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AN EPIC TIER ADVENTURE

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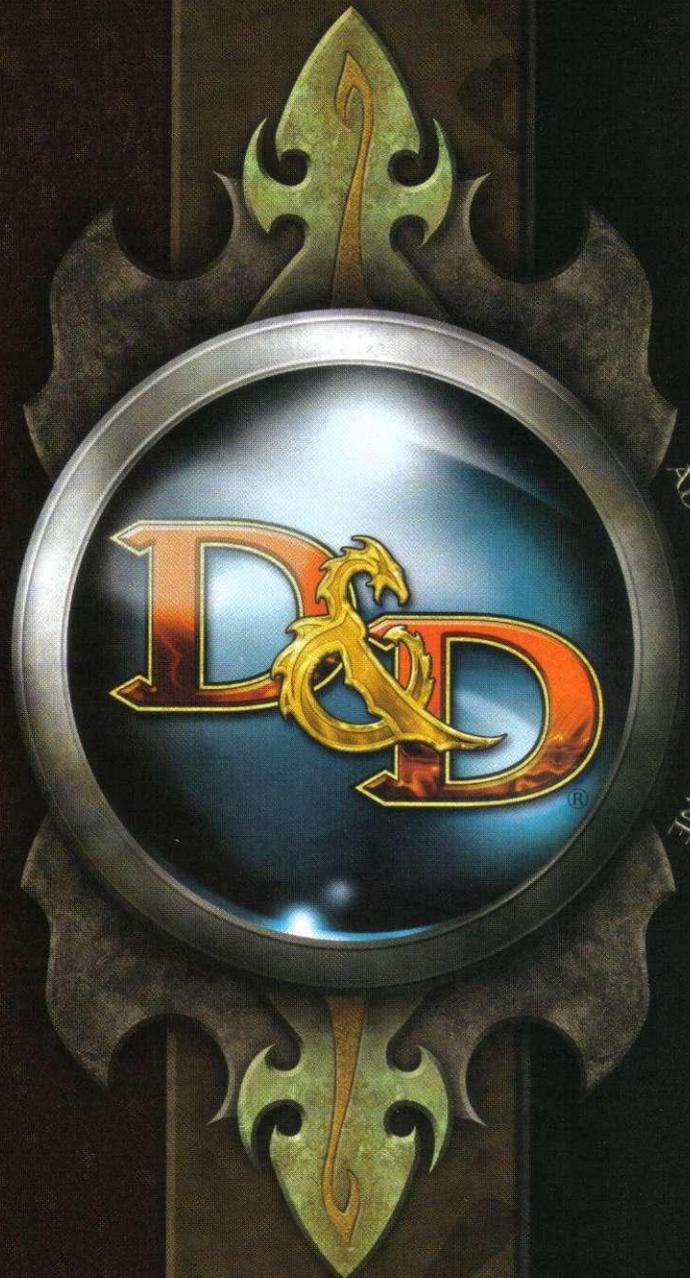
DEATH'S REACH[™]



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 21ST-23RD LEVEL

Bruce R. Cordell • Chris Sims

DEATH'S REACH™



ADVENTURE BOOK ONE

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INTRODUCTION

Powerful entities threaten reality's foundation as they seek to usurp the Raven Queen's position. To prevent this cosmic coup, adventurers must enter the Shadowfell's timeless core, where all things find their end.

Death's Reach is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure for characters of 21st to 23rd level. You need the *Player's Handbook*®, *Monster Manual*®, and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*® to play. D&D™ *Dungeon Tiles* and D&D® *Miniatures* can enhance your play experience.

BACKGROUND

While the Shadowfell presents a dark echo of the world, significant variations exist between the two. One of the more terrible differences exists at the shadow plane's fabled core, a place called Death's Reach. Once a place of purity, Death's Reach is now the spiritual nadir of existence. Before the rise of the Raven Queen, before the founding of Pluton (where Nerull once trapped the dead), departed souls simply moved on to a place beyond all reckoning. One of the doorways they used was Death's Reach.

When the primordials first crafted the world, they had little regard for the fate of souls. Still, some among them recognized life force as a potent power and hungered for it. These entities arrived in Death's Reach and shut the doorway. Souls continued to be drawn to the Shadowfell's core. With nowhere to go, they were either consumed by insatiable primordials or, finding no further path or final purpose, simply dissipated.

During the Dawn War, when primordials and gods battled over the world and existence, deities descended on Death's Reach to weaken their primordial enemies. They established a beachhead—Nerull's Gate—through which they could attack with massed armies. The battle was lengthy and vicious, but the deities triumphed in the end. Still, they were unable to cleanse Death's Reach of its taint. So they sealed the core and devised other fates for souls.

Given its inaccessibility, the gods found Death's Reach the ideal place to hurl the troublesome detritus of the ages. They used it to store dangerous enemies and artifacts. Such transfers required elaborate and powerful rituals, but, in the right circumstances, the gods felt such efforts were necessary. Over time, disposal or internment in Death's Reach fell into disfavor. Despite being nearly forgotten, the Shadowfell's core yet endures.

Death's Reach is a graveyard of dead warriors and damaged weapons hailing from the Dawn War and other prehistoric events. At the close of the Dawn War, powerful entities, including the primordial Timesus the Black Star, were relegated to this barren place, where they are held in stasis by the location's spiritual undertow.

Divine safeguards, put in place by ancient deities, long served to prevent entry into Death's Reach. But the hidden doors have not proven invulnerable. Orcus's minions have found a way into Death's Reach. Now narrow passages allow defilers to enter and a dribble of power to be accessed. This meddling has created a soulfall: a handful of souls that should go to the Raven Queen now find their way to Death's Reach instead.

Although the Raven Queen knows Orcus is behind this evil, she does not know who his followers are, their number, or their exact plans. No deity, primordial, demon lord, or exarch can enter Death's Reach, as they are blocked by a divine ban that, over time, has come to possess the weight of cosmic law. Yet, the continuing soulfall makes it clear that outsiders have arrived in the Shadowfell's core. These interlopers are disinterring relics—ancient weapons perhaps, but also the remains of primeval warriors of unknown strength and power. The Raven Queen believes an army is being gathered against her—an army composed of Dawn War soldiers roused from a sleep as old as the beginning of time.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure has four distinct parts, with various side treks and resting points scattered throughout. The four parts are Zvomarana, Citadel of the Raven Queen, Death's Reach, and the Reliquary of Timesus.

After a mysterious attack and summons, the adventurers must seek out Letherna, the Realm of the Raven Queen. They enter Letherna through Zvomarana, the Temple of Temples, where powerful servants of the Raven Queen dwell. The adventurers arrive to find terrible forces laying siege to the temple grounds—the spiritual tests they would have undertaken become a series of brutal battles against Orcus's elite.

If the characters break the siege, they have the opportunity to speak with the Raven Queen among the sky-piercing icy mountains of Letherna, where souls of the world's dead congregate to learn their fates.

The Raven Queen provides a method for the adventurers to travel into Death's Reach. A soul gate is one of the few passages to that dark place left open by the gods. If the adventurers manage to traverse this perilous route not meant to be used by living creatures, they arrive in a vast crater filled with the debris of the Dawn War. Charged with finding and stopping the intruders that have invaded this place, the adventurers must make their way through a blasted landscape punctuated by horrifying undead, war monsters, relics of an earlier age, mighty servants of Orcus, and secretive servants of another power who has an interest in this conflict—Vecna. Upon reaching Nerull's Gate and liberating it from its guardians, the adventurers summon the Raven Queen's aspect to point them further along their way. It is then they discover that they have roused the wrath of Orcus!

Following their divine patron's direction, the adventurers find and explore the Reliquary of Timesus, the place where the interlopers are making their greatest discoveries. The Reliquary, a necropolis complex that contains many surprises, is the prison of the primordial known as the Black Star. Timesus was imprisoned in Death's Reach with his terrible blackstar host. In an ancient lair of death and incarceration, among many ancient horrors, the adventurers must defeat Orcus's greatest worldly servant, the self-proclaimed exarch Elder Arantham. The adventurers can find a measure of victory by vanquishing Arantham. However, the triumph is darkened by the discovery that Timesus is no longer imprisoned here.

HOW TO USE THIS ADVENTURE

Death's Reach, an epic tier adventure for the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** Roleplaying Game, consists of four parts. It takes a group of five player characters (PCs) from 21st to 23rd level. You can use this adventure as the start of a series of epic tier adventures, as a continuation of the adventures detailed in H1-H3 and P1-P3, or as a stand-alone adventure in your own campaign.

The two booklets included in this adventure are for the Dungeon Master (DM). If you're planning to experience the adventure as a player, stop reading now.

Death's Reach contains these components:

1. *Adventure Book One* (this booklet) provides the Dungeon Master (DM) with an overview of the adventure. This includes descriptions of the four adventure areas—Zvomarana, Citadel of the Raven Queen, Death's Reach, and the Reliquary of Timesus. This booklet also provides illustrations of key locations and adversaries for the DM to show to the players, descriptions of several new monsters, and new magic items.
2. *Adventure Book Two* contains the bulk of the adventure, including many possible encounters within the four adventure areas described in *Adventure Book One*.
3. A poster map depicting two of the adventure's most important encounter areas, rendered in a scale that allows you to place your *D&D Miniatures* directly on the map.
4. A folder to hold the booklets and the poster map.

Getting Started

Begin the adventure by providing your players with one or more hooks from "Adventure Hooks" (page 4), and then proceed to **Encounter A1: Death Calls** on page 8 of this book.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This section provides a series of adventure hooks that you can use to involve the player characters in the events that are about to unfold. The minor quests are tied to epic destinies, and one or more of them can be distributed among the characters. If a character has an epic destiny other than the ones presented below, use these to model a new hook more in keeping with the specific epic destiny.

Hook: STUDIES OF THE ARCHMAGE

Provide a character with the Archmage epic destiny the following quest, playing it out as the character performs a ritual.

Instead of the result you expected, as the ritual is completed the image of a cloaked humanoid standing in a pile of broken skulls appears before you. In a cracked voice reverberating with veiled power, the figure speaks:

“Pay heed, mortal. I sense great potential in you. It would please me to witness such potential come to fruition, so mark my words well.

“A secret place exists that contains relics of primordial vintage. This place has been walled away from creation since the elder gods willed it so, but its walls have been breached. Even now, fell creatures loot this ancient trove of its treasures. If you would secure any of its wonders before they are all carted away to serve an abyssal master, seek the Raven Queen in Letherna. Claim for yourself and yours a relic of the dawn time, see a place lost since the first days, and move closer to unlocking the secrets of reality. In doing so, you help many besides yourself... including me.”

This arcane vision is sent directly by Vecna, though the god is able to cover his tracks well enough that determining its origin is impossible. The PC recognizes that the message wasn't unlike a Sending ritual, though vastly more powerful, and vastly more significant.

Quest XP: 3,200 XP (minor quest) for traveling to Death's Reach and claiming any artifact within.

Hook: A DEADLY TRICKSTER'S REWARD

Provide a character with the Deadly Trickster epic destiny the following quest, playing it out as the character wanders around any settlement.

One of your many contacts approaches you and nonchalantly offers the following tale:

“As sly-fingered and silver-tongued as you are, I'm surprised you didn't already know this. Something big is going down. Mauglurien the Black Dragon, dwarven leader of the Ebon Riders

hasn't been seen for months. A one-eyed stranger whispered this secret while we drained tankards at the Broken Sword. Word is, Mauglurien is leading a force against Zvomarana, the Raven Queen's holiest temple! The Raven Queen or her exarchs would give much to learn about this plot. Of everyone I deal with, I believe you can best work this news to your advantage. Perhaps you can even procure a favor from Fate herself.”

The PC who receives this message can begin to investigate this rumor, with the help of the other PCs (see page 6).

Minor Quest: 3,200 XP (minor quest) for bringing whatever the character discovers of this plot to the Raven Queen and successfully bargaining for a favor in return.

Hook: ASCENSION OF A DEMIGOD

Provide a character with the Demigod epic destiny the following quest, playing it out as the character prepares to take an extended rest.

As sleep closes in on you, you suddenly become aware of a presence. Sitting beside you is a figure with glowing golden flesh and a divine aura that you know you will someday share. It takes a moment, and then you realize that this divine visitor looks just like you. The visitor smiles at your realization and says:

“You might one day achieve what I represent, but your destiny is by no means certain. Challenges lie before you, some of which may seem, at first glance, beyond your power and skill to deal with. Perhaps you will succeed, perhaps not. Either way, one task is surely set before you, a deed all who seek godhood must do. You must petition the Raven Queen to acknowledge your destiny and relinquish her claim on the ultimate disposition of your soul. Seek out the Raven Queen at Zvomarana, the Temple of Temples.”

A PC who receives this vision knows that it is true, and that it comes from a being that transcends time—a being the character might soon become. The character should begin to seek knowledge about Letherna, the Raven Queen's dominion, and the Temple of Temples, before the adventure begins.

FOOTPRINTS OF DESTINY

Consider foreshadowing some or all these epic destiny hooks while the adventurers are still in the paragon tier. Such revelations stress the fact that as each character approaches his or her epic destiny, the universe begins to resonate with that fate. You might ask the players to choose a destiny earlier than level 21 to facilitate this preview.

At mid-paragon tier, the adventurers might begin to have dreams and visions of the icy peaks of Letherna, the burned-out crater of Death's Reach, and the skull of Orcus's wand. A character likely to choose the Archmage destiny might see an old, one-eyed beggar ranting about a place that later can be recognized as Death's Reach.



Minor Quest: 3,200 XP (minor quest) for traveling to Letherna and convincing the Raven Queen to relinquish her power over the potential Demigod's soul.

HOOK: THE ETERNAL SEEKER'S PATH

Provide a character with the Eternal Seeker epic destiny the following quest, playing it out as the character sleeps and dreams.

An ominous dream comes to you in flashes as you sleep.

You see a temple on a mist-covered mountain, where thousands of ravens circle above its slender spires.

The scene shifts to inside, where a knight in black armor atop a black steed pounds on a doorway beyond a mirrored altar. His crimson shield is adorned with the head of a black dragon.

The scene shifts, and you see yourself and your companions locked in battle with an ebony dragon as ghosts wail in agony and the dragon cuts you down one by one.

The scene shifts, and you are alone in an endless darkness. After long moments, you spot a dimly lit corridor containing a succession of seven locked gates. You try to open the first gate and the scene shifts.

Now you are on a wide, desolate plain, watching helplessly as a great black rock the size of the moon hurtles out of the sky. It strikes the land with a world-shattering impact.

Sweat soaked, you awaken, these scenes of future doom still bouncing within your mind.

The PC can investigate the visions. Certain rituals, such as Consult Oracle, are effective, as is finding a sage to explain the dream symbols (see page 6).

Minor Quest: 3,200 XP (minor quest) if the PCs successfully discover the meaning of the dream and its disturbing symbology, and if they learn that the great black rock is the primordial Timesus.

HOOK: DEATH CALLS

Regardless of other options, the exploits of the adventurers have garnered the attention of the Raven Queen. She sends a representative to summon the adventurers to an audience in order to offer them an opportunity to perform a service for the spinner of fate and the patron of winter. As this encounter unfolds, the Ebon Riders attack.

See **Encounter A1: Death Calls** on page 8 for details.

CUSTOMIZING TREASURE

Some treasure in this adventure is specific, and some is general. For general treasure identified by item level, choose an item appropriate for the player characters. You should also feel free to change specific treasure to fit your needs. For example, Mauglurien's battleaxe *Boneshredder* can be a bastard sword, or Uganon's *pact blade* can be a wand.

The only treasures you shouldn't change without careful consideration are the artifacts. These items play an important part in the story of the adventure. Unless you're prepared to alter the story in an appropriate manner, keep the artifacts as they are presented herein.

RESEARCH

After the initial destiny introductions (as presented in Adventure Hooks on page 4), and even more so after the Ebon Riders attack (see Encounter A1 on page 8), the adventurers might want to engage in some research to find out more about what's going on. This section reveals what they can learn through their efforts.

Investigating any of these topics openly might attract the attention of powerful beings who want to make sure that certain information remains secret. You can add encounters with such forces if you wish, or to build tension simply have word get back to the curious PC that he or she has aroused the suspicion or interest of someone with more than a modicum of influence and power.

The lore in this section offers clues to who might care about those investigating specific topics, as well as those that might seek to avenge the deaths of servants dispatched by the adventurers along the way. In fact, the research done by the Eternal Seeker or the Deadly Trickster might be the cause of the Ebon Rider attack in the opening encounter of this adventure.

The lore addressed in this section crosses over in numerous ways, opening new avenues of investigation and research. For simplicity's sake, the information is presented in alphabetical order.

RITUALS

If the adventurers' skills fail them, there are powerful rituals that can help them uncover more information. Consult Mystic Sages provides a method for using Religion to determine what the adventurers couldn't figure out using the History or Arcana skills. Consult Oracle allows the adventurers to learn any fact they want, as long as they can formulate solid questions based on what they already know. In this adventure, information helps build tension, so reward wise and clever uses of rituals.

ASHEN COVENANT LORE

A character knows the following information about the Ashen Covenant with a successful Arcana or Religion check.

DC 22: Orcus, the Demon Prince of the Undead, has inspired numerous and varied cults. Rarely do any of these groups deal with the others, but recently a disturbing movement has arisen among Orcus's most devoted followers. Several cult leaders have banded together with the express purpose of finding a way to replace the Raven Queen with their Blood Lord. This movement among the faithful is known as the Ashen Covenant.

DC 27: Elder Arantham leads the Ashen Covenant. Other cult leaders in accord with the covenant include Mauglurien of the Ebon Riders (a dwarf warlord); Ghovran Akti the Planeweaver (an eladrin necromancer); Sithas

Tyrr the Blood Knight (a human paladin); Kielno Varim the Mad (a tiefling warlock); and Shonvurru the Blood Serpent (a marilith rewarded with undeath through service to Orcus). Each of these leaders advances his or her own scheme to elevate Orcus.

DC 29: The Ashen Covenant has found a cause the factions can unite behind. Elder Arantham has breached Death's Reach and even now unearths terrible secrets from the time of the Dawn War when the gods battled the primordials. Elder Arantham has purposefully excluded some of the covenant's members from this plot, so the entire movement won't be wiped out if he fails.

DC 31: The ultimate hand behind this movement is Orcus himself, who has been working on a grand scheme of conquest and power since the events that happened at the Keep on the Shadowfell several months ago.

DEATH'S REACH LORE

A character knows the following information about Death's Reach with a successful Arcana check.

DC 24: Death's Reach is a mythical place. It was once a doorway for the souls of the dead that led to an unknown final reward, but primordials corrupted it. They trapped souls there so they could consume them. The gods waged war against the primordials at Death's Reach, but they could not undo what had been wrought. So the gods sealed the place forever, leaving the fallen and the machines of war behind. Some of the abandoned are primordials.

DC 29: Although sealed, Death's Reach has access points. Although the gods, their exarchs, and beings of similar power can't fully enter the place, mortals can. Furthermore, the gods use doorways into Death's Reach to discard what cannot or should not be destroyed.

DC 31: Orcus's followers breached Death's Reach, where they now unearth unspeakable power. Their meddling has caused some souls to fall into Death's Reach, where they are beyond the power and influence of the Raven Queen.

EBON RIDERS LORE

A character knows the following information about the Ebon Riders with a successful History or Streetwise check.

DC 14: A black dragon on a crimson field serves as the symbol of the Ebon Riders. This elite mercenary company consists mostly of heavy cavalry and shock troopers. A dwarf known as Mauglurien the Black Dragon leads the Riders.

DC 22: Combat magic specialists, such as Ghovran Akti and the cambion Tannerli, are important members of the Ebon Riders. Certain Riders have special mounts. Ebon Riders fight for the highest bidder, and they've been known to change sides in the middle of a battle if their

price is met. They support no great cause, unless that cause is their own.

DC 27: Rumor suggests that the Ebon Riders are dedicated to evil gods. Numerous leaders among them are undead—possibly even Mauglurien—and the knights and mounts of the group are known to reanimate as undead after falling on the battlefield.

DC 29: The Ebon Riders forces include death knights, liches, wights, and vampires, many of whom maintain the appearance of living beings. The Riders ultimately serve the cause of Orcus, and they gladly rally to the call of the Ashen Covenant.

DC 31: The Ebon Riders plan to assault Zvomarana, the Raven Queen's holiest of temples and the gateway to Letherna, the Raven Queen's dominion. Such an attack can only serve the foul purposes of Orcus, and must be opposed at all costs.

ELDER ARANTHAM LORE

A character knows the following information about Elder Arantham with a successful History or Religion check.

DC 24: Elder Arantham was once a high priest in Bahamut's church, but after a mysterious crisis of fate, he turned to Orcus. He is a rare form of divinely empowered undead known as a huecuva, which he became to purposely shed his humanity.

DC 29: As an undead priest of Orcus, Elder Arantham is held in high esteem by worshipers throughout the demon lord's cults. He claims to be an exarch of the Blood Lord, although this assertion might be little more than self-aggrandizement. He formed the Ashen Covenant to organize the efforts of Orcus's followers and to fulfill the mission he claims came to him in a divine vision.

DC 31: Elder Arantham has a lofty goal—to change the nature of death itself. According to Arantham, undeath should be the natural end to life. All creatures that die should rise again and endure in a world that the undead eventually come to dominate. The means to accomplish this goal rests in Orcus taking on the divine power of the god of death—a goal that all of Orcus's followers are dedicated to seeing come to fruition.

GHOVRAN AKTI LORE

A character knows the following information about Ghovran Akti with a successful History or Arcana check.

DC 14: Ghovran Akti, a powerful eladrin mage and a member of the Ebon Riders, has always been focused on combat and the martial applications of magic. He has survived against impossible odds. Some say he has returned from the dead.

DC 22: Clearly dedicated to winter, Ghovran's studies also extend into planar topics and death. He is a known necromancer, and his powers suggest he venerates or once venerated the Raven Queen.

DC 27: Ghovran Akti often rides a nightmare creature from Orcus's Abyssal realm of Thanatos, suggesting that

he has ties to the Demon Prince. Ghovran also has a cambion disciple—a magus named Tannerli.

DC 29: Ghovran Akti is a lich dedicated to Orcus, although he maintains his living form so that he can pass for one of the living. He hopes to help Mauglurien slay the Raven Queen, to elevate Orcus, and thereby to become an exarch of bitterest winter.

MAUGLURIEN LORE

A character knows the following information about Mauglurien with a successful History or Streetwise check.

DC 14: Mauglurien the Black Dragon is a mighty dwarf warlord. He is a savage, bloodthirsty, and remorseless fighter who seeks glory in battle and wealth above all else. His battleaxe, *Boneshredder*, is as well known as he is.

DC 22: Mauglurien's history is a dark one. It begins with his exile from his own clan long ago, but the crimes that occasioned that punishment are long forgotten. The dwarf is ancient now, attested by his wizened appearance, though his beard bears no hint of gray. Nonetheless, he continues to lead the Ebon Riders to victory upon victory on the broken bodies of innumerable fallen foes.

DC 27: It is said that Mauglurien once worshiped Kord. In his thirst for bloodshed, he turned to Gruumsh. It is unclear if he still reveres a wicked patron, but the warlord is clearly evil, insane, or both.

DC 29: Despite his appearance, Mauglurien is a death knight, and he has turned to the worship of the demon lord Orcus. Working in the Ashen Covenant, he plans to put Orcus on the Raven Queen's throne by slaying the god of death and winter.

ZVOMARANA LORE

A character knows the following information about Zvomarana with a successful Religion check.

DC 22: Zvomarana is the Raven Queen's holiest temple. Located in the Shadowfell on the edge of Letherna, the temple features several monumental gates. Beings who wish to petition the Raven Queen must pass through Zvomarana's gates and perform the required rites. Only then can the high priest of Zvomarana open the final portal to the Raven Queen's citadel.

DC 27: The gates of Zvomarana appear in more than one heroic legend. In most tales, the heroes pass through the Seven Veiled Gates of Fate on a journey to their ultimate destiny. Zvomarana holds only five of the gates—the final two gates are always different and always located in different places. Every story describes Zvomarana as a high place on a mountain, its paths covered in cold mist.

ENCOUNTER A1: DEATH CALLS

Encounter Level 20 (15,600 XP)

SETUP

Ghovran Akti (riding a shadowclaw)

Tannerli, Ebon Rider Magus (T)

2 Ebon Riders (riding shadowclaws)

3 Shadowclaws (S)

After establishing one or more of the hooks presented on page 4, use this encounter to kick off this adventure. Only the adventurers begin on the map, as they wander near the fountain, the encounter begins.

Fresh from amazing exploits (perhaps even the defeat of the dragon Urishtar, as detailed in the *P3: Assault on Nightwyrn Fortress* adventure), the adventurers have come to the attention of the Raven Queen. While they are resting and restocking at a town or city, they receive a strange visitor. With a sound like ravens taking flight, a marut concordant (see *Monster Manual*, page 185), servant of the Raven Queen, appears in the presence of the party. It appears in the center of the city street, replacing the statue that just moments before adorned the fountain.

In Supernal, which every character present hears in his or her native tongue, it says:



"You are honored above all others, for you have earned an audience with the spinner of fate and the patron of winter. She who marks the end of each mortal life would meet with you over a matter of extraordinary significance. Time is of the essence—tarry not overlong in your coming. I leave you with a passage to the doorstep of Zvomarana, high temple of the Raven Queen and the gateway to Letherna. When you come, come prepared, lest the capriciousness of fate overwhelm you."

The concordant gives the adventurers a bone scroll case with the symbol of the Raven Queen seared into its cap. It holds a ritual scroll of Planar Portal keyed to carry the adventurers to the teleportation circle of Zvomarana (see page 10).

The marut departs as it came, the statue once again in place above the fountain.

Minor Quest: 3,200 XP (minor quest) if the adventurers answer the summons and eventually speak with the Raven Queen.

As soon as the marut departs, the Ebon Riders attack. They ride in from the north and west. Place the attackers on the map as shown at this point and roll initiative. Ghovran and an Ebon Rider, each atop a shadowclaw, approach from the north. An Ebon Rider atop a shadowclaw approaches from the west, as Tannerli flies in behind him.

When the Ebon Riders attack, read:

The clatter of claws on stone attracts your attention as riders on large shadow creatures come hurtling into view from two directions. From the north, a gaunt eladrin in black robes and a knight in black plate carrying a blood-red shield emblazoned with a black dragon. From the west, another black knight and a woman with dark crimson skin, leathery wings, and the horns of a devil. Instead of riding, the woman flies.

The eladrin points and rasps, "They are the ones we seek. For the glory of the Ebon Riders and the Covenant, slay them all!"

TACTICS

Tannerli begins the battle by hurling a *soul burn* into the midst of the adventurers. Then she lands on a rooftop to fire *balefire ray* attacks until *soul burn* recharges.

The Ebon Riders charge in with longsword attacks, gaining +10 to damage. Then the riders maneuver to protect Ghovran and Tannerli. At this point, the riders dismount and their mounts move to set up flanks with their riders. Note that the shadowclaws require two hits to take down, unlike most minions.

Ghovran rides close to the party, using a move action while atop his shadowclaw. He then uses *deadwinter step* to teleport to a place from which he can spend his action point to use *lifesapping hate*. On his next turn, he fearlessly makes melee or ranged attacks.

Ghovran Akti (G) **Level 21 Elite Controller**
Medium fey humanoid (undead), eladrin lich XP 6,400

Initiative +18 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision
Necromantic Aura (Necrotic) aura 5; any living enemy that enters or starts its turn within the aura takes 5 necrotic damage.
HP 392; **Bloodied** 196
Regeneration 10 (if Ghovran takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function until the end of his next turn)
AC 35; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 36
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic, 15 cold
Saving Throws +2, +5 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *deadwinter step*
Action Points 1

⊕ **Deadwinter Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold, Necrotic**
+26 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 cold and necrotic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

↘ **Deadwinter Ray** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold, Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +24 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 7 cold and necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold, Necrotic**
Ghovran makes two *deadwinter touch* attacks or two *deadwinter ray* attacks.

⊖ **Lifesapping Hate** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Cold, Necrotic**
Close blast 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 7 cold and necrotic damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 cold and necrotic damage (save ends). Ghovran gains 5 temporary hit points for each enemy he damages with this power.

Deadwinter Step (move; encounter) ♦ **Teleportation**
Ghovran can teleport 5 squares. At the end of that move, enemies adjacent to him take 10 cold and necrotic damage.

Indestructible
When Ghovran is reduced to 0 hit points, his body and possessions crumble into dust, but he is not destroyed. He reappears (along with its possessions) in 1d10 days within 1 square of its phylactery, unless the phylactery is also found and destroyed.

Spellmaster (minor; recharge ☹️⚡️)

Ghovran regains the use of an expended encounter power.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +19, History +19, Religion +19
Str 15 (+12) **Dex** 26 (+18) **Wis** 19 (+14)
Con 20 (+15) **Int** 18 (+14) **Cha** 27 (+18)

Tannerli, Ebon Rider Magus (T) **Level 20 Artillery**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil), cambion XP 2,800

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +15; darkvision
HP 144; **Bloodied** 72
AC 32; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 34
Resist 15 fire; 10 against effects that target AC or Reflex while bloodied
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)

⊕ **Fiery Claws** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**
+27 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 fire damage, and the target slides 2 squares.

↘ **Balefire Ray** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**
Ranged 20; +25 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 8 fire and necrotic damage.

↘ **Soul Burn** (standard; recharge ☹️⚡️) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**
Area burst 1 within 10; targets enemies; +23 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 8 fire damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

Necrotic Mantle
A mantle of necrotic energy protects Tannerli, giving her resist 10 against effects that target AC or Reflex while bloodied.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Supernal
Skills Arcana +21, Bluff +23, Insight +20
Str 16 (+13) **Dex** 20 (+15) **Wis** 19 (+15)
Con 18 (+14) **Int** 22 (+16) **Cha** 27 (+18)

2 Ebon Riders (E) **Level 18 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 2,000 each

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +14
HP 170; **Bloodied** 85
AC 34; **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 30
Speed 6

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+25 vs. AC; 1d8 + 9 damage.

⊕ **Death Mark** (standard; recharge ☹️⚡️) ♦ **Weapon**
+25 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 damage, and the target is marked (save ends). While marked, the target grants combat advantage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Athletics +20, Endurance +18, Intimidate +16
Str 23 (+15) **Dex** 16 (+12) **Wis** 20 (+14)
Con 18 (+13) **Int** 12 (+10) **Cha** 15 (+11)

3 Shadowclaws (S) **Level 21 Minion**
Large shadow beast (mount, undead) XP 800 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +13
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 33; **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 33
Resist 10 necrotic
Speed 8

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+26 vs. AC; 8 damage (12 damage after reanimation).

Charger (while mounted by a friendly rider) ♦ **Mount**
Shadowclaw grants rider +10 to damage rolls on charge attacks.

Reanimation
On the turn after it is first reduced to 0 hit points, the shadowclaw rises again with 1 hit point.

Shadow Jump (move; recharges with reanimation) ♦ **Teleportation**
Shadowclaw teleports 3 squares and becomes immune to all damage until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Str 25 (+16) **Dex** 18 (+13) **Wis** 18 (+13)
Con 20 (+14) **Int** 2 (+5) **Cha** 9 (+8)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from the daytime sky.

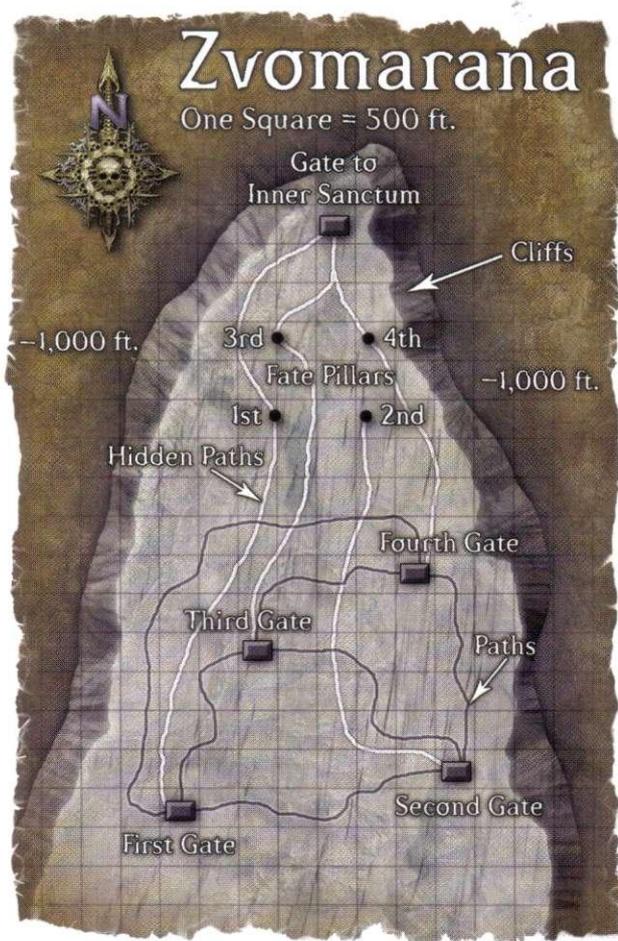
Market Stalls: The stalls of the various vendors are difficult terrain.

Buildings: The various shops and residences are blocking terrain. Characters can enter a building as a move action. Climbing to a rooftop requires a DC 15 Athletics check. Flat-top buildings are 10 feet high. Slanted-roof buildings are 20 feet high.

CONCLUSION

The adventurers might not know their attackers, but they can investigate to find out more. The rider's shields, words and language, and names all provide clues (see page 6). Ghovran's phylactery resides with Mauglurien, so the adventurers will need to battle the lich again later in the adventure. With the battle ended, they can use the Planar Portal ritual to travel to Zvomarana as soon as they are ready to depart. Go to **Encounter Z1: Doom's Approach**, on page 4 of *Adventure Book Two*.

ZVOMARANA



Zvomarana, the Raven Queen's holiest of temples, provides a pathway to Letherna, the death god's realm. The Temple of Temples stands near the summit of Zvoma Mountain, occupying a broad, flat expanse and bordered by sheer precipices on three sides. The main features of the temple, at least for the purposes of this adventure, are the five Gates of Fate and the four Fate Pillars that rise from the center of the temple plateau. (Two more gates exist beyond the temple grounds, but they are only accessed by the souls of legendary individuals seeking special destinies.)

Architecture: The structures throughout the temple grounds radiate holiness, and are purposefully designed to represent the cycle of life and death with aged (rather than destroyed) ruins, pristine structures, and edifices in various states between. Everything is richly carved with ornamentation, religious symbols, and panoramic scenes. Since the buildings are monumental rather than practical, many of them lack roofs and walls.

Cliffs: Sheer precipices bound Zvomarana's grounds on the east, north, and west, descending 1,000 feet to tundra. Falling is a concern only if the adventurers wander from the paths through the mists.

Departing Souls: When a creature dies here, its soul departs visibly through the mist toward Letherna.

Illumination: Bright light. Glowing crystals provide silvery illumination throughout the area.

Paths: Crisscrossing Zvomarana are wide, frosty streets cobbled in white stone, aged in places and perfect in others. Hidden paths to the fifth gate location, the Inner Sanctuary, appear only after the four Fate Pillars are lit. Areas outside the paths are obscured by mists.

Weather and Environment: The environment is desolate, and the weather is cold. Thick mist covers the temple grounds, and domes each encounter site starting at a height of 30 feet. Navigating the mist without a path is difficult (DC 27 Nature check). Failing this check leads to wandering, possibly tumbling over one of the cliffs.

THE EBON RIDERS

Elder Arantham ordered the Ebon Riders to storm Zvomarana. In truth, Arantham knows that Mauglurien can't take or hold the temple, but that does not concern him. He just wants to make sure that the Raven Queen's attention is focused on the siege and not on other events happening in the Shadowfell.

The Ebon Riders know the adventurers through divinations, and they act accordingly.

FATE PILLARS

Four fate pillars rise 90 feet into the mist-shrouded air at the center of Zvomarana. Each pillar is 20 feet wide. When the adventurers complete a Gate of Fate test, the pillar with the matching number illuminates with silvery brilliance that only they can see. They can see the glowing pillar in the distance, a beacon in the mist. When a gate task is completed, a hidden path to the gate's corresponding pillar is revealed. Once all four pillars are glowing, the hidden paths to the Gate to the Inner Sanctuary appear.

While a pillar glows, it provides those that can see the glow with a safe resting place. The court around the pillar remains free of monsters and other threats, and the water flowing at the pillar's base is pure and refreshing.

When the adventurers approach a pillar, read:

An immense, round pillar of black crystal rises into the mist here, a dim light glowing subtly at its core. A small court surrounds the pillar, and clear water flows in a wide pool around its base.

THE FIRST GATE

After meeting the image of Felidha, high priest of Zvomarana, the adventurers arrive just outside the strange building that appears half in ruins and half brand new. Hertrud, an Ebon Rider deathpriest, has led a squad of troops here and is turning the place into an altar to Orcus.

The adventurers have two tasks here: stop Hertrud and his troops, and then enter the shadowthorns that grow among the ruins to receive a vision from the Raven Queen.

See **Encounter Z1: Doom's Approach**, on page 4 of *Adventure Book Two*.

THE SECOND GATE

The adventurers arrive at the second gate from the west. Uganon, an Ebon Rider necromancer, has taken control of this location and is polluting Zvomarana and creating monstrosities for Orcus's glory.

The adventurers have two tasks here: stop Uganon, and then willingly bathe in one of the cisterns located here.

See **Encounter Z2: Vile Workings**, on page 6 of *Adventure Book Two*.

THE THIRD GATE

The adventurers reach the third gate from the east or west by traversing the cobbled pathways. This monastery was once home to Zvomarana's monks. Now Hertrud and Uganon have turned it into a stable for their shadowclaws.

The adventurers have two tasks here: clear the area of shadowclaws and other Ebon Rider forces, and then recover the *bloodcrystal raven skull* (see page 24 for information on this item).

See **Encounter Z3: Profane Stables**, on page 8 of *Adventure Book Two*.

THE FOURTH GATE

The adventurers arrive at the fourth gate to find Gukat, a death giant devoted to Orcus, sifting through a temple

library for lore to increase his power and discarding the rest into a roaring fire.

The adventurers have two tasks here: put an end to Gukat, and secure any of the holy writings.

See **Encounter Z4: Lost Library**, on page 10 of *Adventure Book Two*.

THE FIFTH GATE

This gate is situated at the northernmost point of Zvomarana. The hidden paths leading to this Inner Sanctuary are revealed only after four Fate Pillars are lit.

Unfortunately, the hidden paths did not dissuade Mauglurien. After deploying his troops, he successfully navigated the mists through the use of magic provided by Orcus to arrive at the final gate ahead of the adventurers.

The adventurers have two tasks here: defeat Mauglurien, and then free Felidha so that she can send them on to the Raven Queen's Citadel.

See **Encounter Z5: Death and Destiny**, on page 12 of *Adventure Book Two*.

TREASURE

The Ebon Riders have destroyed or absconded with many of Zvomarana's valuables. The bulk of the treasure in these encounters, provided by the riders, belongs to the temple. The adventurers might leave such riches behind out of reverence. If they do, the Raven Queen presents it all to them, with her thanks, after they reach her Citadel.

CITADEL OF THE RAVEN QUEEN

When mortals perish, their life force—their souls—travel to the Shadowfell. There, they pass through the Raven Queen's Citadel in Letherna. Recently, however, the natural process has been disturbed, and a troubling number of souls has evaded the fate decreed by the Raven Queen.

The Raven Queen's Citadel resides in the realm of Letherna, nestled among the peaks of jagged mountains that sprout from the center of a wintry forest. Her mighty stronghold is a maze of reaching towers and graceful bridges cut from stone and ice. Above the Citadel, a maelstrom of stars spin, each bright pinpoint a soul. From this maelstrom, a grim procession of souls descends to learn their final fates.

VISITING THE CITADEL

Most intelligent beings visit the Raven Queen once, as a departed soul, when their life ends. Epic characters have a way of charting their own destinies, however. In the course of their adventures, such characters might strike

upon the notion of paying the God of Death a call. Determined visitors who avoid Zvomarana could find their way to Letherna through the winter-shrouded woods and up the steep-sided slopes of the mountain chain. There, they might attempt entry through the same gates used by the dead. Of course, the potent guardians who protect the Citadel from casual callers would have to be dealt with.

