizard who had spent so long hiding behind a silly disguise became the person who saved their home.

It was also a fitting moment outside the game. Shinebright's original player had recently become a father and had to step away from the campaign.

Instead of simply writing the character out, the story gave him a final moment that mattered.

A character who started as a joke NPC became one of the most memorable parts of the entire campaign.

And after everything...

Skyreach Castle belonged to them.

Their first real home.

Their base.

The place where the next chapter of the war against the Cult would begin.

Book Two – The Rise of Tiamat

The Return to Waterdeep

When the party returned to Waterdeep, they did not arrive as the same adventurers who had left.

They came back with something impossible.

A flying castle.

Skyreach Castle.

The very fortress the Cult of the Dragon had used to transport their stolen treasure was now in the hands of the people trying to stop them.

For the first time, the party had something that proved just how serious the threat really was.

But even then...

The world was still divided.

Everyone had their own problems.

Their own cities to protect.

Their own people to save.

Their own reasons why *their* priority should come first.

Everyone agreed the Cult was dangerous.

Nobody agreed on what to do about it.

And then...

The Draakhoorn sounded.

Everything changed.

The sound was impossible to ignore.

Across the world, people heard it.

The whispers stopped.

The arguments stopped.

The denial stopped.

The Cult of the Dragon was no longer a shadowy organization moving behind the scenes.

Everyone knew something was coming.

Something terrible.

Tiamat.

The Dragon Queen.

The world finally understood that this was not a war that could be avoided.

It was already happening.

The First Real Council of Waterdeep

The sound of the Draakhoorn was what forced the first true Council of Waterdeep to happen.

The factions could no longer argue about whether the threat was real.

The only question left was:

"What are we going to do about it?"

And that meeting was a political disaster.

Every faction wanted something different.

Every leader had their own priorities.

Everyone wanted the world saved...

But everyone also wanted to make sure their own people survived.

The party quickly learned that fighting dragons might actually be easier than convincing powerful people to work together.

But this was also the moment where the party's role changed forever.

They were no longer just adventurers reporting what they had discovered.

They were the people everyone looked toward for answers.

The people who had been there from the beginning.

The people who had seen the Cult's plans firsthand.

The people who had a flying castle sitting outside Waterdeep.

The Council eventually narrowed the possibilities down to three major choices.

Three paths.

Three ways to fight back.

The White Dragon Mask

The first option was to search for the White Dragon Mask.

The party could travel to the Tomb of Diderius and attempt to recover another piece of the Cult's power.

The Sea of Moving Ice

The second option was to travel north into the frozen seas and find **Maccath the Crimson**, a researcher who knew about the Draakhoorn and might have information that could help stop it.

The Giants

The third option was perhaps the most ambitious.

Travel to the seat of giantkind and attempt to convince the giants to stand with the smaller races against the dragons.

An alliance that could change the entire war.

Three impossible choices.

And the party could only choose one.

They chose the White Dragon Mask.

They would travel to the Tomb of Diderius.

And that choice would shape everything that followed.

Chapter 10 – The Tomb of Diderius: The Last Piece Falls Into Place

The party's first mission after the Council was to find the White Dragon Mask.

Their destination:

The Tomb of Diderius.

This chapter was, for the most part, one of the few parts of *Rise of Tiamat* that we played fairly close to the book.

The tomb itself was already a fantastic location. Ancient secrets, strange visions, dangerous creatures, and a feeling that the party was walking somewhere they were not supposed to be.

But for our campaign, this place became important for reasons that went far beyond the adventure written on the page.

This was also the moment where the final version of the party started to form.

After almost ten years of playing, campaigns naturally change. Players move, life happens, and sometimes people have to step away.

This was the last major player change of the campaign.

And then Lucky joined.

A gnome wizard with a giant axe named **Aremdina**.

A strange little character who appeared to know nothing about himself.

He had no memories.

No idea where he came from.

No idea why he was there.

At the time, he was just the newest member of the party.

The players had no idea that this strange gnome would eventually stand with them at the Well of Dragons.

The tomb itself also introduced something that would become important much later.

Devils.

The party encountered devils within the tomb, and while it seemed like just another strange encounter at the time, it opened a door to choices and consequences that would come much later in the campaign.

One of the things I love about running a long campaign is that you can plant something years before it matters.

Sometimes the players notice.

Sometimes they don't.

But eventually, those threads come back.

The party eventually found the person who once carried the White Dragon Mask.

But there was a problem.

The mask was no longer there.

It was already back with the Cult.

And the person they found had clearly been broken by everything that had happened.

They weren't the powerful figure they expected to meet.

They had lost themselves.

The party didn't walk away with the prize they came for.

But they learned something much more important:

The Cult was already several steps ahead.

And then there was the pool.

The Pool of Diderius became one of my favourite DM tools in the entire campaign.

Because by this point, I wasn't just running one story.

I was running the Wholesomeverse.

Three campaigns.

Three groups.

One shared world.

The visions the pool showed the party weren't only about their own adventure.

It gave them glimpses of things happening elsewhere in the world.

Secrets from other campaigns.

Events that their friends at the table were experiencing in another corner of the same timeline.

I remember sitting there as a DM, knowing what I was showing them.

Knowing the other players would eventually hear about it.

Knowing that months later, during a birthday, a game night, or just hanging out together, someone would say:

"Wait...

Your group saw THAT?"

Those moments were one of the biggest rewards of running a shared world.

The Tomb of Diderius wasn't just a dungeon.

It was a place where the different stories briefly touched.

And the party left the tomb without the White Dragon Mask...

But with something much more important.

They had a new companion.

Lucky.

And the final party that would one day face Tiamat was finally complete.

Chapter 11 – The Sea of Moving Ice: The Great White Death

After the Tomb of Diderius, the party turned their attention north.

The Council had given them several impossible choices.