Those creatures who arrive by way of the Temple of Temples, however, bypass the long approach through the forested plain. Such worthies avoid the potentially lethal showdown outside the Citadel against its numerous and devastating defending forces. If the priests and guardians of Zvomarana allow it, travelers need merely step through the activated portal at the Fifth Gate. This teleportation circle deposits travelers directly into the chamber where the Raven Queen holds court.

See **Encounter C1: Fate's Guardians, Interlude: Citadel of the Raven Queen**, and **Encounter C2: The Soul Gate**, on pages 14–19 in *Adventure Book Two* for more information.

DEATH'S REACH

Death's Reach is an emotionally taxing and depressing place for living creatures to visit. This atmosphere has no game mechanic effect, but gloom should pervade any role-playing aspects of encounters here.

SOULS IN DEATH'S REACH

The most common fate of a soul loosed into Death's Reach is annihilation. A few malevolent and strong-willed souls survive by inhabiting a corpse from the Dawn War or becoming a virulent ghostly manifestation. Such souls are the rare exception.

DYING IN DEATH'S REACH

A creature that dies in Death's Reach suffers death of the soul. Its soul pulls, screaming, from its body and slides into the deadly ground, surviving for a short while as luminous dust. The *bloodcrystal raven skull* (see page 24) can protect the adventurers. A Gentle Repose ritual or Raise Dead ritual can tie the soul to the body if the ritual is begun within 10 minutes of a creature's death.

The adventurers don't know these facts until they kill a creature or one of them dies. At that point, a DC 15 Religion check reveals what's going on. If the characters don't know the soul-protecting property of the *bloodcrystal raven skull*, play the soul death up for horror, then use the magic item's property to surprise the group.

SOULFALL

In the open barrens of Death's Reach, souls fall from the sky intermittently, wailing as they plummet. Most strike the ground, where they dissipate, leaving only vague luminescence behind and the lingering shriek of ultimate loss. Describe the soulfall regularly while the adventurers travel. These souls are beyond saving.

Soulfall is attracted to intense activity. Whenever the adventurers engage in battle, roll 1d4. The result is the number of souls that fall during the ongoing battle.

✦ Soulfall ✦ Necrotic

Area burst 1 within 50; +25 vs. Will; 2d10 + 5 necrotic damage.

RITUALS IN DEATH'S REACH

Certain rituals function differently in Death's Reach. A ritual's performer intuits any limitations on a ritual after beginning it, but before any components are expended.

- ✦ A ritual or ritual result automatically fails if it requires a creature or object to enter Death's Reach, requires or allows communication with or observation of a creature or object not in Death's Reach, or would allow exit from or entry into Death's Reach.
- ✦ A ritual's performer takes a -5 penalty to any Heal check required to perform a ritual.
- ✦ Commune with Nature works, but performing it costs the participants a total of three healing surges. Spirits surviving in this place are few, so the ritual's performer takes a -10 penalty to the Nature check.
- ✦ Consult Oracle works, but even the oracles have difficulty manifesting in Death's Reach. The ritual's performer takes a -15 penalty to the Religion check, and no oracle appears on a result of 0 or lower. Each question costs a ritual participant one healing surge.
- ✦ Loremaster's Bargain and Voice of Fate work only at Nerull's Gate. Even there, the ritual's performer takes a -10 penalty to the Religion check.
- ✦ Traveler's Feast has a duration of 12 hours, not 24.

DEATH'S REACH ENVIRONS

Bounded by treacherous cliffs and a deadly sky, Death's Reach is a wasteland of gray dust. The Dawn War left it polluted and littered with the lost and the dead.

Illumination: Death's Reach is full of dim light with spots of darkness and occasional flashes of bright light.

Signs of the Worm: As the adventurers travel, they find bizarre tunnels in the ash and rock of the wasteland, hinting at the existence of some great, tunneling beast (see Random Encounters on page 2 of *Adventure Book Two*). A DC 25 Dungeoneering or Nature check determines that a creature similar to a purple worm left these stable channels.

COMING AND GOING

Once the adventurers endure the first passage to Death's Reach through the Raven Queen's Soul Gate ritual, they gain a connection to that dark place that allows them to come and go with less hardship. Each character can teleport to a known location in the world, or to the Raven Queen's Court, once in a 24-hour period, staying in that safe place for no longer than 24 hours before returning. One or more adventurers can travel together or each can arrive at separate locations. In this way, they have a chance to rest and replenish away from the dangers of Death's Reach.

This boon should not be abused, however. If the adventurers make more than two trips out of Death's Reach, they draw dire attention. Through his connection to Orcus, Elder Arantham quickly learns where the adventurers go to rest between engagements against his forces. He arranges for a suitable "welcome."

See **Interlude: Unexpected Ambush** on page 34 of *Adventure Book Two*.

Sky: Above the ominous landscape stretches a brooding twilight sky. The clouds start roughly 200 feet above the ground, no matter what that ground's height, and the area within them is heavily obscured. This makes the atmosphere uneven above Death's Reach, and the cloud cover can obscure the view from one area to the next. The clouds contain rolling flashes of lightning that occasionally flare brightly.

The churning vapors separate Death's Reach from the rest of the Shadowfell (DC 25 Arcana or Religion check to realize that moving close to the sky is dangerous). Flying within 100 feet of the clouds invites soul-scouring strikes of astral lightning. Every minute a creature travels at 100 feet above the ground or higher, a *cloud strike* attacks.

← Death's Reach Cloud Strike

Area burst 2 within 20; +25 vs. Will; 3d10 + 5 lightning and radiant damage. Miss: Half damage.

Travel: The plains and ridges of Death's Reach are trackless, and covered in dust and rubble. The most common landscape features are tumbled black rock with spires of the same material jutting skyward.

Weather and Environment: The environment is barren, and no food or water can be found here.

IMMORTAL RIDGES

During the Dawn War, the primordials raised defensive ridges. Ruins and the refuse of war litter the ridges, reducing land speed to 3/4 normal.

ENCOUNTERS IN DEATH'S REACH

Encounters are tied to the locations shown on the map. These encounters, labeled as D1-D8, can be found in *Adventure Book Two*, starting on page 19.

DAWN WAR PRESERVE

If the adventurers learn of the caches of ancient weapons (probably from Calah), they can look for one of these storage places. The vault can be seen from a rise about 5 miles from its actual location.

When the adventurers can see the vault, read:

You crest a rise that descends into another broad valley. A few miles off, a great spire of black rock has been neatly cut into near the base, as if by the sword of a god. The surface sparkles with a soft silver glow issuing from a rectangular hole in its middle. This glow is a subtle beacon in the gloom of Death's Reach.

The adventurers have to reach the sliced spire and ascend 75 feet to the top (DC 22 Athletics check to climb), assuming they can't fly.



NERULL'S GATE

This ancient gate, which the gods once used to assault Death's Reach, stands in the middle of a bowl-shaped valley on the top of the largest ridge. Nerull's Gate can be seen from about a mile away as a faint glow. Adventurers who approach carefully using the ridge's points for cover can get close without being observed.

Shonvurru, an undead marilith and member of the Ashen Covenant, has already used the gate to bring Orcus's aspect here. She's now working on connecting the gate to Thanatos. Other creatures guard the area while she works.

The adventurers must wait before performing the Summon Raven Aspect ritual. When they finally do so, they talk briefly with a weak aspect of the Raven Queen. Attracted by the knowledge that Shonvurru's work stopped, Orcus's aspect shows up to sow carnage.

RELIQUARY OF TIMESUS

The giant monoliths that mark the entry to the reliquary are visible from 20 miles away. These black shafts appear to cut into the sky, which responds with angry flashes of white light. See the next page for details on this location and the encounters associated with it.

RELIQUARY OF TIMESUS

With perseverance and the Raven Queen's aid, the adventurers eventually discover this location hidden in Death's Reach. The entire Reliquary complex, buried below ground, serves as a prison for Timesus, one of the many primordials defeated by the gods during the Dawn War.

The adventurers might learn the name Timesus, or the Black Star, from NPCs, creatures, or locations in Death's Reach prior to finding the Reliquary. However, it's unlikely the adventurers can discover too many details about this long-defeated primordial, even with exceptional skill checks. That is, until they discover the history of the primordial sculpted in garish detail on every surface of the Reliquary's interior.

ELDER ARANTHAM IN THE RELIQUARY

The adventurers have already encountered agents of the Ashen Covenant, notably Mauglurien and Shonvurru. As the adventure culminates, the PCs meet the head of this cult of Orcus worshippers, Elder Arantham, as he finally stepped out of the shadows.

Elder Arantham knows that releasing Timesus from the Reliquary will increase the number of souls that fall beyond the Raven Queen's purview into Death's Reach. He expends much of his strength in breaching the defenses of the Reliquary to achieve this aim.

In the process, Arantham has also freed dozens of Timesus's soldiers, the so-called blackstar host, turning some of these creatures to his service. Others remain hostile to all intruders. Many, many more lie trapped throughout Death's Reach and in the Reliquary.

GENERAL RELIQUARY DETAILS

The upper level of the Reliquary (Locations 1-12) lies 120 feet below the surface of Death's Reach.

The middle level of the Reliquary (Locations 13-17) is located 200 feet below the surface.

The vault level of the Reliquary (Locations 18-19) rests nearly 1,000 feet below the surface, and is accessible only by the path described in Location 17.

Light Sources: Varies by chamber.

Doors: The double valves that control access between locations in the Reliquary are composed of adamantine. Though each contains a locking mechanism, most are unlocked due to the presence of Elder Arantham's forces.

Walls: The chambers of the Reliquary are bounded by a solid matrix of hard stone. Much of the interior surface is covered with intricate relief sculptures that reveal various events of the Dawn War, particularly as they relate to Timesus. A great deal of this sculpture, however, is eroded and crumbled. The floors consist of serpentine flagstone laid in bone mortar.

As related in the history carved on the interior surfaces of the Reliquary, every member of the blackstar host is a fragment broken or carved from Timesus's mighty form and animated with supernatural vigor. Elder Arantham hopes to present this powerful army, along with the Black Star itself, to Orcus. Elder Arantham believes that, after his liege lord uses the primordial to press his claim over Death, he will be duly rewarded. Indeed, the leader of the Ashen Covenant hopes to become exarch to the new god of Death.

INSIDE THE RELIQUARY

As the adventurers explore the Reliquary, they face still-active Reliquary guardians, as well as creatures and cultists of the Ashen Covenant. They can also learn some of the background and history of Timesus and the Dawn War by studying the wall sculptures throughout the complex.

REMAINING TOO LONG IN ONE PLACE

The adventurers might be tempted to hole up in one of the chambers of the Reliquary once they clear it of threats. If the adventurers choose any of the following locations to use as a resting place, they are unlikely to be disturbed by Ashen Covenant forces: Locations 3, 5, 7, and 8. Other parts of the Reliquary are not as safe for camping out, however. For every hour the adventurers remain in a chamber not noted above, roll 1d20 + 2. If the result is 20 or higher, the adventurers encounter an Ashen Covenant Patrol (see *Adventure Book Two*, page 2).

HISTORY SUMMARY

The history of the Dawn War and Timesus's involvement in it unfolds as the adventurers move deeper and deeper into the Reliquary. The wall sculptures reveal how the hosts of the Astral Sea and the hordes of the Elemental Chaos clashed across the surface of a ravaged world. It begins by showing Timesus and other primordials sending their titans and other servants out to shape and build the world. As the act of creation continues, pieces are discarded and the Shadowfell and the Feywild come into existence. Divine beings look down from the Astral Sea and take an interest in the work of the primordials and their offspring. They become horrified, however, when the primordials decide to destroy what they have created and start over. In terrible battles that shake the world, gods and primordials alike die. A great and powerful primordial, Timesus the Black Star, travels to the Shadowfell to feed on the departing life force of dying entities. The gods and their followers amass a great army to attack and destroy Timesus before he can become too powerful. In a great battle, Timesus is gravely wounded and imprisoned, and the power of Death's Reach is sealed away for all time.



THE RELIQUARY CHAMBERS

The hidden entrance to the Reliquary opens onto a steeply descending corridor that ends at the Reliquary Access.

1. Reliquary Access. The passage ends at a 10-foot-wide arch filled with roiling, opaque mist. The mist is a remnant of the ward Elder Arantham shattered to gain access to the Reliquary. The mist that remains retains only the power to prevent creatures on one side from hearing, seeing, or otherwise sensing anything on the other side.

2. Entry Hall (Encounter R1). Elder Arantham assembled disinterred blackstar creatures here before transferring them to the surface.

History on the Walls: A host of powerful elemental entities mix and merge different elemental forces to create a glowing sphere of cooling magma.

DC 24 History or Religion check: The elemental entities known as the primordials created the world.

3. Empty Alcoves. When Elder Arantham's forces defeated the Reliquary guardians here, they defaced the historical images carved on the walls so thoroughly that nothing can be learned in these locations.

4. Guardian Alcoves (Encounter R2). Reliquary guardians still protect this location.

History on the Wall: Great primordials hurl chunks of the world to each side. The chunks hurled to the right are dark, more shadow than substance. The chunks hurled to the left are intensely bright and vivid, more real than their central counterparts.

DC 24 History or Religion check: This is a retelling of the creation of the Shadowfell and the Feywild, the reflections of the natural world.

5. Portal Guardians (Encounter R3). Elder Arantham did not test the guardians protecting this chamber and its strange, unnatural portals.

History on the Walls: The wall sculpture shows divine beings looking down upon the creation of the primordials with interest, excitement, and even a touch of jealousy.

DC 24 Religion check: The first gods noticed what the primordials were up to and took a great interest in the acts of creation that were resulting in the world, the Shadowfell, and the Feywild.

6. Hydra Defeated (Encounter R4). This area contained fell traps and an eternally revivable primordial hydra determined to keep all intruders at bay. But Elder Arantham succeeded, finding a way to defeat the guardians and keep the hydra from returning. His forces control the chamber when the adventurers arrive.

History on the Walls: Creation gives way to destruction in this sculpture, as the great primordials and their servants plow through the world and begin to break it back down to its elemental components in order to start the process over.

DC 24 History or Religion check: The primordials, never content to let well enough alone, decided to destroy creation and start again. The tenets of Elemental Chaos demand that the cycle of creation and destruction continues, no matter the consequences.

7. Angelic Tombs. The door to this chamber is locked (DC 31 Thievery check to open). Inside, two sarcophagi of stone and gold stand on the opposite wall. Each is decorated with symbology related to angels (DC 16 Religion check to identify). These sarcophagi once held the angels charged with guarding the Reliquary for all time, but those entities are no longer waiting within these vessels. Written in Supernal on the left sarcophagus is "Erexes," and on the right, "Ilyssus." If the adventurers manage to open the sarcophagi (DC 24 Strength check to open), one contains 1,000 pp, four 5,000 gp gems, and a 23rd-level magic item. The other contains 700 pp, six 5,000 gp gems, and a 24th-level magic item.

History on the Walls: The divine beings come together in a great assemblage, surrounded by hosts of angels, the races of the world (including dwarves, elves, and humans), and other creatures and beings. All appeared armed and armored for war.

DC 24 History or Religion check: History and religious doctrine tell us that the gods gathered angels and other allies together to oppose the primordials, and it was at this time that each god took a specific interest in one of the new races that emerged in the world.

DC 29 Religion check: Erexes and Ilyssus are the names of two great angels that helped defeat the primordials during the Dawn War. They are said to appear every few millennia when the need is great and circumstances dire.

8. Excavation. Elder Arantham found several members of the Blackstar Host buried in the floor of this long hall. A gaping hole 30 feet deep, with the outline of a few unanimated blackstar knights embedded in the walls of the pit, suggests what happened here.

9. Dream Pool (Encounter R5). This chamber contains the Dream Pool, whose waters allow the adventurers to move deeper into the Reliquary.

History on the Walls: A great black mass hurtles from the sky trailing fire, on a collision course with an assemblage of divine beings.

DC 29 History or Religion check: A primordial named Timesus, also known as the Black Star, was often represented as a flaming rock that falls from the sky. It was said to have killed many of the first gods, even after they learned to work together to oppose the primordials.

10. Desecrated Temple (Encounter R6). Elder Arantham has turned this area, which was once a temple dedicated to the gods that helped defeat Timesus, into a grand Temple of Orcus. A terrible entity strains to escape in the chamber's center.

History on the Walls: The relief sculptures here have been replaced with a gruesome covering of half-animated remains. In one or two places, if the adventurers take the time and effort, they can uncover a few scenes of the gods that once held sway in this temple, including Moradin, Corellon, and Tiamat.

DC 24 History check: The gods, whether good, lawful good, evil, chaotic evil, or unaligned, worked together

to defeat the primordials and save the world from destruction.

11. Summoning Chamber (Encounter R7). This chamber once served as a summoning area for Reliquary defenders. Now it has been compromised and seized by members of the recently unearthed blackstar host, who have shaken off the controls placed upon them by the Ashen Covenant.

History on the Walls: Fantastic mechanisms of war, legions of angels, phalanxes of fiendish warriors, and elemental creatures of every shape and energy fight across the length and breadth of a city-sized fortress built in the hollow of a still-smoking crater.

DC 29 Religion check: Ancient songs hint at fantastic battles that raged in Death's Reach.

12. Spiral Stairs, Down. These spiral stairs plunge 80 feet through compacted stone to Location 13.

13. Spiral Stairs, Up. These spiral stairs rise 80 feet through compacted stone to Location 12.

14. Sarcophagi Chamber (Encounter R8). Eight sarcophagi occupy this chamber. The lid to one of these has been shattered, but the others remain sealed. If the adventurers ignore the sealed sarcophagi, they bypass the threats lingering here and the treasure they guard. Otherwise, combat breaks out.

History on the Walls: A walking mass of flaming black rock stands before a swirling vortex of dark energy as wisps of light are sucked into it.

DC 29 Religion check: Timesus the Black Star gazes into the heart of Death's Reach, a dark doorway that some souls enter to find an unknown fate.

15. Sentinel Traps (Encounter R9). Traps protect this L-shaped corridor.

History on the Wall: A dragon whose scales shine like the sun engages in battle with a brutal, axe-wielding primordial. As the sculpture wraps from wall to wall, the battle plays out, ending with the death of the dragon.

DC 24 History or Religion check: The dragon might be Io the First Dragon, which would make its opponent the primordial called the King of Terror, who killed Io in the ancient stories.

16. Hall of Judgment (Encounter R10). The Ashen Covenant has excavated a deep pit in the center of this large chamber.

History on the Walls: The same landscape as in Location 14, except a coal-gray disk hangs before the swirling vortex. The disk bears a strange rune. The wisps of light bounce off the disk. Some rain down upon the ground like dying embers, while others are gathered as so much glowing honey in the primitive appendages of the walking mass of flaming black rock.

DC 24 Religion check: The residue of a just-destroyed soul can animate the dead or even constructs, with surprising vigor.

DC 29 Arcana check: The rune suggests the concept of perfect impedance, and denotes the use of a powerful spell of sealing.

DC 29 Religion check: Timesus and its allies sealed off this portal within Death's Reach so that they could trap and consume the residual power of the souls of the recently deceased.

17. Reliquary Test (Encounter R11). This chamber contains several traps, as well as the access shaft that drops 100 feet to Location 18.

History on the Walls: The walking mass of flaming black rock grows larger and more powerful as the wisps of light flow into and around it instead of the swirling vortex of dark energy. Divine beings, meanwhile, amass nearby in what appears to be a final stand against the primordial.

DC 29 Religion check: Timesus the Black Star used the diverted energy of the lost souls to make itself one of the most powerful and devastating of the primordials. A force of gods and their allies came together to oppose Timesus and open or destroy Death's Reach once and for all.

18. Divine Memorial (Encounter R12). The shaft leading down from Location 17 is smooth (DC 29 Athletics check to climb). This chamber served as a monument to six gods who died in the Dawn War. Elder Arantham's forces smashed two of the statues when he moved through the area because of their disruptive radiance. He has left followers here to delay the adventurers long enough so that he can achieve his goal in Location 19.

History on the Walls: A great circular portal on a devastated plain shines with heavenly light. Scores of angelic beings pour from the portal, right into rank upon rank of undead of every possible configuration. The angelic and divine beings continue to pour through, seemingly an unstoppable tide. Some of the beings shining most brightly in the vanguard stand toe-to-toe against primordials, and seem in grave danger of being destroyed by the monstrous creatures. In the center of it all stands the immense mass of flaming black rock.

DC 24 History or Religion check: The first gods were able to defeat the primordials only when they pooled their resources and worked together. Still, many gods perished in the Dawn War in order to save the world and creation; some of their names were never recorded.

19. Reliquary (Encounter R13). This chamber, the prison of Timesus, shows signs of a methodical excavation.

History on the Walls: A great battle between the forces of the Astral Sea and the Elemental Chaos reaches a crescendo at the heart of the Shadowfell. Scores of angels and even more powerful divine beings overwhelm the flaming black rock that walks like a man. As the sculptures wrap around the walls and show the story, the great primordial is gravely wounded and finally imprisoned within a massive reliquary. Finally, the gods work together to hide and seal off a portion of the Shadowfell.

DC 29 Religion check: Timesus the Black Star, finally defeated by the gods and their followers, is trapped within the Reliquary and Death's Reach is sealed away for all time by the collective power of multiple gods.

NEW MONSTERS

BLACKSTAR HOST

The primordial Timesus, the Black Star, has been represented in myth and legend as an avenging meteorite that smote foes by smashing down from the sky like a hammer of black stone. In truth, the flaming black rock that walked like a man could launch itself great distances to make devastating attacks. In some of its battles against the gods, fragments of Timesus's primordial form splintered and manifested into terrible creatures that became known as the blackstar host. The Host followed Timesus as faithful warriors, and those not destroyed in the Dawn War were imprisoned along with the Black Star.

With the opening of the Reliquary, the blackstar host has been freed. They can be powered by different energy, including a soulfall. A variety of forms of these creatures exist, as each fills a different role within the Host.

Blackstar Annihilator Level 23 Artillery Medium elemental animate XP 5,100

Initiative +20 **Senses** Perception +23; darkvision
HP 168; **Bloodied** 84
AC 35; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 34
Resist 10 fire; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Speed 5, fly 8 (clumsy)

Ⓛ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+30 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Ⓜ **Meteor Bolt** (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +28 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 8 damage, and the target takes –2 to saving throws and ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).

Blackstar Fall (standard; encounter)
The blackstar annihilator can fly 8 squares and enter an enemy's space; +28 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. *Miss:* The target is pushed 1 square. If the target cannot be pushed, the blackstar annihilator ends its move in an unoccupied square adjacent to the target. *Secondary Attack:* When it lands, the blackstar annihilator attacks: close burst 3; targets enemies; +26 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone. The burst area becomes difficult terrain.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Primordial
Str 18 (+15) **Dex** 28 (+20) **Wis** 24 (+18)
Con 24 (+18) **Int** 8 (+10) **Cha** 7 (+9)

BLACKSTAR ANNIHILATOR DESCRIPTION AND TACTICS

A blackstar annihilator seeps shadows like black flame, and acts with depraved will and energy. A point of blue light serves as a sensory organ.

The blackstar annihilator flies over its targets and uses *blackstar fall* to initiate combat. Whenever it can, it tries to land in an enemy's space among many foes, to get the most out of its initial assault. It then flies aloft again to hurl ranged attacks at its opponents. It prefers to avoid melee, employing *slam* attacks only when it would provoke opportunity attacks for using *meteor bolt*.

Blackstar Prowler Level 23 Skirmisher Medium elemental animate XP 5,100

Initiative +22 **Senses** Perception +17; darkvision
HP 214; **Bloodied** 107
AC 37; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 32
Resist 10 fire; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Speed 8

Ⓛ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage, or 2d10 + 13 damage against a prone target.

Ⓡ **Blackstar Charge** (standard; recharge ☐ ☐ ☐)
The prowler makes a charge attack; +28 vs. AC; 3d10 + 10 damage, and the target is knocked prone. When the target stands up, it provokes opportunity attacks from adjacent blackstar prowlers.

Pounce on the Fallen (move; at-will) Ⓡ **Teleportation**
The blackstar prowler teleports up to 8 squares to end its move adjacent to a prone enemy.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Skills Endurance +22, Stealth +25
Str 24 (+18) **Dex** 28 (+20) **Wis** 22 (+17)
Con 22 (+17) **Int** 3 (+7) **Cha** 7 (+9)

BLACKSTAR PROWLER DESCRIPTION AND TACTICS

Vaguely wolflike in shape, blackstar prowlers are crude accumulations of animated dust and lustrous black rock fragments. Terrifyingly crafty, these creatures remain silently on the move, hunting relentlessly for sources of animating energy.

A blackstar prowler launches itself with *blackstar charge* to send its quarry sprawling, ruthlessly biting thereafter. Prowlers prefer to run in packs and with allies that can knock enemies prone so they can take advantage of their *pounce on the fallen* attack.

Blackstar Crusher Level 24 Brute Large elemental animate XP 6,050

Initiative +19 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision
Blackstar Gravity aura 5; any enemy within the aura at the start of the blackstar crusher's turn is pulled 2 squares.
HP 275; **Bloodied** 137
AC 36; **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 34
Resist 15 fire; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Speed fly 5 (clumsy)

Ⓛ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +27 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage.
Ⓡ **Meteoric Shockwave** (standard; recharge ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐) Ⓡ **Force**
Close burst 3; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 12 force damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares and knocked prone.

If the target hits a wall or other unmovable object as a result of the push, the target stops in the last unoccupied square and takes an additional 1d10 + 4 force damage from impacting against the wall or unmovable object.

Ⓡ **Focused Gravity** (standard; at-will) Ⓡ **Force**
Ranged 20; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 7 force damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Str 28 (+21) **Dex** 25 (+19) **Wis** 24 (+19)
Con 25 (+19) **Int** 4 (+9) **Cha** 7 (+10)



BLACKSTAR CRUSHER

DESCRIPTION AND TACTICS

An amalgamation of massive chunks of fire-smoothed black stone, a blackstar crusher has massive striking limbs. The crusher moves by floating.

Charging into combat, the blackstar crusher opens with *focused gravity* on the first adversary it can reach. Once the battle is joined, the crusher pummels its foes, reusing *meteoric shockwave* whenever possible. It shifts and moves in such a way that *blackstar gravity* brings it more opponents to crush or lines those enemies up for a truly devastating *meteoric shockwave*. It uses *focused gravity* to bring down flying targets or to deal with ranged attackers.

BLACKSTAR IDOL

DESCRIPTION AND TACTICS

Timesus's servitors carved and prepared fragments of their master. These blackstar idols, were designed to create other blackstar creatures and lead them in battle.

A blackstar idol appears as large sphere of smooth, black stone, rapidly rotating in midair. Energy streams from it like ebony flame, wrapping it in a pall of doom.

The idol begins combat in flight, attacking enemies with its *mindquake*. Then it descends to catch foes in its aura and uses *blackstar nova*. It uses *mindrip* every turn.

Blackstar Idol Level 22 Elite Controller (Leader)

Large elemental animate

XP 8,300

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +21; darkvision

Blackstar Pulse (Healing) aura 3; enemies that start their turns within the aura take 10 damage, and blackstar host that start their turns within the aura heal 10 hit points.

HP 420; **Bloodied** 210

AC 36; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 36

Resist 10 fire; **Vulnerable** 15 radiant

Saving Throws +2

Speed fly 8 (hover), teleport 4

Action Points 1

⊕ **Force Slam** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Force**
+27 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 force damage.

➤ **Mindrip** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +26 vs. Will; 1d10 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

⚡ **Blackstar Nova** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ **Psychic**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 4d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. Miss: Half damage, and the target is neither pushed nor knocked prone.

⚡ **Mindquake** (standard; recharge ☹ ☹ ☹) ♦ **Psychic**

Area burst 5 within 20; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 4d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Animate Blackstar (standard; at-will or encounter)

The idol targets the remains of a fallen blackstar creature and imbues it with energy. As an at-will power, the fallen blackstar rises as a blackstar pawn. If the blackstar idol targets a blackstar pawn as an encounter power, it becomes a blackstar knight.

Alignment Evil

Languages Primordial

Str 25 (+18)

Dex 13 (+12)

Wis 30 (+21)

Con 26 (+19)

Int 10 (+11)

Cha 7 (+9)

Blackstar Knight		Level 23 Soldier
Medium elemental animate		
XP 5,100		
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +19; darkvision	
HP 212; Bloodied 106		
AC 39; Fortitude 35 Reflex 34, Will 35		
Resist 15 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed 7		
⊕ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blackstar knight's next turn.		
⊕ Deathsword (standard; recharge [2][3]) ♦ Weapon		
Requires greatsword; +28 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage, and if the target is marked by the blackstar knight it takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).		
⬅ Soldier's Duty (when reduced to 0 hit points)		
The blackstar knight explodes; close burst 2; targets enemies; +24 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 9 damage; marked targets take an additional 1d10 + 9 damage.		
No Escape (move; at-will) ♦ Teleportation		
The blackstar knight can teleport 10 squares as long as it ends in a square adjacent to an enemy marked by the blackstar knight.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Primordial	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 26 (+19)
Con 20 (+16)	Int 10 (+11)	Cha 9 (+10)
Equipment greatsword		

BLACKSTAR KNIGHT

DESCRIPTION AND TACTICS

Blackstar knights are baroque vessels of glossy black stone and the dust of the Dawn War's fallen. Some of these knights have a connection to the dead of the Dawn War, due to pulling animating energy from Death's Reach. Each knight carries a black, stone blade that is sharper than worked steel.

A blackstar knight fights alongside allies, beginning combat by marking an opponent with its greatsword attack. The blackstar knight then uses *deathsword* and *no escape* to hound its marked foe. As it approaches 0 hit points, a knight maneuvers close to multiple enemies so that it gets the most out of its *soldier's duty* power.

Blackstar Pawn		Level 23 Minion
Medium elemental animate		
XP 1,275		
Initiative +18	Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 37; Fortitude 37, Reflex 36, Will 31		
Resist 15 fire		
Speed 7		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+26 vs. AC; 12 damage (crit 18 damage).		
⊕ Blackstar Ricochet (immediate reaction, when a blackstar pawn within 5 squares is reduced to 0 hit points; at-will)		
The blackstar pawn shifts 3 squares and collides with an enemy; +24 vs. Fortitude; 8 damage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages —	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 14 (+13)
Con 18 (+15)	Int 3 (+7)	Cha 3 (+7)

BLACKSTAR PAWN

DESCRIPTION AND TACTICS

Chips of Timesus with barely enough self-awareness to recognize enemies fill out companies of the Blackstar Host. Blackstar pawns are rough-looking humanoid amalgamations of black stone that steam and sparkle with tattered energy.

Blackstar pawns are perfect companions to others of the blackstar host. In addition to their claw attacks, the pawns ricochet and collide with enemies each time one of their number falls.

BLACKSTAR HOST LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful History or Arcana check.

DC 16: Of late, a handful of strange creatures have found their way into the service of powerful evil beings, apparently provided as gifts by a still more secretive entity. These blank-faced, black-stone warriors seem to be animated creatures of some kind. Most scholars assume a ritual is used to create them, but their origin is obscure.

DC 24: Creatures of the blackstar host are castoff bits of an ancient primordial. These creatures are always agitated and direct their ire at anything that moves, suggesting that most blackstar creatures remain on the hunt because they must. It's likely they need a steady diet of energy to maintain their animation.

DC 29: Strange animates are attracted to sites of ancient conflicts from elder days. Properly called blackstar idols, these frightening manifestations find such sites without fail, sometimes traveling immense distances. At such places, blackstar idols can use spiritual energy to animate blackstar creatures like themselves, but with differing abilities, if the necessary parts are present.

DC 31: The blackstar host owes its existence to the primordial Timesus, a destructive power that, in an ancient age, helped create a place called Death's Reach. There, Timesus and other primordials consumed the souls of departed mortals until the first gods stopped them in a great battle.

The gods sealed Timesus and its followers in Death's Reach. Who knows what still lingers in that secret place?

A character who achieves this result also knows the information presented in the description and tactics paragraphs of the blackstar host.

BLACKSTAR HOST IN DEATH'S REACH

A character knows the following information with a successful Religion check.

DC 31: The reawakening of blackstar creatures in Death's Reach is not a mystery. The soulfall in this sealed corner of the plane has fed their quiescent shells, giving them the power they need to reanimate and work Timesus's evil.



ENCOUNTER GROUPS

In Death's Reach, members of the blackstar host run wild, or they serve Elder Arantham and the forces of the Ashen Covenant. Elder Arantham has spent enough time in Death's Reach to use the blackstar host as a means of barter, trading Host creatures to potential allies as slaves. Thus, outside Death's Reach, blackstar host creatures can be found in the service of highly evil masters. Through various means, some blackstar creatures have also escaped Death's Reach. These creatures exist now only to consume energy and continue the primordials' goals from the time of the Dawn War.

DEATH'S REACH HUNTING PARTY

The following group of blackstar host wander Death's Reach after being freed from the Reliquary.

Level 22 Encounter (XP 24,875)

- ◆ 1 blackstar idol (level 22 elite controller)
- ◆ 2 blackstar knights (level 23 soldier)
- ◆ 5 blackstar pawns (level 23 minion)

BLACKSTAR AWAKENING

A blackstar idol has escaped Death's Reach—or perhaps Elder Arantham released it as a distraction—with a retinue of blackstar creatures. It cuts an ashen swath across the world, heading for an ancient crater where Timesus once

walked. If the idol manages to arrive at its goal, it awakens a whole new army of the blackstar host to bring ruin on civilization.

Perhaps the adventurers discover this fact after defeating Elder Arantham in Death's Reach. Maybe they realize it just a little late, and the idol has already begun its dreadful work at the site. In that case, other elemental horrors could supplement the blackstar idol's forces.

Level 24 Encounter (XP 34,750)

- ◆ 1 blackstar annihilator (level 23 artillery)
- ◆ 2 blackstar prowlers (level 23 skirmisher)
- ◆ 1 blackstar crusher (level 24 brute)
- ◆ 1 blackstar idol (level 22 elite controller)
- ◆ 1 blackstar knight (level 23 soldier)

THE DARK BENEATH

Elder Arantham secured the allegiance of a blackfire dracolich with a gift of blackstar creatures, a secret lair, and incredible treasures. The dracolich lives below Elder Arantham's shadow cathedral to Orcus. It might feel compelled to wreak vengeance on the adventurers who defeated Elder Arantham in Death's Reach.

Level 25 Encounter (XP 44,625)

- ◆ 3 blackstar prowlers (level 23 skirmisher)
- ◆ 1 blackfire dracolich (level 23 solo controller)
- ◆ 3 blackstar pawns (level 23 minion)

ASTRAL WARWING

In the Dawn War, the gods created glorious constructs called astral warwings and other astral war engines to fill out their armies and counter the chaotic creations of the primordials. The warwings were used to break enemy formations and fortifications, and to bolster units of living soldiers. Modeled after the angels that were the first servants of the gods, the astral warwings are sometimes mistaken for members of the angelic host.

Astral warwings all have a similar appearance, with modifications based on role and mission. The standard astral warwing is a mace-wielding soldier, while other warwings are designed as ranged artillery, brutal engines of destruction, elite command and control centers, and even solo battle wings designed to take on huge numbers of enemies all by themselves.

Astral warwings follow their orders to the letter. Without a recognized commander in the field, a warwing will continue to act on its last set of orders for as long as it is able.

In the current age, these astral warwings can still be encountered. Some are still used in divine dominions, and some have been captured and put to use in other planes. Still others, however, were lost among the planes and can show up in unexpected places.

Astral Warwing		Level 23 Soldier
Large immortal animate (construct) XP 5,100		
Initiative +20		Senses Perception +18
HP 214; Bloodied 107		
Regeneration 10 (if the astral warwing takes necrotic damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)		
AC 39; Fortitude 35, Reflex 35, Will 35		
Immune disease, poison, sleep		
Speed fly 8 (hover)		
⚡ Astral Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning, Radiant, Weapon		
Reach 2; +30 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 lightning and radiant damage, and target is marked until the end of astral warwing's next turn.		
⚡ Mace Sweep (standard; recharge ☼ ☼) ♦ Lightning, Radiant, Weapon		
Close blast 2; +28 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 lightning and radiant damage, and target is dazed until the end of astral warwing's next turn.		
Combat Vigilance		
If a target that the astral warwing has marked shifts or makes an attack that does not include the astral warwing, the astral warwing can make an <i>astral mace</i> attack as a free action against that target.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages telepathy 20
Str 25 (+18)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 24 (+18)
Con 22 (+17)	Int 8 (+10)	Cha 8 (+10)

ASTRAL WARWING TACTICS

An astral warwing flies into battle, using its *astral mace* attack to take down enemies one at a time, or switching to its *mace sweep* when multiple targets are available and when the power has recharged. An astral warwing remains in the midst of a battle, using its ability to mark its enemies to contain and lock down its opponents for as long as possible.

Astral Warwing Bombardier		Level 24 Artillery
Large immortal animate (construct) XP 6,050		
Initiative +22		Senses Perception +19
HP 175; Bloodied 87		
Regeneration 10 (if the astral warwing takes necrotic damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)		
AC 36; Fortitude 36; Reflex 39; Will 36		
Immune disease, poison, sleep		
Speed fly 8 (hover)		
☼ Astral Ray (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Radiant		
Ranged sight; +29 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 10 fire and radiant damage.		
⚡ Astral Burst (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Radiant		
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +27 vs. Fortitude; 3d4 + 10 fire and radiant damage, and the target is blinded (save ends) and pushed 3 squares. Miss: Half damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.		
☼ Astral Bombard (standard; recharge ☼ ☼) ♦ Radiant		
Area burst 3 within sight; +27 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 10 radiant damage.		
☼ Final Bombard (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Fire, Radiant		
Area burst 3 within sight; +27 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 10 fire and radiant damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages telepathy 20
Str 25 (+19)	Dex 30 (+22)	Wis 25 (+19)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 6 (+10)	Cha 6 (+10)

ASTRAL WARWING BOMBARDIER TACTICS

An astral warwing bombardier flies over the battle, launching its area and ranged attacks. It uses *astral burst* to throw back melee attackers. When it knows destruction is inevitable, it moves into position for a *final bombard*.

Astral Warwing Rager		Level 24 Brute
Large immortal animate (construct) XP 6,050		
Initiative +19		Senses Perception +18
HP 275; Bloodied 137		
Regeneration 10 (if the astral warwing takes necrotic damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)		
AC 36; Fortitude 39; Reflex 36; Will 35		
Immune disease, poison, sleep		
Speed fly 8 (hover)		
⚡ Siege Flail (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 3; +27 vs. AC; 2d12 + 10 damage, and the target is knocked prone. If the target is prone, the target is dazed until the end of the astral warwing's next turn.		
⚡ Raging Assault (standard; at-will; warwing must be bloodied to use this power) ♦ Weapon		
The astral warwing moves at half speed. It makes one <i>siege flail</i> attack with each square of movement against an enemy that comes within reach. It can make up to four attacks in this way. If it comes within reach of a conjuration or zone, it makes an attack: +25 vs. creator's Will. On a hit, the conjuration or zone is destroyed, and all its effects end. The creator takes 1d10 + 6 psychic damage and is pulled 2 squares closer to the astral warwing.		
⚡ Raging Sweep (standard; recharge ☼ ☼) ♦ Weapon		
Requires siege flail; close blast 3; +25 vs. AC; 2d12 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages telepathy 20
Str 30 (+22)	Dex 24 (+19)	Wis 22 (+18)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 6 (+10)	Cha 6 (+10)

ASTRAL WARWING RAGER TACTICS

The astral warwing rager wades in to attack with its *siege flail*, crashing through enemy lines to outflank its opponents. It then pounds foes with *raging sweep*. True to its name, it becomes more deadly when it is bloodied, going on a rampage with its *raging assault* power.

Astral Warwing Commander Level 23 Elite Controller

Huge immortal animate (construct) XP 10,200

Initiative +18 Senses Perception +18

Commander's Boon aura 10; astral warwings that start their turn in the aura gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

HP 418; Bloodied 209

Regeneration 10 (if the astral warwing takes necrotic damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 37; Fortitude 35, Reflex 34, Will 34

Immune disease, poison, sleep

Saving Throws +2

Speed fly 8 (hover)

Action Points 1

⚡ **Astral Blade** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.

⚡ **Blade Sweep** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Close burst 3; +26 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage, and target is pushed 3 squares.

🎯 **Astral Target** (minor 1/round; at-will)

Ranged sight; +27 vs. Reflex; the target is illuminated in astral fire, slowed, and takes an additional 1d10 + 8 damage from attacks made against it by astral warwings (save ends both).

🌀 **Clearing Burst** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

Area burst 2 within sight; +27 vs. Will; 2d8 + 7 psychic damage. In addition, this power targets any conjuration or zone in the burst; +27 vs. creator's Will; conjuration or zone is destroyed, all its effects end, and its creator is dazed (save ends).

⚡ **Astral Thunder** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Thunder, Radiant**

Close blast 5; targets enemies; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 7 thunder and radiant damage, and the target is deafened and blinded (save ends both), and knocked prone. *Miss*: Half damage, and the target is deafened (save ends), but not blinded or knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Telepathy 20

Str 27 (+19) Dex 24 (+18) Wis 24 (+18)

Con 23 (+17) Int 12 (+12) Cha 12 (+12)

ASTRAL WARWING COMMANDER TACTICS

The astral warwing commander leads each battle with its *commander's boon* aura, then selects targets for other warwings with its *astral target* ability, which it uses each round to increase damage against its opponents. It uses either *blade sweep* or *clearing burst* each round, depending on how close its opponents are. It saves its *astral thunder* power for when it has multiple powerful enemies ganging up on it.

ASTRAL WARWING VANGUARD TACTICS

The astral warwing vanguard is saved to send into the most dangerous battles, where it operates as an army unto itself, making multiple attacks each round.

Astral Warwing Vanguard

Level 23 Solo Brute

Huge immortal animate (construct)

XP 25,500

Initiative +17 Senses Perception +17

HP 1,052; Bloodied 526

Regeneration 10 (if the astral warwing takes necrotic damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 35; Fortitude 36, Reflex 35, Will 35

Immune disease, poison, sleep

Saving Throws +5

Speed fly 6 (hover)

Action Points 2

⚡ **Astral Waraxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 3; +26 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage and the target is pushed 1 square. If the warwing is bloodied, the damage increases to 3d10 + 8.

⚡ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

The astral warwing makes two *astral waraxe* attacks.

⚡ **Triple Attack** (standard; at-will; warwing must be bloodied to use this power) ♦ **Weapon**

The astral warwing makes three *astral waraxe* attacks.

⚡ **Vanguard Vengeance** (immediate reaction when hit by an area or ranged attack; encounter; recharges when first bloodied) ♦

Teleportation, Weapon

The astral warwing teleports up to 20 squares to end adjacent to the attacker and then make an *astral waraxe* attack against the attacker.

⚡ **Vanguard Assault** (standard; at-will; warwing must be bloodied to use this power) ♦ **Weapon**

The astral warwing moves its speed. It makes one *astral waraxe* attack with each square of movement against an enemy that comes within reach. It can make up to six attacks in this way.

Alignment Unaligned Languages telepathy 20

Str 28 (+18) Dex 22 (+17) Wis 22 (+17)

Con 23 (+17) Int 8 (+10) Cha 6 (+9)



NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The adventurers might run across these items in their travels throughout this adventure.

Bloodcrystal Raven Skull

Level 21

This perfectly crafted raven skull is roughly a foot long and made of red-tinted crystal. A pale light flickers within its depths, seeming to react to your presence.

Wondrous Item 225,000 gp

Property: A character can discern that the skull is magical using detect magic during a short rest, but learns nothing else. A character trained in Arcana or Religion can make one DC 27 check per day to learn one property or power, in the order below. One feature must be discovered before the next one, and a specific user must independently discern each feature in turn. Failed checks can be repeated on a new day, or the user can learn all about the skull during their discussion with the Raven Queen (see *Adventure Book Two*, page 16).

Property: As a minor action, you can store two healing surges in the skull. The skull's red color darkens when it absorbs healing surges, and its light brightens. Up to seven different creatures can store healing surges in the skull in this way. Each creature can store only two surges and takes a -2 penalty to death saving throws while any surges are stored. The skull consumes these surges during any extended rest, dulling and dimming, so it must be recharged with new surges each day.

Property: The healing surge stored within the skull is enough to allow the Raise Dead ritual to work even in the absence of any other part of that creature (see *Player's Handbook*, page 311).

Property: If a creature that has one or two healing surges stored in the skull would suffer an effect or attack that traps or destroys the soul, the skull instead draws away the harmful effect and consumes the stored surges.

Power (Special ♦ Healing): No action. If a creature that has two healing surges stored in the skull would die, that creature instead regains hit points equal to its healing surge value, using up one of the surges stored in the skull. That creature is at -1 to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until it reaches its next milestone. Each creature that has healing surges stored in the skull can use this power once per day.

Deathburst Armor

Level 7+

Blood and shadow color this armor darkest crimson, and it channels the energy of death.

Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp
Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp			

Armor: Any

Enhancement: AC

Property: You automatically save against ongoing necrotic damage.

Power (Daily ♦ Necrotic): Minor action. Until the end of your next turn, any creature that hits you with a melee attack takes 1d8 + Constitution modifier necrotic damage.
 Level 12 or 17: 2d8 + Constitution modifier necrotic damage.
 Level 22 or 27: 3d8 + Constitution modifier necrotic damage.

Moonstone Sphere

Level 23

This perfect globe of lustrous moonstone has a dark flaw that gives it the appearance of an eyeball. At times, it moves like a roving eye, looking at something its wielder missed.

Wondrous Item 425,000 gp

Property: You gain a +5 bonus to Perception checks, and a +2 bonus to Arcana checks.

Property: You can use the sphere's powers with your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier, treating the sphere as a +5 implement.

Property: The sphere can be used as a focus for scrying rituals.

Property: The sphere secretly records everything that happens to and around its wielder. In truth, the sphere is an aspect of the Eye of Vecna (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 166). It prefers an arcane wielder, sending dreams of its power to such a character in the party. A DC 29 Arcana check while studying the sphere reveals that it has hidden powers. A subsequent DC 31 Arcana check, made no sooner than a day later, reveals the sphere's true nature. Failed checks can be repeated on a new day.

Power (At-Will ♦ Arcane, Charm, Implement, Psychic): Standard Action. You can use *eyebite* (warlock 1; 2d6 + Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier damage).

Power (Daily ♦ Arcane): Standard Action. You can use *eye of the warlock* (warlock 16. *Player's Handbook*, page 137).

Dawn Warrior Armor

Level 20+

This finely wrought armor glows with an inner radiance that flares even more brilliantly in the presence of elementals.

Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp
Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp			

Armor: Any

Enhancement: AC

Property: Resist 10 acid, 10 cold, 10 fire, and 10 lightning.

Power (Daily ♦ Radiant): Minor action. Until the end of your next turn, any creature that hits you with a melee attack takes 2d8 + Constitution modifier radiant damage.
 Level 25: 3d8 + Constitution modifier radiant damage.
 Level 30: 4d8 + Constitution modifier radiant damage.

Dawn Warrior Weapon

Level 20+

This finely wrought weapon glows with an inner radiance that flares even more brilliantly in the presence of elementals.

Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp
Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp			

Weapon: Any melee

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d8 radiant damage per plus, and you heal 10 hit points

Property: A hit against an elemental or primordial weakens that creature until the end of your next turn.

Power (Daily ♦ Radiant): Standard action. Close burst 1; Strength vs. AC; 3[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage and the target is pushed 1 square.
 Level 25: 4[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.
 Level 30: 5[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.

EYES OF OLD GODS

The *Eyes of the Old Gods* are epic artifacts. There are two *Eyes*, and each grants a different wearer the same abilities.

Eye of the Old Gods

Epic Level

This mote of celestial fire races around its wearer's head. It is a remembered dream of an elder, deceased deity.

Body Slot: Head

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to Will, or a +3 item bonus to Will against attacks by primordials and elementals.

Property: You gain darkvision.

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Perception checks.

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to initiative checks.

Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when an attack stuns, dazes, or dominates you. You are unaffected by that condition, and you instead take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and Will for the condition's normal duration.

GOALS OF THE EYES OF OLD GODS

- ◆ Recall the glory of the Dawn War and sing of the prowess of the gods who saved the world.
- ◆ Destroy all elementals, for they are children of the primordials, and are therefore corruptible.

ROLEPLAYING THE EYES OF THE OLD GODS

The *Eyes* communicate silently through visions, usually of glorious deeds done by the ancient gods—some of whose names are now long forgotten. Subtle at first, these visions can eventually grow to be overwhelming.

The *Eyes* are content to dream of old exploits, save when an elemental or primordial comes within view.

CONCORDANCE

Starting Score	5
Owner gains a level	+1d10
Owner speaks to others of the old gods (maximum 1/day)	+1
Owner kills an elemental (maximum 1/day)	+1
Owner kills a primordial	+2
Owner deals peacefully with an elemental or a primordial	-2
Per day concordance doesn't improve	-1
If the other <i>Eye</i> , held by an allied owner, moves on	-5

PLEASED (16 OR HIGHER)

"Visions of celestial lords celebrating in ancient halls."

The *Eye* appreciates a wearer who holds the memory of the old gods close!

Property: The *Eye's* bonus to Will increases to +2, +5 against primordials and elementals.

Property: You gain a +5 item bonus to Diplomacy checks against immortals.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit an elemental or primordial. You deal an extra 5d6 damage.

SATISFIED (12–15)

"Visions of unnamed gods on a grand celestial quest."

The *Eye* believes the wearer is learning respect.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit an elemental or primordial. Creatures with resistances lose them until the end of your next round.

NORMAL (5–11)

"Visions of powerful primordials striving against ancient gods, sometimes winning, sometimes losing."

The *Eye* is uncertain that the wearer appreciates ancient glory, and tries to hook the wearer with exciting visions of days long past.

UNSATISFIED (1–4)

"Visions of hellish landscapes, worlds torn asunder, and primordials laughing amid the destruction."

It seems as if the wearer isn't open to the gifts the *Eye of the Old Gods* has to offer.

Special: You take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and damage rolls against creatures other than elementals or primordials.

ANGERED (0 OR LOWER)

"Unrelieved vistas of void and darkness cover all things."

The *Eye of the Old Gods* wonders if its wearer is a secret sympathizer with the primordial cause.

The bonus to Will is lost, and the bonus to Will against attacks by elementals is reduced to +1.

Special: You take a -5 penalty to attack rolls and damage rolls against any creatures other than elementals or primordials.

MOVING ON

"The world falls away through a silver void."

The *Eye* knows its time to teach others of the old gods and the Dawn War. When the character next gains a level, the artifact disappears.

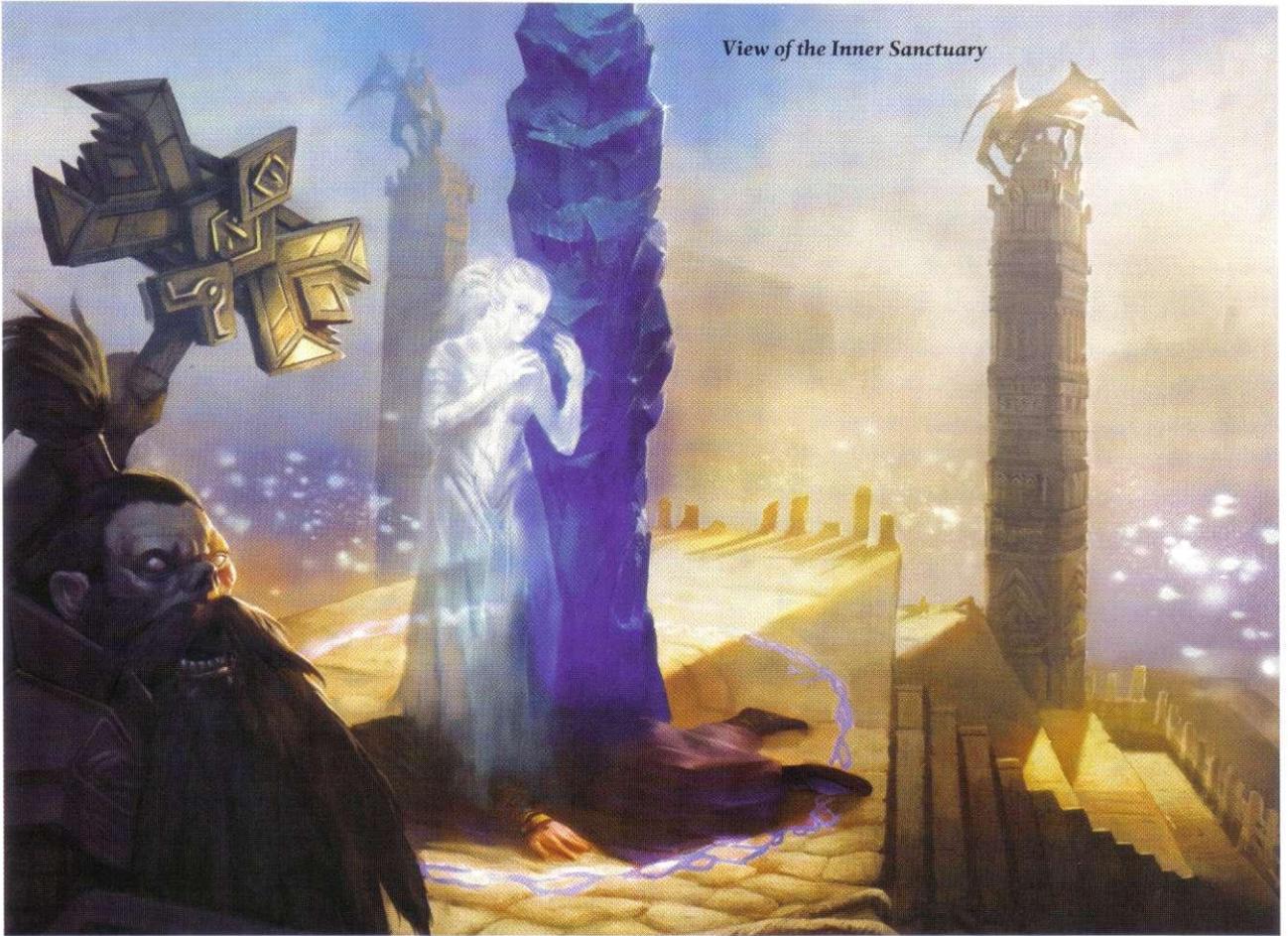
SPECIAL: TWO ALLIED EYES

"A crystal watchtower stands overlooking all the world."

If both *Eyes* are worn by allies within sight of each other, the following ability is gained.

Property: One wearer does not grant combat advantage to enemies that flank the wearer (free action to switch which wearer gains this benefit).

View of the Inner Sanctuary



View of the Raven Queen's Citadel





View of Revelation's Herald

EW 08

ERIC L. WILLIAMS / BEN WOOTTEN



View of Nerull's Gate



View of Orcus Attacks!



View of the Dawn War Preserve

View of the Sentries

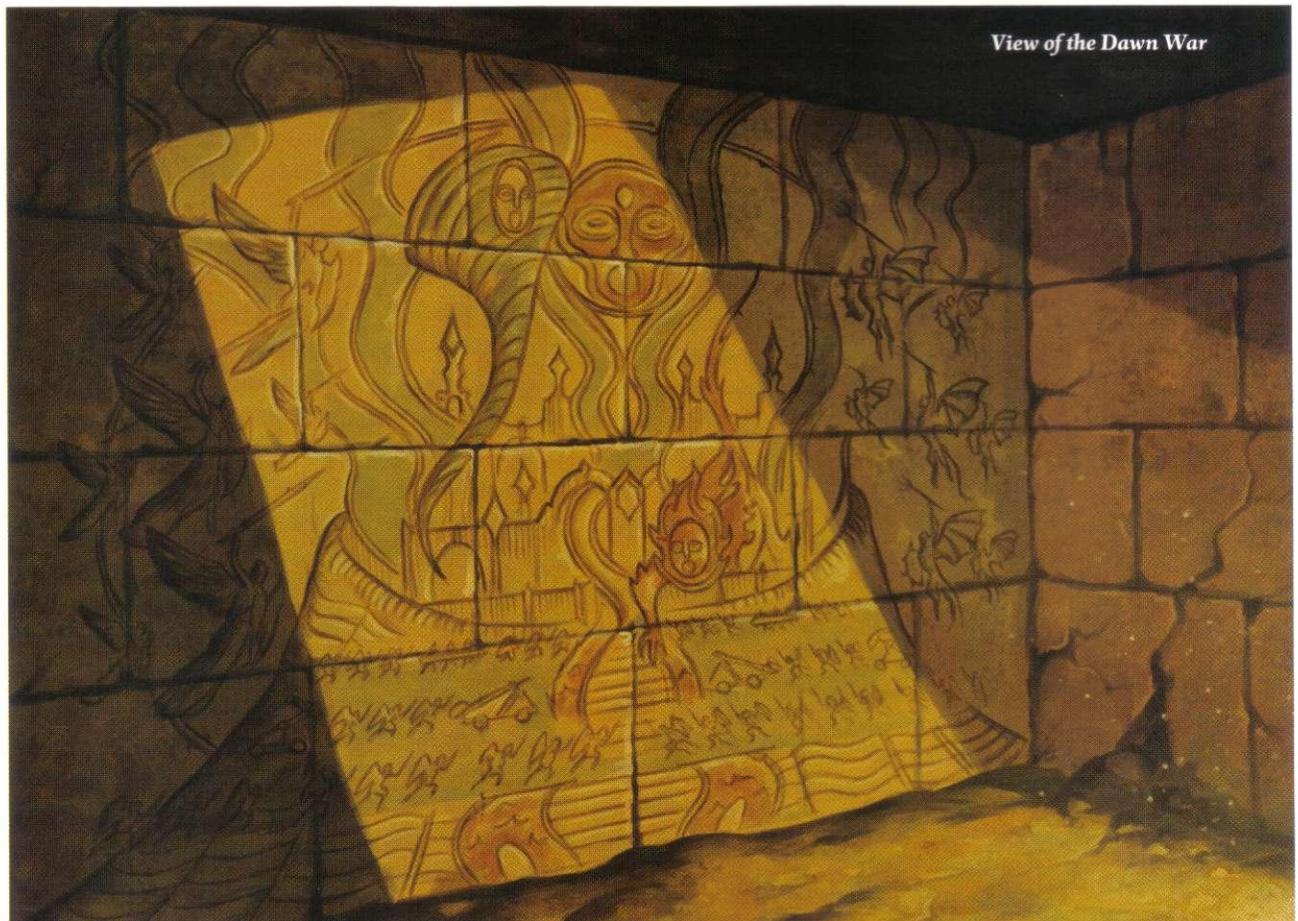


View of Death's Reach

View of the Hierophant



View of the Dawn War



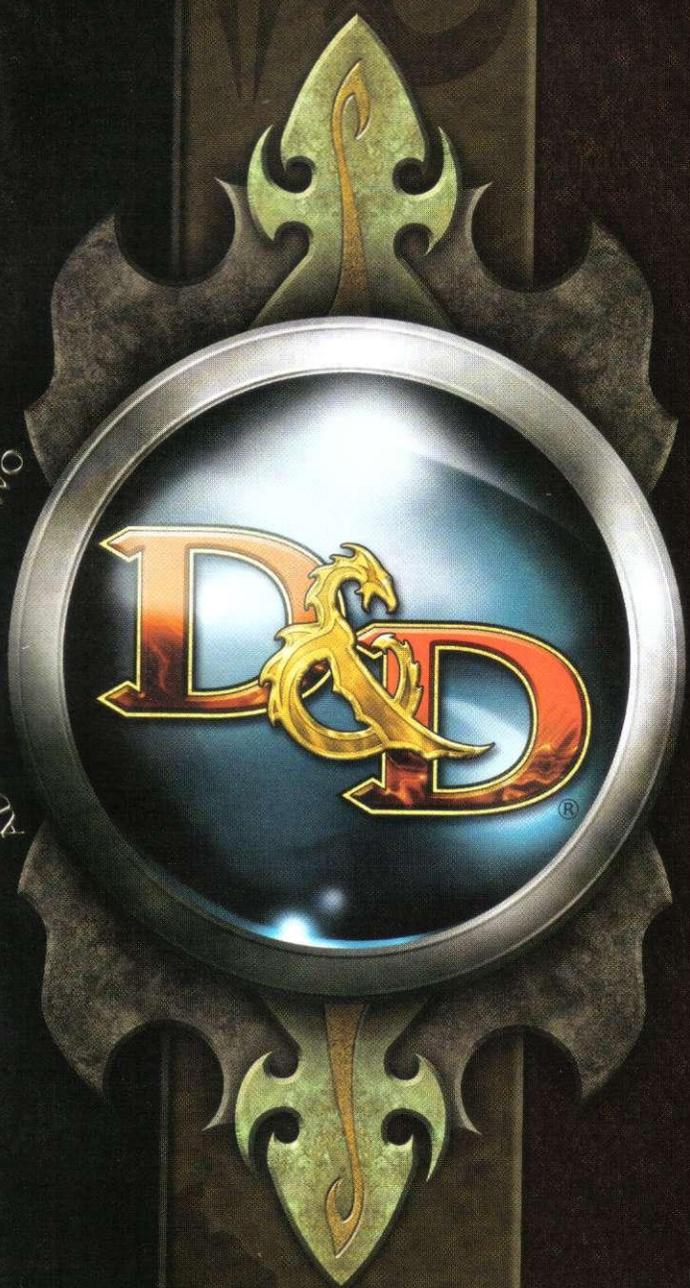


View of the Memorial



View of the Breath of Bahamut

ADVENTURE BOOK TWO



DEATH'S REACH

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RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

As the adventurers travel through Zvomarana and Death's Reach, and as they explore the Reliquary of Timesus, they might run into any number of creatures beyond the listed encounters. This section includes a number of random encounters for just such use.

GHOUL ATTACKS

Zvomarana, Level 19 Encounter (XP 12,000)

- ◆ 10 abyssal ghoul hungerers (level 18 minion, *Monster Manual*® page 119)
- ◆ 5 abyssal ghouls (level 16 skirmisher, *Monster Manual* page 118)

Abyssal ghouls roam Zvomarana in packs. They can appear during short rests, or while the adventurers are traveling between locations. Such run-ins show that the Ebon Riders have brought corruption to this holy place.

THY NAME IS VENGEANCE

Death's Reach, Level 20 Encounter (XP 14,400)

- ◆ 1 angel of vengeance (level 19 elite brute, *Monster Manual* page 17)
- ◆ 6 angel of valor legionnaires (level 21 minion, *Monster Manual* page 16)
- ◆ 1 goristro (level 19 elite brute, *Monster Manual* page 55)

Gruumsh banished the angel of vengeance Marsathus for failing to overcome a force of eladrin that opposed one of the deity's pet projects to raze a Feywild city. The angel, outcast and unwelcome in other divine dominions, became a free agent.

Following tales it heard while in Gruumsh's service, it found a path into Death's Reach, and it now searches for weapons potent enough to turn against the gods. Adventurers might be able to talk to Marsathus without resorting to combat, but the goristro doesn't make that easy. It continually insults the adventurers in Abyssal, spoiling for a fight.

THE PERFECT HOARD

Death's Reach, Level 20 Encounter (XP 14,000)

- ◆ 1 elder blue dragon (level 20 solo artillery)

When rumors of an ancient trove of treasure beyond all imagining made their way to the elder blue dragon Tartharlona's lair, the dragon set finding Death's Reach as her preeminent goal. Having succeeded, her next objective is to claim a relic for her hoard. The dragon slipped into Death's Reach as a supposed ally of Elder Arantham. At the first opportunity, she offered to "patrol," and under that pretense, began to search the blasted crater for

treasure. So far, she's found little, but she's seen what Covenant agents have unearthed and is undeterred. Ideally, the dragon runs across the adventurers after they have claimed an artifact from Death's Reach. The dragon offers to let the adventurers live if they hand the item over. If the party complies, she might even keep her word.

BATTLE HAUNTS

Death's Reach, Level 21 Encounter (XP 16,000)

- ◆ 2 giant mummies (level 21 brute, *Monster Manual* page 193)
- ◆ 1 larva mage (level 21 elite artillery, *Monster Manual* page 175)
- ◆ 1 tormenting ghost (level 21 controller, *Monster Manual* page 117)

Numerous creatures died during the battles in Death's Reach, and a few endured in spirit despite the place's dark power. Some were allies of Timesus; others were servitors of the gods. The soulfall into Death's Reach has caused the shells of some of these ancient creatures to shudder back to animation. These undead attack all creatures, regardless of affiliation.

SOUL SCAVENGERS

Death's Reach, Level 21 Encounter (XP 16,950)

- ◆ 1 war devil (level 22 brute [leader], *Monster Manual* page 67)
- ◆ 2 ice devils (level 20 soldier, *Monster Manual* page 63)
- ◆ 2 legion devil legionnaires (level 21 minion, *Monster Manual* page 64)
- ◆ 1 soulspike devourer (level 20 elite soldier [leader], *Monster Manual* page 69)

Rumors reached the Nine Hells that souls are falling into Death's Reach. Several devils stole in to reap the rewards. They unearthed a little golden mechanism that, when fed a soul, stores the energy. Daelbrech the war devil believes if it is fed enough, the device might confer a boon or point him to a cache of ancient weapons. The devils are willing to talk rather than fight, but they are wicked schemers.

ASHEN COVENANT PATROL

Death's Reach or the Reliquary, Level 22 Encounter (XP 21,675)

- ◆ 5 blackstar pawns (level 23 minion, *Adventure Book One* page 20)
- ◆ 1 blackstar annihilator (level 23 artillery, *Adventure Book One* page 18)
- ◆ 2 blackstar knights (level 23 soldier, *Adventure Book One* page 20)

Elder Arantham has control of enough blackstar creatures that he has created patrols to hinder any agents of the Raven Queen who attempt to interfere with his plans.

BLACKSTAR PACK

Death's Reach or the Reliquary, Level 23 Encounter (XP 26,450)

- ◆ 2 blackstar prowlers (level 23 skirmisher, *Adventure Book One* page 18)
- ◆ 1 blackstar crusher (level 24 brute, *Adventure Book One* page 18)
- ◆ 2 blackstar annihilators (level 23 artillery, *Adventure Book One* page 18)

Now that the Ashen Covenant has breached Death's Reach and started digging up ancient relics of war, the blasted crater has become a dangerous place to remain in the open for too long. Packs of the blackstar host roam the vast area. The blackstar pack stealthily surround adventurers, then attacks from all directions at once.

WORM OF AGES

Death's Reach, Level 24 Encounter (XP 30,250)

- ◆ 1 worm of ages (level 24 solo controller)

Below Death's Reach burrows a great worm, long dead but roused from eternal slumber by the soulfall. The adventurers might spot this tremendous creature one or more times before encountering it, especially if they're flying. Much like a purple worm with a black carapace, the undead worm exists only to consume.

The monster lurks beneath the ashen soil of Death's Reach (DC 29 Perception check to spot signs of its nearby presence). Off to the side of the battle area, draw four 2-by-2-square areas and label them "maw," "throat," "gullet," and "stomach." Save space to draw the worm's 3-square-wide tunnel if it retreats. Players can move their miniatures through these sections and around the other areas of the battle as the fight evolves.

Given the creature's size, an adventurer can occupy one of the worm's squares; while so doing the PC is either free, grabbed, or swallowed. If it has surprise, the worm emerges with a *gulping maw* attack. It then uses up to three minor actions, employing an action point, to swallow PCs. On its next turn, it tries to swallow any character remaining in its maw, then makes another bite attack against a PC it hasn't grabbed or swallowed. It uses another action point to accomplish this if necessary. Its aim is to swallow all the PCs. If it does, it retreats into its tunnels to digest.

The worm's flesh becomes dust when it is finally destroyed, leaving behind teeth and a black carapace.

Worm of Ages		Level 24 Solo Controller
Huge shadow beast (blind, undead)		XP 30,250
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +19; blindsight 10, tremorsense 20	
AC 38; Fortitude 36; Reflex 32; Will 34	HP 916; Bloodied 458	
Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 10 radiant	Saving Throws +5	
Speed 8, burrow 4 (tunneling)	Action Points 2	
Ⓛ Bite (standard; at-will)		
Reach 3; +29 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape ends). Place a grabbed target in the maw. While the worm has a target grabbed, it cannot bite and no creature can enter the maw. The maw adjoins the throat. If a creature moves into the maw from the throat without being grabbed, it can shift to an unoccupied space adjacent to the worm.		
Ⓛ Gulping Bite (standard; recharges when the worm is bloodied)		
Close blast 3; +28 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 9 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape ends). Place a grabbed target in the maw. Miss: Half damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone, but not grabbed.		
Sections		
The inside of each section of the worm— <i>maw</i> , <i>throat</i> , <i>gullet</i> , and <i>stomach</i> —is 2-by-2 squares and dark. A creature inside the worm but not <i>swallowed</i> has combat advantage against the worm. Moving from a section deeper in the worm to a section closer to the maw requires a move action and a DC 24 Strength check. Moving deeper into the worm requires only a move action.		
Maw (minor against a Large or smaller grabbed target in the maw; at-will)		
+28 vs. Reflex; 1d12 + 4 damage, and the target is <i>swallowed</i> . The target is forced into the throat.		
Throat (minor against a Large or smaller target in the throat; at-will)		
+28 vs. Reflex; 1d12 + 4 damage, and the target is <i>swallowed</i> . The target is forced into the gullet.		
Gullet (minor against a Large or smaller target in the gullet; at-will)		
+28 vs. Fortitude; 1d12 + 4 damage, and the target is <i>swallowed</i> . The target is forced into the stomach.		
Stomach (no action required) ◆ Acid, Necrotic		
At the start of its turn, a creature in the <i>stomach</i> takes 1d10 + 9 acid and necrotic damage, and the target is <i>swallowed</i> .		
Swallowed		
A <i>swallowed</i> target is restrained (escape ends), and takes 1d12 + 4 damage at the start of each of its turns. The area of effect for its area and close attacks cannot extend beyond the section of the worm it currently occupies. If the target succeeds on an escape action, it ends the <i>swallowed</i> condition. If any target deals damage to the <i>throat</i> , <i>gullet</i> , or <i>stomach</i> , that target and all others in that same section of the worm gain a +2 bonus to escape rolls until the start of the worm's next turn. Creatures outside the worm have no line of effect on creatures inside the worm. If the worm drops to 0 hit points, its flesh turns to dust in a matter of moments, freeing any creatures inside it.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Stealth +22		
Str 28 (+21)	Dex 20 (+17)	Wis 25 (+19)
Con 29 (+21)	Int 2 (+8)	Cha 6 (+10)

ENCOUNTER Z1: DOOM'S APPROACH

Encounter Level 22 (21,100 XP)

The Planar Portal ritual scroll opens a gateway, but little can be seen on the other side of the portal except for an unadorned stone platform. When the adventurers step through the portal, read:

A striking female shadar-kai with elaborate robes, plaited silver hair, and tribal tattoos stands before you, atop a plain, stone platform. Mist appears all around you, except for the glowing portal beyond the woman, directly opposite from where you entered. The Raven Queen's symbol dangles from a chain around the woman's neck. She speaks in a soft voice.

"You come to Zvomarana as honorable supplicants, and by divine law you must pass the appointed tests before advancing on to Letherna. The monks here shall guide you through the first four of the Seven Veiled Gates of Fate along your road to destiny. As you pass these tests, the Fate Pillars of Zvomarana will glow, visible only to you through the mists. You must come to me in the Inner Sanctuary, pierced by thorns' deathly visions, bathed in holy water, raven skull and holy writings in hand. Only then can I, Felidha, Holy Speaker of Zvomarana, open the fifth gate to you."

The adventurers can't speak to Felidha's image (a DC 24 Arcana check discerns that the image is an illusion). Contrary to what the image of Felidha has said, because of the Ebon Riders' actions, no monks remain to guide the adventurers along their path. Even so, the adventurers must visit each gate location and perform a certain task there. Felidha's vision provides clues about the tasks; a DC 16 Religion check also reveals the answers if the players can't guess what to do at each location.

SETUP

Hertrud, Ebon Rider Deathpriest (H)
2 rot slingers (R)
2 abyssal ghoul hordes (G)

When the adventurers step through the second glowing portal, they arrive at the bottom of a stone staircase.

When the adventurers arrive, read:

You find yourselves on a pedestal in a runic circle. A cold wind and the smell of smoke, rot, and blood immediately greet you. You stand on the upper slopes of a frigid mountain.

To the north, a wide stone stair leads up a slope from the terrace on which you stand. Grisly remains of carnage foul the stairway. Dark brambles choke the slope that edges the steps. Necropolis obelisks—one pristine and the other cracked, darkened, and missing its top—flank the end of the stairs and give way to a wide, paved plaza.

Beyond the obelisks stands a squat building. One side of the building is a tumbled, vine-covered ruin, while the other appears as if was built yesterday. Slightly luminous mist obscures the area surrounding the site.

TACTICS

The nearest rot slinger flings an orb of decay, then retreats to the building behind it. It flies onto a high perch before resuming its attacks, preferring ranged attackers as targets. The second joins it as soon as the battle begins.

Hertrud moves toward the fray on her turn, preaching the ascendance of Orcus. She prefers to hang back and use fatal vision, saving grave word and melee attacks for those enemies who assail her directly. She uses her deathburst chainmail when beset by more than one melee attacker, but she doesn't retreat from melee once the battle is joined.

Hertrud, Deathpriest (H)		Level 21 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 6,400
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +19	
HP 382; Bloodied 191		
AC 35; Fortitude 36, Reflex 35, Will 37		
Saving Throws +2; automatically saves against ongoing necrotic damage		
Speed 5		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon +26 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage (crit 4d6 + 21), and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).		
⊕ Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon The deathpriest makes two mace attacks.		
✂ Fatal Vision (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Psychic Ranged 20; +25 vs. Will; 3d6 + 7 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target is stunned until the end of Hertrud's next turn. Aftereffect: The target is dazed (save ends).		
⚡ Grave Word (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Necrotic Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). Hertrud's undead allies in the burst gain 10 temporary hit points.		
⚡ Call of the White Kingdom (standard; encounter) Close burst 1; four abyssal ghoul hungerers appear in squares Hertrud designates in the burst area. If a ghoul appears in an occupied space, that space's occupant is pushed 2 squares.		
⚡ Deathburst Armor (minor; daily) ♦ Necrotic Until the end of Hertrud's next turn, each creature that hits her with a melee attack takes 3d8 + 2 necrotic damage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Arcana +19, Religion +19		
Str 20 (+15)	Dex 13 (+11)	Wis 18 (+14)
Con 15 (+12)	Int 18 (+14)	Cha 22 (+16)
Equipment +5 deathburst chainmail (see Adventure Book One page 24), light shield, +4 mace		
Description A tall, bald woman in dark chain and a horned helm, she carries an Ebon Rider shield. While fighting, she preaches of Orcus and curses in Abyssal.		

She does use *call of the White Kingdom* for help against numerous foes.

The ghoul hordes surge forward and surround enemies in their *swarm attack* aura.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. Silvery radiance covers this area.

Blood Rock of Orcus: The Ebon Riders completed a bloody ritual using Zvomarana's guardians to make this blood rock (DC 24 Arcana or Religion check to identify it and to realize it is newly created). Orcus's followers gain +2 to attack rolls within this area, and anyone standing on a blood rock square scores a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20.

Frosty Slope: The slope is steep, rocky, and covered in frost. It is difficult terrain and creatures on it grant combat advantage. If an attacker hits a down-slope target with a melee attack, that attacker can push the target 2 squares down the slope (southward).

Rubble: The rubble is difficult terrain.

Shadowthorn Shrubs: Shadowthorn shrubs are difficult terrain. Any creature that starts its turn in a square takes 10 points of necrotic damage.

Stairs: The stairs are gently sloped (normal terrain).

Walls: The walls are 15 feet high (DC 20 Climb check) and 1 foot thick (DC 17 Acrobatics check to avoid falling if hit while standing on one; break DC 35).



2 Abyssal Ghoul Hordes (G)

Level 21 Brute

Huge elemental humanoid (undead, swarm)

XP 3,200 each

Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +13; darkvision
Swarm Attack aura 1; the abyssal ghoul horde makes a melee basic attack as a free action against any enemy that starts its turn within the aura.

HP 240; **Bloodied** 120

AC 30; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 29

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 10 damage from close and area attacks.

Speed 8, climb 4

⊕ **Horde of Fangs** (standard; at-will)

+24 vs. AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). An immobilized target takes an extra 3d6 damage.

↖ **Sprays of Dead Blood** (when the horde is damaged) ◆ **Necrotic**
 Close burst 1; +21 vs. Reflex; 10 necrotic damage.

↖ **Ghoul Stragglers** (when the horde takes forced movement and when it is reduced to 0 hit points) ◆ **Necrotic**

Each square the ghoul horde formerly occupied now contains one abyssal ghoul hungerer, which acts just after the horde.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Abyssal

Skills Stealth +21

Str 24 (+17)

Dex 22 (+16)

Wis 17 (+13)

Con 20 (+15)

Int 16 (+13)

Cha 13 (+11)

2 Rot Slingers (R)

Level 22 Artillery

Medium elemental humanoid (undead)

XP 4,150 each

Initiative +18 **Senses** Perception +21

HP 165; **Bloodied** 82

AC 37; **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 34

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)

⊕ **Rotting Claw** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**

+25 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

⊗ **Orb of Decay** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**

Ranged 10; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened and takes a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends both).

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Abyssal

Str 20 (+16)

Dex 24 (+18)

Wis 20 (+16)

Con 27 (+19)

Int 17 (+14)

Cha 19 (+15)

THE FIRST TEST

A character that willingly spends three turns in the shadowthorn shrubs receives a vision and satisfies the test of the first gate. Read:

As the shadowthorns pierce your flesh, a night-black raven appears before you. "Zvomarana has been invaded," the raven says in a singsong voice. "Help us, believer. The Raven Queen has need of you this day."

In the distance, the first Fate Pillar glows brightly through the mist, signifying success at this test. Paths become visible through the mist, leading to the first pillar, the second gate, and the third gate. The adventurers can follow any path they choose.

ENCOUNTER Z2: VILE WORKINGS

Encounter Level 21 (18,500 XP)

SETUP

Uganon, Ebon Rider Necromancer (U)

3 bone naga corruptors (N)

5 abyssal ghoulish hungerers (G)

The monsters are within or behind the structure and not immediately apparent when the adventurers arrive.

When the adventurers follow the path to this area, read:

As the mist thins, you spy another monumental temple ahead. It is a jumbled ruin on the south end and structurally intact on the north end. The stone plaza is roughly paved, and a water channel passes through its center. Great stone cisterns feed either end of the channel. Slightly luminous mist obscures the area surrounding the site.

Perception Check

DC 14: From inside the temple you hear the drone of disturbing chanting.

Perception Check

DC 22: A few spindly ghouls prowl through the rubble, their mouths steaming with their hunger.

Perception Check

DC 27: Within the southeastern cistern, something dark moves methodically through the water.

TACTICS

The bone naga corruptors move to block access to Uganon. They draw enemies in with *death lure*. Then they keep enemies tied up with *lethal fascination* and their bite attacks. The abyssal ghouls rush in to attack whatever the bone nagas attack.

Uganon waits to make sure his undead engage most of the attackers. He prefers to remain in his ritual circle. After cursing two enemies, he casts *Thanatos pall* on a group of enemies. After that, he sustains *Thanatos pall*, curses targets, and uses *ghoulish ray*. He drinks a potion if bloodied (recovering 50 hit points), but he prefers to use his minor actions to employ other powers.

3 Bone Naga Corruptors (N)

Large immortal magical beast (undead)

Level 21 Soldier

XP 3,200 each

Initiative +18

Senses Perception +17; darkvision

Lethal Fascination aura 5; the aura is difficult terrain for enemies.

HP 199; **Bloodied** 99

AC 37; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 34

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 20 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Speed 8

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Poison**

Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 poison and necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 poison and necrotic damage (save ends). **Afterspell:** The target is dazed until the end of the bone naga's next turn. In addition, a target is marked as long as it suffers any effect from the bite.

⚡ **Death Lure** (standard; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓜ) ♦ **Necrotic, Psychic**

Close burst 3; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 2d6 + 7 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target is marked (save ends) and pulled 1 square closer to the bone naga.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic

Str 22 (+16)

Dex 22 (+16)

Wis 25 (+17)

Con 23 (+16)

Int 10 (+10)

Cha 3 (+6)

5 Abyssal Ghoulish Hungerers (G)

Medium elemental humanoid (undead)

Level 18 Minion

XP 500

Initiative +17

Senses Perception +14; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see also *dead blood*.