They chose to search for Maccath the Crimson.

The goal was simple:

Find the person who knew about the Draakhoorn.

What they found instead changed the entire story of the world.

The journey into the Sea of Moving Ice was unlike anything they had done before.

This was not just another mission.

This was the kind of place where the world itself felt ancient.

Buried beneath the ice were secrets that had existed long before the Cult of the Dragon, long before the current kingdoms, and even long before the heroes themselves.

And at the center of it all was an ancient white dragon.

The Great White Death.

A creature that had ruled this frozen wasteland for generations.

The party knew they were walking into danger.

They did not realize just how far above their weight class they were fighting.

Deep within the lair, they discovered something that connected back to a mystery from years earlier.

Liv's master.

The person she had searched for since the very first session.

The person whose death at the hands of the Marut had left the party with more questions than answers.

Before he died, he spoke two names:

Voaraghamanthar.

Waervaerendor.

At the time, nobody understood why those names mattered.

Now they discovered they were not just names.

They were keys.

The words spoken by Liv's master were part of a puzzle.

A puzzle designed to unlock something hidden deep within the lair of the Great White Death.

And when Liv solved the riddle...

The world changed.

The seal opened.

And inside was something thought lost.

A gem dragon.

In my world, gem dragons are not simply another type of dragon.

They are guardians of the timeline itself.

Ancient protectors who watch over the flow of history.

But they had been imprisoned.

Trapped by the black dragon twins.

Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor.

The same names that had been connected to Liv's master's final words.

The same mystery that had started years earlier in the Mere of Dead Men.

The pieces were finally connecting.

The battle against the Great White Death was brutal.

The party was completely outmatched.

This was not a fight they were supposed to win through strength alone.

But then Liv did what Liv does.

She thought.

She remembered.

She solved the impossible puzzle at exactly the right moment.

The prison broke.

The ancient gem dragon was free.

And suddenly the battle changed.

The party was no longer fighting alone.

Together, they defeated the ancient white dragon.

But the gem dragon's power came with a cost.

To protect the timeline, it needed to act.

It reached through time itself...

And the party was pulled with it.

For a moment, they were somewhere else.

Somewhen else.

A place and time they were never meant to see.

And then...

They were back.

But they remembered nothing.

That was a mystery I intentionally left open.

A thread waiting for a possible future campaign.

Because one of the joys of running a shared world for this long is that not every question needs an immediate answer.

Sometimes you leave a door closed.

And maybe, years later, someone opens it.

When the party finally left the Sea of Moving Ice, they had accomplished far more than they expected.

They had rescued Maccath the Crimson.

They had defeated the Great White Death.

They had released an ancient guardian of the timeline.

And they had gained a powerful new ally in the Arcane Brotherhood.

An ally who would soon make a very important request:

A seat at the Council of Waterdeep.

Chapter 12 – The Second Council of Waterdeep: Politics, Power, and Impossible Choices

The first Council of Waterdeep was difficult.

Everyone knew the Cult of the Dragon was a threat, but nobody agreed on how to respond.

The second Council?

That was even harder.

Because by now, the world had changed.

The party had changed.

And the problems were no longer just about the Cult.

When the party returned to Waterdeep, they discovered that one of the most powerful people in the room was also one of the biggest problems.

Dagult Neverember.

Through events that had happened in another campaign running in the same world, the truth about Dagult had finally come to light.

He had not been the leader people believed him to be.

He had made choices that could not simply be ignored.

And now the Council had to decide what happened next.

The first order of business:

Judge Dagult Neverember.

And the party was given the honour — and the burden — of making that judgement.

This wasn't a simple skill check.

This became a full roleplaying moment.

They listened.

They debated.

They considered the consequences.

Because removing a powerful person is easy.

Dealing with the political fallout is much harder.

In the end, they reached a compromise.

Lady Silverhand would become the new Open Lord of Waterdeep.

Dagult would be removed from Waterdeep and exiled to Neverwinter, where he would continue as Lord there.

But there was a catch.

Neverwinter was an important ally.

If Dagult lost everything, Neverwinter would likely walk away from the alliance entirely.

So the party made the difficult choice:

Punishment, but not destruction.

Dagult lost Waterdeep.

But the alliance survived.

Then came the next problem.

The Arcane Brotherhood wanted a seat on the Council.

And this was not a simple request.

The Arcane Brotherhood was powerful.

Useful.

Knowledgeable.

But they were not exactly heroes.

Many factions immediately pushed back.

Some threatened to leave the Council entirely if they were allowed to join.

Others argued that fighting Tiamat required every resource the world could gather.

The debate went on.

And on.

And on.

This became several full sessions of political roleplay.

The fate of the Council itself was at stake.

The biggest conflict came between the Arcane Brotherhood and the Order of the Gauntlet.

Especially between Rillifane and Othar Frume.

The argument became so heated that Frume, frustrated by the direction things were going, did something nobody expected.

He stepped down.

And handed his position in the Order of the Gauntlet to Rillifane.

And then came one of the most ridiculous moments I have ever seen happen at a D&D table.

Rillifane rolled.

And rolled.

And rolled.

Five natural 20s in a row.

I still cannot believe it happened.

I swear this is not something I made up for the story.

Because of that insane moment, my player suddenly went from being a member of the Order of the Gauntlet...

To one of its most important figures.

A true political powerhouse.

The Council survived.

The Arcane Brotherhood joined.

The factions stayed together.

And the party had once again changed the course of the war.

Now it was time to decide what came next.

The Council had several options.

The Giants

Travel to the seat of giantkind and convince the giants to join the war against the dragons.

The Elves

Travel to the ancient forests and search for the Green Dragon Mask.

The Dragons

Seek out the metallic dragons and convince them to stand with the mortal races.

The Devils (*the secret option*)

Use the connections discovered in the Tomb of Diderius...

And negotiate with the forces of Hell.

Because sometimes, when the fate of the world is at stake...

You have to consider making deals with things that are even more dangerous than dragons.

The war was no longer about stopping the Cult.

It was about deciding who would stand together when Tiamat arrived.

Chapter 13 – The Dragons: The Guardian Beneath Waterdeep

After the second Council of Waterdeep, the party had achieved something they never thought possible.

The war effort was growing.

But there was still one major power missing.

The dragons.

If Tiamat was returning, then the dragons themselves could not simply stand aside and watch.

The party needed to convince the metallic dragons to join the fight.

Luckily, they already had someone who could help.

Remilia.

Because Remilia had a secret.

She wasn't just a powerful ally.

She was a silver dragon.

With Remilia's help, the party was brought before the ancient dragon council.

But before they could ask for the aid of the dragons, they discovered something that would change how they saw their own world.

Waterdeep had always had a secret.

The city was protected by an ancient magical barrier.

A dragonward.

A protection that prevented dragons from entering the city.

Which was a problem...

Because if the dragons were going to have a voice in the Council of Waterdeep, they needed a way to actually enter the city.

And Remilia was the exception.

The party finally learned why.

The dragonward was not just a spell.

It was tied to the very foundations of Waterdeep.

Through ancient magic, a golden dragon had been bound beneath the city, protecting it for generations.

A guardian.

A protector.

A dragon who had sacrificed everything to keep Waterdeep safe.

And then came one of the biggest revelations of the entire campaign.

That dragon...

Was Dalia.

Or rather...

The soul that lived inside Dalia.

Dalis.

The party finally learned that their ranger was not just connected to dragons.

They had once been the very guardian that protected Waterdeep itself.

But there was a question.

Why?

Why had such a powerful and important dragon been forced into a mortal life?

Why had Bahamut himself punished them?

The party still didn't know.

They only knew that whatever had happened was not a small mistake.

This was something ancient.

Something serious enough that a god had decided the only answer was to take away a dragon's immortality and force them to live as a mortal.

The truth would come later.

For now, the party only had pieces of the puzzle.

The meeting with the ancient dragons was not easy.

They did not simply agree because the party asked.

The dragons tested them.

Their knowledge.

Their intentions.

Their understanding of what this war truly meant.

The party had to prove that they were not just asking dragons to fight another mortal conflict.

They had to prove that the return of Tiamat threatened all of creation.

After careful arguments, ancient tests, and more than a few tense moments...

They succeeded.

The ancient dragon council agreed.

The metallic dragons would join the war against Tiamat.

There was one final problem.

The dragons needed a representative at the Council of Waterdeep.

Someone who could speak for them.

Someone who could stand beside the mortal leaders.

And because of the Dragonward, there was only one dragon who could do it.

Remilia.

At the time, it seemed like a simple diplomatic decision.

A way for the dragons to have a voice.

Nobody knew yet how important that choice would become.

Because Remilia sitting at that council table would matter more than anyone realized.

Chapter 14 – The Emerald Assassin: The Forest That Changed Everything

With the metallic dragons now on their side, the party turned their attention to the elves.

The Council needed the strength of every ally they could find.

But there was one problem.

The party did not trust King Melandrach.

And as it turned out...

They were right not to.

At the time, nobody knew the truth.

Melandrach's own son was the Green Dragon Mask.

A member of the Cult of the Dragon.

The Emerald Assassin.

The greatest betrayal the elves could imagine.

The only problem?

Even Melandrach himself did not know.

But before they could uncover the truth, the party's journey into the forest became something much bigger than a simple mission.

This chapter is still one I think about years later.

Because it turned into an entire adventure of its own.

The party first found themselves fighting to protect the forest itself.

During this journey, they encountered an ancient god.

A being unlike anything they had met before.

A god who was not bound by the rules and contracts that governed the rest of the divine beings in my world.

At the time, the party did not know who this mysterious figure truly was.

But years of playing in this world would eventually reveal the truth.

It was Eilistraee.

A goddess who existed outside the rules everyone else followed.

Another piece of a much larger puzzle.

During their travels, the party also discovered a place that would become incredibly important.

Lucky's village.

For the first time, they learned about the gnome behind the mystery.

Lucky was not some strange being who appeared from nowhere.

He was once just a normal gnome.

A devoted follower of Garl Glittergold.

A cleric.

Someone with a life and a history before he lost his memories.

Another mystery began to unravel.

Eventually, the party made an alliance with the village elder, who promised to help them find the legendary green dragon.

The Emerald Assassin.

The creature responsible for so much pain and destruction.

The party believed they had found a trusted ally.

They had not.

The village elder betrayed them.

And the consequences were devastating.

The battle against the Emerald Assassin went horribly wrong.

The green dragon was not simply powerful.

He was prepared.

I gave him abilities far beyond what the party expected.

A dragon with the skills of a level 20 assassin.

A ring of invisibility.

A perfect hunter.

And the party walked straight into his trap.

They never stood a chance.

The heroes fell.

All of them.

Dead.

And they stayed dead.

For two weeks.

The world panicked.

The heroes who had defeated Rezmir.

The heroes who had saved Waterdeep.

The heroes who had convinced dragons to join the war.

Gone.

The Cult celebrated.

The Green Dragon Mask believed victory was certain.

After all...

Dead heroes cannot stop a plan.

Except death was not the end of the story.

For the first time, the party found themselves somewhere completely different.

The afterlife.

And waiting there were devils.

They offered possibilities.

Deals.

Ways to return.

But the party refused.

The devils were too dangerous.

Too evil.

Whatever price they demanded was not worth paying.

No deal was made.

But someone else had plans for them.

Eilistraee.

The goddess who had been watching.

The goddess who was not bound by the same rules.

She returned the party to life.

But not without a gift.

Rillifane was given a chance to claim something ancient.