AC 30; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 25

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Speed 8, climb 4

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+21 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

⚡ **Dead Blood** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Necrotic**

Close burst 1; targets enemies; the target takes 5 necrotic damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Abyssal

Skills Stealth +22

Str 26 (+17)

Dex 25 (+16)

Wis 17 (+12)

Con 23 (+15)

Int 19 (+13)

Cha 13 (+10)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. Silvery radiance covers this area.

Channel: Frigid, calm water flows between the cisterns in this 10-foot-deep channel. A creature that touches the water is slowed (save ends) but regains 10 hit points (the healing works once per day).

Channel Bridge: The bridge arches above the channel to the heights indicated on the map.

Fouled Cistern: Cold, calm water thick with rot and shadow algae fills the southeastern cistern. A living creature that touches the water is immobilized (save ends). **Afterspell:** The target is slowed (save ends). These dangers can be recognized with a DC 22 Arcana check. If the adventurers defeat Uganon and destroy his ritual circle, the cistern returns to its former state in 24 hours.

Uganon (U) **Level 21 Elite Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling XP 6,400

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +18; low-light vision
Despair (Fear) aura 5; any enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

HP 304; **Bloodied** 152
AC 33; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 35; see also *Uganon's curse*
Resist fire 15, necrotic 10

Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; see also *wraith's transposition*
Action Points 1

⊕ **Pact Blade** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
+28 (+29 against bloodied enemies) vs. AC; 2d4 + 6 damage plus 2d6 necrotic damage (crit 5d6 + 14 + 12 necrotic).

⊗ **Ghoulish Ray** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 15; +26 vs. Will; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage (crit 5d6 + 23 necrotic), and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Double Attack (standard; at-will)
Uganon makes either two *pact blade* or two *ghoulish ray* attacks.

✱ **Thanatos Pall** (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ **Necrotic, Zone**

Area burst 5 within 20; targets enemies; +24 vs. Fortitude; 2d4 + 7 necrotic damage. Enemies treat the area as lightly obscured. A creature that enters or starts its turn within the zone is attacked. As a move action, Uganon can move the zone 3 squares. *Sustain Minor*: The zone persists.

Uganon's Curse (minor; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
Targets closest enemy; the curse remains in effect until either the target or Uganon is destroyed. Once per round, Uganon can deal an extra 4d6 necrotic damage to a cursed target he hits with an attack. Cursed targets that make an attack against Uganon take 5 necrotic damage.

Infernal Wrath (minor; encounter)
Uganon gains a +1 power bonus to his next attack roll against an enemy that hit him since his last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, Uganon deals an extra 7 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.

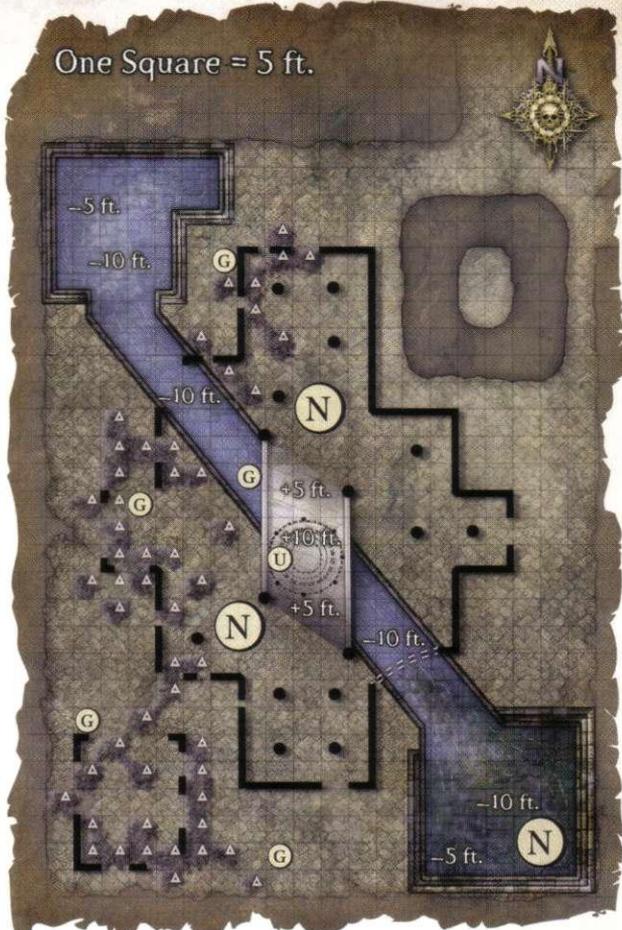
Wraith's Transposition (move; encounter) ♦ **Necrotic, Teleportation**
Uganon teleports 8 squares and becomes insubstantial until the end of his next turn. He can teleport into a space occupied by an ally or a cursed target, switching places with that target. A cursed enemy takes 10 necrotic damage from this switch.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Bluff +22, Arcana +22, Religion +22, Stealth +19
Str 17 (+13) **Dex** 18 (+14) **Wis** 16 (+13)
Con 20 (+15) **Int** 24 (+17) **Cha** 24 (+17)

Equipment +4 *feyleather armor*, +5 *pact blade*, 2 *potions of recovery*
Description A skeletally thin, bald tiefling with backswept horns, one of which is broken. His skin is dark red, and his teeth are filed into fangs. He laughs at the pain of living creatures.

Fresh Cistern: Cool, calm water fills the northwestern cistern. A living creature that touches the water can spend a healing surge as a free action once per day, regaining an extra 1d10 hit points.

Ritual Circle: A creature launching attacks from inside this circle ignores gains a +2 bonus to attacks and +1d6 necrotic damage. After Uganon benefits from this, a DC 22 Arcana or Religion check is enough to determine the advantage might be coming from the circle. A PC can use a standard action to break the circle and end the effect.



ENCOUNTER Z2: VILE WORKINGS

Rubble: The rubble is difficult terrain.
Walls: The walls are 15 feet high (DC 20 Climb check) and 1 foot thick (DC 17 Acrobatics check to avoid falling if hit while standing on one; break DC 35).
Treasure: In addition to his gear, Uganon wears a mithral torc with star rubies (worth 5,000 gp). He also has a ritual book, which contains unholy rituals to Orcus (level 21 minor quest to destroy it; 3,200 XP divided among the PCs). Uganon's supplies contain 30 large jet gems (100 gp each), five perfect diamonds (5,000 gp each), and 30,000 gp worth of *residuum*.

THE SECOND TEST

A character that willingly spends three turns in the fresh cistern receives a blessing and satisfies the test of the second gate. Read:

As the cool water calms and soothes you, the blessing of the Raven Queen comes upon you.

The blessing bestows a +1 bonus to all saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks the character makes for the duration of his or her stay in Zvomarana.

In the distance, the second Fate Pillar glows brightly through the mist, signifying success at this test. Paths become visible through the mist, leading to the second pillar, the third gate, and the fourth gate. The adventurers can follow any path they choose.

ENCOUNTER Z3: PROFANE STABLES

Encounter Level 22 (22,200 XP)

SETUP

- 1 undead goristro (U)
- 2 blackstar knights (B)
- 2 shadowclaw nightmares (N)

None of the monsters are immediately visible as the adventurers approach this area.

When the adventurers reach the area, read:

Another plaza with a monumental gate structure appears out of the mist. On the eastern side, the building is a tumbled ruin that adjoins a pristine section of unmarred white stone to the west. Much of this oddly shaped structure lacks a roof. Part of it is divided into cells, much like places in which monks might dwell. The cells have ceilings.

You hear the inhuman wails of someone or something obviously being tortured, punctuated by the booming, baritone laughter of something big inside the place. Suddenly, the wailing is cut short, and a limp, red humanoid body flies high into the air from the middle of the structure. It appears to be one of the emaciated ghouls you fought before.

The goristro was playing with the ghoul, which the demon discarded when it died.

When the adventurers enter the structure, read:

Other than the cells and pillars, the most prominent features of the building are three depressions in the ground.

When the goristro attacks, read:

An immense creature stands in a courtyard just outside the archway. With a roar, it bursts through the wall, sending rubble flying as it hurtles toward you.

TACTICS

Heedless of friend or foe, the goristro rushes the adventurers with its *deadly rampage*. With this attack and its follow-up *goring charge* attacks, it ignores opportunity attacks and tries to knock its foes into the pits. Otherwise it lays about with its slams, bellowing in fury.

The blackstar knights charge silently into battle, each choosing a different target to attack and mark. They make running jumps over the pits if they need to do so, easily making it across. They then harry their marked targets with *deathsword*, using *no escape* to close on a fleeing enemy.

The shadowclaw nightmares try to cut off escape, and then attack with their claws. They use *shadowride*, when available, to corral and corner the adventurers.

Undead Goristro (U)

Huge elemental humanoid (demon, undead)

Level 21 Elite Brute

XP 6,400

Initiative +12

Senses Perception +18; darkvision

HP 500; Bloodied 250; see also *raging frenzy*

AC 33; Fortitude 36, Reflex 28, Will 29

Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic; Vulnerable 15 radiant

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +24 vs. AC; 2d12 + 10 damage.

⊖ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

The undead goristro makes two slam attacks.

⊖ **Deadly Rampage** (standard; recharges when first bloodied)

The undead goristro moves its speed and can move through enemy spaces. Each time it enters a creature's space, it makes a gore attack: +24 vs. AC; 2d10 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. The goristro must end its move in an unoccupied space.

⊖ **Goring Charge** (standard; at-will)

The undead goristro makes a charge attack: +24 vs. AC; 3d12 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

⊖ **Raging Frenzy** (immediate reaction, when attacked by an adjacent enemy while bloodied; at-will)

The undead goristro makes a frenzied gore attack against the enemy: +24 vs. AC; 2d10 + 10 damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Abyssal

Str 30 (+20)

Dex 14 (+12)

Wis 17 (+13)

Con 30 (+20)

Int 6 (+8)

Cha 8 (+9)

2 Blackstar Knights (B)

Medium elemental animate

Level 23 Soldier

XP 5,100 each

Initiative +20

Senses Perception +19; darkvision

HP 212; Bloodied 106

AC 39; Fortitude 35 Reflex 34, Will 35

Resist 15 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant

Speed 7

⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blackstar knight's next turn.

⊖ **Deathsword** (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ◆ **Weapon**

Requires greatsword; +28 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage, and if the target is marked by the blackstar knight it takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends)

⚡ **Soldier's Duty** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

The blackstar knight explodes; close burst 2; targets enemies; +24 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 9 damage; marked targets take an additional 1d10 + 9 damage.

No Escape (move; at-will) ◆ **Teleportation**

The blackstar knight can teleport 10 squares as long as it ends in a square adjacent to an enemy marked by the blackstar knight.

Alignment Evil

Languages Primordial

Str 26 (+19)

Dex 24 (+18)

Wis 26 (+19)

Con 20 (+16)

Int 10 (+11)

Cha 9 (+10)

Equipment greatsword

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. Silvery radiance covers this area.

Monk Cells: The cells in this structure are made for occupancy, and each has a roof. Inside is a simple room with a bench and a bed; the cell is more like the ossuary shelves in a catacomb than a place for rest. Western cells show signs of recent habitation, along with writing materials, prayer books, and holy symbols of the Raven Queen. The eastern cells are in ruins.

Rubble: The rubble is difficult terrain.

Sepulchral Pits: Each of these stepped pits drops 30 feet. A tomb chamber, 20 feet on each side, extends 8 feet below the bottom of the pit. Each chamber is entered from a hole in its ceiling.

Northern: The walls are made of aged stone (DC 20 Athletics check to climb). This pit's tomb chamber is dusty and holds five stone coffins. Three have been opened, their lids shattered and bones from within scattered about and gnawed.

The *bloodcrystal raven skull* (see *Adventure Book One* page 24) sits on the floor of this pit. A creature inside the pit easily spots the *skull*, but it can't be seen from above. This magic item is required to pass through Zvomarana into Letherna.

Eastern: The walls are made of polished stone (DC 24 Athletics check to climb). The pit's tomb chamber is empty except for five polished stone biers.

Western: The walls are cracked stone grown over with old vines (DC 15 Athletics check to climb). The tomb chamber's floor is only 7 feet from the pit floor. Dust and the rubble of broken stone biers, coffins, and scattered bones choke the chamber (+1d10 fall damage).

Walls: The walls are 15 feet high (DC 20 Climb check) and 1 foot thick (DC 17 Acrobatics check to avoid falling if hit while standing on one; break DC 35).

Treasure: Other than the *skull* in the northern sepulchral pit, the goristro wears four cuffs (2,500 gp each), ten rings (500 gp each), and two horn sheathes (5,000 gp each), all made of bejeweled platinum. Two sets of ornamented saddle and bridle—macabre finery worthy of royal steeds in an evil court—are stored here (5,000 gp each set).

THE THIRD TEST

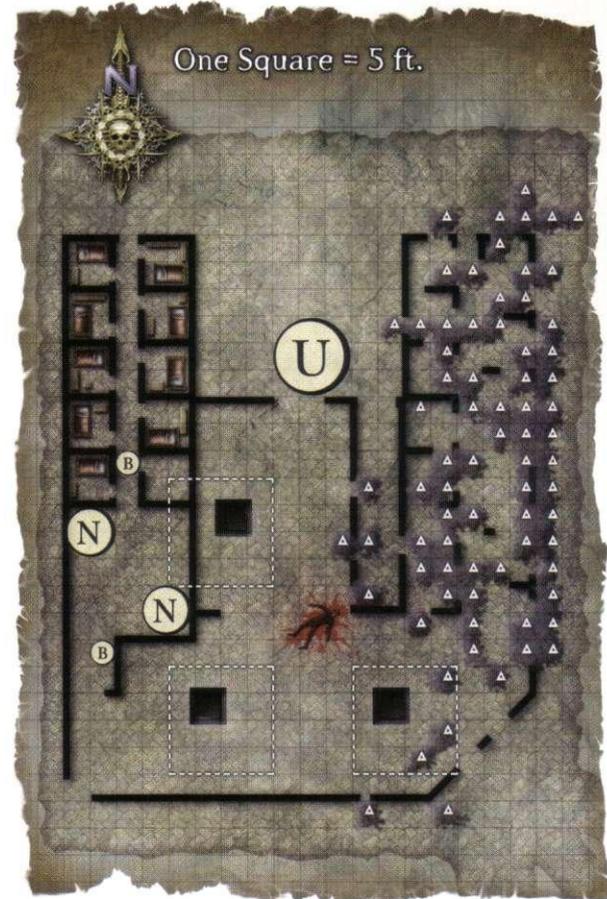
The characters must locate and take possession of the *bloodcrystal raven skull*. It is in the northern pit. When the adventurers enter the pit and see the *skull*, read:

A perfectly crafted raven's skull, carved from crimson crystal, sits on the floor of this pit. As you lift the skull, a long, sorrowful note, not unlike a funeral dirge, echoes through the mists.

In the distance, the third Fate Pillar glows brightly through the mist, signifying success at this test. Paths become visible through the mist, leading to the third pillar and the fourth gate. The adventurers can follow any path they choose.

2 Shadowclaw Nightmares (N)		Level 21 Skirmisher
Large shadow beast (mount, undead)		XP 3,200 each
Initiative +18	Senses Perception +19	
HP 206; Bloodied 103		
AC 34; Fortitude 34, Reflex 30, Will 28		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic, 20 cold; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed 8		
⊕ Shadowclaws (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Necrotic		
+26 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 cold damage (save ends). (Damage increases to 2d8 + 9 after reanimation.)		
Shadowride (standard; recharge ☒☒) ♦ Cold, Necrotic		
Shadowclaw moves its speed. Each creature that makes a melee attack against the shadowclaw during this move takes 15 cold and necrotic damage. Each square the shadowclaw leaves is filled with swirling shadows until the end of the shadowclaw's next turn. A living creature that enters an affected square is blinded (save ends).		
Charger (while mounted by a friendly rider of 20th level or higher; at-will) ♦ Mount		
Shadowclaw grants rider +15 to damage rolls on charge attacks.		
Reanimation		
On the turn after it is first reduced to 0 hit points, a shadowclaw rises again with 25 hit points.		
Shadow Jump (move; recharges with reanimation) ♦ Teleportation		
Shadowclaw teleports 5 squares and becomes immune to all damage until the start of its next turn.		
Alignment Evil	Languages —	
Str 25 (+17)	Dex 22 (+16)	Wis 18 (+14)
Con 30 (+20)	Int 4 (+7)	Cha 12 (+10)

ENCOUNTER Z3: PROFANE STABLES



ENCOUNTER Z4: LOST LIBRARY

Encounter Level 21 (17,650 XP)

SETUP

Gukat, Death Giant Devotee of Orcus (D)

1 blackstar knight (B)

3 blackstar crawlers (C)

Gukat the death giant isn't in view when the adventurers approach this area. The giant is totally focused on searching through the books.

When the adventurers approach the area, read:

You emerge from the mist just outside a walled courtyard. Through the gate you see a long building with two smaller, lavish buildings flanking an area past its far end. In front of the nearer structure are the stumps of two freshly hewn great trees.

A fire is burning behind the long building, somewhere between the two smaller ones. You can see its scarlet light and thin smoke rising over the roof. Suddenly, from the door of the western smaller structure, a bunch of scrolls and books flies toward the firelight.

Perception Check

DC 32: Spiderlike creatures made of sharp shards of black stone peek around the corners of the central building. Multiple eyes glow like twinkling blue stars in their misshapen heads.

Death Giant (D)		Level 22 Brute	
Large shadow humanoid (giant)		XP 4,150	
Initiative +16	Senses Perception +19; darkvision		
Soulcatcher aura 5; a creature that dies within the aura bestows one soul shard to the death giant (see <i>soul shroud</i>).			
HP 255; Bloodied 127			
AC 34; Fortitude 37, Reflex 33, Will 31			
Resist 15 necrotic			
Speed 7			
Ⓢ Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
Reach 2; +25 vs. AC; 4d6 + 9 damage (crit 6d6 + 21).			
⚡ Soulfire Burst (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic			
Close burst 1; +23 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage. The death giant must expend one soul shard to use this power.			
☞ Consume Soul Shard (minor; at-will) ♦ Healing			
The death giant expends one soul shard and regains 20 hit points.			
Soul Shroud			
The <i>soul shroud</i> contains soul shards that swirl around the death giant to protect and empower it. At the beginning of an encounter, the <i>soul shroud</i> contains four soul shards. While the <i>soul shroud</i> is depleted of soul shards, the death giant takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.			
Alignment Evil	Languages Giant		
Skills Intimidate +18			
Str 28 (+20)	Dex 20 (+16)	Wis 16 (+14)	
Con 25 (+18)	Int 12 (+12)	Cha 15 (+13)	
Equipment chainmail, greataxe			

Blackstar Knight (B)		Level 23 Soldier	
Medium elemental animate		XP 5,100	
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +19; darkvision		
HP 212; Bloodied 106			
AC 39; Fortitude 35 Reflex 34, Will 35			
Resist 15 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant			
Speed 7			
Ⓢ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blackstar knight's next turn.			
⚔ Deathsword (standard; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ) ♦ Weapon			
Requires greatsword; +28 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage, and if the target is marked by the blackstar knight it takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends)			
⚡ Soldier's Duty (when reduced to 0 hit points)			
The blackstar knight explodes; close burst 2; targets enemies; +24 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 9 damage; marked targets take an additional 1d10 + 9 damage.			
No Escape (move; at-will) ♦ Teleportation			
The blackstar knight can teleport 10 squares as long as it ends in a square adjacent to an enemy marked by the blackstar knight.			
Alignment Evil	Languages Primordial		
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 26 (+19)	
Con 20 (+16)	Int 20 (+11)	Cha 9 (+10)	
Equipment greatsword			

3 Blackstar Crawlers (C)		Level 20 Skirmisher	
Medium elemental animate		XP 2,800 each	
Initiative +19	Senses Perception +16; darkvision		
HP 188; Bloodied 94			
AC 34; Fortitude 32, Reflex 34, Will 33			
Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant			
Speed 8			
Ⓢ Bite (standard; at-will)			
+25 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage.			
Disengage (immediate reaction, when hit by a melee attack; at-will)			
The blackstar crawler shifts up to 8 squares to end its move adjacent to an enemy other than the one that caused this reaction and makes a bite attack.			
Alignment Evil	Languages –		
Skills Endurance +20, Stealth +22			
Str 20 (+15)	Dex 24 (+17)	Wis 22 (+16)	
Con 20 (+15)	Int 3 (+6)	Cha 7 (+6)	

TACTICS

Gukat continues to toss scrolls and books into the fire, using a standard action each turn to do so. He assumes that the blackstar host under his command will keep the adventurers busy while he completes his task. If any of the adventurers move to engage him, he turns his greataxe upon them with wild abandon. He saves his soul shards to use *soulfire burst* when surrounded, using them to heal only after he is bloodied. If any of his allies are near death and in range of his aura, Gukat has no problem hurrying them along to gain a soul shard.

The blackstar creatures charge into melee. The knight does so to mark a foe and use *deathsword*; the crawlers to use *bite*. The knight focuses on its marked target. The crawlers take full advantage of their disengage power to change targets and bounce around the battlefield.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. Silvery radiance covers this area.

Columns: A column square is difficult terrain. The columns are 15 feet high (DC 25 Athletics check to climb), and 1 foot wide (DC 17 Acrobatics check to avoid falling if hit while standing on one).

Fire: This book- and scroll-burning conflagration is slightly magical due to the eldritch materials that serve as its fuel and the soulfire Gukat used to ignite it. A creature that enters or starts its turn adjacent to the fire takes 2d10 fire and necrotic damage. A creature that starts its turn in the fire takes 3d10 fire and necrotic damage.

Libraries: Each of these shrines is an intricately carved building with a steep staircase (difficult terrain when ascending) leading to a large arch. Each library has a peaked roof (DC 15 Athletics check to climb), along with a wide ledge that surrounds it. Inside each one, scroll racks and bookcases line the walls.

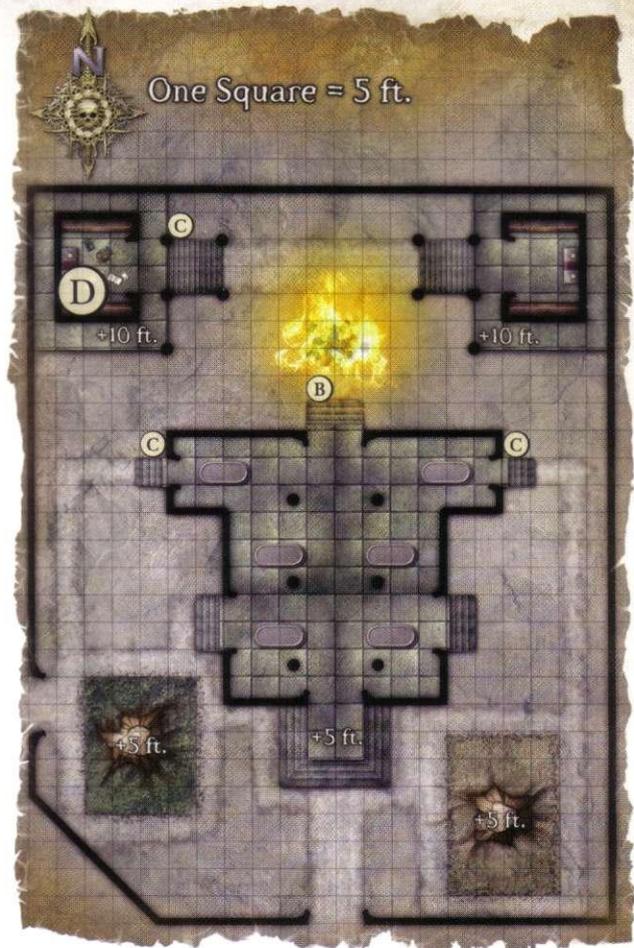
Eastern: This library is intact, and on its eastern wall is an altar to the Raven Queen. Magical blue flames on either side of the altar coolly light the room. A creature that prays at the altar gains a +4 bonus to Perception checks to search the library, feeling mysteriously guided.

Separate DC 22 Perception checks each uncover one item of value here. A ritual book contains the Planar Portal ritual (17,000 gp) and the sigils for Zvomarana, Sigil, and Pluton, astral dominion of long-dead Nerull, death god before the Raven Queen. Another has the Soulguard ritual (20,000 gp, see *Adventure Book One* page 11). The scroll racks contain a jeweled elemental earth scroll case (15,000 gp, opens on mental command) containing seven Raise Dead scrolls (4,760 gp).

Western: This library would be a mirror image of the eastern library if Gukat had not pillaged it. Its shelves are in shambles, and torn papers that haven't found their way to the fire litter the floor. The altar on the western wall is defaced, its lights snuffed. If the characters aright and clean the altar, and a PC trained in Religion succeeds on a DC 22 check to perform a simple 10-minute ritual to purify it, the flames ignite and the participants feel fate smile upon them. Each participant gains an extra action point that lasts through extended rests until it is used.

Reading/Meditation Platforms and Stairs: These features are normal terrain.

Stumps: These obstacles are 5 feet high, and a Large or smaller creature can stand atop one. The squares around them are difficult terrain.



Walls: The walls are 15 feet high (DC 20 Climb check) and 1 foot thick (DC 17 Acrobatics check to avoid falling if hit while standing on one; break DC 35).

Treasure: Other than the valuables in the libraries, Gukat has a ritual book of Forbiddance (25,000 gp), a platinum choker with an astral diamond (15,000 gp), and 11 ad.

THE FOURTH TEST

The adventurers must locate and take possession of any text from either of these libraries. As soon as they have possession of one of the holy texts, and once Gukat is defeated, the paths from this gate open and become visible.

In the distance, the fourth Fate Pillar glows brightly through the mist, signifying success at this test. Paths become visible through the mist, leading to the fourth pillar. If all four pillars are now aglow, the paths to the fifth gate, the Gate to the Inner Sanctuary, are made clear.

ENCOUNTER Z5: DEATH AND DESTINY

Encounter Level 22 (25,000 XP)

SETUP

Mauglurien the Black Dragon (M)

1 fell wyvern mount (W)

3 rot slinger decayers (S)

4 shadowclaws (C)

1 Felidha, priest of the Raven Queen (F)

Use the poster map when running this encounter. When the adventurers arrive, Mauglurien is in the process of questioning and threatening Felidha. The priestess is dead, and the death knight plans to use her trapped soul in the campaign against Letherna.

When the adventurers arrive, show them the “View of the Inner Sanctuary” illustration on page 26 of *Adventure Book One*, then read:

A lavishly carved archway with glowing sigils across its threshold pierces the wall that materializes out of the mist. Within is a broad plaza around a low, stepped pyramid with four obelisks surrounded by a moat crossed by bridges. Atop the highest step rises a towering pillar of silver-black crystal. Beyond that is a wall, into which is built an archway into a chamber with many narrow windows.

Bat-winged, horned humanoids with flayed skin watch from atop three of the obelisks. A sleek black wyvern with a saddle perches on the wall above the far chamber. Near the crystal pillar is the spirit of the female shadar-kai who greeted your arrival, a similarly clad bloody corpse at her feet. A dwarf in black plate stands near the spirit, threatening her.

4 Shadowclaws (C)

Level 21 Minion

Large shadow beast (mount, undead)

XP 800 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +13

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 33; **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 33

Resist 10 necrotic

Speed 8

Ⓢ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+26 vs. AC; 8 damage (12 damage after reanimation).

Charger (while mounted by a friendly rider) ♦ **Mount**

Shadowclaw grants rider +10 to damage rolls on charge attacks.

Reanimation

On the turn after it is first reduced to 0 hit points, a shadowclaw rises again with 1 hit point.

Shadow Jump (move; recharges with reanimation) ♦ **Teleportation**

Shadowclaw teleports 3 squares and becomes immune to all damage until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil

Languages –

Str 25 (+16)

Dex 18 (+13)

Wis 18 (+13)

Con 20 (+14)

Int 2 (+5)

Cha 9 (+8)

Death Knight Mauglurien (M)

Level 23 Elite Soldier

Medium natural humanoid, dwarf (undead)

XP 10,200

Initiative +14

Senses Perception +13; darkvision

Undead Warlord aura 10; any ally within the aura gains +5 to initiative.

HP 422; **Bloodied** 211

AC 39; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 34

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5

Action Points 1

Ⓢ **Boneshredder** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**

+30 vs. AC; 2d10 + 10 necrotic damage (crit 5d12 + 30).

↓ **Black Anvil** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**

Requires *Boneshredder*; +30 vs. AC; 2d10 + 10 necrotic damage (crit 5d12 + 30), and an ally adjacent to target makes a melee basic attack against it as a free action with a +5 damage bonus.

← **Unholy Flames** (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**

Close burst 2 or close blast 5; +26 vs. Reflex; 6d8 + 4 necrotic and fire damage to all living creatures; undead creatures within the burst (including Mauglurien) deal an extra 2d6 fire damage with melee attacks until the end of Mauglurien's next turn.

← **Ebon Rider Banner** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Healing**

Close burst 5; each ally in the burst regains 20 hit points and gains a +4 bonus to its next attack roll.

Shadow Weapon (minor; recharges when first bloodied)

Mauglurien's melee attacks target Reflex instead of AC until the start of his next turn.

Alignment Evil

Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarven

Skills Athletics +22, Endurance +18, Intimidate +23

Str 27 (+19)

Dex 13 (+12)

Wis 14 (+13)

Con 19 (+15)

Int 18 (+15)

Cha 24 (+18)

Equipment +4 plate armor, light shield, *Boneshredder* (+5 vicious battleaxe; soul weapon, see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 177), Ebon Rider battle standard (jeweled pole; 5,000 gp)

TACTICS

Mauglurien calls the wyvern to him as he rushes into melee. The wyvern uses *pestilent breath* on the way. Mauglurien mounts the wyvern as soon as he can, using an action point to do so. He then uses *flyby attack* with *unholy flames*, or *shadow weapon* and *black anvil*, as the wyvern bites (and bites again if *black anvil* hits).

While on the ground, Mauglurien pairs with a shadowclaw when using *black anvil*. The wyvern circles with *flyby attack*, and occasionally lands to use *necrovenom sting* and give the death knight the chance to mount. Mauglurien uses *Ebon Rider banner* to rally his troops once a number of them are bloodied.

FELIDHA

Felidha is trapped inside a magic circle and is unable to move on to natural death. Although she is dead, she has some power left. See “Fate Stone,” on the next page, for details.

Fell Wyvern Mount (W) **Level 21 Skirmisher**
 Large shadow beast (mount, reptile) XP 3,200

Initiative +17 **Senses** Perception +17; darkvision
HP 201; **Bloodied** 100
AC 35; **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 30
Resist 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6, fly 12 (hover); see also *flyby attack*

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
 Reach 2; +26 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage.

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
 The fell wyvern can attack with its claws only while flying; +26 vs. AC; 2d4 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

⊕ **Necrovenom Sting** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Necrotic, Poison**
 Reach 2; +26 vs. AC; 2d4 + 7 damage, and the fell wyvern makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack*: +24 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 15 necrotic and poison damage (save ends).

⊕ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)
 The fell wyvern flies up to 12 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The fell wyvern doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack. A rider on the wyvern can also make one melee attack at any point during the movement.

⊖ **Pestilent Breath** (standard; recharge ☼ ☼) ⊕ **Necrotic**
 Close blast 5; +24 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 27 (+18) **Dex** 20 (+15) **Wis** 15 (+12)
Con 25 (+17) **Int** 2 (+6) **Cha** 6 (+8)

3 Rot Slinger Decayers (S) **Level 20 Artillery**
 Medium elemental humanoid (undead) XP 2,800 each

Initiative +17 **Senses** Perception +20
HP 153; **Bloodied** 76
AC 32; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 29
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)

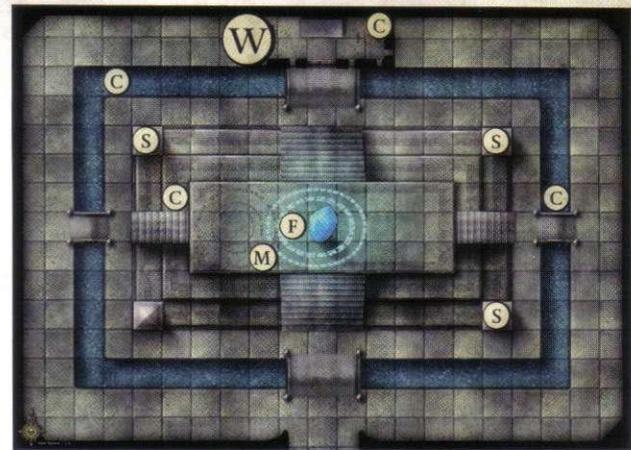
⊕ **Rotting Claw** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Necrotic**
 +24 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

☼ **Orb of Decay** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Necrotic**
 Ranged 10; +24 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened and takes a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends both).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal
Str 20 (+15) **Dex** 24 (+17) **Wis** 20 (+15)
Con 27 (+18) **Int** 17 (+13) **Cha** 19 (+14)

FATE STONE

The pillar crystal, 30 feet high, is a *fate stone*. Felidha's action each turn is to make this stone show an image of a foe—usually Mauglurien. A DC 25 Arcana or Religion check lets a PC know that a successful ranged or area attack targeted at this image actually hits the creature the image shows. The image moves around the stone to stay out of the depicted creature's view, so PCs who want to use it might have to move to see it.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

- Illumination:** Bright light. Silvery radiance covers this area.
- Magic Circle:** The circle at the top of the pyramid affects shadow creatures, binding Felidha in it.
- Moat:** Cold water fills the moat to a depth of 10 feet.
- Moat Bridges:** The bridges are flat, 5 feet above the water in the moat.
- Obelisks:** The obelisks are 30 feet high, filling their squares like walls do.
- Pyramid Steps:** The steps are difficult terrain.
- Teleportation Circle:** This circle has been damaged. Mauglurien removed the three sigils that power it, and he carries the sigils on his person.
- Treasure:** Other than his gear, Mauglurien has several pieces of macabre shadar-kai jewelry (30,000 gp) and Ghovran's phylactery.

GHOVRAN AKTI

The eladrin lich can be called forth if and when Mauglurien feels that the PCs have gotten the upper hand. Use the statistics on page 9 of *Adventure Book One*.

THE INNER SANCTUARY

After the adventurers defeat Mauglurien, Felidha confirms that the PCs have performed all the tasks necessary to continue on. The mist lifts, affording a view of vast tundra and Letherna in the distance. Felidha informs the adventurers that, once they repair the teleportation circle and release her from the magic circle, she can send them to the Raven Queen's Citadel.

Repairing the Circle: Every 10 minutes, a character can make a DC 24 Arcana or Religion check to insert a sigil. Inserting all three sigils repairs the circle.

Felidha warns the party to take an extended rest before stepping into the repaired circle. The ghostly high priest waves a hand and activates the circle, then visibly passes on—her soul departing for Letherna.

ENCOUNTER CI: FATE'S GUARDIANS

Encounter Level 26 (36,000 XP)

SETUP

- 3 sorrowsworn fleshrippers (F)
- 2 sorrowsworn doomguards (D)
- 25 angel of shadow legionnaires

When Fedhila opens the portal, the adventurers step through into a grand courtyard. The sorrowsworn are in place, but the angels have not yet appeared. The Raven Queen's throne, to the north, is vacant.

When the adventurers arrive, show them the "View of the Raven Queen's Citadel" illustration on page 26 of *Adventure Book One*, then read:

You arrive in a wide court. Ahead of you is a monolith, 20 feet high. Others like it stand in recesses in each of the courtyard's four corners. Observation platforms, supported by pillars, line the walls to your left and right. Above you, a swirling storm of light signifies the souls of the dead waiting for an audience before the Raven Queen.

Ahead, stairs are flanked by large braziers burning with blue-white fire. They climb to a dais where a dark throne currently sits empty.

Gaunt black-clad creatures stand in a line at the bottom of the stairs, their faces embodiments of bereavement. One spreads its dark wings and says in a deathlike voice, "What needs the Raven Queen with mortal agents when she has the likes of us? Prove your worth and mettle, mortals! Win your right to serve the Raven Queen!"

Suddenly, each of the adventurers is teleported to a different location in the courtyard. Randomly place a PC atop each of the observation platforms, one to the east and west of the southern portion of the courtyard, and one just to the north of the central monolith. When the PCs appear in these places, they are immediately surrounded by five angel of shadow legionnaires and the battle begins.

Angel of Shadow Legionnaire		Level 21 Minion
Medium immortal humanoid (angel)		XP 800
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +12	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 35; Fortitude 35, Reflex 31, Will 30		
Immune fear; Resist 10 necrotic, 10 radiant		
Speed 6, fly 9 (hover)		
⊕ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon		
+26 vs. AC; 12 necrotic damage.		
Alignment Any	Languages Supernal	
Str 26 (+18)	Dex 18 (+14)	Wis 14 (+12)
Con 18 (+14)	Int 12 (+11)	Cha 16 (+13)
Equipment chainmail, greatsword		

3 Sorrowsworn Fleshrippers (F)		Level 21 Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid		XP 3,200 each
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +21; darkvision	
HP 196; Bloodied 98		
AC 35; Fortitude 32, Reflex 35, Will 33		
Speed 7; see also <i>corpse dance</i>		
⊕ Spiked Gauntlet (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+26 vs. AC; 2d6 + 11 damage.		
⊕ Bereaving Strike (standard; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ) ♦ Teleportation		
The sorrowsworn fleshripper teleports 5 squares and makes a spiked gauntlet attack with combat advantage.		
⊕ Corpse Dance (standard; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ) ♦ Psychic, Weapon		
The sorrowsworn initiate fleshripper shifts 8 squares and makes three spiked gauntlet attacks at any point during the move, dealing an extra 1d8 psychic damage on each attack. Each attack must be made against a different target.		
Combat Advantage ♦ Psychic		
The sorrowsworn fleshripper deals an extra 2d8 psychic damage to a target it has combat advantage against.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +23		
Str 21 (+15)	Dex 26 (+18)	Wis 23 (+16)
Con 20 (+15)	Int 14 (+12)	Cha 18 (+14)
Equipment 2 spiked gauntlets		

TACTICS

The adventurers are separated at the beginning of this battle and forced to fight a squad of angel minions by themselves. The angels give no quarter and ask for none in return.

The sorrowsworn fleshrippers move to surround the PC that was placed near the central monolith, joining that character's battle immediately. They begin using their spiked gauntlet attacks. One or two break off to deal with the next PC to either defeat or come close to defeating the angels attacking him or her, using *bereaving strike* to close the distance. They save *corpse dance* until the PCs have moved closer together.

The sorrowsworn doomguards fly or teleport to take on the most-powerful looking PCs, not necessarily waiting until they take out their angels before leaping into the fray.

When three or more of the sorrowsworn have been bloodied, the Raven Queen appears to end the battle. See "Conclusion" on the facing page.

2 Sorrowsworn Doomguards (D) **Level 21 Soldier**
 Medium shadow humanoid XP 3,200 each

Initiative +20 Senses Perception +19; darkvision
 HP 198; Bloodied 99
 AC 37; Fortitude 33, Reflex 35, Will 32
 Speed 7; climb 4 (spider climb); see also *doomguard jaunt*

⚔ Scythe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon
 +28 vs. AC; 4d4 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the sorrowsworn doomguard's next turn.

⚔ Shadow Reap (standard; recharge [1]); ♦ Psychic, Weapon
 Requires scythe; targets an enemy marked by a sorrowsworn doomguard; +26 vs. Reflex; 4d4 + 15 psychic damage, the target is immobilized and marked—both until the end of the sorrowsworn doomguard's next turn. If this attack reduces a target to 0 or fewer hit points, the sorrowsworn doomguard gains 20 temporary hit points.

Doomguard Jaunt (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation
 The sorrowsworn doomguard teleports 8 squares.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Common
 Skills Intimidate +20

Str 23 (+16) Dex 26 (+18) Wis 18 (+14)
 Con 22 (+16) Int 14 (+12) Cha 21 (+15)

Equipment scythe

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. The braziers burn eternally with blue-black spirit fires that are cold and harmless. They, and the glowing souls in the sky above, fully illuminate this area.

Corner Monoliths: These obelisks are like the central one, except they are 15 feet tall. A glowing circle of harmless silver runes surrounds each one.

Dais and Throne: Steep stairs (difficult terrain) lead up to a throne of richly carved bone. Anyone who makes a DC 31 Religion check knows that these are the bones of the dead god Nerull.

Observation Platforms: These elevated areas are 10 feet high. Pillars hold each platform up, 10 feet above the floor underneath. Creatures can move under the platforms on the lower level. The stairs to each platform are steep (difficult terrain).

Pillars: A pillar square is difficult terrain (DC 25 Athletics check to climb).

CONCLUSION

The sounds of battle in the courtyard eventually draws the attention of the Raven Queen. When three or more of the sorrowsworn have been bloodied or defeated, she appears upon her throne of bones. Read:

A tall, regal woman with raven hair and a robe of a similar hue suddenly appears upon the dark throne. Her eyes and lips are black and glossy, her skin pale. She looks out over the courtyard, then says in a quiet voice that all can hear, "Why have you attacked these mortals, who have successfully won their way to my citadel?"

The sorrowsworn immediately disengage from the battle and kneel before the woman on the throne. "Forgive us, Dark Lady," one of the gaunt creatures says, "but we sought to conduct our own test of these mortals to see if they were indeed worthy of serving you."

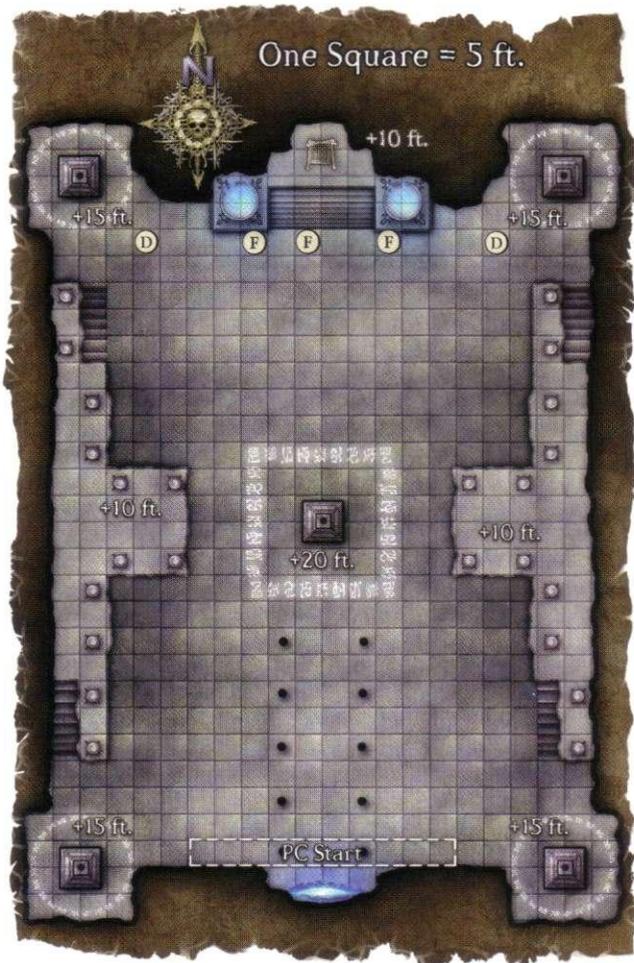
Her eyes appear to flare, but whether with anger or amusement you cannot say. Then a slight smile touches her dark lips, and she asks, "And what is your verdict, my guardians?"

The sorrowsworn hesitates, then answers, "Much to our amazement, these mortals are worthy of your trust and service. We apologize for doubting Felidha's judgment, my lady."

The Raven Queen stands, and behind her, ravenlike wings extend. She moves forward.

"Welcome, heroes of Zvomarana," she says. "Your victories speak well of you. Now, let us learn more of each other and discuss what you can do to help the Raven Queen."

Go on to **Interlude: Court of the Raven Queen** on page 16.



INTERLUDE: CITADEL OF THE RAVEN QUEEN

Once the Raven Queen appears before the adventurers, they have an opportunity to speak with her. When you and the players are ready, have the Raven Queen address the adventurers. Read:

"You have proven yourselves worthy to stand before the spinner of fate and the patron of winter. Heed my words, and learn something of the foundations of reality.

"There is a place where all things find their ultimate dissolution, a place that wears the Shadowfell like a cloak. Before my rise, and prior to Nerull's reign in Pluton before me, primordial trapped souls on their way from this existence to the next. There, these insatiable beings consumed souls for power, rather than letting them move on to their ultimate destiny. The first gods wrested control of this corrupted doorway, called Death's Reach, from the ancient ones. They sealed it, forgot it.

"But all that has gone before is now imperiled. Would you hear more, and in so doing, pledge yourself to closing that which has been opened?"

The players likely wish to learn more about the situation and what they are pledging themselves to accomplish. Read or paraphrase the answers to the following questions as part of the natural flow of conversation between the adventurers and the Raven Queen.

As the conversation progresses, she waves off questions about why she didn't save Zvomarana herself with generalities about other responsibilities, and about the destiny of the adventurers. Cold and blunt, she brooks little second-guessing from mortals. She assures any characters who ask that the temple is already being restored.

Q: What's wrong? What exactly is "imperiled?"

"Some deceased souls are not making their way to me as they should; they are falling into Death's Reach instead. This error in the way of things indicates that intruders have breached Death's Reach, upsetting the natural order the gods decreed. These intruders seek nothing less than to usurp my power over death."

Q: Who opposes you?

"The followers of Orcus, some of whom you have battled recently, gather power within Death's Reach. They have defied the ban the gods placed on Death's Reach, and even now they are ransacking it like ghouls in a graveyard. Worse, they are preparing the way for their lord to enter that place. This must not be allowed to happen! It must not!"

Q: What are they disturbing? What is the nature of Death's Reach?

"When the primordials first crafted the world, they had no regard for the fate of souls. Souls came from beyond the known, and beyond the known they fled in death. Death's Reach was one of the places in the Shadowfell where souls passed beyond this existence. But ancient, gluttonous primordials corrupted the place so that they could consume the souls of the dead. When the first gods seized reality from the primordials, they made other arrangements.

"But that primeval, shadowy place remains. Because it can be reached only with great difficulty, the first gods deemed it the proper location to store dangerous artifacts and weapons from the Dawn War. Many who fought on the side of the primordials in that ancient conflict were relegated to Death's Reach, where they were locked away.

"Thus, Death's Reach is a graveyard of abandoned weapons hailing from the Dawn War. Primordials and even entire armies were imprisoned therein."

Q: What are the intruders doing exactly?

"I cannot be certain, for even my power cannot breach Death's Reach. I believe the intruders are disinterring relics, ancient weapons perhaps, but also the remains of primeval warriors of unknown strength and power. I believe an army is being assembled, composed of roused Dawn War soldiers, for the express purpose to storm my citadel. The intruders must be stopped. Moreover, any entities released from Death's Reach must be returned to their ancient prisons or destroyed."

Q: Why can't you or your servants deal with the problem?

"No godlike being, demon lord, or exarch can enter Death's Reach according to an age-old ban that possesses the weight of divine law. Not even I.

"But mortals are not so constrained. The servants of Orcus have breached Death's Reach for ill ends. Orcus lusts for complete authority over death, and that lust knows no bounds.

"Just as these intruders have perverted the ancient safeguards, so may I try to set affairs back to order. With the aid of those who have proven themselves, such as yourselves, there might even be hope for us to succeed."

Q: Where do you send souls? What lies beyond death?

"Those that fall in Death's Reach are destroyed forever by the corruption there. But in the normal course of things, souls go beyond the worlds as we know them. My intercession on behalf of a dead spirit can direct it toward the realm of its god if that entity wishes it. No being knows the fate of those who pass beyond, not even I. If you remain mortal, perhaps you shall discover a truth that even the gods are unable or unwilling to explore. When your time finally comes, as it does for all things of the mortal realm."

Q: Can you provide us with any help?

"You possess the bloodcrystal raven skull. It is a powerful and useful item. In it, you can store a portion of the life force coursing through each of you. This stored life force can be used to power a Raise Dead ritual when no other part of you remains. Or, the stored energy can be used to save you from an effect that would otherwise trap or destroy your soul. Finally, if you die while your life force is stored within the skull, you instead heal automatically. Be careful, though. There is a limit to how often you can call upon the skull's power in this way. If you undertake this mission, you may use this item with my blessing."

COMING TO DEATH'S AID

If the adventurers agree to aid the Raven Queen, she explains their mission:

"In aiding me, you aid yourselves. You shall each have a favor from me before your final breath, this I pledge. But I sense that final breath is still distant for most of you, so do not exert yourselves to settle on what that favor may be.

"To close that which has been opened, we must first open it wider still. I will send you into Death's Reach as my heralds. Once you arrive, you must travel to an ancient place known as Nerull's Gate, where the gods built a beachhead in Death's Reach long ago. I cannot enter Death's Reach, even in part, unless I am summoned. You shall summon me by going to Nerull's Gate and reading a ritual scroll I shall provide to you. Once my aspect has arrived, I shall be able to learn what is truly going on and direct you further. I might even be able to provide more substantial assistance at that time.

"Rest now, and regain your strength. You may tarry here in my court. In your preparations, know that no sustenance or succor awaits you in Death's Reach. You must bring with you whatever you need. When you are ready, I shall send you on your way."

At the Raven Queen's signal, one of her courtiers gives the adventurers a ritual scroll of Summon Raven Aspect, components for the ritual, and a map of Death's Reach that always shows the party's location relative to its conscious goal (at first, Nerull's Gate; later, the Reliquary of Timesus). The ritual can be performed only at Nerull's Gate (see **Encounter D6: The Wrath of Orcus** on page 28 for more information).

If the adventurers want to leave the citadel before embarking on their quest, the Raven Queen agrees if they promise to return before a full day passes. She provides them with a means to return to the courtyard directly, if they need such assistance.

After the conversation reaches a natural conclusion, the Raven Queen has no more time for the adventurers. "I shall return when you are ready to enter Death's Reach." She wishes them well, as Fate decrees, and disappears to see to the business of the dead.

TIME TO GO

When the adventurers indicate they are ready to enter Death's Reach, the Raven Queen reappears. She explains their transport.

"I am creating a soul gate that allows passage into Death's Reach. The initial passage shall be difficult, but once you have touched the soil of Death's Reach, your connection to that place shall make all future journeys easier. Once every 24 hours, you can choose to return to one of your homes in the natural world or here, to my citadel. No more than 24 hours later, but sooner if you wish, the soul gate shall carry you back to Death's Reach, to the point from which you left. This back and forth can continue until I have freed you from this ritual or you have freed yourself by reaching the natural—or unnatural—end of your days."

With that, the Raven Queen begins the ritual. When it concludes, read:

A gap opens in midair. Within the gap, you see a tunnel walled in luminous whirling vapor, shadow, and ominous silhouettes. A constant roar like thousands of fluttering and cawing ravens pours from it. The spinning hollow extends with no obvious end, promising a turbulent passage. "Enter, and carry the hope and gratitude of the patron of winter and the spinner of fate with you," the Raven Queen says.

When the adventurers enter the gate, they begin their trip to Death's Reach. Go on to **Encounter C2: The Soul Gate**, on the next page.

ENCOUNTER C2: THE SOUL GATE

Encounter Level 21 (9,600 XP)

The adventurers enter the harrowing mouth of the soul gate, a passage not usually intended for living creatures. They must endure this route one time before they establish a connection with Death's Reach and can pass through the gate more easily. This test of stamina is a skill challenge. An adventurer might recognize it as the sixth of the Seven Veiled Gates of Fate with a DC 22 Religion or History check.

When the adventurers enter the soul gate, read:

You enter a region of swirling light and tearing wind. The noise is nearly unbearable, and no clearpath exists. You float in this twisting ether, able to will yourself in different directions. Behind you, the Raven Queen's Court is still visible.

The soul gate twists and turns, and its luminance is confusing. It's hard to know which way to go. Knowledge of the mystical, rather than the natural, must be your guide in this place. You get the feeling that intuition is a good guide here, but sharp eyes for the right openings won't hurt.

TRAVERSING THE SOUL GATE

The adventurers must endure the rigors of the soul gate and make their way through it to arrive at Death's Reach. Describe movement through the vortex in the most disorienting and disturbing ways imaginable. The characters perceive their travel as vague passage through the swirling light and tearing wind. Each turn moves them closer to the exit. A success makes the trip bearable, while each failure costs the characters dearly. Note that each round of this challenge represents about 10 minutes of travel through the soul gate.

Complexity: 3 (8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Endurance, Religion.

Arcana (DC 27, standard action): The character tries to gain a glimpse of mystical understanding to help guide the party through this tumultuous void.

This skill can be used to gain up to four successes in this challenge.

Endurance (DC 14, minor action): At the start of a character's turn, he or she must make an Endurance check to weather the violence of the soul gate. This check doesn't count as a success or failure toward the completion of the challenge, but if a character fails the check, that character loses 1 healing surge.

Religion (DC 22, standard action): The character uses faith and prayer to find a path through the churning whirlwind.

This skill can be used to gain up to four successes in this challenge.

Secondary Skills: Dungeoneering, Insight, Perception.

Dungeoneering (DC 27, standard action): The character treats the soul gate as a dungeon and seeks to use that experience to find a safe path.

This skill can be used to gain up to two successes in this challenge.

Insight (DC 14, standard action): The character attempts to use intuition to help navigate the soul gate. This check doesn't count as a success or failure toward the completion of the challenge, but it does provide a +2 bonus or -2 penalty to the next character's Arcana, Dungeoneering, or Religion check.

Perception (DC 22, standard action): The character attempts to spot a path through the swirling turmoil. This check doesn't count as a success or failure toward the completion of the challenge, but it does provide a +2 bonus or -2 penalty to the next character's Arcana, Dungeoneering, Endurance, or Religion check.

Success: If the adventurers get 8 successes, they arrive in Death's Reach alert and ready. The opponents in the next encounter do not have surprise against the adventurers.

Failure: If the adventurers accumulate 3 failures, they exit the soul gate into Death's Reach in bad shape. First, they gain no experience for this skill challenge. Second, each character loses 1 healing surge. Third, they arrive in Death's Reach in the prone position. Fourth, the opponents in the next encounter gain surprise against the adventurers.

CONCLUSION

Whether the adventurers succeed or fail at this skill challenge, they arrive in Death's Reach. Read:

The sound of ravens fades away and you sense that you're falling. Vaguely, you perceive that you are falling as a luminous orb. You plummet through a dismal sky toward an ashen plain. With a gut-wrenching twist and a blinding flash, you appear on an alien slope. In the still air, you smell the faint scent of ancient dust and old fire. Pale ash covers the ground between black rocks that are smooth and glassy.

Above you, the slope ascends at a sheer angle, forming a black cliff. Maybe 200 feet overhead, it disappears into a turbulent field of clouds that flash sporadically with sinister light. Downward, the slope gives way to a barren wasteland of ashy soil. Great spires of black rock claw upward, some straight and others bent at unnatural angles.

In the vastness, you see an orb of silver light falling slowly, trailing a luminous tail and reminding you of your own arrival. From the orb you can hear a distant cry like that of a dying creature. You also notice an orb of red light hovering over the desolation in the distance.

ENCOUNTER D1: ARRIVAL

Encounter Level 21 (18,500 XP)

SETUP

3 blackstar prowlers (B)
1 soulfall ignition (S)

The adventurers arrive in Death's Reach. If they succeeded at the skill challenge in the previous encounter, the blackstar prowlers start at the locations shown on the map. If the adventurers failed the skill challenge, they arrive here prone. The prowlers get a surprise round, using *pounce on the fallen* to teleport next to a prone target.

TACTICS

If the prowlers have surprise, they teleport next to a prone PC and get ready to attack. If not, they use *blackstar charge* at the start of the fight. After two targets are prone, one or more of the remaining coursers gang up on a fallen target, using *pounce on the fallen*. A prowler uses *blackstar charge* again whenever it can. The prowlers leap over the soulfall ignition whenever they can.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

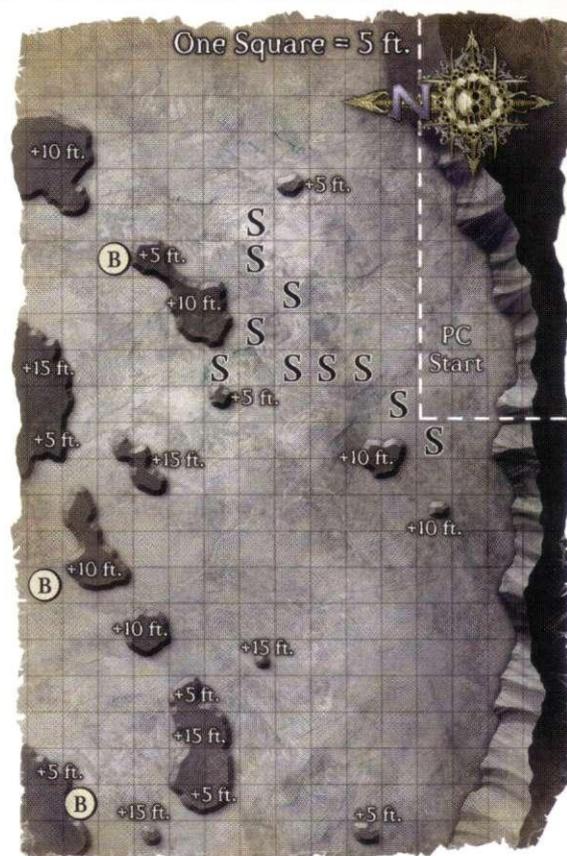
Illumination: Dim light. Death Reach's usual pall covers this area.

Cliff: The black cliffs ascend into the cloudy sky (DC 27 Athletics to climb).

Rocks: These black rocks create difficult terrain (+5 feet) or blocking terrain (DC 15 Athletics check to climb) in their squares.

3 Blackstar Prowler (B)	Level 23 Skirmisher
Medium elemental animate	XP 5,100 each
Initiative +22	Senses Perception +17; darkvision
HP 214; Bloodied 107	
AC 37; Fortitude 33, Reflex 35, Will 32	
Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant	
Speed 8	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)	
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage, or 2d10 + 13 damage against a prone target.	
⊖ Blackstar Charge (standard; recharge ☞ ☞)	
The prowler makes a charge attack; +28 vs. AC; 3d10 + 10 damage, and the target is knocked prone. When the target stands up, it provokes opportunity attacks from adjacent blackstar prowlers.	
Pounce on the Fallen (move; at-will) ◆ Teleportation	
The blackstar prowler teleports up to 8 squares to end its move adjacent to a prone enemy.	
Alignment Evil	Languages –
Skills Endurance +22, Stealth +25	
Str 24 (+18)	Dex 28 (+20)
Con 22 (+17)	Int 3 (+7)
	Wis 22 (+17)
	Cha 7 (+9)

Soulfall Ignition (S)	Level 21 Blaster
Hazard	XP 3,200
<i>Portions of the ground ahead glows and pulses with a faint luminescence.</i>	
Hazard: Soulfall has infused the soil with energy, which releases in the presence of a living creature or radiant damage.	
Perception	
◆ DC 14: The character notices that the soil glows and pulses.	
Additional Skill: Religion	
◆ DC 22: The character identifies the spiritual energy in the faintly luminous soil, and its danger.	
◆ DC 27: The character realizes radiant damage can be used as a countermeasure.	
Trigger	
When a living creature enters an infused square, or begins its turn in or adjacent to a square that contains infused soil, or when the square is subjected to radiant damage.	
Attack	
Opportunity or Standard Action	Close burst 1
Targets: Each creature in burst	
Attack: +26 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 5d6 necrotic damage.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Countermeasures	
◆ A character can make an Athletics check to jump over a square, or use other means to move over the square without touching the soil. A living creature must enter a square, or be in or adjacent to a square at the start of its turn, for the hazard to discharge.	
◆ A character can move through a square without triggering the soil by making a DC 27 Acrobatics check, or by moving at half speed and making a DC 22 Endurance check.	
◆ A square that takes 25 or more radiant damage in one round dissipates and is no longer active. A square is automatically hit by any melee or ranged attack aimed at it, and by any close or area attack that includes it.	



ENCOUNTER D2: HERALD OF SECRETS

Encounter Level 21 (16,000 XP)

As the adventurers progress deeper into Death's Reach, they meet Calah, an angel of secrets.

If the PCs talk to Calah, proceed with the skill challenge on this page. If they attack, go to **Encounter D3: Warrior of Secrets** on the next page.

When the angel begins to descend toward the adventurers, show them the "View of the Herald of Secrets" illustration on page 27 of Adventure Book One, then read:

As you crest a ridge, the blue glow of a soulfall—brighter than any you've seen so far—illuminates the sky. Rather than the descent of a single incandescent form, you spot a rain of five orbs falling to the dark soil of the ridge ahead. Their vague shapes hurtle soundlessly toward ground.

Just before striking and dissipating forever, the five glows change course and merge. In a split second, they form a towering humanoid that shines momentarily with violet light. Behind the figure, the glow takes the shape of ten broad wings that shimmer and disappear. The body solidifies into a vaguely feminine form clad in robes like liquid shadow, its lower body flowing mist. Winged brooches on its cloak dim, but its eyes continue to glow with purple light.

Without paying attention to or perhaps even noticing you, the figure clutches a stone sphere with a dark flaw that makes it look like an eye. The figure turns toward the north, peering intently in that direction.

WHAT IS IT?

An angel of secrets is, by definition, an unknowable thing. Still, the adventurers can make checks to determine what they might have heard or seen concerning this creature.

Arcana Check

DC 22: *This creature entered Death's Reach on purpose, in a manner similar to the one you employed. It might have separated into parts for protection or some other reason, or the separation could be a manifestation of one of its powers.*

DC 27: *If the separation was a manifestation of a power, the creature could be an amalgam of more than one being, or it could be multiple creatures disguised as a single entity. Obviously, it is far more dangerous than it appears.*

Perception Check

DC 22: *As the creature turns away, you see it has no facial features besides its glowing eyes.*

Religion Check

DC 14: *With wings that were briefly apparent, glowing eyes, and a mostly formless lower body, the creature appears distinctly angelic.*

INTERVIEW WITH AN ANGEL

If the adventurers hail or approach Calah, it turns and speaks in a feminine voice that sounds like a chorus of soft voices. This begins a skill challenge. Read:

"Are you servants of the craven Orcus? Or are you far from well-tread lands on a righteous mission in this ancient place? If the former, words are at an end! If the latter, know that I too am on a quest to oppose the demon prince."

The creature readies to fight, a blade of vibrating mist forming in one hand as the other clutches the ball-sized moonstone. It hesitates only to hear your answer.

Complexity: 5 (12 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Insight, Religion.

Diplomacy (DC 22, standard action): The character tries to keep Calah talking while keeping it from growing suspicious of the party, trying to get it to reveal its intentions and mission in Death's Reach.

This skill can be used to gain up to eight successes in this challenge. Each success causes Calah to reveal something else to the party. See "Roleplaying Calah" for possible revelations.

Insight (DC 27, standard action): The character tries to ascertain the truth of what Calah is saying.

This skill can be used to gain up to three successes in this challenge. Each success earns the party a bit more about Calah's true nature and hidden agenda.

Religion (DC 22, standard action): The character uses faith and religious knowledge to interpret Calah's words. A success allows the character to recognize hints of the tenets of Sehanine in Calah's conversation.

This skill can be used to gain up to one success in this challenge through this line of inquiry.

Religion (DC 27, standard action, after gaining one success with Religion): The character's understanding of the tenets of Sehanine is so strong that he or she recognizes the discrepancies in Calah's proclamations.

This skill can be used to gain up to one success in this challenge through this line of inquiry.

Religion (DC 27, standard action, after gaining five or more successes in this challenge): The character's understanding of religion brings a revelation—trickery and illusion are but aspects of secrets, and secrets are the domain of Vecna.

This skill can be used to gain up to one success in this challenge through this line of inquiry.

Secondary Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Intimidate.

Arcana (DC 24, standard action): The character examines the stone sphere that Calah carries and with a success

recognizes it as a *moonstone sphere* (see *Adventure Book One*, page 24). The character knows the powers and properties of the item, except for the secret property that it records everything and is an aspect of the *Eye of Vecna*. This check doesn't count as a success or failure toward the completion of the challenge.

Bluff (DC 27, *standard action*): The character attempts to trick Calah into revealing more than it intended about its mission in Death's Reach, or tries to obfuscate the party's purpose in the area. This check doesn't count as a success or failure toward the completion of the challenge, but it does provide a +2 bonus or -2 penalty to the next character's Diplomacy, Insight, or Intimidate check.

Intimidate (DC 27, *standard action*): The character attempts to convince Calah that the party is an actual threat to its goals.

This skill can be used to gain up to one success in this challenge.

Success: If the adventurers get 12 successes, Calah is so impressed with the party and its dedication to its mission that it offers them the *moonstone sphere* (always keeping its true nature a secret). Calah also points the party to additional treasure that can aid them in their quest, directing them to **Encounter D7: Spoils of War** (see page 30).

Failure: If the adventurers accumulate 3 failures, Calah determines that the party is incapable of accomplishing anything here in Death's Reach, let alone do something to advance Vecna's goals. The party gains no experience points for this encounter.

Calah departs, mocking the adventurers as it leaves. It immediately attracts a random encounter to attack the party (see page 2), such as the worm of ages. As soon as that encounter ends and the party takes a short rest, then Calah attacks. Go to **Encounter D3: Warrior of Secrets** on the next page.

ROLEPLAYING CALAH

Calah's personality is cold and condescending, and all its answers are distractions, half-truths, or riddles. It is fond of answering a question with a question of its own. Any humility it shows is feigned, as a PC might discern through Insight. Characters can earn Calah's respect by showing willingness to work against Orcus, or by discerning the angel's actual motives and loyalties.

The angel lets circumstances determine which of two goals it pursues. Its first objective is to give the PCs the *moonstone sphere* to sway them to Vecna's service. It only does this if they prove capable and discerning. Otherwise, it seeks to hinder them so that they fail in opposing Orcus's gambit against the Raven Queen. Vecna feels both gods must be vanquished. Its second objective is to direct the party to spoils of the Dawn War so that they can find the means to help them deal with the servants of Orcus—and with Timesus, should the primordial become free.

Use the following samples when roleplaying Calah. Calah asks similar questions of the PCs.

Who are you?

I am Calah. Perhaps you would like to know more than this?

Calah won't reveal its name until the PCs gain 1 success using Diplomacy.

What are you?

I am a servant of the gods. Surely you recognize this. Or do you toy with me for some reason? What are you?

Where are the other glows that fell with you?

Who knows what strange laws govern this place? What do you think they could be?

Whom do you serve?

I am bound not to say directly, but as a gesture of trust, I can tell you that I serve changeability and false seeming. I serve warmth in the dark, and cold in mornings long in coming.

The riddle hints at Sehanine, but it's a falsehood. If a player guesses this god without a check, grant an automatic success in the skill challenge. If not, Calah won't reveal this until the PCs gain 3 successes using Diplomacy.

Why are you here?

I am on a divine mission. I come to see if the enemy has gained any ancient primordial objects. Why are you here?

What is it you seek? Where were you headed?

I go first to see if the enemy has acquired any objects of great power. I know of a place of storage. That place must not fall into the hands of Orcus's lackeys.

Calah won't reveal this information until the PCs gain 5 successes using Diplomacy.

We're here to stop Orcus's servants!

Then you are mighty indeed, or fools beyond measure—either way, you have a braggart's heart. Lucky for you I am not an enemy spy. Still, what makes you think you have the power to oppose a demon lord, even one as debased as Orcus?

What is that sphere? How will the ones you serve gain knowledge?

This sphere is an observer and a guide, but it is a weapon as well. It sees that which is hidden.

You're really a servant of Vecna, aren't you?

Ah, adventurers. Your kind is never satisfied to leave well enough alone. So, a servant of Vecna you think I am? Would that be so bad? Could we not still be allies, united against a common foe?

If, at any point during the interview, hostilities flare up, go to **Encounter D3: Warrior of Secrets** on the next page.

ENCOUNTER D3: WARRIOR OF SECRETS

Encounter Level 21 (20,300 XP)

SETUP

- Calah, angel of secrets (C)
- 1 angel of vengeance retaliator (V)
- 1 angel of protection shield bearer (P)
- 3 angel of secrets legionnaires (L)

If the adventurers choose to attack Calah, or if the interview with the angel of secrets turns hostile, or if the skill challenge ends in failure, a battle breaks out. Only Calah is visible at the start of the battle. On the angel of secrets turn, it releases the other angels onto the field of battle.

TACTICS

The angel of secrets carries five lesser angels in its *cloak of angels*, a special item made just for that purpose. It releases the angels when attacked as a minor action, placing the angel of vengeance retaliator and the other angels around it on the map, as shown. It then unleashes *roaring revelation*—a secret word of power overwhelming to the mind and too terrible to be remembered. It then moves to the edge of the battle, close to the angel of protection and within melee reach, where it can use its other powers easily.

Staying as close to the angel of secrets as possible, the angel of protection fights enemies who approach. It focuses on opponents who assail the angel of secrets in melee, hampering their attacks with its mark ability.

The angel of vengeance flies to where it can harry the back of the party. It places its *sign of vengeance* upon an opponent that clearly likes to make ranged attacks or area attacks. If no such character is evident, the angel of vengeance concentrates on a highly mobile character.

Staying well away from the angel of vengeance (to avoid the inevitable *coldfire pillar*), the angel of secrets legionnaires focus on opponents assaulting the angel of secrets in melee. They work together to flank targets and gain combat advantage.

When Calah is bloodied, it offers to surrender. It uses the *moonstone sphere* and the location of ancient treasure (see **Encounter D7: Spoils of War** on page 30) as bargaining chips, promising both if the adventurers allow it to depart in peace. The angels keep any truce that Calah agrees to, fleeing Death's Reach once a bargain has been struck and the details of the arrangement have been solidified.

3 Angel of Secret Legionnaires (L)		Level 21 Minion
Medium immortal humanoid (angel)		XP 800 each
Initiative +18	Senses Perception +16	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 35; Fortitude 32, Reflex 33, Will 31		
Immune fear; Resist 10 fire, 10 radiant		
Speed 6, fly 9 (hover)		
⚔ Shadowsword (standard; at-will) ⚔ Necrotic, Weapon		
+26 vs. AC; 10 necrotic damage.		
Combat Advantage		
The angel deals an extra 5 damage to a target it has combat advantage against.		
Shadow Play		
When an attack misses the angel, it becomes insubstantial until the end of its next turn. The angel gains combat advantage against all enemies while it is insubstantial.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Supernal
Str 24 (+17)	Dex 26 (+18)	Wis 14 (+12)
Con 18 (+14)	Int 12 (+11)	Cha 22 (+16)
Equipment chainmail, shadowsword		

Angel of Secrets (C)	Level 22 Elite Controller	
Large immortal humanoid (angel)		
XP 8,300		
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +23; darkvision	
Angelic Presence Attacks against the angel of secrets take a -2 penalty until the angel is bloodied; once bloodied, the penalty increases to -4.		
HP 408; Bloodied 204		
AC 36; Fortitude 34, Reflex 34, Will 36		
Immune disease, fear; Resist 10 radiant		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)		
Action Points 1		
⚔ Memory Blade (standard; at-will) ⚔ Psychic		
Reach 2; +27 vs. AC; 3d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target can't use encounter powers or daily powers until the end of the angel's next turn.		
↗ Mind Lash (standard; at-will) ⚔ Psychic		
Ranged 10; +25 vs. Will; 2d10 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the angel's next turn.		
⚡ Roaring Revelation (standard; encounter and when reduced to 0 hit points) ⚔ Psychic, Thunder		
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +23 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 8 psychic and thunder damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the angel's next turn.		
Foresight (immediate interrupt, when attacked; recharge ☞ ☞) ⚔		
Teleportation		
The angel of secrets teleports 4 squares and makes a <i>memory blade</i> attack.		
Alignment Unaligned		
Languages All		
Skills Arcana +22, History +22, Stealth +20		
Str 22 (+17)	Dex 18 (+15)	Wis 23 (+17)
Con 20 (+16)	Int 23 (+17)	Cha 27 (+19)
Equipment chainmail, memory sword, cloak of angels		

Angel of Protection Shieldbearer (P) Level 21 Soldier

Medium immortal humanoid (angel) XP 3,200

Initiative +17 Senses Perception +16

Angelic Presence Attacks against the angel of protection take a -2 penalty until the angel is bloodied.**Angelic Shield** aura 5; any enemy treats the area within the aura as difficult terrain as long as the angel's *angelic presence* is active and the angel is within 5 squares of the angel of secrets.

HP 197; Bloodied 98

AC 37; Fortitude 33, Reflex 31, Will 32

Immune fear; Resist 15 radiant

Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)

⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Radiant, Weapon**

+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage plus 10 radiant damage, and the target is marked until the end of the angel of protection's next turn.

Ward Angel of Secrets (standard; at-will)

When the angel is within 5 squares of the angel of secrets, the angel of secrets takes only half damage from melee and ranged attacks; the angel of protection takes the rest. While the angel is adjacent to the angel of secrets, the angel of secrets gains a +2 bonus to AC.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Supernal

Skills Insight +21, Intimidate +19

Str 25 (+17) Dex 21 (+15) Wis 23 (+16)

Con 21 (+15) Int 16 (+13) Cha 18 (+14)

Equipment plate armor, greatsword

Angel of Vengeance Retaliator (V) Level 21 Elite Brute

Large immortal humanoid (angel) XP 6,400

Initiative +15 Senses Perception +17

HP 486; Bloodied 243

AC 34; Fortitude 34, Reflex 32, Will 34; see also *cloak of vengeance*Immune disease, fear; Resist 15 cold, 15 fire, 15 radiant; see also *coldfire pillar*

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, fly 12 (hover); see also *sign of vengeance*

Action Points 1

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold, Fire, Weapon**

Reach 2; +24 vs. AC; 1d10 + 9 damage plus 2d8 cold and fire damage.

⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold, Fire, Weapon**

The angel of vengeance makes two longsword attacks.

➤ **Sign of Vengeance** (minor; encounter) ♦ **Teleportation**

Ranged sight; the angel of vengeance places an invisible sign upon the target. Until the end of the encounter, as a move action, the angel of vengeance can teleport adjacent to the target.

⚡ **Coldfire Pillar** (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ **Cold, Fire, Polymorph**

Close burst 2; +23 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 9 cold and fire damage. The angel of vengeance transforms into a 30-foot-high pillar of blue fire and is immune to all damage until the start of its next turn.

Cloak of Vengeance (until bloodied) ♦ **Cold, Fire**Attacks against the angel of vengeance take a -2 penalty until the angel is bloodied. While *cloak of vengeance* is in effect, a creature that hits the angel with a melee attack takes 2d8 cold and fire damage.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Supernal

Skills Insight +22, Intimidate +23

Str 27 (+18) Dex 20 (+15) Wis 25 (+17)

Con 23 (+16) Int 19 (+14) Cha 26 (+18)

Equipment plate armor, 2 longswords

CONCLUSION

By defeating Calah, whether through combat or because the angel surrenders, the adventurers wind up with the *moonstone sphere*. While the item can benefit the PCs, it also retains its ties to its ultimate master, Vecna.

If the PCs attack the *sphere*, it has defenses of 33 and 100 hit points. It counterattacks with *eyebite* (warlock 1) whenever struck (+25 vs. Will; 2d6 + 10 damage). If the *sphere* is reduced to 0 hit points, the stone cracks and falls away to reveal the *Eye of Vecna* (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 166).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

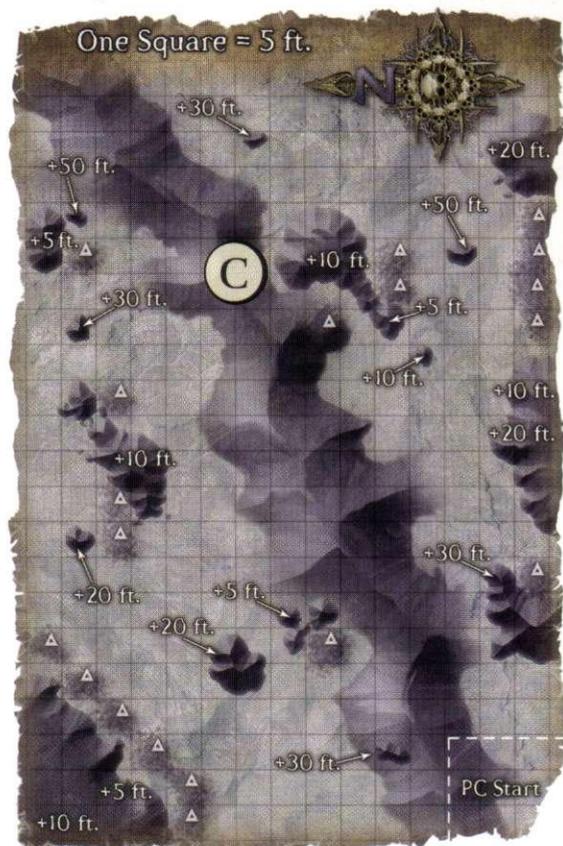
Illumination: Dim light. Death Reach's usual pall covers this area.

Dust Drifts: These piles are difficult terrain. Moving through one stirs up enough dust to make the disturbed square lightly obscured.

Ridge: The slope down either side of the ridge is gentle, and it's easy to slide down. Increase forced movement down the slope by 1 square, and creatures that move downward on it can move 1 extra square.

Rocks: These black rocks are blocking terrain (DC 15 Athletics check to climb).

Rock Spires: These riblike spires rise to the heights noted on the map. A spire creates difficult terrain if it doesn't fill its square (DC 25 Athletics check to climb). Catching hold after falling (DC 30 Athletics check) deals 1d10 damage.



ENCOUNTER D4: EMPEROR OF BONES

Encounter Level 22 (22,300 XP)

SETUP

Yannux, Emperor of Bones (Y)

1 bonestorm (B)

A canyon between jutting walls of black rock serves the lair of Yannux, the self-proclaimed Emperor of Bones. The nightwalker lurks amid ancient remains, hidden in the shadows, studying a new treasure he has acquired. Yannux's bonestorm crowds around the nightwalker, indiscernible as anything but rubble and debris. If Yannux or the bonestorm notices the approach of the adventurers, each hides to ambush them when they arrive.

When the adventurers approach the area, read:

An orb like a nearly burned-out sun hangs over sharp spires of black rock that jut high into the air. The spires create a natural wall bounding an area into which the dying orb dimly shines. Debris of all sorts litters the area within—rubble, weapons, bones, ancient statues, and more collects here. Closer to the rock wall, the debris gathers more thickly.

Above, a soulfall careens into the dying star, causing it to flash white. It silently shoots a bolt of white energy down into the natural canyon.

When the adventurers enter the canyon, read:

The rock walls form a hollow stuffed with ancient refuse. Dim red light illuminates the depression, but the sharp shadows of the overarching rocks create long patches of darkness within. The interior of the hollow's walls are carved in macabre reliefs. Above these carvings, a ledge runs around the interior. Statues stand here and there, broken and at chaotic tilts. A few look like ancient pillars, still supporting pieces of a long-lost floor or ceiling. A throne of rubble, black rock, and bones is set against the far wall.

If Yannux isn't ready for the adventurers, read:

You hear a chilling whisper within the hollow. "What secrets does it hide, older than all reckoning? Show me. Show me."

Yannux, in his madness, talks to a mithral box he found in his wanderings through Death's Reach.

Perception Check

DC 31 (DC 26 if the PCs heard Yannux whispering):

In the shadows lurks a gigantic humanoid, probably 12 feet tall, like darkness made flesh. Horns sprout from its shoulders and head. Its face has no features, only hollow eyes staring out of the darkness.

Bonestorm (B)		Level 20 Solo Controller	
Huge natural animate (blind, swarm, undead)		XP 14,000	
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +16; blindsight 20		
Swarm Attack aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 damage.			
HP 752; Bloodied 376			
AC 34; Fortitude 32, Reflex 29, Will 30			
Immune disease, gaze, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 10 radiant, 10 against close and area attacks			
Saving Throws +5			
Speed 8, burrow 8, fly 8			
Action Points 2			
⊕ Bone Thrash (standard; at-will) +25 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage (2d12 + 10 damage while bloodied).			
⚡ Bonestorm (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic Close burst 3; +23 vs. Reflex; 3d10 + 9 necrotic damage, and the target is grabbed. At the start of a grabbed target's turn, it takes 15 necrotic damage. While grabbed, a target cannot be hit by another bonestorm.			
⚡ Soul Plague (free, when first bloodied, and when reduced to 0 hit points) ⊕ Necrotic Close burst 20; targets enemies; +21 vs. Fortitude; the target is weakened (save ends) and loses a healing surge. Miss: The target is weakened until the end of its next turn and does not lose a healing surge.			
Hide in Plain Sight While inactive, the bonestorm appears as rubble and remains. It can make a Stealth check to remain unnoticed until it takes an action.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages —	
Skills Stealth +20			
Str 26 (+18)	Dex 20 (+15)	Wis 23 (+16)	
Con 20 (+15)	Int 4 (+7)	Cha 8 (+9)	

TACTICS

If the adventurers approach the hollow in the air Yannux and the bonestorm tear into the sky to attack them. Yannux's primary desire is to bring his enemies crashing down so he can fight them on the ground. To this end, the bonestorm attacks with *subsumption*, and the nightwalker uses *death's gaze*.