The Sword of Corellon.

A weapon tied to the history of the elves themselves.

A moment that could change the future of an entire people.

The roll was made.

And Rillifane succeeded.

The sword chose her.

History changed.

The party returned to the world.

But they did not return quietly.

Everyone believed they were dead.

The Cult believed they had won.

The Green Dragon Mask believed he was safe.

And that gave the party the perfect advantage.

They created one of the greatest infiltration plans of the entire campaign.

A group of heroes who were supposed to be dead.

Moving unseen.

Entering the lair of the Emerald Assassin.

And finally getting their revenge.

They succeeded.

The green dragon was defeated.

The Green Dragon Mask was killed.

But at the very last moment...

The mask escaped.

A final failed skill challenge allowed it to teleport back to the Cult.

The victory was incomplete.

But the damage had been done.

The party returned to Waterdeep with impossible news.

They were alive.

The Green Dragon Wyrmspeaker was dead.

The elves had a new legendary hero.

The party had gained unlimited trust from the elven nations.

And King Melandrach?

He was now in a very difficult position.

Because the world could never know his son was the Green Dragon Mask.

Not yet.

Which meant the party had something much more valuable than revenge.

They had leverage.

The kind of political power that could change the course of the war.

The war against Tiamat was no longer just about armies.

It was about secrets.

And the party had just acquired one of the biggest secrets in the world.

Chapter 15 – The Third Council: Consequences

By the time the party returned to Waterdeep, the war had moved on.

One of the things I wanted to do differently from the book was make sure that choosing one mission meant *not* choosing another.

The world didn't pause while the heroes were away.

It kept moving.

And now the consequences of those earlier decisions were catching up with them.

The first problem arrived almost immediately.

The giants.

Or, more accurately...

The very angry giants.

The party had never gone to negotiate with them.

Instead, they had taken Skyreach Castle.

A flying giant fortress.

Powered by a mythal.

From the giants' perspective, the "heroes" had simply stolen one of their greatest treasures.

Needless to say...

They were not impressed.

The meeting did not go well.

There was shouting.

There was fighting.

There were several moments where diplomacy completely fell apart.

By the end of it, the giants refused to unite behind the war effort.

The party hadn't made an enemy...

But they certainly hadn't gained an ally.

This was the direct consequence of the choice they had made months earlier.

Before the next Council session, another unexpected visitor arrived.

Rath Modar.

One of the highest-ranking Red Wizards of Thay.

And a loyal servant of the Cult of the Dragon.

Instead of attacking the party...

He wanted to talk.

Rath Modar knew far more about the world than the players did.

He explained pieces of the larger mythology.

Why weren't there legendary level 20 heroes solving all of this?

Where were the Chosen?

Why weren't the gods simply intervening?

Why did the fate of the world rest on this one group?

For the first time, many of those questions finally received answers.

Of course...

Rath Modar wasn't helping out of kindness.

He wanted something in return.

If the party survived the war...

He wanted them to overthrow the ruler of Thay.

His reasoning was wonderfully twisted.

In his eyes, a world scorched by Tiamat would eventually recover.

A world ruled forever by undead...

Would not.

The party politely declined making any promises.

But they certainly left with a lot to think about.

Then came the Third Council of Waterdeep.

This one felt very different from the first.

The party had earned allies.

Real allies.

The elves stood firmly beside them after everything that had happened in the forest.

The dragons now had a seat at the table through Remilia.

Not everyone was happy about that.

The dwarves, especially, were furious that dragons had been welcomed into the Council.

Old grudges die hard.

What followed was another evening of political roleplay as the party managed to keep the alliance together.

Eventually, a compromise was reached.

The dragons would help defend the cities of the Sword Coast.

The difficult question became:

Which cities?

There were not enough dragons to protect everyone.

Someone would always be left vulnerable.

Even success came with impossible choices.

With the Council concluded, two new missions were placed before the party.

Xonthal's Tower

Travel to the mysterious tower in search of the Blue Dragon Mask before the Cult could secure it.

Mission to Thay

Travel into one of the most dangerous nations in Faerûn.

Not to fight...

But to negotiate.

Could the heroes really convince the Red Wizards of Thay to stand beside the free peoples of the Sword Coast against Tiamat?

Or was this simply another trap?

The party had another impossible decision to make.

And by now, they knew exactly what that meant.

Whatever they chose...

The world would keep moving without them.

Chapter 16 – Mission to Thay: An Alliance with the Undead

After the Third Council, the party made their choice.

They would travel to Thay.

Forget dragons.

Forget armies.

Forget dungeons.

This was diplomacy in one of the most terrifying places in Faerûn.

I decided to lean heavily into the horror of Thay.

Everything about the country felt wrong.

The cities were filled with undead servants carrying out everyday tasks as if it were the most normal thing in the world.

People spoke in whispers.

Power was everything.

Life was cheap.

Death was... negotiable.

It was one of the creepiest locations I've ever had the pleasure of running.

There, the party met Ilmich.

The information officer of Szass Tam himself.

Rather than immediately attacking the party, Ilmich welcomed them.

Politely.

Calmly.

Almost professionally.

Which somehow made him even more unsettling.

He knew things.

About the Cult.

About the war.

About the heroes.

And he wanted to know whether they were worth helping.

This became Lucky's chapter.

Up until now, the mysterious gnome wizard had slowly earned the party's trust.

Now he had to earn the respect of one of the most dangerous magical nations in the world.

Negotiations with the Red Wizards were never going to be about morality.

Nobody in the room believed Thay was good.

Nobody even pretended otherwise.

The only question was simple.

Would helping stop Tiamat benefit Thay?

Lucky stepped forward.

Through clever arguments, powerful magic, and some excellent roleplaying, he managed to convince the Thayans that the answer was yes.

Not because they cared about the Sword Coast.

Not because they cared about the innocent.

But because Tiamat winning would be bad for everyone.

Even Thay.

The Red Wizards were willing to help.

But they had conditions.

If they were going to commit resources to the war...

They wanted a seat at the Council of Waterdeep.

And more than that.

They wanted an official Thayan embassy inside Waterdeep itself.

The room went quiet.

Everyone knew what that meant.

Lady Silverhand would never like the idea.

Inviting the Red Wizards into the heart of the greatest city on the Sword Coast was, under normal circumstances, unthinkable.

But these were no longer normal circumstances.

The party agreed to bring the proposal before the Council.

Sometimes, saving the world means making peace with people you'd rather never see again.

Sometimes, stopping a dragon goddess is more important than refusing to work with necromancers.

The heroes left Thay with something they had not expected.

Not friendship.

Not trust.

But the possibility of an alliance.

And in a war against Tiamat...

That was more than enough.

Chapter 17 – Xonthal's Tower: The Biggest Rewrite

I'm just going to say it.

I really don't like Xonthal's Tower as written.

Out of the entire campaign, this was probably the chapter I changed the most. The setup never really clicked for me, and the motivations didn't make much sense in the context of the story we had been building for years.

So...

I stole the parts I loved and rewrote almost everything else.

The journey itself was fantastic.

The maze surrounding the tower became one of the most enjoyable puzzle sessions we've ever played.

Instead of feeling like another combat encounter, it became a giant magical escape room filled with strange riddles, clever solutions, and plenty of moments where the entire table was shouting ideas at each other.

Even after all these years, I still remember how much fun everyone had with it.

And as an added bonus...

Our fighter found a Vorpall Sword.

A weapon that would become *very* relevant later.

Eventually, the party reached the tower itself.

Guarding it was an adult blue dragon.

The battle was brutal, but the party came out on top.

Inside the tower, they finally confronted the Cult's forces in a desperate race to secure the Blue Dragon Mask.

After everything they had been through...

After years of chasing Dragon Masks across Faerûn...

It looked like they were finally going to claim another one.

The fighting was intense.

The mask was within reach.

Literally seconds away.

Victory was right there.

And then...

Without warning...

Rillifane cast **Teleport**.

No discussion.

No explanation.

No "trust me."

Just...

Poof.

The entire party disappeared.

Everyone at the table——just stared in disbelief.

The Blue Dragon Mask was left behind.

The Cult survived.

And the heroes suddenly found themselves back in Waterdeep.

It was one of the biggest "Wait... WHAT?!" moments of the entire campaign.

At the time, nobody understood why she had done it.

But she had seen something the rest of the party hadn't.

And her decision would change everything.

Interlude – So... What Was Actually Going On?

At this point, I should probably stop for a moment and explain some of the bigger mysteries that had been building in the background.

Remember...

This wasn't just one campaign anymore.

This was nearly **10 years**, spread across **three campaigns** in one shared world.

There are *hundreds* of story threads that connected these adventures, so here's the absolute minimum amount of context you'll need before we head into the final chapters.

1. Liv was never from this timeline.

One of the biggest revelations of the campaign was that Liv didn't actually belong in this version of history.

She had been saved as a child from a doomed timeline by the mysterious man she knew only as her master.

That same revelation also uncovered something completely unexpected.

Liv's mother had been one of Mystra's daughters in that other timeline.

Which, in the strangest way imaginable, made Lady Silverhand something of a distant family member.

That discovery only strengthened the bond between them throughout the campaign.

2. Liv's master had committed the impossible.

When he rescued Liv from that dying timeline, he didn't come back alone.

He also carried something else across realities.

A fragment of the Plane of Chaotic Good itself.

In my setting, that entire plane had been destroyed long before the campaign began.

That tiny surviving fragment became one of the most important pieces of the overarching story.

It was also the reason the Marut executed him the moment he spoke the forbidden names.

He hadn't merely broken the rules.

He had broken reality's contract.

3. Dragons don't have an afterlife.

One of the biggest pieces of lore in my world is that dragons are different from every other race.

Their souls never travel to the Fugue Plane.

Instead, dragons belong to the Material Plane itself.

When they die...

Their souls remain here.

That single rule ended up explaining a surprising number of mysteries throughout all three campaigns.

4. The mystery of Waterdeep's Dragonward.

For centuries, Waterdeep had been protected by the Dragonward.

No dragon could enter the city unless the ancient guardian beneath Waterdeep allowed it.

So one question kept getting bigger and bigger.

How had Voaraghamanthar entered Waterdeep?

There was only one possible answer.

Someone with authority over the Dragonward had allowed it.

And all signs pointed toward one person.

Dalia.

Or rather...

The golden dragon soul that had once been the guardian of Waterdeep.

That revelation made Bahamut's punishment seem far more understandable.

Whatever Dalia had done...

It wasn't a simple mistake.

5. Dalia became Suria.

The truth behind Dalia's punishment was even more tragic than we expected.

When Bahamut forced the soul of the guardian dragon into a mortal body...

Something had to make room.

The unborn human child who should have lived that life lost their soul.

It was condemned to the Wall of the Faithless.

A fate Suria considered completely unforgivable.

The name "Dalia" had belonged to the child her parents believed they would raise.

It never truly belonged to the dragon living inside that body.

So she chose a new name.

Suria.

A name that was finally her own.

6. The impossible twins.

Ever since Castle Naerytar, one mystery had refused to go away.

Voaraghamanthar.

Waervaerendor.

Two ancient black dragons.

Twins.

Except...

Dragons can't have twins.

That should have been impossible.

Which meant one of two things.

History was wrong.

Or...

Something involving different timelines, different realities, or different planes had happened.

The party still didn't know the answer.

But by this point, everyone knew one thing.

The story had become much bigger than stopping the Cult of the Dragon.

Chapter 18 – The Fall of Waterdeep prelude

Sometimes, the heroes don't choose the next adventure.