On the ground, Yannux assaults his foes with *death's gaze*, unconcerned about harming the blind bonestorm. He picks a prone target to pummel with his slam. He reserves *Finger of death* for an opponent who has dealt considerable damage, but if Yannux becomes bloodied, he uses it against a bloodied foe.

The debris that forms the bonestorm batters foes within the *swarm attack* aura. On its turn, the bonestorm uses *subsumption* to grab a target, unless it already has a grabbed target. In that case, the bonestorm uses *bone thrash* on another target.

THE SOUL STAR

The smoldering orb hovering over Yannux's lair is an ancient relic of Death's Reach, and many similar orbs once filled the place. It catches soulfalls. If any soulfall occurs during the encounter, the orb catches it, flashes with white light, and strikes Yannux with a white bolt. As a result, Yannux regains 15 hit points. To determine if a soulfall occurs, roll 1d20 at the start of each round. On a roll of 1, a soulfall takes place.

The soul star hangs 20 squares above the floor. It has 100 hit points and defenses of 34. It is immune to attacks against Will, and cannot be moved from its spot. If it takes 20 or more radiant damage in one round, it glows with golden light for 2 rounds and ceases healing Yannux during that time. If destroyed, it explodes in a shower of black shards, blasting anyone in the hollow.

← Soul Star Shard Shower

Close blast 20; +25 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 5 damage. Miss: Half damage.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light. Death Reach's usual pall covers this area.

Blackrock Walls: These sharp, smooth walls (DC 25 Athletics check to climb) rise about 40 feet, forming an open ceiling. Catching hold (DC 30 Athletics check) after falling deals 2d10 damage.

Dust Sinks: The marked areas of the floor contain dust sinks. A DC 22 Perception check is enough to notice the loose and shifting dust in these squares. A Small or Medium creature that enters one of these squares falls 20 feet (2d10 damage) into a pit and is knocked prone. Climbing out of a pit requires a DC 20 Athletics check.

Ledges: These winding, ascending pathways are normal terrain, leading to observation platforms.

Platforms: These broad landings provide a view for miles across Death's Reach.

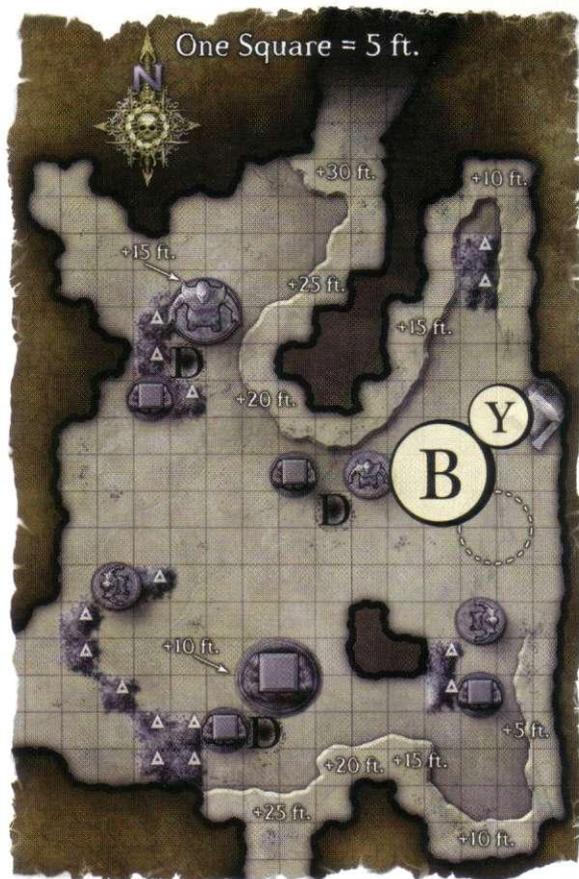
Rubble: Where noted on the map, the rubble is difficult terrain.

Statues: Medium statues are between 5 and 8 feet tall. They are difficult terrain, and can be pushed over (DC 25 Athletics check) to create 2 squares of difficult terrain. Large statues are between 10 and 15 feet high, and they are blocking terrain. All statues can be climbed (DC 15 Athletics check). The statues in red on the map are columns still attached to pieces of old floor and ceiling.

Throne: This black stone chair is difficult terrain. Its seat is 4 feet from the floor. Sitting on the throne is an ancient mithral box, bejeweled with astral diamonds. The box functions as a *bag of holding* (worth 16,000 gp).

Treasure: Other than the mithral box, if the PCs search for 10 minutes, a DC 22 Perception check reveals a level 24 magic item of your choice. They also find four 5,000 gp gems and 600 ancient pp.

Yannux, Nightwalker (Y)		Level 22 Elite Brute
Large shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 8,300
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +15; darkvision	
Void Chill (Cold, Necrotic) aura 5; any enemy that start its turn within the aura takes 10 cold and necrotic damage.		
HP 504; Bloodied 252		
AC 34; Fortitude 35, Reflex 30, Will 34		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 cold, 20 necrotic; Vulnerable 20 radiant		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 8; see <i>ride the bones</i>		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Necrotic		
Reach 2; +25 vs. AC; 3d10 + 7 cold and necrotic damage.		
☞ Finger of Death (standard; encounter) ♦ Necrotic		
Ranged 5; bloodied target only; +23 vs. Fortitude; the target drops to 0 hit points. Resistance to necrotic damage does not apply to this power.		
☞ Death's Gaze (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ Cold, Gaze, Illusion, Necrotic		
Close blast 3; +23 vs. Will; 1d10 + 8 cold and necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares, knocked prone, and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and defenses (save ends).		
Ride the Bones (move; at-will)		
Yannux can fly on the bonestorm, like a rider on a mount.		
Necrotic Energy (minor, while bloodied; encounter) ♦ Healing		
Yannux deals 50 damage to the bonestorm, and regains 50 hit points.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, telepathy 20	
Skills Stealth +22		
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 22 (+17)	Wis 18 (+15)
Con 22 (+17)	Int 17 (+14)	Cha 24 (+18)



ENCOUNTER D5: NERULL'S GATE

Encounter Level 23 (27,450 XP)

SETUP

Shonvurru (S)
2 petrified treants (T)
1 ghostfire flameskull (F)

From its vantage, the ghostfire flameskull might perceive the adventurers as they approach Nerull's Gate. If it does, it warns Shonvurru the Blood Serpent, who continues her work until the adventurers get close enough for combat. The treants are loyal to Shonvurru. They attack only if she is attacked or upon her orders.

Use the poster map for this encounter.

As the adventurers approach the area, show them the "View of Nerull's Gate" illustration on page 27 of Adventure Book One, then read:

An enormous arch, covered in runes that dance with silver and red light, towers over a circular platform. Steps around the paved platform descend into a depression around the arch.

Flanking the arch are two gigantic statues the color of ebony and bone. They look like they were once treants, but the ages have petrified them and left them leafless. Hovering above the arch's apex is a skull swathed in blue-black fire.

Under the arch, a giant dark serpent topped with the body of a female human with six arms appears to be in the midst of casting a ritual from an ancient tome. The runes on the arch pulse in response to her unfamiliar words.

Perception Check

DC 24: You notice the treant statues move ever so slightly.

Arcana Check

DC 24: The marilith is manipulating and altering the arcane energy present in the gate.

DC 29: The marilith is using the ritual to change the location the gate is connected to.

TACTICS

The flameskull hides until the adventurers get close. Then it launches a *ghostfire storm* at the lead melee combatants. It uses the arch for cover while making ranged attacks against the PCs.

The treants rush forward on Shonvurru's order. They use *petrifying roots*, then slam away.

Shonvurru draws one weapon in each hand as a single minor action. She moves to a good position, then uses *wraith dance* to attack multiple PCs—preferably foes she can flank with the treants. She moves each round, attacking with *deadly steel mantle* and *hacking blades*.

Shonvurru (S)

Level 24 Elite Skirmisher

Large elemental humanoid, marilith (demon, undead) XP 12,100

Initiative +22 Senses Perception +21; darkvision

Grave Shroud aura 5; undead within the aura at the start of their turn regenerate 5 hit points.

HP 440; **Bloodied** 220

AC 38 (40 with *deadly steel mantle*); **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 33
Resist 15 variable (3/encounter; see *Monster Manual* page 282); 10 necrotic

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage (crit 6d10 + 29), and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

⊖ **Deadly Steel Mantle** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
Shonvurru makes two scimitar attacks and uses two scimitars to parry incoming attacks, gaining a +2 bonus to AC until the start of her next turn.

⊖ **Hacking Blades** (free, when an adjacent enemy misses Shonvurru with a melee attack; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
Shonvurru makes a scimitar attack against the enemy.

⊖ **Wraith Dance** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
Shonvurru can shift 4 squares, including through enemy spaces, and make up to four scimitar attacks, shifting 1 extra square each time she hits. She gains insubstantial and phasing while shifting this way, and deals 5 necrotic damage to any creature whose space she shifts through. She must end the dance in an unoccupied space.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

Skills Arcana +19, History +19, Insight +21, Stealth +25

Str 25 (+19) **Dex** 26 (+20) **Wis** 19 (+16)

Con 20 (+17) **Int** 14 (+14) **Cha** 22 (+18)

Equipment 6 scimitars

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light. Death Reach's usual pall covers this area.

Blackrock Walls: These glassy black walls (DC 25 Athletics check to climb) rise 30 feet up from the inner slope to evenly surround the gate. Catching hold after falling (DC 30 Athletics check) deals 2d10 damage.

Defensive Towers: Designed as watch positions for angelic guardians, these towers stand 40 feet high but have no access from the ground other than by climbing the blackrock walls.

Dust Drifts: These piles are difficult terrain.

Gate Arch: Standing 40 feet high, the gate requires a DC 25 Athletics check to climb, lowering to DC 20 once a climber has reached 20 feet. The middle 5 squares of the arch are fashioned such that a creature can stand upon them safely.

Gate Steps: These slight steps are normal terrain. A DC 20 Dungeoneering allows a PC to see that the arch can move.

Ghostfire Flameskull (F) **Level 22 Artillery**

Small natural animate (undead) XP 4,150

Initiative +20 **Senses** Perception +15; truesight 6
HP 163; **Bloodied** 81
Regeneration 10
AC 34; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 33
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 20 fire, 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 15 radiant
Speed fly 8 (hover)

⊕ **Ghostfire Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**
 +29 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 fire and necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).

↘ **Cremation Ray** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**
 Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 7 fire and necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).

✱ **Ghostfire Storm** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**
 Area burst 3 within 15; +25 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 7 fire and necrotic damage. *Miss:* Half damage. The storm blocks line of sight, deals 10 fire and necrotic damage to any creature that starts its turn in the area, and disappears at the end of the flameskull's next turn. The flameskull can exclude allies from the effect.

Mage Hand (minor; at-will) ♦ **Conjuration**
 As *mage hand* (wizard 1; *Player's Handbook* page 158).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

Skills Stealth +25

Str 10 (+11) **Dex** 28 (+20) **Wis** 9 (+10)

Con 25 (+18) **Int** 14 (+13) **Cha** 26 (+19)

2 Petrified Treants (T) **Level 20 Elite Controller**

Huge fey magical beast (plant, undead) XP 5,600 each

Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision
Aura of Petrification aura 3; any enemy that enters or starts its turns within the aura takes 10 necrotic damage and is slowed.

HP 376; **Bloodied** 188
AC 34; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 28
Resist 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Petrifying Slam** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 Reach 3; +25 vs. AC; 2d12 + 8 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* Target is restrained (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* Target is restrained and takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends). *Third Failed Saving Throw:* Target is petrified (no save).

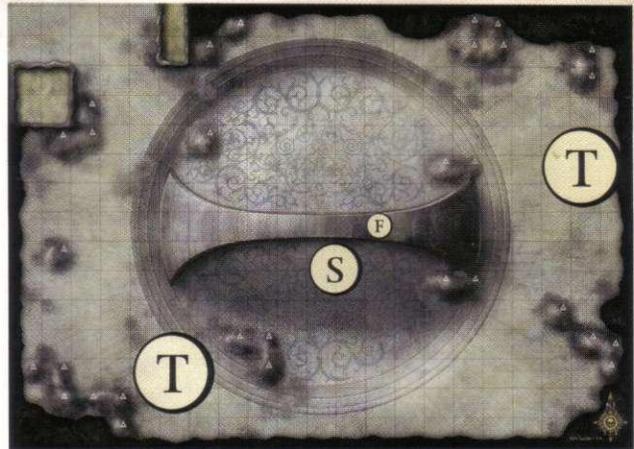
⊖ **Petrifying Roots** (standard; at-will)
 Close burst 3; +23 vs. Reflex; 1d12 + 8 damage and the target is knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 26 (+18) **Dex** 23 (+16) **Wis** 8 (+9)

Con 20 (+16) **Int** 6 (+8) **Cha** 18 (+14)

Shonvurru's Book: Shonvurru's book, in Abyssal and the Barazhad script, contains notes on what she was doing. The book reveals that she awakened the guardians and used the gate three days ago to summon "the Great Beast," which she sent "to the reliquary." She then set about inventing a way to tie Nerull's Gate permanently to Thanatos, Orcus's Realm in the Abyss. She had not completed this task when the PCs arrived. A DC 20 Religion check indicates that "the Great Beast" is a name for an aspect of Orcus.



ENCOUNTER D5: NERULL'S GATE

Treasure: Shonvurru has eight bejeweled mithral cuffs (3,000 gp each), a jeweled ceremonial mithral breastplate (15,000 gp), an adamantine idol of Orcus with diamond eyes and an emerald-tipped scepter (15,000 gp). Her book contains the *Loremaster's Bargain ritual* (65,000 gp, *Player's Handbook* page 308). She also has 51,000 gp worth of residuum and a flawless black diamond (5,000 gp).

CONCLUSION

Once the adventurers have defeated Shonvurru, they can try to decipher her ritual book and learn more about the area.

A DC 24 Arcana check indicates that, whatever Shonvurru was doing to the gate, the energy of her working has polluted the site. The energy should be allowed to fade completely over a couple hours before the gate is used for any other task. A DC 29 Arcana check shows she was aligning the gate with the Abyss, which is the source of the polluted energy. Taking one minute to detect magic on the gate, as well as a DC 29 Arcana check, reveals that Shonvurru opened the gate recently, and that a lot of residual necrotic energy remains from that opening.

Beginning *Summon Raven's Aspect* after Shonvurru's defeat reveals the site's pollution; the PCs should delay their ritual for a while. The characters can rest while they wait. Nerull's gate is safe from any random encounters and soulfall.

When the PCs begin the ritual, go to **Encounter D6: The Wrath of Orcus** (on the next page).

ENCOUNTER D6: THE WRATH OF ORCUS

Encounter Level 24 (32,500 XP)

SETUP

- 1 aspect of Orcus
- 2 blackstar annihilators
- 1 Dawn War ghost
- 1 voidsoul specter

This encounter begins when the adventurers execute the Summon Raven Aspect ritual, which takes an hour to perform (see page 17). Use the same poster map as the previous encounter. This encounter has no tactical map—the monsters approach from the northwest.

When the adventurers begin the ritual, read:

You begin the Raven Queen's ritual, and as it progresses the runes on the arch of Nerull's Gate darken and then begin to glow with blue light. As you perform the last incantations, the arch turns with a loud grinding sound. It makes a complete rotation, stopping briefly three times as it comes around.

First, you hear the calls of ravens and a swirling form appears in the arch. Black motes of darkness—like tiny, swarming ravens—slowly unite to form the regal form of the Raven Queen.

"Excellent," she says. "You have done perfectly, and I salute your tenacity and competence. Now, wait a moment, and I shall divine what it is we need to know."

Her wings extend, and she bows her head. The sound of circling ravens again fills the air.

2 Blackstar Annihilators		Level 23 Artillery
Medium elemental animate		XP 5,100 each
Initiative +20 Senses Perception +23; darkvision		
HP 168; Bloodied 84		
AC 35; Fortitude 34, Reflex 36, Will 34		
Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed 5, fly 8 (clumsy)		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+30 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
⊗ Meteor Bolt (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +28 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 8 damage, and the target takes -2 to saving throws and ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).		
Blackstar Fall (standard; encounter)		
The blackstar annihilator can fly 8 squares and enter an enemy's space; +28 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. <i>Miss:</i> The target is pushed 1 square. If the target cannot be pushed, the blackstar annihilator ends its move in an unoccupied square adjacent to the target. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> When it lands, the blackstar annihilator attacks: close burst 3; targets enemies; +26 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone. The burst area becomes difficult terrain.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Primordial
Str 18 (+15)	Dex 28 (+20)	Wis 24 (+18)
Con 24 (+18)	Int 8 (+10)	Cha 7 (+9)

Aspect of Orcus		Level 24 Elite Brute
Large elemental humanoid (demon)		XP 12,100
Initiative +15		Senses Perception +21; darkvision
Lesser Aura of Death (Necrotic) aura 10; enemies that enter or start their turns in the aura take 5 necrotic damage (10 necrotic damage while the aspect of Orcus is bloodied).		
HP 560; Bloodied 280		
AC 37; Fortitude 39, Reflex 35, Will 36		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic, 10 variable (3/ encounter; see glossary)		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Skull Mace (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic, Weapon		
Reach 2; +27 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).		
† Tail Lash (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves or shifts into a square adjacent to the aspect of Orcus; at-will)		
+27 vs. AC; 2d6 + 10 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
⊖ Necrotic Burst (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic		
Close burst 3; targets enemies; +23 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 5 necrotic damage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Arcana +23, History +23, Intimidate +24, Religion +23		
Str 30 (+22)	Dex 17 (+15)	Wis 19 (+16)
Con 30 (+22)	Int 22 (+18)	Cha 25 (+19)
Equipment skull mace		

ORCUS ARRIVES

The aspect of Orcus and its allies try to approach the arch undetected. The voidsoul specter approaches first, using its invisibility ability.

A character keeping watch might hear the specter (requires a passive Perception 34). The adventurers feel the temperature fall when the specter's aura touches them, but only PCs within the aura can use that clue to help locate the undead. The specter remains invisible and opens with *life siphon* on as many targets as possible.

A character on a tower during the specter's attack could see the aspect of Orcus's approach (DC 24 Perception check), and warn the party. Such a character automatically spots the monsters when they are within 50 feet of the site.

When the aspect of Orcus attacks, show them the "View of Orcus Attacks" illustration on page 28 of Adventure Book One, then read:

Suddenly, the Raven Queen's head snaps skyward, and her eyes grow fierce with anger.

"The Great Beast is upon us," she says.

Howling in rage as it appears over the walls, Orcus rushes toward the Raven Queen.

RAVEN QUEEN IN COMBAT

The Raven Queen is a story element here, but give her a place in the initiative order just after the aspect of Orcus. Describe her combat with Orcus as one in which the demon prince gains the upper hand. Her aspect is primarily sensory, but she manages to harm Orcus before she departs. On the second round, just before the Raven Queen acts, read:

Orcus smites the Raven Queen with his mace, and she staggers back, pained and wounded. She looks to you, and you hear her voice in your mind.

"The place you seek is the Reliquary of Timesus, nearly 40 miles to the northeast. Your map now shows this location, and you shall mark it as the place where great black monoliths, squared in their ancient shaping, rake the sky. Use this knowledge well. I've not much power left in this place, but enough to aid you one last time. If you defeat this dog, he will be unable to return to this place for at least a decade. Strike well, my faithful."

The Raven Queen glows, and she phases through Orcus, taking a ghostly double of the demon prince with her. Orcus staggers and snarls, swinging his mace at her departing form. His blow connects, but she flies into Nerull's Gate. In a flash, she disappears.

TACTICS

Orcus attacks the Raven Queen's aspect during the first two rounds of this battle, even if a PC marks him. He starts by slamming into her with his entire body as he lands, knocking her to the ground. On his next turn, he opens with a *necrotic burst* if marked or near numerous foes, and he then uses his action point to smite the Raven Queen with his mace. He saves his action point for later if using it early would be a waste. Orcus is otherwise a straightforward brute. He uses his mace and tail, employing *necrotic burst* whenever he can, cursing the Raven Queen and the PCs in Common and Abyssal.

The blackstar annihilators use *blackstar fall* on the PCs first, catching the Raven Queen in the area if they can. They then take to the air and rain down ranged attacks, resorting to melee only if forced into close combat.

The voidsoul specter uses its minor action to become invisible after each melee attack it makes. It stalks the battlefield, moving at half speed and using *Stealth* to make itself a harder to hit target.

The Dawn War ghost quickly uses both of its encounter powers, sustaining *relive the war* to divide PCs who hang back from melee. It then uses *ghostly possession* on a PC, preferring an arcane or divine character.

TREASURE

Orcus's skull mace isn't magical, but it is an art object worth 35,000 gp.

Dawn War Ghost

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 23 Controller

XP 5,100

Initiative +19

Senses Perception +15; darkvision

Memories of War (Fear, Psychic) aura 3; enemies that enter or start their turns in the aura take 10 psychic damage and is slowed.

The area is filled with ghostly images and sounds of the ghost's memories of the Dawn War.

HP 148; **Bloodied** 74

AC 37; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 34

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** insubstantial

Speed fly 8 (hover); phasing

⊕ **Trauma Touch** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Psychic**

+26 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 9 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the ghost's next turn.

‡ **Traumatic Possession** (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ◆ **Charm, Psychic**

Targets a living humanoid; +26 vs. Will; the ghost enters the target's space and is removed from play, and the target is dominated (save ends). The ghost can use this power against one creature at a time. Instead of dictating the target's action, the ghost can cause the target to take no action and deal it 20 psychic damage. When the target is no longer dominated, or when the ghost chooses to end its *ghostly possession* (a free action), the ghost reappears in an unoccupied square adjacent to the target.

◀ **Mortal Terror** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Fear, Psychic**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 1d8 + 9 psychic damage, the target is pushed 5 squares, and the target is dazed, and takes ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends both).

Spectral Shift (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The ghost shifts 3 squares.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common, Elven

Skills Stealth +24

Str 11 (+11)

Dex 26 (+19)

Wis 8 (+10)

Con 20 (+16)

Int 12 (+12)

Cha 24 (+18)

Description This shadowy spirit wears the form of a regal male eladrin in ancient robes. Its hollow eyes are wide with madness.

Voidsoul Specter

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 23 Lurker

XP 5,100

Initiative +23

Senses Perception +16; darkvision

Spectral Cold (Cold) aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 cold damage and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the start of its next turn.

HP 115; **Bloodied** 57

AC 35; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 34

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 30 necrotic, insubstantial;

Vulnerable 10 radiant

Speed fly 8 (hover); phasing

⊕ **Spectral Touch** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**

+25 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 6 necrotic damage.

◀ **Life Siphon** (standard; encounter) ◆ **Healing, Necrotic**

Close blast 5; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 6 necrotic damage, and the voidsoul specter regains 5 hit points for every creature damaged by the attack.

Invisibility (minor 1/round; at-will) ◆ **Illusion**

The voidsoul specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack. It remains invisible while using *life siphon*.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common

Skills Stealth +24

Str 12 (+12)

Dex 26 (+19)

Wis 10 (+11)

Con 19 (+15)

Int 11 (+11)

Cha 23 (+17)

ENCOUNTER D7: SPOILS OF WAR

Encounter Level 23 (25,500 XP)

SETUP

- 1 astral warwing commander (C)
- 2 astral warwings (W)
- 1 stasis vault trap (A for anchor points)

The adventurers find this Dawn War preserve by climbing to the top of the severed spire (DC 20 Athletics check to climb, height is 50 feet).

When adventurers climb to the top, read:

Smooth and shiny in the dim silver light, the surface of the spire's top is like black glass. It descends toward a circular opening that drops into the spire's dark interior.

The adventurers must drop to the floor that is 40 feet beneath them (4d10 damage if no precautions are taken). Characters feel growing dread while approaching the opening.

When the adventurers reach the inner chamber, read:

You land in the southern end of an ovoid-shaped chamber. Silver light with no discernible source floods the chamber, and ornamental carvings cover every interior surface. Across from your entry point is a massive door that looks like it slides up or down. Two similar but smaller doors flank it on the side walls.

A suit of armor and a weapon floats in the middle of a square of blue and silver light, rotating about 10 feet above the floor.

2 Astral Warwings (W) Level 23 Soldier

Large immortal animate (construct) XP 5,100

Initiative +20 Senses Perception +18

HP 214; Bloodied 107

Regeneration 10 (if the astral warwing takes necrotic damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 39; Fortitude 35, Reflex 35, Will 35

Immune disease, poison, sleep

Speed fly 8 (hover)

⚡ Astral Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning, Radiant, Weapon
Reach 2; +30 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 lightning and radiant damage, and target is marked until the end of astral warwing's next turn.

⚡ Mace Sweep (standard; recharge [5]; [1]) ♦ Lightning, Radiant, Weapon
Close blast 2; +28 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 lightning and radiant damage, and target is dazed until the end of astral warwing's next turn.

Combat Vigilance

If a target that the astral warwing has marked shifts or makes an attack that does not include the astral warwing, the astral warwing can make an *astral mace* attack as a free action against that target.

Alignment Unaligned Languages telepathy 20
Str 25 (+18) Dex 24 (+18) Wis 24 (+18)
Con 22 (+17) Int 8 (+10) Cha 8 (+10)

A blue line bounds the stasis vault's perimeter, a nearly invisible energy field that extends floor to ceiling. Its anchor points are shown on the map (A); each is a pair—one point on the floor and one on the ceiling. The Dawn War armor and Dawn War weapon, each level 25, float upon an anchor point. The creatures in this encounter are not visible when the adventurers enter.

When the warwings emerge, show the players the "View of the Dawn War Preserve" illustration on page 28 of *Adventure Book One*, then, read:

A glittering silver construct emerges from behind each door, limned in silver light that resembles brilliant wings. Each is an armored, vaguely humanoid shape, floating legless above the floor. As big as a titan, the largest has massive arms and a head like a knight's helm with a pointed tail. Silver lightning whirls and rumbles in its torso and dances on its armor. The smaller constructs, each as big as an ogre, are slimmer but no less fearsome.

Astral Warwing Commander (C) Level 23 Elite Controller

Huge immortal animate (construct) XP 10,200

Initiative +18 Senses Perception +18

Commander's Boon aura 10; astral warwings that start their turn in the aura gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

HP 418; Bloodied 209

Regeneration 10 (if the astral warwing takes necrotic damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 37; Fortitude 35, Reflex 34, Will 34

Immune disease, poison, sleep

Saving Throws +2

Speed fly 8 (hover)

Action Points 1

⚡ Astral Blade (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon
Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.

⚡ Blade Sweep (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon
Close burst 3; +26 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage, and target is pushed 3 squares.

☞ Astral Target (minor 1/round; at-will)
Ranged sight; +27 vs. Reflex; the target is illuminated in astral fire, slowed, and takes an additional 1d10 + 8 damage from attacks made against it by astral warwings (save ends both).

⚡ Clearing Burst (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic
Area burst 2 within sight; +27 vs. Will; 2d8 + 7 psychic damage. In addition, this power targets any conjuration or zone in the burst; +27 vs. creator's Will; conjuration or zone is destroyed, all its effects end, and its creator is dazed (save ends).

⚡ Astral Thunder (standard; encounter) ♦ Radiant, Thunder
Close blast 5; targets enemies; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 7 thunder and radiant damage, and the target is deafened and blinded (save ends both), and knocked prone. Miss: Half damage, and the target is deafened (save ends), but not blinded or knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned Languages telepathy 20
Str 27 (+19) Dex 24 (+18) Wis 24 (+18)
Con 23 (+17) Int 12 (+12) Cha 12 (+12)

TACTICS

The astral warwings attack only if a character takes any direct action against or triggers the stasis vault. They operate under orders to protect the last treasures stored in this place to the exclusion of all other concerns.

Stasis Vault (A)

Level 23 Warlord

Trap

XP 5,100

Silver-blue lines of glowing energy form a floor-to-ceiling box in the center of this ovoid-shaped chamber.

Trap: The stasis vault is meant to keep its contents in and trespassers out, but its semivisible shell allows would-be looters to see within.

Perception

◆ **DC 29:** The character spots the astral diamonds that serve as the anchors for the stasis vault, and can target those anchors.

Additional Skill: Arcana

- ◆ **DC 16:** The character senses the magic of the stasis vault's walls. The check isn't possible from more than 5 squares away.
- ◆ **DC 24:** After detecting the stasis vault or seeing it in action, the character identifies it, and understands how it attacks and that it has anchors that must be disabled to breach it.
- ◆ **DC 29 (trained only):** The character can see the stasis vault walls and understands its weaknesses. Such a character knows where the anchors are and gains +2 on any countermeasure check.

Trigger A

When a creature tries to enter a stasis vault square without using a countermeasure, or ends its turn adjacent to but not inside the vault's perimeter, the vault uses attack A. When a creature tries to teleport into the vault, it is shunted to the nearest square outside the vault, and the teleporting creature is attacked in that square.

Attack A

Opportunity Action **Melee 1**

Targets: Triggering creature

Attack: +27 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 4d10 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends), pushed 3 squares, and knocked prone.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

Effect: When the stasis vault attacks, the energy web become visible for a split second as a fluctuating weave of silvery energy.

Trigger B

A creature enters or starts its turn within the vault.

Attack B

Opportunity Action **Melee 1**

Target: Triggering creature

Attack: +27 vs. Will

Hit: 2d10 damage, and the target is stunned until the start of its next turn.

Miss: No damage, and the target is slowed and must succeed on a DC 24 Athletics check to move 1 square. For every 5 points by which the check result exceeds the DC, the character can move another square. (The character can still run, if the check allows enough movement.)

Countermeasures

- ◆ A DC 29 Acrobatics check allows a character to move by any means through the stasis vault's perimeter into its area without triggering trigger A.
- ◆ A character adjacent to an anchor point can disable it with a DC 29 Thievery check or a DC 31 Arcana check. If half the anchor points are disabled, the vault collapses and all its effects end.
- ◆ If a creature leaves the stasis vault with the last of the vault's contents, the vault collapses and is destroyed. All its effects end.

The astral warwing commander employs *astral thunder* as soon as it makes the most sense. Otherwise, it attempts to stay back and attack with *astral target* and *clearing burst*.

The astral warwings protect the astral war commander. They split up to mark melee combatants for later use of *combat vigilance*, favoring enemies who try to engage the commander.

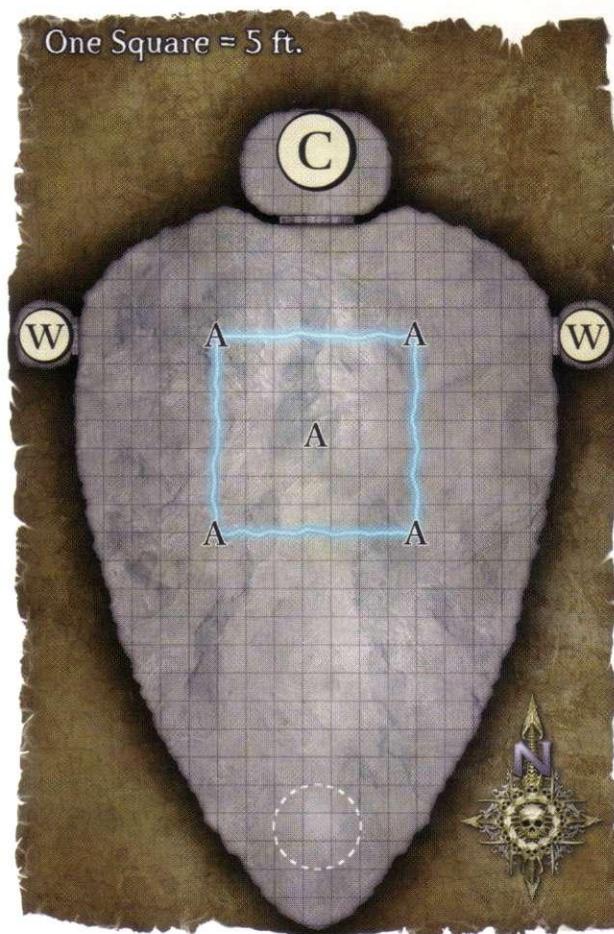
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. A silvery radiance covers this area.

Astral Field: Astral energy protects the spiritual integrity of this locale and bathes the interior in the silver light. A soul survives for 12 hours when exposed to Death's Reach here, and rests taken here are uninterrupted.

Treasure: Dawn War armor and a Dawn War weapon, each 25th level, rest within the stasis vault, along with 13 astral diamonds that are focuses for the vault. See page 24 of *Adventure Book One* for details.

Walls and Ceiling: The carvings make the walls easy to climb (DC 15 Athletics check). In fact, climbing among the carvings in the ceiling is possible (DC 25 Athletics check).



ENCOUNTER D8: RELIQUARY APPROACH

Encounter Level 23 (28,200 XP)

SETUP

- 1 phane wraith (P)
- 2 blackstar crushers (C)
- 5 time wraiths

The blackstar crushers hide within the guardian monoliths, melded with the stone until intruders approach. Twenty feet above the ground, the phane wraith is using its *dead to time and space* power. None of the creatures can be seen as the adventurers move toward the reliquary entrance. They are alert and wait for intruders to approach close enough to launch their ambush.

When the adventurers approach the area, read:

Gigantic shafts of stone, carved from single spires of rock, stab into the clouded sky. Carved into these monoliths, relief images show a great flaming rock crashing to the ground. Symbols like writing cover each monolith in a twisting script. A few paces beyond the monoliths is a wide opening, carved to resemble a great maw. A ramp leads downward into darkness.

When the blackstar crushers attack, read:

With a sound like glass scraped across glass, an apelike construct of smooth black stone emerges from each monolith, floating slightly above the ground. The size of a giant, each creature is legless and hunched, with massive striking limbs.

2 Blackstar Crushers (C)		Level 24 Brute
Large elemental animate		XP 6,050
Initiative +19	Senses Perception +19; darkvision	
Blackstar Gravity aura 5; any enemy within the aura at the start of the blackstar crusher's turn is pulled 2 squares.		
HP 275; Bloodied 137		
AC 36; Fortitude 36, Reflex 34, Will 34		
Resist 15 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed fly 5 (clumsy)		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +27 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage.		
⚡ Meteoric Shockwave (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ Force		
Close burst 3; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 12 force damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares and knocked prone.		
If the target hits a wall or other unmovable object as a result of the push, the target stops in the last unoccupied square and takes an additional 1d10 + 4 force damage from impacting against the wall or unmovable object.		
↘ Focused Gravity (standard; at-will) ♦ Force		
Ranged 20; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 7 force damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Alignment Evil	Languages –	
Str 28 (+21)	Dex 25 (+19)	Wis 24 (+19)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 4 (+9)	Cha 7 (+10)

Time Wraith		Level 21 Minion
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 800
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 36; Fortitude 32, Reflex 33, Will 31		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, insubstantial		
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing		
⊕ Shadow Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+26 vs. Reflex; 12 necrotic damage.		
Spiritual Connection		
The time wraith marks the target from which it was created until the time wraith is destroyed, or the mark is otherwise superseded or ended. A target cannot produce another time wraith while so marked. When the time wraith is reduced to 0 hit points, the target from which it originated is dazed until the end of that target's next turn.		
Alignment Evil	Languages –	
Str 6 (+8)	Dex 25 (+17)	Wis 6 (+8)
Con 22 (+16)	Int 6 (+8)	Cha 20 (+15)

Phane Wraith (P)		Level 24 Elite Controller
Large shadow magical beast (undead)		XP 12,100
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +24; darkvision	
HP 315; Bloodied 157		
Regeneration 15 (if the phane wraith takes radiant damage, regeneration is negated until the end of its next turn)		
AC 38; Fortitude 36, Reflex 38, Will 36		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, insubstantial;		
Vulnerable 10 radiant (see also regeneration above)		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed fly 10 (hover); phasing		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Ghost Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
Reach 2; +27 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 11 necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares, and is weakened until the end of the phane wraith's next turn. The phane wraith can shift before and after the attack, up to a total of 4 squares.		
↘ Ray of Temporal Possibility (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic, Teleportation		
Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 11 psychic damage, and the target is teleported 7 squares and restrained (save ends). Aftereffect: The target is slowed (save ends).		
⚡ Ghost Tempest (standard; at-will; not usable when bloodied) ♦ Necrotic		
Close burst 1; +25 vs. Will; 1d10 + 11 necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares, and is weakened and insubstantial until the end of the phane wraith's next turn. If possible, a time wraith appears in the target's original space and enters the initiative order.		
Temporal Fugue (minor; at-will)		
By moving backward and forward in time, a phane wraith cancels one condition or type of ongoing damage effecting it.		
Dead to Time and Space		
The phane wraith is invisible and immune to all damage until it attacks or avoids the damage from an area or close attack.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial, Supernal	
Str 12 (+13)	Dex 28 (+21)	Wis 25 (+19)
Con 25 (+19)	Int 28 (+21)	Cha 10 (+12)

When the phane wraith appears, read:

Out of nowhere, hovering between the monoliths, dark mist coalesces into a centaurlike form blacker than a starless night. The creature's lower body is that of a hunting cat whose legs and tail trail off into nothingness. Where the cat's head would be, a humanoid torso sprouts, topped with a long, featureless head with two burning red eyes. Ripples pass through the creature as if it can barely hold its incorporeal body together.

When a time wraith appears, read:

A shadowy, diaphanous, and twisted double of you appears in the space you just left. Although barely physical, it is palpably malevolent and burns your mind with its mocking presence.

TACTICS

The blackstar crushers hurl themselves at the party. They charge in and utilize *meteoric shockwave* to throw PCs at other party members. In their predatory cunning, they stay close enough to their enemies so that *blackstar gravity* keeps numerous targets hindered. The crushers prefer to remain near the ground.

When it attacks, the phane wraith dives on the PCs to use *ghost tempest*. Its aim is to produce as many time wraiths as possible. It can create one time wraith from a target at a time; it cannot create a new time wraith from a target until that target's time wraith has been destroyed. It cannot use this power while it is bloodied. When unable to make melee attacks or its close burst attack, the phane wraith employs *ray of temporal possibility* to restrain and place targets in range of a blackstar crusher.

If it has a choice, a time wraith attacks a target other than the creature from which it was created. It prefers to target a creature with which its PC double has a strong positive relationship.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

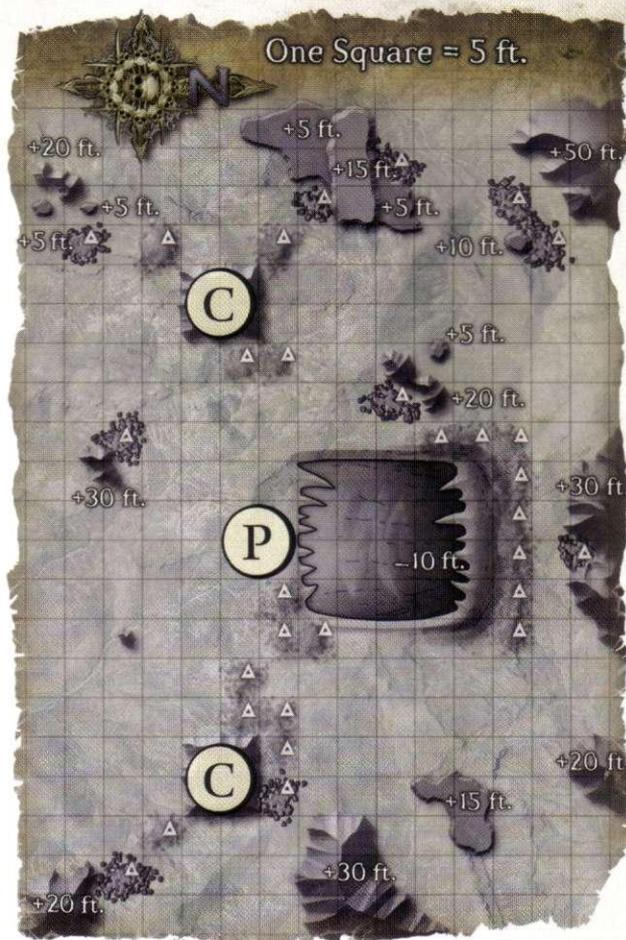
Illumination: Dim light. Death Reach's usual pall covers this area.