Sometimes...

The adventure chooses them.

The party had just fought their way through Xonthal's Tower. They had survived the maze, defeated an adult blue dragon, and had come within seconds of claiming the Blue Dragon Mask.

And then, without warning...

Rillifane cast **Word of Recall**.

No explanation.

No discussion.

She simply grabbed the party...

And they vanished.

Why?

Because she had heard a scream.

Not with her ears.

Inside her mind.

Laeral Silverhand.

The Open Lord of Waterdeep.

She wasn't speaking.

She was screaming.

Begging for help.

Rillifane didn't hesitate for a single second.

She trusted her friend.

She trusted her instincts.

And she brought the entire party home.

Meanwhile...

The world had kept turning.

And while the heroes had been chasing Dragon Masks across Faerûn...

Voaraghamanthar had been playing a completely different game.

One he had been planning for centuries.

His attack on Waterdeep wasn't an opportunity.

It was the culmination of a plan that had been unfolding long before the campaign even began.

Step One – Cripple the City

During a side adventure, the party had uncovered fragments of a horrifying truth.

Voaraghamanthar hadn't been preparing for months.

Or years.

He had been undermining Waterdeep for centuries.

Planting agents.

Making deals.

Corrupting institutions.

Waiting.

Then, when the moment was right...

He pulled the trigger.

Thousands of influential people across the city took their own lives almost simultaneously.

Officials.

Administrators.

Military officers.

Civil servants.

The people who kept Waterdeep functioning simply...

Disappeared.

The city didn't just lose lives.

It lost its ability to organize.

Chaos spread before a single dragon ever appeared in the sky.

Step Two – The Assault

Then the Cult struck.

Everything the party had done throughout the campaign suddenly made sense.

The dragons assigned to defend other cities.

The armies that had marched elsewhere.

The strange troop movements that had seemed disconnected.

If you drew them on a map...

Every road led to Waterdeep.

This had always been the real target.

The Cult believed the ritual was nearly complete.

They believed Tiamat's return was inevitable.

They no longer cared about subtlety.

The time for hiding was over.

Dragons filled the skies.

The armies of the Cult marched on the city.

The greatest assault in Waterdeep's history had begun.

Step Three – Break the Dragonward

There was only one obstacle left.

The Dragonward.

For thousands of years, it had protected Waterdeep from dragons.

As long as it stood...

The city could not truly fall.

And that was exactly why Voaraghamanthar had spent centuries preparing.

He wasn't trying to overcome the Dragonward.

He was trying to destroy it.

Together with Waervaerendor, he finally put the last piece of his plan into motion.

The ancient protection of Waterdeep...

Was about to break.

And that...

Is what the party arrived to witness.

Not a battle.

Not a siege.

But the beginning of a catastrophe.

The lowest point of the entire campaign.

Everything they had fought for.

Everything they had built.

Every alliance they had painstakingly forged.

Was about to be tested.

Because Waterdeep...

Was falling.

Chapter 19 – The Fall of Waterdeep

The party arrived beneath Waterdeep...

Too late.

The guardian was dead.

The ancient golden dragon that had protected the city for centuries lay motionless beneath the streets.

The Dragonward had failed.

Standing over the body were the architects of it all.

Voaraghamanthar.

And Waervaerendor.

For years, the party had chased clues surrounding these impossible dragons.

Now, at last, they learned the truth.

Voaraghamanthar explained the bargain he had once made with Dalia—the guardian dragon whose soul now lived on as Suria. It was that ancient agreement that had allowed him to bypass the Dragonward all those centuries ago.

The punishment Bahamut had given Suria suddenly made terrible sense.

One mistake...

One bargain...

And the greatest city in Faerûn had been left vulnerable.

Then came the final step of the dragons' plan.

Using an ancient artifact, they shattered the staff that anchored the Dragonward.

The consequences were immediate.

Reality itself began to collapse.

The Material Plane, the Feywild, and the Shadowfell started crashing into one another.

This wasn't something I had invented overnight.

Years earlier, we had played multiple side campaigns explaining why this catastrophe was possible and what forces had been set into motion long before the main campaign began.

Everything was finally coming together.

The battle beneath Waterdeep was desperate.

The party wasn't strong enough to defeat two ancient black dragons in a fair fight.

But they still carried something priceless.

The Black Dragon Mask.

Using the mask, they managed to halt Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor for a single round.

Just six seconds.

But six seconds was enough.

The battle turned.

The dragons fell.

The heroes had won.

...

Except they hadn't.

The Dragonward was already broken.

The planes were already colliding.

The city above was already dying.

As Voaraghamanthar lay on the ground, he smiled.

Not the smile of someone defeated.

The smile of someone whose plan had succeeded.

His final words still give me chills.

"I have already won. My soul will merge with my others... only to become stronger."

And suddenly...

The party understood.

Dragons in my world don't simply die.

There are many versions of the same dragon across different realities.

When one dies...

Its soul strengthens the others.

Voaraghamanthar had never expected to survive.

His death was part of the plan.

The heroes hadn't stopped him.

They had merely completed his final move.

Above the city...

Everything had fallen apart.

Waterdeep burned.

The Cult's armies poured through the streets.

Dragons ruled the skies.

For the first time in almost ten years of playing...

The campaign felt truly lost.

And then...

A miracle.

Months earlier, Rath Modar had secretly given Rillifane a small stone tablet.

He had explained only one thing.

"If you break this, your Divine Intervention will automatically succeed."

There was one warning.

"It will not necessarily call the god you expect."

As Waterdeep collapsed around them, Rillifane crushed the tablet.

She prayed.

Not for victory.

Not for revenge.

Simply...

For help.

The answer came from somewhere no one expected.

Some readers may already have seen it coming.

Lucky had carried Aremdina since the day he joined the party.

What nobody realised was that Aremdina was no ordinary axe.

It was the weapon of Garl Glittergold himself.

The creator god of the gnomes.

The moment the prayer was answered...

The soul of the god awakened.

Lucky disappeared.

And in his place stood Garl Glittergold.

A true deity walking the Material Plane.

The battle changed instantly.

Dragons fell from the sky.

The Cult's army broke.

The impossible became possible.

Waterdeep was saved.

But every miracle carries a price.

The Maruts arrived.

The same terrifying constructs that had executed Liv's master years before.

Their judgement was simple.

Gods were not permitted to walk the Material Plane.

Garl Glittergold had broken the contract.

He did not argue.

He simply smiled.

Accepted their judgement.

And returned with them to Mount Celestia.

His divine body fell lifeless onto the streets of Waterdeep.

Lady Silverhand rushed to him first.

She tried everything she could.

Nothing worked.

Garl's soul had already departed.

The resurrection failed.

Then Rillifane had one last idea.

"Wait... Revivify doesn't say the soul has to be willing."

The table went completely silent.

They had sixty seconds.

Nothing more.

A desperate race began through the ruined streets of Waterdeep.

Rillifane sprinted.

Reached Lucky's body.

And cast the spell just in time.

It worked.

But something had changed.

Garl Glittergold was gone.

Vern Copperboot—the gnome Lucky had once been before losing his memories—was gone too.

Only Lucky remained.

A soul born from impossible circumstances.

Neither god.

Nor mortal.

Simply...

Lucky.

From that moment on, the player retired his wizard and rebuilt Lucky as a monk for the final chapters of the campaign.

It felt strangely fitting.

He had already been three different people over the course of the story.

Now he finally had the chance to discover who Lucky truly was.

Waterdeep still stood.

But only just.

The Dragonward was gone.

The city lay in ruins.

Thousands had died.

The Cult had been driven back...

Not defeated.

Everyone around the Council table understood the same thing.

There would not be another chance.

The final Council of Waterdeep was called.

No more diplomacy.

No more gathering allies.

No more preparing.

It was time to march on the Well of Dragons.

It was time to end the war.

Chapter 20 – The Final Council of Waterdeep

This...

This was probably my favourite part of the entire campaign.

Not because there was a dragon.

Not because there was an epic battle.

But because, for three whole sessions, the campaign simply stopped...

And everyone talked.

Three sessions.

Almost fifteen hours of roleplaying.

And every single minute felt earned.

This wasn't the first Council of Waterdeep anymore.

The frightened politicians who had once argued over every little detail were gone.

Now, sitting around the table, were representatives of almost every major power in Faerûn.

The Lords' Alliance.

The Harpers.

The Order of the Gauntlet.

The Emerald Enclave.

The Zhentarim.

The Arcane Brotherhood.

The elves.

The metallic dragons.

The Red Wizards of Thay.

Every one of them was there because of something the party had accomplished.

Nothing had been handed to them.

Every seat had been earned.

Over the course of three sessions, the party argued.

Negotiated.

Made promises.

Solved disputes.

Settled old grudges.

Assigned armies.

Figured out supply lines.

Made impossible compromises.

It felt less like playing D&D...

And more like running the biggest war council in Faerûn's history.

And somehow... They absolutely nailed it.

Thanks to incredible roleplay, some unbelievable dice rolls, and years of building trust with the people around that table, the party achieved what I considered the "perfect" Council.

Every major faction committed everything they had.

For the first time since the Draakhoorn sounded...

The world stood united.

Then came the final problem.

How do you move the largest army Faerûn has ever assembled?

The Well of Dragons lay hundreds of miles away.

Marching there would take far too long.

The Cult would complete the ritual before anyone arrived.

Then Liv remembered something she had been carrying for years.

A fragment of the Plane of Chaotic Good.

The same fragment her master had rescued from a doomed timeline.

The same fragment that had ultimately cost him his life.

She placed it in Lady Silverhand's hands.

As one of Mystra's daughters, Laeral could accomplish something nobody else could.

She used that fragment to perform the impossible.

Not a teleport for a handful of adventurers.

Not even a city.

An entire war.

Armies.

Dragons.

Wizards.

Knights.

Clerics.

Soldiers.

Thousands upon thousands of people.

All would be transported directly to the Well of Dragons.

The final battle had become possible.

The Council ended.

There were still a few days before the spell would be cast.

The campaign slowed down one last time.

No villains.

No dragons.

Just people.

Friends saying goodbye.

Families embracing.

Promises being made.

The quiet conversations you only have when everyone knows they might never see each other again.

Chapter 21 – The Well of Dragons: The Last Mission

After ten years...

The moment had finally arrived.

The Council's plan was put into motion.

Laeral Silverhand raised the fragment of the Plane of Chaotic Good.

The greatest teleportation spell ever attempted was cast.

Armies disappeared from every corner of Faerûn.

Soldiers.

Dragons.

Wizards.

Knights.

Giants.

Every faction the party had spent years bringing together.

In a single instant...

The greatest alliance in the history of the Sword Coast arrived at the Well of Dragons.

For one brief, beautiful moment...

Everything had worked.

Then it all fell apart.

Someone had betrayed the Council.

The Cult knew.

They knew where the armies would arrive.

They knew the plan.

They were waiting.

The allied forces materialized directly into an ambush.

The battle began before anyone had a chance to organize.

Chaos spread across the battlefield.

Dragons filled the sky.

The Cult's armies crashed into the allied lines.

Everything the Council had spent months preparing seemed lost within moments.

The greatest military operation in the history of Faerûn had become a disaster.

But the party had one advantage.

One secret that nobody else knew.

Rath Modar had trusted them with information he had kept hidden even from his own allies.

He knew where the Draakhoorn was.

And because of Remilia...

The party had a way to reach it.

The Cult had discovered the battle plan.