Dust Drifts: These piles are difficult terrain.

Entrance Ramp: From its 20-foot opening, this ramp descends steeply 300 feet into the ground. The dusty ramp is difficult terrain to creatures moving up it. Creatures that fall into the opening near its northern end drop 10 feet (1d10 damage).

Guardian Monoliths: Each of these highly polished shafts (DC 30 Athletics check to climb) allows a single blackstar creature to meld with it. The melded creature's senses are unobstructed, and it gains resist 30 to all damage while melded. Once a melded creature leaves the monolith, it cannot meld again for 1 hour.

The words accompanying the images on the monoliths are Primordial, in the Barazhad script: *The hammer of the heavens sleeps. Its reawakening shall be the call of doom to all immortals.*



History DC 24/Religion DC 29: The words and images could refer to the Black Star, a primordial who took the shape of a terrifying falling star. The gods defeated and imprisoned this creature in Death's Reach during the Dawn War.

Rocks: These black rocks create difficult terrain (+5 feet) or blocking terrain (DC 15 Athletics check to climb) in their squares.

Rock Spires: These riblike spires rise to the heights noted on the map. A spire creates difficult terrain if it doesn't fill its square (in which case it's blocking). Catching hold after falling (DC 30 Athletics check) deals 1d10 damage.

Rubble: The rubble is difficult terrain. A DC 29 Arcana check allows a character to recognize the remains as the remnants of blackstar host creatures.

INTERLUDE: UNEXPECTED AMBUSH

Encounter Level 19 (13,100 XP)

SETUP

- 1 flameharrow lord
- 2 bodak reavers
- 1 death hag
- 3 abyssal ghoul hungerers

The first time the adventurers stop to take an extended rest in Death's Reach, this encounter occurs. If the adventurers refuse to take an extended rest in Death's Reach, then roll 1d20 whenever they take a short rest, adding +1 to the result each time. On a result of 15 or greater, this encounter occurs. Use whatever map the adventurers are on when they take their rest.

The flameharrow lord approaches the adventurers first, while its companions remain out of sight but nearby. Read:

An emaciated figure in a tattered cloak steps from concealment, its face obscured by a ragged hood. The figure sweeps back the hood with a bony hand to reveal a bare skull. A gleaming gem is set into each eye socket—one black, one red.

It says, "I've greatly enjoyed cutting the still-beating heart from one of your friends back in the natural world. As the Ashen Covenant commands, you're next!"

The flameharrow lies to elicit concern and perhaps even fear in one of its targets. It claims that it has killed someone that one of the PCs knows back in the natural world. This isn't true, but the flameharrow only cares about sowing doubt, anger, and fear in its opponents.

The flameharrow lord fights on its own for one round. In the second round, on their initiative counts, its companions emerge from hiding to join the battle. Read:

A mob of undead spill into the area to join the cloaked skeleton. One, a hag of some sort, shouts, "The Ashen Covenant demands blood!"

FLAMEHARROW LORD

A rare form of undead often mistaken for a lich or skeleton, the flameharrow (sometimes referred to as an "eye of fear and flame") is an agent of utter chaos and wanton destruction. Although capable of intricate schemes and patient evil, it is most satisfied when wreaking pain and terror for the sheer joy of it. A number of flameharrows serve Elder Arantham. A flameharrow lord is an advanced version of the base creature, which was first introduced in "The Ashen Covenant" (*Dragon* 364). Check out *D&D Insider*™ for more information.

Flameharrow Lord Level 20 Elite Controller (Leader)

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 5,600

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +17; darkvision
Spiritual Inferno aura 5; any undead ally within the aura gains resist 15 fire, and deals an extra ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends) with its melee or ranged attacks.

HP 374; **Bloodied** 187

AC 34; **Fortitude** 31; **Reflex** 33; **Will** 35

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 20 necrotic, 25 fire; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, teleport 5

Action Points 1

⊕ **Flameharrow Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**
 +25 vs. AC; 1d10 + 9 fire damage, and the target can't spend healing surges until the end of the flameharrow's next turn.

⊙ **Harrowing Gaze** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Fear, Gaze, Psychic**
 Ranged 10; +24 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares. The target is dazed until the end of the flameharrow's next turn.

◀ **Deadfire Gaze** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Gaze, Necrotic**
 Close blast 5; targets enemies; +22 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 10 necrotic damage, ongoing 10 fire damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends both).

↻ **Death's Salvation** (immediate interrupt, when an undead ally is reduced to 0 hit points; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ) ♦ **Healing**
 Ranged 10; targeted undead ally regains 25 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

Str 15 (+12) **Dex** 16 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+12)

Con 19 (+14) **Int** 23 (+16) **Cha** 26 (+18)



2 Bodak Reavers

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 18 Soldier

XP 2,000 each

Initiative +16**Senses** Perception +17; darkvision

Agonizing Gaze (Fear, Gaze, Necrotic) aura 5; a creature in the aura that makes a melee or a ranged attack against the bodak reaver takes 5 necrotic damage before the attack roll is made and takes a -2 penalty to the attack roll.

HP 175; **Bloodied** 87**AC** 31; **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 31

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 20 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant; a bodak reaver that takes radiant damage can't weaken a target until the end of its next turn.

Speed 5⊕ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**

+23 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 18) plus 1d8 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed and weakened (save ends both).

↘ **Death Gaze** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Gaze, Necrotic**

Ranged 10; targets a living creature; +20 vs. Fortitude; if the target is weakened, it is reduced to 0 hit points; otherwise, the target takes 1d6 + 6 necrotic damage and loses a healing surge.

Death Drinker

If a living creature is reduced to 0 hit points within 5 squares of the bodak reaver, the reaver gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn, as well as 15 temporary hit points.

Alignment Evil**Languages** Common**Str** 22 (+15)**Dex** 21 (+14)**Wis** 16 (+12)**Con** 23 (+15)**Int** 10 (+9)**Cha** 23 (+15)**Equipment** plate armor, greataxe**Death Hag**

Medium fey humanoid

Level 18 Soldier

XP 2,000

Initiative +15**Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision**HP** 171; **Bloodied** 85; see also *life drain***AC** 34; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 32**Resist** 10 necrotic**Speed** 6⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+24 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is marked and cannot spend healing surges or regain hit points until the end of the death hag's next turn.

↖ **Life Drain** (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ **Healing, Necrotic**

Close blast 3; +22 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and the death hag regains 5 hit points for each creature damaged by this attack.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ **Polymorph**

A death hag can alter its physical form to appear as female of any Medium humanoid race (see *Change Shape*, *Monster Manual* page 280).

Alignment Evil**Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Bluff +19, Insight +17, Intimidate +19, Nature +17**Str** 25 (+16)**Dex** 18 (+13)**Wis** 17 (+12)**Con** 19 (+13)**Int** 16 (+12)**Cha** 20 (+14)**3 Abyssal Ghoul Hungerers**

Medium elemental humanoid (undead)

Level 18 Minion

XP 500 each

Initiative +17**Senses** Perception +14; darkvision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see also *dead blood*.**AC** 30; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 25**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic**Speed** 8, climb 4⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+21 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

↖ **Dead Blood** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Necrotic**

Close burst 1; targets enemies; the target takes 5 necrotic damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil**Languages** Abyssal**Skills** Stealth +22**Str** 26 (+17)**Dex** 25 (+16)**Wis** 17 (+12)**Con** 23 (+15)**Int** 19 (+13)**Cha** 13 (+10)**TACTICS**

The flameharrow lord begins combat with its *flameharrow claw*. It immediately follows up with *harrowing gaze* as a minor action, using it on the character who seems most likely to deal exceptional melee damage. If it hasn't moved, it uses its other minor at-will power, *deadfire gaze* on one or more PCs in range. The flameharrow lord continues to use the latter two attacks (foregoing its claws unless a character gets close) each round, saving *death's salvation* to keep its allies in play.

The bodak reavers begin combat with their *death gaze*, then wade forward with their great axes.

The death hag moves to use *life drain*, then continues to use its claws as often as possible.

The abyssal ghoul hungerers attack characters who menace the flameharrow lord.

ENCOUNTER R1: ENTRY HALL

Encounter Level 22 (23,700 XP)

SETUP

Maliwan, dark naga (M)
 1 bodak reaver (B)
 4 blackstar pawns (P)
 2 blackstar knights (K)

This encounter takes place in Locations 1 and 2 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

The dark naga Maliwan and her bodak assistant are responsible for impressing Ashen Covenant control on blackstar host creatures freed from deeper inside the reliquary. Once Maliwan uses its device (*Brand of the Ashen Covenant*; see Features of the Area), a fragment of Timesus can be sworn to the service of the Ashen Covenant.

The blackstar creatures begin the encounter prone. They have just been animated and await Maliwan's bidding (they do not react to outside stimulus until that command comes). Maliwan the dark naga tends to the blackstar creatures, while the bodak reaver aids in the efforts.

When the adventurers arrive, read:

A long hall stretches before you. Three sets of black metallic double doors stand closed on the north and south walls. A grand altar looms at chamber's eastern end, over which hangs a winged sculpture. A pile of dirt and stone-encrusted skulls lies before the altar.

Lying on the floor, as if in the process of being sorted or prepared, are six strange stone statues. Standing above them is a snakelike monster covered in fine purple scales with a face that combines human and ophidian features. Next to it is a gray-fleshed, hairless humanoid with white, empty eyes. It carries a black rod. The snake-thing hisses in clear Common, "You're late! Elder Arantham will have your hides! Come, help me sort these properly!"

OPPORTUNITY TO PARLAY

When the adventurers enter this area, Maliwan initially believes they are agents of Elder Arantham. However, this impression fades unless at least one character wears or wields paraphernalia of the cult. If one PC is so equipped (perhaps taken from a cultist on the surface), they can attempt to fool Maliwan. Two successful Bluff checks opposed by Maliwan's Insight check (with a +5 bonus to Maliwan's check to account for suspicion) before one failure convinces Maliwan to open the Altar Soaring so the "recruits" can find Elder Arantham deeper inside. The naga also tells the PCs the Primordial pass phrase "Timesus Ascendant" to prevent the guardians in the flanking chambers (Locations 4 and 5) from emerging.

Bodak Reaver (B)

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 18 Soldier

XP 2,000

Initiative +16

Senses Perception +17; darkvision

Agonizing Gaze (Fear, Gaze, Necrotic) aura 5; a creature in the aura that makes a melee or a ranged attack against the bodak reaver takes 5 necrotic damage before the attack roll is made and takes a -2 penalty to the attack roll.

HP 175; Bloodied 87

AC 31; Fortitude 31, Reflex 30, Will 31

Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant; a bodak reaver that takes radiant damage can't weaken a target until the end of its next turn.

Speed 5

⊕ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**

+23 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage (crit 2d12 + 18) plus 1d8 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed and weakened (save ends both).

➤ **Death Gaze** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Gaze, Necrotic**

Ranged 10; targets a living creature; +20 vs. Fortitude; if the target is weakened, it is reduced to 0 hit points; otherwise, the target takes 1d6 + 6 necrotic damage and loses a healing surge.

Death Drinker

If a living creature is reduced to 0 hit points within 5 squares of the bodak reaver, the reaver gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn, as well as 15 temporary hit points.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common

Str 22 (+15)

Dex 21 (+14)

Wis 16 (+12)

Con 23 (+15)

Int 10 (+9)

Cha 23 (+15)

Equipment plate armor, greataxe

Dark Naga (M)

Large immortal magical beast (reptile)

Level 21 Elite Controller

XP 6,400

Initiative +14

Senses Perception +21; darkvision

HP 404; Bloodied 202

AC 36; Fortitude 34, Reflex 33, Will 36

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

⊕ **Tail Sting** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Reach 2; +24 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 poison damage (3d6 + 8 damage against a dazed target), and the target is slowed (save ends).

↖ **Lure** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Charm**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +25 vs. Will; the target is pulled 1 square and dazed (save ends).

↖ **Psychic Miasma** (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ♦ **Psychic**

Close burst 3; +26 vs. Will; 3d6 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is stunned (save ends).

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Draconic, Supernal

Skills History +22, Insight +21, Stealth +19

Str 26 (+18)

Dex 18 (+14)

Wis 22 (+16)

Con 26 (+18)

Int 24 (+17)

Cha 30 (+20)

2 Blackstar Knights (K) **Level 23 Soldier**
XP 5,100 each

Medium elemental animate

Initiative +20 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision
HP 212; **Bloodied** 106
AC 39; **Fortitude** 35 **Reflex** 34, **Will** 35
Resist 15 fire; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Speed 7

⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 +28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blackstar knight's next turn.

⊕ **Deathsword** (standard; recharge ☞ ☞) ♦ **Weapon**
 Requires greatsword; +28 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage, and if the target is marked by the blackstar knight it takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends)

⬅ **Soldier's Duty** (when reduced to 0 hit points)
 The blackstar knight explodes; close burst 2; targets enemies; +24 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 9 damage; marked targets take an additional 1d10 + 9 damage.

No Escape (move; at-will) ♦ **Teleportation**
 The blackstar knight can teleport 10 squares as long as it ends in a square adjacent to an enemy marked by the blackstar knight.

Alignment Evil	Languages Primordial	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 26 (+19)
Con 20 (+16)	Int 10 (+11)	Cha 9 (+10)

Equipment greatsword

4 Blackstar Pawns (P) **Level 23 Minion**
XP 1,275 each

Medium elemental animate

Initiative +18 **Senses** Perception +13; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 37; **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 31
Resist 15 fire
Speed 7

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
 +26 vs. AC; 12 damage (crit 18 damage).

⊕ **Blackstar Ricochet** (immediate reaction, when a blackstar pawn within 5 squares is reduced to 0 hit points; at-will)
 The blackstar pawn shifts 3 squares and collides with an enemy; +24 vs. Fortitude; 8 damage.

Alignment Evil	Languages –	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 14 (+13)
Con 18 (+15)	Int 3 (+7)	Cha 3 (+7)

TACTICS

If Maliwan decides that the adventurers are not the agents it thought they were, or if the characters attack, roll initiative. Maliwan screams, "Arise, Host of the Black Star, and deal with the enemies of your master Timesus!"

The prone blackstar creatures stand up on their first actions. They move to block (or engage and mark) PCs closest to the dark naga. The knights attempt to hold the PCs in place while the naga moves to use its *lure* and tail attack. The bodak begins with its *death gaze* and moves to engage PCs with its greataxe. The pawns engage one target at a time.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Darkness.

Altar Soaring: This massive altar is carved to resemble a primordial of the air. It is composed of a fragment of Timesus, and is thus a member of the blackstar host, but just barely. The altar seals access to Location 6. Indeed, unless PCs examine the wall (DC 29 Perception check to realize there might be something behind it), the altar gives every indication of being the terminus of the chamber.

Over the millennia, the altar has become corrupted; it is more lenient about allowing passage. A living sacrifice on the altar remains a possible trigger, but now placing one of the skulls from the pile before it is sufficient. From the opposite side, the altar slides down with a touch (no sacrifice necessary).

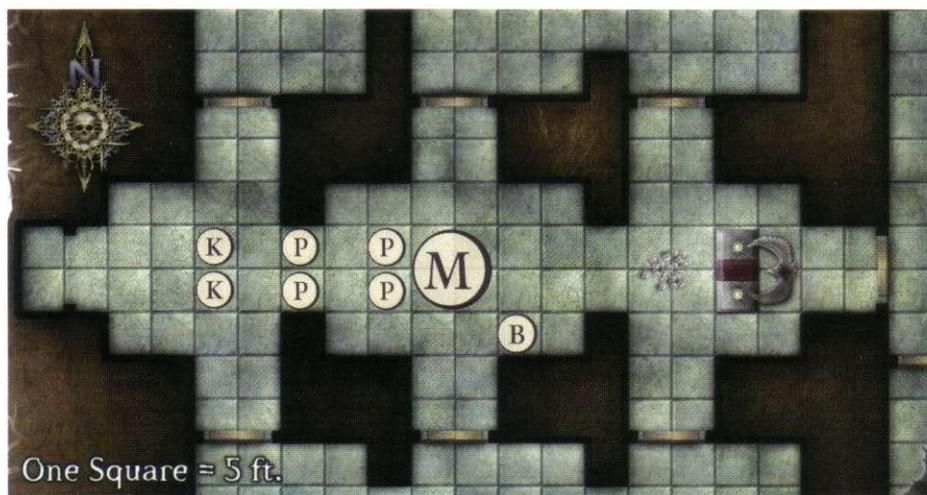
Opening the altar activates the guardians in Locations 4 and 5, if they haven't yet been defeated. The guardians begin to enter this chamber a round after the altar descends. The creatures remain quiet if the pass phrase "Timesus Ascendant" is shouted in Primordial when the altar slides away to reveal the exit.

Brand of the Ashen Covenant: When touched to the body of an inert construct or undead for 1 minute, the black rod brands the creature with the Ashen Covenant's mark (the skull of a ram's head), animates the creature

according to its type, and modifies the creature's allegiance so that it serves the Ashen Covenant. The brand doesn't work on already animate constructs or undead.

History on the Walls: See page 16 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

Pile of Skulls: These were gathered from graves on the surface of Death's Reach. They retain just enough residue of shattered souls to serve as keys to open the Altar Soaring. These squares are difficult terrain.



ENCOUNTER R2: GUARDIAN ALCOVES

Encounter Level 19 (12,000 XP)

SETUP

- 1 blaspheme imperfect keeper (I)
- 2 blaspheme knight keepers (K)
- 1 blaspheme disciple keeper (D)
- 4 blaspheme fragment keepers (F)

This encounter takes place in Location 4 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

In their resting state, the blaspheme creatures are positioned in the alcoves as noted on the tactical map. These guardians have been inactive for so long that they are a little slow to react; roll initiative only after a creature (whether PC or NPC) steps fully into the chamber (and is noticed), or if a guardian is attacked. The blaspheme keepers attack all intruders without bias (they have not been converted to the Ashen Covenant as yet).

If combat in Location 2 spills into these connected chambers, or if the altar in Location 2 is activated without use of the pass phrase, the keepers awaken and join the fight.

When the adventurers enter this chamber, show the players the “View of the Sentries” illustration on page 29 of *Adventure Book One*, then, read:

A half-foot thick layer of dust covers the floor of this double chamber. Ebony alcoves line the far wall. Standing silent within each alcove is a dust-shrouded nightmare-humanoid in shape, each is a composite figure formed of mummified corpse pieces that do not match. Devilish, demonic, and otherwise decidedly nonhuman sections are stitched into a gruesome mixture. The creatures stand like sentries, each staring out of their individual alcove.

BLASPHEMES

Blasphemes are crafted from pieces of corpses and given life through alchemy and magic. Despite their haphazard façade, blasphemes are intelligent, cunning undead. They're often found guarding ancient repositories of knowledge, such as wizards' libraries or shrines to dark gods. Blasphemes have a variety of motivations, ranging from the worship of dark gods and obedience to sinister masters to the pursuit of redemption for their cursed existence. The creatures found in Timesus's Reliquary were recruited as eternal guardians by dark gods aligned against the primordials. Blasphemes were first presented in *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead™*. The creatures detailed here are advanced versions of these monsters.

Blaspheme Imperfect Keeper (I) **Level 19 Brute**
Medium natural animate (construct, undead) XP 2,400

Initiative +13 Senses Perception +13; darkvision
Life Sap (Healing, Necrotic) aura 1; any living enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 necrotic damage. Each round, if at least one enemy is damaged by the aura, the blaspheme imperfect keeper regains 5 hit points.

HP 214; Bloodied 107; see also *bloodied degeneration*
AC 31; Fortitude 32, Reflex 29, Will 29

Immune disease; Resist 15 necrotic; Vulnerable 10 radiant
Speed 7

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**
+22 vs. AC; 2d12 + 11 necrotic damage.

⊕ **Deadly Clutch** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**
Requires a free hand; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 11 necrotic damage, and the target is grabbed; see also *life drain*.

⊕ **Life Drain** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Healing, Necrotic**
Targets a creature grabbed by the blaspheme imperfect keeper; +20 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 9 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge, and the blaspheme imperfect keeper regains 15 hit points.

Bloodied Degeneration (while bloodied)

The blaspheme imperfect keeper's body begins to degenerate, and it enters a state of bloodlust. The blaspheme gains vulnerable 5 to all damage and deals 3d6 extra damage on a hit.

Alignment Evil	Languages —	
Str 24 (+16)	Dex 18 (+13)	Wis 19 (+13)
Con 14 (+11)	Int 14 (+11)	Cha 12 (+10)

Blaspheme Disciple Keeper (D) **Level 19 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium natural animate (construct, undead) XP 2,400 each

Initiative +14 Senses Perception +14; darkvision
HP 136; Bloodied 68

AC 31; Fortitude 29, Reflex 31, Will 33

Immune disease; Resist 15 necrotic, 15 poison; Vulnerable 10 radiant

Speed 6

⊕ **Unholy Smite** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**
+26 vs. AC; 1d10 + 10 necrotic damage.

⤵ **Unholy Ray** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**
Ranged 20; +24 vs. Reflex; 1d12 + 12 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the blaspheme disciple's next turn.

✱ **Words of Undeath** (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ◆ **Necrotic, Psychic**

Area burst 2 within 20; targets enemies; +22 vs. Will; 3d6 + 12 necrotic and psychic damage. In addition, undead allies within the burst regain 10 hit points.

Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Heal +19, Religion +17		
Str 13 (+10)	Dex 20 (+14)	Wis 20 (+14)
Con 16 (+12)	Int 16 (+12)	Cha 24 (+16)

4 Blasphe Fragment Keepers (F) **Level 19 Minion**

Medium natural animate (construct, undead) XP 600 each

Initiative +16 Senses Perception +12; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 33; Fortitude 32, Reflex 31, Will 27

Immune disease; Resist 15 necrotic, 15 poison

Speed 7

Ⓛ Slam (standard; at-will)

+22 vs. AC; 12 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Alignment Evil Languages Common

Str 26 (+17) Dex 25 (+16) Wis 17 (+12)

Con 23 (+15) Int 19 (+13) Cha 13 (+10)

2 Blasphe Knight Keepers (K) **Level 19 Soldier**

Medium natural animate (construct, undead) XP 2,400 each

Initiative +16 Senses Perception +9; darkvision

HP 182; Bloodied 91

AC 35; Fortitude 31, Reflex 29, Will 29

Immune disease; Resist 15 necrotic, 15 poison; Vulnerable 10 radiant

Speed 6

Ⓛ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon

+26 vs. AC; 1d12 + 13 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blaspheme knight keeper's next turn; see also *blasphemous might*.

⚡ Sweeping Cleave (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon

Requires greatsword; close burst 1; +24 vs. AC; 2d12 + 13 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blaspheme knight's next turn; see also *blasphemous might*.**Blasphemous Might** (when a creature marked by the blaspheme knight makes an attack that doesn't include the knight)

Until the end of its next turn, the blaspheme knight deals 3d10 extra necrotic damage when it hits the marked creature.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Common

Str 25 (+16) Dex 20 (+14) Wis 10 (+9)

Con 22 (+15) Int 14 (+11) Cha 20 (+14)

Equipment ornate scale armor, greatsword

TACTICS

The blaspheme knight keeper and blaspheme imperfect keeper rush to attack the closest adventurer, using *sweeping cleave* and *deadly clutch*, respectively. Meanwhile, the blaspheme fragments attempt to move toward the door through which the characters did not enter the chamber in an attempt to gain a flank.

The blaspheme disciple keeper doesn't even move from its alcove; it begins combat with *unholy ray*. It continues to use *unholy ray* for at least one more round, then targets any congregation of blasphemers and adventurers with *words of undeath* in hopes of healing its allies while harming its opponents.

The monsters are happy to allow advancing characters to position themselves in an empty alcove slot, which affects living creatures far differently from how it affects undead (see "Features of the Area"). Despite the regenerative nature of the alcoves for undead, none of the blasphemers retreat if the combat goes poorly; they fight until destroyed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Darkness.

Alcoves: The alcoves are roughly carved of black sedimentary stone; small fossils of strange bony creatures protrude visibly from the stone. The alcoves have an interesting property that preserves undead flesh against the wear of extreme time. Any undead creature that ends its turn in an alcove regains 10 hit points.

On the other hand, any living creature that ends its turn in an alcove is subject to a *necrotic pulse of preservation*. This attack occurs every round a living creature stands within an alcove. If multiple living characters stand in the alcoves, multiple attacks go off at the end of each of their turns. The attacks are not part of a trap; no subtle clues provide creatures unfamiliar with them a hint about their function, and no countermeasures other than not entering the alcoves are useful in preventing the attack.

Ⓛ **Necrotic Pulse of Preservation** (triggered when a living creature ends its turn in an alcove) ♦ **Necrotic**
+28 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

History on the Walls: See page 16 in *Adventure Book One* for details.



ENCOUNTER R3: PORTAL GUARDIANS

Encounter Level 22 (19,625+ XP)

SETUP

- 1 void lich (V)
- 2 blood fiends (B)
- 3 blood fiend martyrs (or more)

This encounter takes place in Location 5 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

The void lich bound to this area is called Ahemoth. Its phylactery lies in a buried, forgotten cyst in the natural world. If Ahemoth is destroyed, it reappears by its phylactery 1d10 days after its destruction. That causes it to be freed from its bondage serving as a guardian in the reliquary. The lich then resumes its ancient plots and schemes that it initiated while the Dawn War yet raged. This development could be the basis for a subsequent adventure for the player characters.

This encounter begins with the void lich and the two blood fiends visible, standing silent and motionless in the chamber. The three blood fiend martyrs appear, one each in front of the three portals, after combat begins.

The reliquary guardians here have stood dormant so long they do not immediately respond to the doors to the room opening; roll initiative only after a creature (whether PC or NPC) steps fully into the chamber or if a guardian is attacked. The creatures here attack all intruders without bias (the lich has not been converted to the Ashen Covenant, and the blood fiends are neither constructs nor undead).

If combat from Location 2 spills into these three connected chambers, or if the altar in Location 2 is activated without use of the pass phrase, the creatures awaken and join the fight.

When any of the three double doors (all sets are unlocked) are opened, read:

A half-foot thick layer of dust covers the floor of this triple chamber. Three 10-foot wide archways open in the center of the far wall of each connected chamber. The archways are filled with an opaque blue radiance. Relief sculptures cover the walls and ceilings of these chambers.

Three creatures stand motionless under a pall of dust, one in each of the three connected chambers. Two are blood-red, hairless humanoids with four arms and massive claws. The final creature is a skeletal human dressed in rotting finery. The faintest suggestion of shadow tentacles writhes like a crown around its skull.

Void Lich (V)

Medium aberrant humanoid (undead)

Level 20 Elite Lurker

XP 5,600

Initiative +13

Senses Perception +18; darkvision

Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light within the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light within the aura is reduced to darkness (if the void lich takes radiant damage, the aura is negated until the end of the void lich's next turn).

HP 296; **Bloodied** 148; see also *indestructible* and *life tap*

AC 34; **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 34

Immune disease, poison, fear; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Saving Throws +2

Speed 4, fly 8 (hover), see also *phase step*

Action Points 1

⊕ **Life Tap** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Healing, Necrotic**

+23 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 7 necrotic damage, and the void lich regains 15 hit points.

↗ **Void Tendrils** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Ranged 10; +23 vs. Will; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is knocked prone and dazed (save ends).

↖ **Frightful Gaze** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Fear, Gaze**

Close blast 3; +21 vs. Will; the target is pushed 5 squares and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is dazed, immobilized, and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends all).

↖ **Hideous Laughter** (minor; recharges when the void lich bloodies an enemy) ♦ **Fear, Psychic**

Close blast 3; +21 vs. Will; 2d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target takes a -5 penalty to all defenses until the end of the void lich's next turn.

Fade to Dusk (minor; recharge ☹️; ☹️)

The void lich becomes insubstantial and invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.

Phase Step (minor; at-will)

The void lich teleports up to 2 squares.

Indestructible

When a void lich is reduced to 0 hit points, its body and possessions dissipate into whips of darkness, but it is not destroyed. It reappears (along with its possessions) in 1d10 days within 1 square of its phylactery, unless the phylactery is also found and destroyed.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 10

Skills Arcana +22, Intimidate +20

Str 16 (+13)

Dex 17 (+13)

Wis 26 (+18)

Con 22 (+16)

Int 24 (+17)

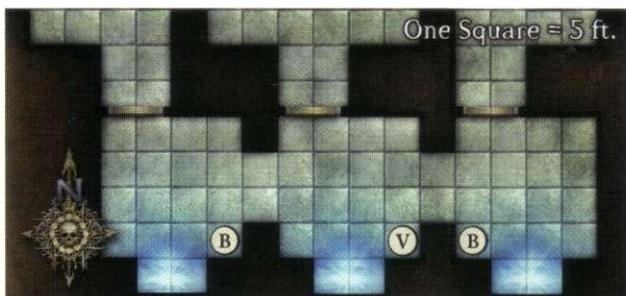
Cha 20 (+15)

VOID LICH

A void lich is created when the soul of a lich-to-be is shunted off to an aberrant realm and is replaced, changelike, by a foul entity that possesses the host lich's body as its own. A void lich can be identified by a shroud of dimness around its head, which sometimes appears as a mass of tentacles. Void liches first appeared in *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*.

2 Blood Fiends (B)		Level 23 Soldier
Medium elemental humanoid		
XP 5,100 each		
Initiative +21 Senses Perception +23; darkvision		
HP 220; Bloodied 110		
AC 41; Fortitude 36, Reflex 34, Will 32		
Immune fear		
Speed 8, fly 10		
⊕ Claws (standard; at-will)		
+28 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage.		
⊕ Bloodthirsty Bite (standard; at-will) ◆ Healing		
Requires combat advantage; +28 vs. AC; 1d8 + 10 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes ongoing 10 damage (until escape). Also, the blood fiend regains 10 hit points.		
← Terror Gaze (minor; at-will) ◆ Fear		
Close blast 3; +24 vs. Will; the target is immobilized (save ends).		
Combat Advantage		
The blood fiend gains combat advantage against any living, bloodied enemy.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Primordial
Skills Intimidate +24		
Str 30 (+21)	Dex 26 (+19)	Wis 24 (+18)
Con 28 (+20)	Int 22 (+17)	Cha 27 (+19)

3+ Blood Fiend Martyrs		Level 23 Minion
Medium elemental humanoid		
XP 1,275 each		
Initiative +19 Senses Perception +18; darkvision		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 37; Fortitude 36, Reflex 34, Will 32		
Immune fear		
Speed 8		
⊕ Claws (standard; at-will)		
+28 vs. AC; 15 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes ongoing 10 damage until the grab ends.		
Combat Advantage		
The blood fiend martyr gains combat advantage against any living, bloodied enemy.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Primordial
Skills Intimidate +24		
Str 30 (+21)	Dex 26 (+19)	Wis 24 (+18)
Con 28 (+20)	Int 22 (+17)	Cha 27 (+19)



TACTICS

When initiative is rolled, roll for the blood fiend martyrs too, despite none being initially present. When their initiative comes up, three blood fiend martyrs appear on the map, one each in one of the two squares before each of the three portals. Every round, if fewer than five martyrs are active at the start of the martyrs' turns, the portals spit out one or more (to a maximum of five in play at any given time) until the portals are deactivated (see "Features of the Area" for details). The PCs earn XP for each blood fiend martyr that they defeat in this encounter.

The blood fiends already present in the chamber shake off the dust of ages and move to place one or more intruders within range of their *terror gaze*, then start in with their bite. These bloodfiends are happy to attack characters that have been grabbed by the martyrs.

The void lich begins combat by using *fade to dusk* (if the area remains dark or dimly lit) and *phase step* to move unexpectedly into the midst of a group of intruders, perhaps even into a flanking position. At that point, it unleashes its *hideous laughter* to lower its foes defenses, then *void tendrils* to keep them off-balance. It uses *life tap* against controllers while keeping defenders at bay with *frightful gaze*.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Darkness.

History on the Walls: See page 16 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

The Martyr's Portals: The portals are actually damage to the fabric of time, created by the ancient entities that built the reliquary. The portals can "summon" blood fiend martyrs as described above as long as their focus is intact. That focus is the skull of a blood fiend set as the keystone atop the middle arch (DC 24 Perception check to notice, followed by a DC 29 Arcana check to determine it might have something to do with portal function). A character can attack the focus (AC 30; Fortitude 27, Reflex 27; 69 hit points); destroying it disables all three portals.

If a creature walks through an arch, it randomly walks out of one of the other two, unscathed.

ENCOUNTER R4: HYDRA DEFEATED

Encounter Level 21 (17,000 XP)

SETUP

- 2 blackstar knights (K)
- 1 rakshasa noble huecuva (R)
- 1 death hag (H)

This encounter takes place in Location 6 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

Elder Arantham's forces defeated the most significant guardians in this chamber. A force remains, composed of converted blackstar knights and loyal Ashen Covenant cultists. The creatures remain in this area but don't move from their places, lest the summoning symbol in the area's center power up again and produce another guardian primordial hydra (as it did when the covenant first entered the chamber).

When the adventurers enter the chamber, read:

Fresh blood and ichor splatter every surface. A glimmering symbol etched in the center of the room slowly alters and shifts from moment to moment. To the north, three alcoves open off the chamber. Two are tiled with rune-covered plates; the central one is empty except for gauzy web fragments. Each runed alcove holds a baroque figure of black stone standing on the symbol-covered plate. A wizened crone naps along the north end of the east wall. In the center of the east wall, a human in ragged clothing stands near a set of adamantine double doors.

2 Blackstar Knights (K)		Level 23 Soldier
Medium elemental animate		XP 5,100 each
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +19; darkvision	
HP 212; Bloodied 106		
AC 39; Fortitude 35 Reflex 34, Will 35		
Resist 15 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed 7		
⚔ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blackstar knight's next turn.		
⚔ Deathsword (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ Weapon		
Requires greatsword; +28 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage, and if the target is marked by the blackstar knight it takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends)		
⚔ Soldier's Duty (when reduced to 0 hit points)		
The blackstar knight explodes; close burst 2; targets enemies; +24 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 9 damage; marked targets take an additional 1d10 + 9 damage.		
No Escape (move; at-will) ♦ Teleportation		
The blackstar knight can teleport 10 squares as long as it ends in a square adjacent to an enemy marked by the blackstar knight.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Primordial	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 26 (+19)
Con 20 (+16)	Int 10 (+11)	Cha 9 (+10)
Equipment greatsword		

If the adventurers proceed directly from Location 2 to this chamber after successfully bluffing Maliwan, that tactic comes to an end. The rakshasa immediately recognizes the adventurers. Likewise, if the adventurers rest and return after dealing with the threats of Location 2, the Ashen Covenant is on alert against invaders.

TACTICS

When the adventurers enter the chamber, the rakshasa noble huecuva is employing its *deceptive veil* power to appear as a defenseless human male. It raises its fingers to its lips and points to the sleeping hag and the motionless blackstar knights. Then it points to the double doors leading to Location 9 (the southeast doors), and motions for the adventurers to pass by. The creature attempts to bluff the characters into entering Location 9. If the adventurers do as the creature suggests, it and the hag pile in behind a few rounds later and attack as the PCs deal the other encounter (see **Encounter R5: Dream Pool**, on page 44).

Whether this ploy fails or succeeds, the rakshasa begins combat with *mind twist*. It uses *frightful phantom* to lure PCs into the webbed alcove, or if in Location 9, into the water.

The death hag rouses from her fake doze to use *life drain*, then moves in to use her claws.

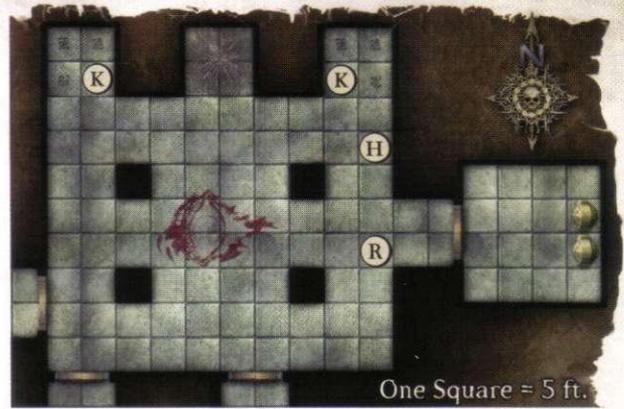
The blackstar knights remain on the rune plates to counter a magical phenomenon that would otherwise call a primordial hydra back to the center of the chamber (see "Features of the Area"). The blackstar knights attack creatures within range, but do not leave the alcoves, even if attacked at range. If the hag or rakshasa see the adventurers attack a knight, one warns, "Do not displace the knights, or the ancient thing will return!"

HUECUVA

Although the Ashen Covenant did not originally create huecuvus, many belong to the movement. Huecuvus were originally the spawn of a divine curse meant to punish priests who violated their vows. Now, a ritual exists to confer this status on powerful evil priests. Those unfortunates who suffer the curse as punishment lose most of their original personality and memories. They are condemned to an existence fraught with insanity, paranoid, and unrelenting self-doubt. Those beings depraved enough to willingly accept the rite suffer no memory loss and gain unholy power, but their personalities shift even further toward evil. Huecuvus were first introduced in "The Ashen Covenant" article (*Dragon* 364). Check out *D&D Insider* for more information.

Death Hag		Level 18 Soldier
Medium fey humanoid		XP 2,000
Initiative +15 Senses Perception +12; low-light vision		
HP 171; Bloodied 85; see also <i>life drain</i>		
AC 34; Fortitude 34, Reflex 31, Will 32		
Resist 10 necrotic		
Speed 6		
① Claw (standard; at-will) ◆ Necrotic		
+24 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is marked and cannot spend healing surges or regain hit points until the end of the death hag's next turn.		
◀ Life Drain (standard; recharge ☼ ☼ ☼) ◆ Healing, Necrotic		
Close blast 3; +22 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and the death hag regains 5 hit points for each creature damaged by this attack.		
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ◆ Polymorph		
A death hag can alter its physical form to appear as female of any Medium humanoid race (see <i>Change Shape</i> , <i>Monster Manual</i> page 280).		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common, Elven
Skills Bluff +19, Insight +17, Intimidate +19, Nature +17		
Str 25 (+16)	Dex 18 (+13)	Wis 17 (+12)
Con 19 (+13)	Int 16 (+12)	Cha 20 (+14)

Rakshasa Noble Huecuva (R)		Level 19 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid		XP 4,800
Initiative +14 Senses Perception +19; darkvision		
Deathless Fanaticism aura 10; any ally within the aura that is reduced to 0 hit points immediately makes a melee basic attack with a +2 bonus to the attack and damage rolls.		
HP 356; Bloodied 178		
Regeneration 5 (damage from silver weapons negates regeneration until the end of the rakshasa noble huecuva's next turn)		
AC 33; Fortitude 31, Reflex 33, Will 34; see also <i>phantom image</i>		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 7		
Action Points 1		
① Unholy Claw (standard; at-will)		
+24 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends). When the target takes ongoing necrotic damage from this power, all adjacent living creatures take 5 necrotic damage.		
➤ Mind Twist (standard; at-will) ◆ Psychic		
Ranged 20; +23 vs. Will; 3d6 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
➤ Phantom Lure (standard; at-will) ◆ Charm		
Ranged 10; +23 vs. Will; the target slides 5 squares.		
➤ Frightful Phantom (standard; recharge ☼ ☼) ◆ Fear		
Ranged 5; +23 vs. Will; 4d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 5 squares and stunned (save ends).		
Deceptive Veil (minor; at-will) ◆ Illusion		
The rakshasa noble huecuva can disguise itself to appear as any Medium humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by the rakshasa's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.		
Phantom Image (minor; recharge ☼ ☼) ◆ Illusion		
Until the end of the rakshasa noble huecuva's next turn, any creature that attacks the rakshasa's AC or Reflex defense must roll twice and use the lower attack roll result. If either result is a critical hit, use that result instead.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common
Skills Arcana +20, Athletics +17, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, History +20, Insight +19, Intimidate +21		
Str 16 (+12)	Dex 20 (+14)	Wis 20 (+14)
Con 18 (+13)	Int 22 (+15)	Cha 24 (+16)



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light. The shifting pattern of light in the center of the chamber illuminates the room.