But they had never discovered the real mission.

While armies clashed outside the Well of Dragons...

The heroes disappeared.

Not to fight the war.

To end it.

Their mission was simple.

Infiltrate the temple.

Reach the Draakhoorn.

Silence it.

No matter the cost.

Waiting for them were the Dragon Masks.

Not one.

Not two.

Four.

The Black Dragon Mask, a resurrected Rezmir.

The Green Dragon Mask, wielded by the very village elder who had betrayed the party in the elven forest.

The White Dragon Mask... Maccath the Crimson.

The ally they had rescued from the Sea of Moving Ice.

The friend who had somehow become their enemy.

And finally...

The Blue Dragon Mask.

A complete mystery.

We never really developed its wielder beyond the moment itself, and honestly, by that point the table was having so much fun that the Blue Wyrmspeaker became a bit of comic relief amidst all the drama.

The battle was everything I had hoped it would be.

Old enemies returned.

Old betrayals resurfaced.

Years of history came crashing together in one room.

And somehow...

The party prevailed.

But the greatest victory wasn't defeating the masks.

It was saving one of them.

During the battle, they managed to bring Maccath back to her senses.

The woman they had travelled halfway across the world to rescue remembered who she was.

The White Dragon Mask lost one of the Cult's greatest servants...

And the party regained an friend.

One final obstacle remained.

The Draakhoorn itself.

It was still sounding.

Still calling.

Still empowering the ritual that would bring Tiamat into the world.

Guarding it was a being of living storm.

A mighty Prince of Evil Air.

The final guardian.

The battle was fierce.

But eventually...

The elemental fell.

For the first time since it had echoed across the world...

The Draakhoorn fell silent.

The sound that had united the Council.

The sound that had announced the end of the world.

Was finally gone.

The party had completed the mission nobody else could have accomplished.

The armies outside had paid for every second with blood.

Now...

It was the heroes' turn to pay theirs.

As the last echoes of the Draakhoorn faded...

The party was teleported to the summit of the Temple of Tiamat.

The ritual was already underway.

The Dragon Queen was waiting.

Chapter 22 – The End of *Tyranny of Dragons*

The party emerged atop the Temple of Tiamat.

They had done it.

The Draakhoorn had fallen silent.

The ritual had been delayed.

But victory had come at a terrible cost.

Laeral Silverhand was gone.

The Maruts had taken her.

There was no time to grieve.

Tiamat was waiting.

What followed was, without question, the biggest battle I have ever run as a DM.

Almost ten years of stories, side campaigns, one-shots, character arcs, and little mysteries all came crashing together in one final encounter.

And finally...

The party learned why any of this had been happening.

The greatest twist belonged to Rillifane.

Back in Session One, my player had chosen the name "Rillifane" simply because she liked how it sounded.

Neither of us thought anything of it.

Ten years later...

It became the centrepiece of the entire campaign.

Severin wasn't simply trying to summon Tiamat.

He was Rillifane's father.

For years he and his wife had secretly worked toward a single goal.

In my setting, elves are descended from beings born from the Plane of Chaotic Good.

But that plane no longer exists.

Its destruction meant the ancient bloodlines of the elves were slowly fading.

Severin saw that as the death of his people.

He didn't worship Tiamat out of love.

He used the Cult of the Dragon as a means to an end.

His true plan was to summon Tiamat, force the elven god Rillifane into his daughter's body, and restore what he believed to be the "true" elven race.

It was twisted.

Fanatical.

And, in his own mind...

Completely justified.

Finally, after years of wondering why the Cult was doing any of this...

They had their answer.

Then the Maruts appeared.

Not to punish anyone.

To offer a choice.

They turned to Rillifane.

Become a god.

Accept your destiny.

Save the world.

Or refuse...

And die.

It seemed like an impossible decision.

But there had always been a third option.

One that nobody—not Severin, not the Maruts, not even the gods themselves—had considered.

Trust your friends.

Fight anyway.

Refuse to let fate make the choice for you.

The party chose the third path.

It was...

A terrible idea.

Turns out four mortals fighting the Dragon Queen isn't exactly healthy.

The battle was brutal.

Every round felt desperate.

Every spell slot mattered.

Every healing potion mattered.

Every hit point mattered.

For a while...

It looked impossible.

Then, without the party even knowing it...

Their years of kindness came back to save them.

The Council had made one final plan.

Delaan, the representative of the Emerald Enclave—and Rillifane's closest friend, and love interest—gave his own life.

His sacrifice bought the impossible.

For sixty seconds...

Tiamat became mortal.

The Dragon Queen could finally bleed.

The fight changed completely.

The party threw everything they had into those precious moments.

More than a thousand hit points later...

After an unforgettable skill challenge...

After ten years of stories...

The impossible happened.

Tiamat died.

Not banished.

Not defeated for a while.

Dead.

And that's where I'll end this post.

Well...

Almost.

Next week we'll play one final session.

An epilogue.

There are still mysteries left unsolved.

Laeral's fate.

The merging of the planes.

The surviving villains.

The consequences of killing a god.

And, of course, what comes next for four heroes who somehow survived all of this.

Maybe that becomes another campaign.

Maybe it doesn't.

But one thing is certain.

After almost ten years...

Hoard of the Dragon Queen and **The Rise of Tiamat** are finished.

The Dragon Queen is dead.

And I honestly couldn't have asked for a better ending.

If you've somehow made it all the way to the end of this ridiculously long post...

Thank you for reading.

I had to leave out dozens of NPCs, entire adventures, and years of little moments that made this campaign what it was. Even then, this barely scratches the surface of what happened around our table.

To everyone currently running *Tyranny of Dragons*:

I hope your story becomes just as uniquely yours as ours became.

Because that's the real magic of D&D.

Not following the book.

But looking back years later and realizing... you barely needed it anymore.