History on the Walls: See page 16 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

Rune Alcoves: Elder Arantham was able to use clues gathered elsewhere to defeat this puzzle. The two "rune alcoves" are each tiled with four squares bearing an ancient rune. PCs who succeed on a DC 31 Arcana check know the runes predate the Giant script that is currently used for the Primordial language. The runes can be roughly translated as: Greed, Deceit, Corruption, and Destruction (each set of four repeats, but in a different order in each alcove). One blackstar knight stands on Corruption in one alcove, the other on Deceit. If one or both of these runes is allowed to go unoccupied for 5 minutes, a primordial hydra (*Monster Manual* page 165) appears in the center of the chamber. The hydra attacks cultists and adventurers alike. Killing the hydra and occupying the noted squares (any weight of 100 or more pounds, living or dead, will do) prevents a new hydra from appearing.

Webbed Alcove: A nasty undead spider-demon once used this alcove as a lair, but Arantham's cultists destroyed it. The alcove retains a residual influence—each creature that enters it is slowed (save ends).

ENCOUNTER R5: DREAM POOL

Encounter Level 21 (16,200 XP)

SETUP

- 1 chuul juggernaut (C)
- 1 aboleth overseer (A)
- 1 githyanki dreamslicer (G)

This encounter takes place in Location 9 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

The creatures noted above are not initially present in the chamber; they appear only after sentient creatures fully enter the main chamber.

When the adventurers enter from Location 6, read:

A relief-carved passage leads south. The far end of the corridor is sealed with ebony double doors. Dreamy music and wavering blue light emanates from two passages leading east.

When the adventurers look into the main area, read:

A pool fills the far side of this chamber. Its contents roll and break as if part of a larger sea of effervescent, glowing elixir. Runes around the pool spell out a message. Four statues of unfamiliar, multiwinged angels with eyes gouged out stand facing each other near the pool.

When the adventurers enter the main area, read:

A massive wave breaks over the lip of the pool. Even as the wave crests and begins to curl downward, it takes on hue and form, becoming a huge crustacean horror, pincerlike claws and mouth cilia squirming incessantly and dripping with malodorous fumes. Beside it, a creature takes form. It is half-primeval fish, half-enormous slug, with tentacles where fins should be. On the pincer creature's other side, a thin woman with mottled yellow and brown skin takes shape holding a silvery sword.

ABERRANT DREAMS

When the Dawn War raged, the released energy seared dimensional walls, weakening them enough so that creatures from the Far Realm dimly noticed the fledgling creation.

Filled with the tears of angels driven insane by the horrors of the Dawn War, the Dream Pool is resonant to aberrant nightmares. The liquid reacts when thinking beings enter the main chamber, forming creatures glimpsed in far-off realms.

Chuul Juggernaut (C) Level 23 Elite Soldier

Huge aberrant magical beast (aquatic) XP 10,200

Initiative +17 **Senses** Perception +17; darkvision
Psychic Moan (Psychic) aura 1; a chuul juggernaut exudes a constant hum of psychic energy. Enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to Will defense and gain vulnerable 5 psychic.

HP 434; **Bloodied** 217
AC 39; **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 33

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7, swim 7

Action Points 1

Ⓜ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +30 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage, or 5d8 + 8 damage against an immobilized creature.

Ⓜ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

The chuul juggernaut makes two claw attacks. If both claw attacks hit a single target, the chuul juggernaut makes a secondary attack against the same target with its tentacles. **Secondary Attack:** +28 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Ⓜ **Psychic Lure** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

Ranged 10; +29 vs. Will; 2d10 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is pulled 5 squares.

Ⓜ **Tentacle Net** ♦ **Poison**

A creature hit by a chuul juggernaut's opportunity attack is immobilized until the end of the juggernaut's next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Deep Speech

Str 27 (+19) **Dex** 19 (+15) **Wis** 22 (+17)

Con 25 (+18) **Int** 4 (+8) **Cha** 16 (+14)

TACTICS

The chuul's presence makes adventurers within its aura vulnerable to psychic damage, which sets them up for extra damage from the other monsters and the statues here. It pulls foes into range with *psychic lure*. If it immobilizes a foe, it spends its action point to make another double attack against the same target.

The aboleth uses *psychic slime* to hinder its enemies and then selects a target to *dominate*.

The dreamforged mindslicer begins combat by unleashing a *psychic barrage* against multiple enemies. It stays at the edge of the pool, going so far as to walk east along the narrow ledge, and continues assailing foes with its *mindslicer* power until it can recharge and unleash *psychic barrage* again.

When creatures from the Dream Pool are destroyed, they collapse into liquid.

Aboleth Overseer (A) Level 18 Elite Controller (Leader)
Large aberrant magical beast (aquatic) XP 4,000

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +16; darkvision
Mucus Haze aura 5; enemies treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain.

HP 348; **Bloodied** 174
AC 35; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 33
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5, swim 10

Action Points 1

① **Tentacle** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +22 vs. AC; 1d8 + 8 damage (3d8 + 8 damage against a dazed target), and the target is dazed (save ends).

↖ **Psychic Slime** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ◆ **Psychic**

Close burst 10; targets enemies; +20 vs. Will; 2d8 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

↘ **Dominate** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Charm**

Ranged 10; targets a dazed humanoid; +20 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends). An aboleth overseer can dominate only one creature at a time.

↘ **Enslave** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Charm, Psychic**

Ranged 5; targets a dominated creature; +20 vs. Will; 6d8 + 8 psychic damage. A target reduced to 0 hit points or fewer by this attack doesn't die but becomes enslaved in preparation for the Aboleth Servitor ritual. Enslaved targets are dominated, and only the death of the overseer can end this domination. Once a creature is enslaved, an aboleth overseer is free to dominate other creatures.

Invisibility (minor; encounter) ◆ **Illusion**

The aboleth overseer and one ally within 10 squares of it turn invisible until the end of the aboleth overseer's next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech, telepathy 20

Skills Arcana +20, Dungeoneering +21, Insight +21

Str 26 (+17) **Dex** 16 (+12) **Wis** 25 (+16)

Con 22 (+15) **Int** 23 (+15) **Cha** 22 (+15)

Githyanki Dreamslicer (G) Level 18 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid XP 2,000

Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +15

HP 128; **Bloodied** 64
AC 32; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 24

Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

① **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Psychic, Weapon**

+23 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 plus 1d10 psychic damage.

↘ **Mindslice** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Psychic**

Ranged 10; +21 vs. Will; 2d10 + 5 psychic damage.

↘ **Telekinetic Leap** (move; encounter)

Ranged 10; the githyanki dreamslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

✦ **Psychic Barrage** (standard; recharge [1]) ◆ **Psychic**

Area burst 1 within 20; +21 vs. Will; 1d8 + 5 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target can't use daily or encounter powers (save ends).

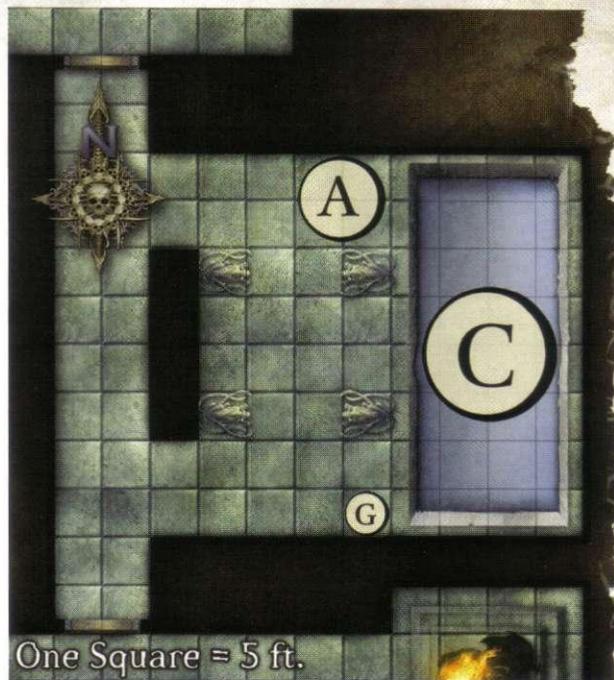
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

Skills History +17, Insight +15

Str 22 (+15) **Dex** 25 (+16) **Wis** 12 (+10)

Con 22 (+15) **Int** 17 (+12) **Cha** 11 (+9)

Equipment robes, overcoat, silver longsword



ENCOUNTER R5: DREAM POOL

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light. The dream-charged liquid glows with a wistful blue light that suffuses the area.

Angel Statues: Each creature not formed of the Dream Pool that ends its turn in a square adjacent to one of these statues takes 15 psychic damage. Destroying a statue ends its effect (AC/Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, 40 hit points).

Double Doors: Written on the southern doors in Supernal is, "Fashion from dreams a golden key." These doors sport a large, obvious keyhole. They are magically reinforced and locked securely by divine decree. Unless the adventurers physically bypass the doors (DC 37 Thievery check to open; DC 30 Strength check to break; AC/Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, 200 hit points, regeneration 15), they must use a key fashioned in the Dream Pool to proceed. Arantham keeps such a key with him.

Dream Pool: Written round the rim of this pool in Supernal is, "What is your dream? See your dream made flesh and iron merely by wishing it so." The Dream Pool might have been the forge of many incredible creations. However, it is preset only to summon glimmers of horrors from beyond and, should any creature name it, a golden key that serves to open the southern doors (the key seems normal in all other respects). The horrors appear immediately and automatically; the key requires a few rounds to materialize once wished for. Only one set of defenders and one key can be formed in each 24-hour period.

If any character enters or falls into the Dream Pool, it is the same as falling into normal water. The pool is 10 feet deep and features currents and waves as though it were the shore of a great, turbulent ocean.

History on the Walls: See page 16 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

ENCOUNTER R6: DESECRATED TEMPLE

Encounter Level 23 (25,900 XP)

SETUP

1 portal thing (P)

1 deathpriest hierophant (D)

4 immolith claws (I)

This encounter takes place in Location 10 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

Elder Arantham and allied Orcus cultist factions discovered they could siphon this chamber's unique influences for the greater glory of the demon prince.

As soon as the adventurers enter the chamber, the deathpriest challenges them.

When the adventurers enter this chamber, show the players the "View of the Hierophant" illustration on page 30 of *Adventure Book One*, then, read:

A yawning cavity punctures the floor of this 30-foot high chamber. The pit is surrounded on three sides by a 10-foot tall wall of obsidian. Animate black liquid undulates as if seeking to escape the cavity, constantly scabbling at the sides of its pit with tendrils and claws of darkness. The stench of rotting blood pours from the thing. The air above the cavity is hazed with distortion, and every few moments, a rivulet of blood appears within the haze and falls onto clawing darkness. The larger rivulets are accompanied by faint shrieks of terror, each of which cuts off at its crescendo.

Four fire pillars burn in the chamber's corners; each pillar is topped by a fire-blackened, horned, demonic skull. Six disembodied skeletal claws emerge from the lower portions of the flame. Behind each flame pillar, identical statues to Orcus rest atop 10-foot tall stone biers.

An emaciated human male wearing an elaborate ramhorn headdress and red robes stands by the obsidian wall. He cackles and says, "Ah, just in time! Are you ready to sacrifice your lives for the glory of Orcus?"

THING IN THE PORTAL

Mystical influences within the reliquary allowed the Ashen Covenant and allied factions to create an "animate altar" consecrated to Orcus. The thing in the cavity is an animated mass of coagulated black blood drained from hundreds of defeated opponents. The red-hazed space immediately above the altar is stretched. It simultaneously connects to several newly founded (and refounded) temples to Orcus in the natural world. Blood sacrifices made in those temples fall through cracks in reality and land here, feeding the "animate altar" with fresh vitality, all in Orcus's name.

Portal Thing (P)

Large shadow animate (blind, ooze, undead) XP 8,300

Initiative +15 Senses Perception +15; blindsight 20, tremorsense 20

HP 520; Bloodied 260

Regeneration 20 (if the portal thing takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)

AC 34; Fortitude 38, Reflex 32, Will 32

Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 acid, 15 fire, 15 necrotic

Saving Throws +2

Speed 0 (immobile)

Action Points 1

⊕ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

Reach 4; +25 vs. AC; 4d6 + 10 necrotic damage, and the target is pulled 1; see also *into the thing*.

↖ Death's Tendrils (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

Close blast 4; targets enemies; +21 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 10 necrotic damage, and the target is pulled 1; see also *into the thing*.

Into the Thing

A creature that enters or starts its turn in a square containing the portal thing takes 20 necrotic damage and is immobilized (save ends). A creature that dies in the portal thing is slowly dissolved over a 24-hour period.

Threatening Reach

The portal thing can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages —

Str 30 (+21)

Dex 18 (+15)

Wis 18 (+15)

Con 30 (+21)

Int 1 (+6)

Cha 1 (+6)

4 Immolith Claws (I)

Level 20 Controller

Large elemental magical beast (demon, fire, undead) XP 2,800 each

Initiative +14 Senses Perception +13

Flaming Aura (Fire) aura 1; any creature that enters or starts its turn within the aura takes 10 fire damage.

HP 193; Bloodied 96

AC 34; Fortitude 35, Reflex 32, Will 32

Immune disease, fire, poison; Resist 15 variable (2/encounter; see *Monster Manual* page 282); Vulnerable 10 radiant

Speed 6

⊕ Flaming Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire

Reach 4; +25 vs. AC; 1d10 + 9 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

⊕ Fiery Grab (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire

The immolith claw makes a flaming claw attack against a large or smaller target. On a hit, the target slides into a square adjacent to the immolith claw and is grabbed. While grabbed, the target loses any resistance it has to fire. An immolith claw can hold up to five grabbed creatures using this power.

↘ Deathfire Curse (minor; at-will) ♦ Fire

Ranged 10; +23 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends).

Aftereffect: The target takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

↖ Fiery Lash (standard; encounter; recharges when first bloodied)

♦ Fire

Close burst 4; targets enemies; +23 vs. AC; 1d10 + 9 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Abyssal

Str 24 (+17)

Dex 18 (+14)

Wis 16 (+13)

Con 25 (+17)

Int 9 (+9)

Cha 18 (+14)

Deathpriest Hierophant (D)		Level 21 Elite Controller	
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 6,400	
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +14		
Aura of Decay (Necrotic) aura 5; living enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.			
HP 382; Bloodied 191			
AC 35; Fortitude 35, Reflex 32, Will 37			
Resist 10 necrotic			
Saving Throws +2			
Speed 5			
Action Points 1			
⚔ Mace (standard; at-will) ⚔ Necrotic, Weapon			
+24 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).			
☞ Vision of Death (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞☞) ⚔ Psychic			
Ranged 10; +24 vs. Will; 2d6 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).			
⚔ Word of Orcus (standard; recharge ☞☞) ⚔ Healing, Necrotic			
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). Undead in the burst regain 15 hit points.			
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Religion +17			
Str 20 (+15)	Dex 13 (+11)	Wis 18 (+14)	
Con 15 (+12)	Int 14 (+12)	Cha 24 (+17)	
Equipment plate armor, mace, censer			

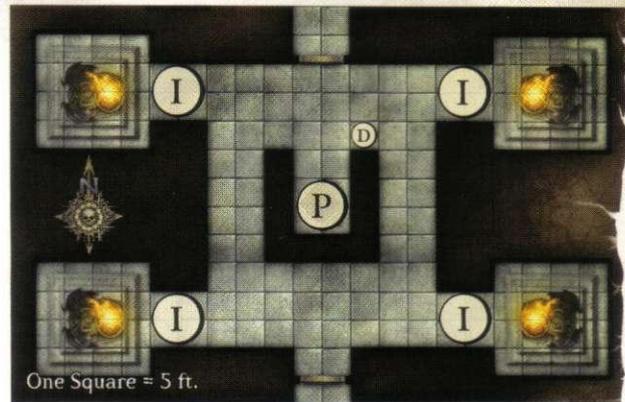
TACTICS

The portal thing is dangerous, but the three-sided enclosure blocks its attacks in all directions except one. The four squares in front of the creature are subject to attack. The portal thing doesn't attack Orcus cultists, unless they fall into the thing.

The deathpriest and the immoliths attempt to steer the adventurers into the clutches of their animate altar whenever possible. They seek to keep the adventurers corralled within reach of the portal thing so that it can make its attacks every round.

The immoliths begin the combat using *fiery lash* to initially soften up the adventurers. They also use a minor action each round to use *deathfire curse*, each targeting a different opponent. The immoliths try to remain in line of sight of one or more Orcus idols to gain their benefits (see "Features of the Area" for more information).

The deathpriest initially retreats from sight around the side of the portal thing's shield wall. He hopes the adventurers will get tied up by the immoliths' initial attacks. Once he does join combat, he begins to call out in a loud voice, "Orcus, aid me now! Orcus, your servant needs your presence! Enter now and destroy these infidels!" There is no chance that Orcus will appear, but the adventurers do not know this. The deathpriest wants to keep them guessing and put a little fear into their (hopefully) short lives.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. Each Orcus idol clutches a fiery brazier.

Blood Haze: The haze above the portal is the endpoint of literally hundreds of portals in the natural world. Blood and life force from sacrifices made in those places come here, and sometimes living sacrifices (or unfortunate priests who get too close to their fancy new sacrificial portal) fall through into the thing. If the portal thing is killed, this spatial anomaly disperses in mere moments.

History on the Walls: See page 16 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

Orcus Idols: Any undead creature or follower of Orcus within line of sight of one or more of these idols gains a +2 bonus to saving throws and an additional 5 necrotic damage every time they make a successful attack against an enemy.

ENCOUNTER R7: SUMMONING CHAMBER

Encounter Level 23 (27,725 XP)

SETUP

- 1 dracolich (D)
- 1 flameharrow lord (F)
- 1 blackstar idol (B)
- 3 blackstar pawns (P)

This encounter takes place in Location 11 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

The blackstar idol in this chamber has shaken off the Covenant's control. In its surprise attack, it killed several invaders. Now it vies for control of a summoning circle against a Covenant flameharrow lord.

The dracolich is not present when this encounter begins. Where it appears is partly determined by the actions of the adventurers, and if they break the concentration of one or both summoners.

The blackstar pawns are also hidden when the encounter begins. They emerge from the excavations in the second round of combat.

The summoners are determined to kill each other first, then turn their attention to intruders.

When the adventurers open the door to this chamber, read:

Relief sculptures cover the walls and ceiling here. The floor along the east and west walls has been heavily excavated, as evident by the large pits dug there. Two magic circles flare with power in the center of the room. Near one, a featureless black ball of stone hovers, energy arches from it to the circle nearest it. At the other circle, a skeleton with a gleaming gem set into each eye socket—one black, one red—gesticulates and chants, apparently trying to summon something into its circle. The undead glances repeatedly at the floating ball, as if determining its progress.

3 Blackstar Pawns (P)		Level 23 Minion
Medium elemental animate		XP 1,275 each
Initiative +18	Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 37; Fortitude 37, Reflex 36, Will 31		
Resist 15 fire		
Speed 7		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+26 vs. AC; 12 damage (crit 18 damage).		
⊕ Blackstar Ricochet (immediate reaction, when a blackstar pawn within 5 squares is reduced to 0 hit points; at-will)		
The blackstar pawn shifts 3 squares and collides with an enemy; +24 vs. Fortitude; 8 damage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages –	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 14 (+13)
Con 18 (+15)	Int 3 (+7)	Cha 3 (+7)

Blackstar Idol (B) Level 22 Elite Controller (Leader)
Large elemental animate XP 8,300

Initiative +12 Senses Perception +21; darkvision
Blackstar Pulse (Healing) aura 3; enemies that start their turns within the aura take 10 damage, and blackstar host that start their turns within the aura heal 10 hit points.

HP 420; Bloodied 210
AC 36; Fortitude 34, Reflex 27, Will 36
Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 15 radiant
Saving Throws +2
Speed fly 8 (hover), teleport 4
Action Points 1

⊕ Force Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Force
+27 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 force damage.

↘ Mindrip (minor; at-will) ♦ Psychic
Ranged 10; +26 vs. Will; 1d10 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

↖ Blackstar Nova (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Psychic
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 4d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. Miss: Half damage, and the target is neither pushed nor knocked prone.

✦ Mindquake (standard; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓜ; Ⓜ) ♦ Psychic
Area burst 5 within 20; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 4d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Animate Blackstar (standard; at-will or encounter)
The idol targets the remains of a fallen blackstar creature and imbues it with energy. As an at-will power, the fallen blackstar rises as a blackstar pawn. If the blackstar idol targets a blackstar pawn as an encounter power, it becomes a blackstar knight.

Alignment Evil Languages Primordial
Str 25 (+18) Dex 13 (+12) Wis 30 (+21)
Con 26 (+19) Int 10 (+11) Cha 7 (+9)

TACTICS

Nothing attacks the adventurers during the first round of combat. The idol and the flameharrow simply continue their rituals. If a PC attacks the flameharrow or idol during this round, the energy arcing around it and its circle dims, and the glow of the energy near the other brightens.

On round 2, the blackstar idol rises up near the ceiling and attacks the flameharrow with *mindquake*. The flameharrow tries to engage the idol with *harrowing gaze*. The pawns emerge this round and swarm toward the flameharrow.

On round 3, the fight becomes a free-for-all, even if the PCs have managed to stay completely out of the conflict to this point. The idol and the flameharrow both assume the PCs are reinforcements for the other, and either directly attack the PCs or send the dracolich and pawns after them. As the fight continues, keep mixing up the combatants who target the PCs to make this conflict as chaotic as possible.

Flameharrow Lord (F) Level 20 Elite Controller (Leader)
 Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 5,600

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +17; darkvision

Spiritual Inferno aura 5; any undead ally within the aura gains resist 15 fire, and deals an extra ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends) with its melee or ranged attacks.

HP 374; **Bloodied** 187

AC 34; **Fortitude** 31; **Reflex** 33; **Will** 35

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 20 necrotic, 25 fire; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, teleport 5

Action Points 1

- ① **Flameharrow Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**
 +25 vs. AC; 1d10 + 9 fire damage, and the target can't spend healing surges until the end of the flameharrow's next turn.
- Ⓜ **Harrowing Gaze** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Fear, Gaze, Psychic**
 Ranged 10; +24 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares. The target is dazed until the end of the flameharrow's next turn.
- ⚡ **Deadfire Gaze** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Gaze, Necrotic**
 Close blast 5; targets enemies; +22 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 10 necrotic damage, ongoing 10 fire damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends both).
- ⚡ **Death's Salvation** (immediate interrupt, when an undead ally is reduced to 0 hit points; recharge ☹☹☹☹☹) ♦ **Healing**
 Ranged 10; targeted undead ally regains 25 hit points.

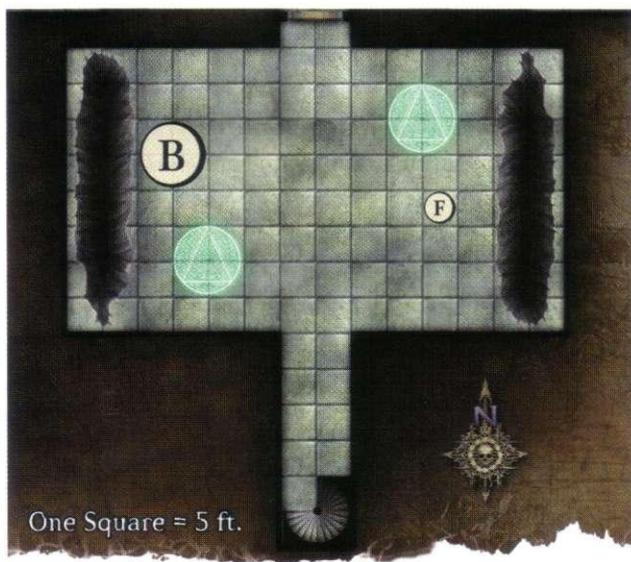
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

Str 15 (+12) **Dex** 16 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+12)

Con 19 (+14) **Int** 23 (+16) **Cha** 26 (+18)

DEVELOPMENT

If any of the PCs successfully attack the blackstar idol, the dracolich appears (partly) within the circle near the flameharrow lord on the following round and under its control. If the PCs first hit the flameharrow, the dracolich appears in the circle nearer the idol and under its control on the next round. If the PCs successfully attack both summoners in the first round, the dracolich manifest on the next round under no one's control in a circle you choose. If the PCs stay out of the fight, the dracolich appears in the third round, under the control of the blackstar idol.



Dracolich (D) Level 18 Solo Controller
 Huge natural magical beast (dragon, undead) XP 10,000

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +18; darkvision

HP 885; **Bloodied** 442; see also *bloodied breath*

AC 34; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 30

Immune disease, fear, poison; **Resist** 30 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Saving Throws +5

Speed 8, fly 10 (clumsy)

Action Points 2

- ① **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 Reach 3; +23 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage. Against a stunned target, this attack deals an extra 2d8 necrotic damage.
- ⚡ **Mesmerizing Glare** (immediate interrupt, when an enemy makes a melee attack against the dracolich; at-will) ♦ **Fear**
 Close blast 3; +20 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dracolich's next turn. **Miss:** The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against the dracolich until the end of the dracolich's next turn.
- ⚡ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge ☹☹☹☹☹) ♦ **Necrotic**
 The dracolich breathes a coruscating blast of necrotic energy. Close blast 9; +21 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the dracolich's next turn. **Miss:** Half damage, and the target is not stunned. **Hit or Miss:** The target loses any necrotic resistance it has (save ends).
- ⚡ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter)
 The dracolich's breath weapon recharges, and the dracolich uses it immediately.
- ⚡ **Frightful Presence** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Fear**
 Close burst 10; targets enemies; +20 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dracolich's next turn. **Afterside:** The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the encounter.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Draconic

Skills Arcana +17, Endurance +21, History +17, Insight +18, Intimidate +17, Religion +17

Str 26 (+17) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 18 (+13)

Con 25 (+16) **Int** 17 (+12) **Cha** 16 (+12)

FEATURES OF THE AREA:

- Illumination:** Dim light. The magic circles glow faintly.
 - Ceiling:** The ceiling is 30-feet tall in this chamber.
 - Excavations:** Several members of the blackstar host were unearthed by Arantham. Each crevice is 30 feet deep.
 - History on the Walls:** See page 17 in *Adventure Book One* for details.
 - Summoning Circles:** The circles were designed to summon a variety of immensely powerful creatures to fight intruders from across the planes. The Ashen Covenant has so scuffed and damaged the circles that only enough energy remains resident in them to illuminate the chamber dimly, and for the summonings being attempted as the PCs enter.
- A DC 29 Arcana check reveals that a creature standing in one of the circles might be able to dismiss the dracolich. Accomplishing this requires another DC 29 Arcana check. Only one attempt to dismiss the dracolich can be made.

ENCOUNTER R8: SARCOPHAGI CHAMBER

Encounter Level 23 (25,500 XP)

SETUP

- 1 larva war master (L)
- 1 blood fiend (B)
- 2 voidsoul specters (V)

This encounter takes place in Location 14 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

The chamber initially appears serene. None of the creatures are placed on the tactical map. If the players ignore the clues indicating great treasures might be present in this area, the creatures never leave their still-sealed sarcophagi.

On the other hand, if the adventurers open any of the three central sarcophagi, or attempt to open either of the two golden sarcophagi to the west, an encounter begins. Ancient divine heroes who fell in the battles against the blackstar host rise to safeguard their legacy. Over the millennia, each one's spirit has become corrupt in its own unique fashion. Each creature, in initiative order, appears (spending a minor action to emerge from its sarcophagus) in the space next to its tomb, as noted on the tactical map.

When the adventurers enter the chamber, read:

Relief sculptures cover the walls and ceiling. Four massive sarcophagi lie in this chamber—three are sealed, one gapes open and empty. Two free-standing stone sculptures of armored warriors rest on either end of the northern wall. The statues seem inert, but their eyes glow so fiercely that they dimly illuminate the area. To the west, an arched passage is flanked by two large alcoves, each of which holds a sarcophagus that gleams as if plated with gold.

If the adventurers wake the area's guardians, read:

Screams rip from the three sealed sarcophagi lying in the center of the chamber. The first sarcophagus lid smashes upward, propelled on a burst of cloying steam. A moment later, a creature stands revealed, its eyes blazing with hate.

LARVA WAR MASTER

The bodies of larva undead are wholly composed of rotting flesh, fragments of bone, and maggots, centipedes, beetles, and other vermin. Their purposes vary with their form, but they are invariably anathema to the living. The larva war master was introduced in *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*.

Larva War Master (L)

Medium natural magical beast (undead)

Level 23 Elite Brute

XP 10,200

Initiative +19

Senses Perception +15

Tactical Feedback (Psychic) aura 6; any enemy within the aura takes 10 psychic damage when it shifts.

HP 528; Bloodied 264

AC 37; Fortitude 37, Reflex 35, Will 34

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; takes half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 10 radiant, 10 against close and area attacks

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5; see also *squeezing swarm*

Action Points 1

⊕ **Mandible Blade** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**
+24 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 8 necrotic damage.

⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**

The larva war master makes two *mandible blade* attacks.

⌘ **Punishing Beetle** (immediate reaction, when a creature regains hit points; encounter) ◆ **Poison**

Ranged 20; targets the triggering creature; +24 vs. Fortitude; 5d10 + 12 poison damage. Miss: Half damage.

Squeezing Swarm

By altering its shape, a larva war master can squeeze through small openings as if it were a Tiny creature.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +23, Intimidate +22

Str 28 (+20)

Dex 26 (+19)

Wis 18 (+15)

Con 24 (+18)

Int 20 (+16)

Cha 22 (+17)

Equipment plate armor

TACTICS

Once the larva war master is free of its sarcophagus, its *tactical feedback* moves out to envelope nearby creatures in a carpet of imagined beetles, punishing any creature that shifts on this phantom footing. The undead charges the closest intruder. If reduced to 50 hit points or fewer, it flees through cracks in the tile flooring of the chamber, using *squeezing swarm*. The larva war master can appear later to bother the party during another encounter, its wounds healed so that its powers are recharged and it has regained 100 hit points.

The blood fiend kicks off each turn with *terror gaze*, attempting to immobilize foes. Then it gets down to the business of destroying the intruders, one at a time. It double-teams with the larva war master if possible to gain flanks and otherwise harass the adventurers.

The voidsoul specters don't visibly appear when the sarcophagus they share blasts open. Instead, they sneak up on the intruders and uses *spectral touch*. They use their abilities to move around the chamber and drain the life force of the adventurers, but unlike the larva war master, they fight until they are destroyed.

2 Voidsoul Specters (V) **Level 23 Lurker**

Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 5,100 each

Initiative +23 **Senses** Perception +16; darkvision
Spectral Cold (Cold) aura 1; an enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 10 cold damage and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the start of its next turn.

HP 115; Bloodied 57

AC 35; Fortitude 32, Reflex 35, Will 34

Immune disease, poison; Resist 30 necrotic, insubstantial;

Vulnerable 10 radiant

Speed fly 8 (hover); phasing

⊕ **Spectral Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+25 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 6 necrotic damage.

⚡ **Life Siphon** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Necrotic**

Close blast 5; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 6 necrotic damage, and the voidsoul specter regains 5 hit points for every creature damaged by the attack.

Invisibility (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**The voidsoul specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack. It remains invisible while using *life siphon*.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common

Skills Stealth +24

Str 12 (+12) Dex 26 (+19) Wis 10 (+11)

Con 19 (+15) Int 11 (+11) Cha 23 (+17)

Blood Fiend (B) **Level 23 Soldier**

Medium elemental humanoid XP 5,100

Initiative +21 **Senses** Perception +23; darkvision

HP 220; Bloodied 110

AC 41; Fortitude 36, Reflex 34, Will 32

Immune fear

Speed 8, fly 10

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+28 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage.

† **Bloodthirsty Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Healing**

Requires combat advantage; +28 vs. AC; 1d8 + 10 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes ongoing 10 damage (until escape). Also, the blood fiend regains 10 hit points.

⚡ **Terror Gaze** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Fear**

Close blast 3; +24 vs. Will; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Combat Advantage

The blood fiend gains combat advantage against any living, bloodied enemy.

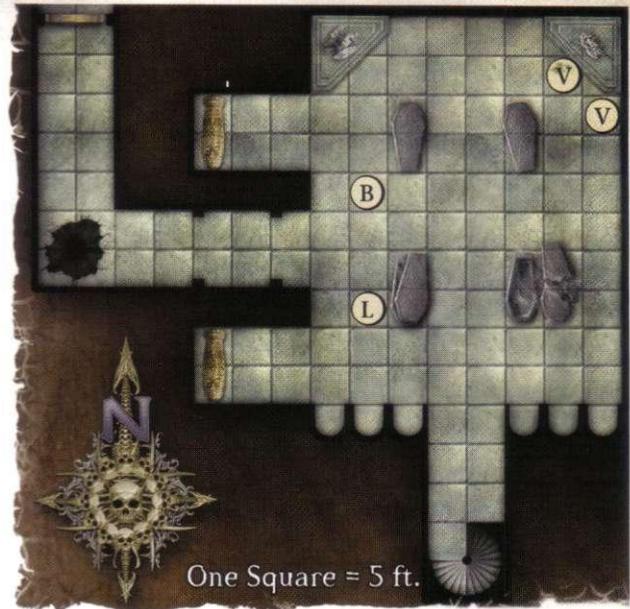
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Primordial

Skills Intimidate +24

Str 30 (+21) Dex 26 (+19) Wis 24 (+18)

Con 28 (+20) Int 22 (+17) Cha 27 (+19)

If the adventurers flee back toward the stairs in Location 13, the larva war master and the blood fiend allow them to leave. However, the voidsoul specters takes up the hunt, and attack the characters immediately after they conclude their next short rest.



ENCOUNTER R8: SARCOPHAGI CHAMBER

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light. The eyes of the statues along the north wall glow fiercely.

Central Sarcophagi: One is open and contains only dust. Three are sealed (DC 33 Strength check to break the stone seal).

Golden Sarcophagi: The sarcophagi along the western wall are also sealed (DC 33 Strength check to break the stone seal). If either is opened, the encounter is triggered. These sarcophagi hold great treasure, including an artifact of the ancient world. The placement of this wealth helped anchor the spirits of the guardians in this chamber, who felt more beholden to guard it than the approach to Time-sus's prison.

History on the Walls: See page 17 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

Southern Alcoves: Empty, but if the trapped archways leading to Location 15 are activated, blasphemes appear within these spaces (see **Encounter R9: Sentinel Traps**, starting on the next page).

Treasure: One golden sarcophagus holds 2,000 pp, 1 level 25 magic item, and one of the *Eyes of the Old Gods* (see *Adventure Book One* page 25).

The other golden sarcophagus holds 900 pp, 1 level 26 magic item, and the other *Eye of the Old Gods*.

ENCOUNTER R9: SENTINEL TRAPS

Encounter Level 19 (12,000 XP)

SETUP

2 blaspheme imperfect keepers (I)

4 blaspheme fragment keepers (F)

1 kinetic arches trap (K)

1 void extrusion trap (V)

This encounter takes place in Location 15 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

Unless the proper countermeasures are executed, the kinetic arches trap triggers this encounter whenever a character moves through it. Ashen Covenant cultists know how to deactivate this trap.

The blasphemes are not initially present when this encounter begins. Place them in the proper alcoves after the kinetic arches trap is triggered, on their initiative count. They appear in a flash of silver radiance.

When an adventurer moves through the arches marked "K", read:

Both archways explode with silver radiance, producing a sound not unlike the roar of a battle-hardened commander calling troops to the front line. Suddenly, an invisible force grabs you, crushing and hurling you forward, toward the gaping maw in the floor ahead. In the chamber behind you, composite creatures formed of mummified corpse pieces that do not match appear in the formerly empty alcoves to the south.

TACTICS

If the arches trap is activated, more than a single character is potentially subject to being pushed through the arch and into the void extrusion trap. Both traps attack each round.

The blasphemes that manifest when the arches trap is triggered are undead sentinel creatures not sworn to the Ashen Covenant. They attack any creature in the chamber and attempt to push them into range of the arches. If necessary, the blaspheme minions even put themselves within range of the arches; the blaspheme imperfects endeavor to keep clear of the blast area.

The sentinels and the traps continue to attack every round that intruders remain in the area.

2 Blaspheme Imperfect Keepers (I)

Medium natural animate (construct, undead)

Level 19 Brute

XP 2,400 each

Initiative +13

Senses Perception +13; darkvision

Life Sap (Healing, Necrotic) aura 1; any living enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 necrotic damage. Each round, if at least one enemy is damaged by the aura, the blaspheme imperfect keeper regains 5 hit points.

HP 214; **Bloodied** 107; see also *bloodied degeneration*

AC 31; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 29

Immune disease; **Resist** 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Speed 7

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**

+22 vs. AC; 2d12 + 11 necrotic damage.

⊖ **Deadly Clutch** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Necrotic**

Requires a free hand; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 11 necrotic damage, and the target is grabbed; see also *life drain*.

⊖ **Life Drain** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Healing, Necrotic**

Targets a creature grabbed by the blaspheme imperfect keeper; +20 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 9 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge, and the blaspheme imperfect keeper regains 15 hit points.

Bloodied Degeneration (while bloodied)

The blaspheme imperfect keeper's body begins to degenerate, and it enters a state of bloodlust. The blaspheme gains vulnerable 5 to all damage and deals 3d6 extra damage on a hit.

Alignment Evil

Languages —

Str 24 (+16)

Dex 18 (+13)

Wis 19 (+13)

Con 14 (+11)

Int 14 (+11)

Cha 12 (+10)

4 Blaspheme Fragment Keepers (F)

Medium natural animate (construct, undead)

Level 19 Minion

XP 600 each

Initiative +16

Senses Perception +12; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 33; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 27

Immune disease; **Resist** 15 necrotic, 15 poison

Speed 7

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+22 vs. AC; 12 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Alignment Evil

Languages Common

Str 26 (+17)

Dex 25 (+16)

Wis 17 (+12)

Con 23 (+15)

Int 19 (+13)

Cha 13 (+10)

Characters who are pushed into the void extrusion suddenly find themselves in swirling mists of silvery luminescence. Here, they experience the touch of the divine. For heightened suspense, do not tell the other players what has become of the missing character until he or she reappears and can describe the experience personally.

Kinetic Arches (K)

Trap

Level 19 Blaster

XP 2,400

A silver net of radiance grabs you in a crushing grip, then throws you through the air like a doll.

Trap: When a creature steps through the archway, the area within and around the arches violently slides creatures west.

Perception

◆ DC 27: A small, wavelike symbol is set upon the top of the arch, protruding slightly like a stud.

Initiative: +8

Trigger

When a creature moves through the archway, the trap activates and rolls initiative.

Attack

Standard Action Close burst 2

Targets: Each creature in burst

Attack: +22 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d12 + 5 damage, and the target slides 4 squares toward the void extrusion trap.

Countermeasures

- ◆ An adjacent character can disable the trap with three DC 24 Thievery checks made as standard actions.
- ◆ If the stud has been spotted, pressing it deactivates the trap for 1 round (until the end of the pressing character's next turn).



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Darkness. The dim light from Location 14 does not extend into the corridor.

Arches: The arches are described in the kinetic arches trap stat block. Once deactivated, the trap remains inactive for one hour. The Ashen Covenant cultists high enough in the organization to work this far inside the reliquary know how to safely deactivate the trap by pressing the stud above the arch.

Void Extrusion (V)

Trap

Level 19 Blaster

XP 2,400

A dark, deep pit in the floor appears to have clouds of silver radiance far within its seemingly bottomless depths.

Trap: The trap becomes active when triggered.

Perception

◆ DC 14: The character can see the pit from Location 14, though the full danger isn't apparent.

Additional Skill: Nature or Dungeoneering

◆ DC 22: The character recognizes the danger of the extrusion before moving within 3 squares of it (which might not do much good if the character is being propelled by the kinetic arches trap).

Trigger

This trap activates when a creature enters the pit. If the arches trap is disabled or bypassed, this trap does not activate, or ceases attacking.

Special

Creatures that are pushed or slid into the pit gain a saving throw to hang onto the edge. Creatures that fail the save fall into darkness. In truth, they are teleported into a silvery space of divine creation, not unlike the expanse of the Astral Sea. They remain in this divine space each round (save ends) and are subject to attack.

Attack**Standard Action**

Targets: Each creature in the divine space

Attack: +22 vs. Will

Hit: 4d8 + 7 radiant damage.

Aftereffect

A creature that emerges from the divine space appears in Location 14, in the entrance to the trapped corridor. The creature is dazed and takes ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends) from the experience, and is subject to additional attacks by the kinetic arches (if they are still active).

Countermeasures

- ◆ A creature in the burst can minimize the damage of the extrusion with a DC 33 Acrobatics check made as an immediate interrupt before the attack. With a successful check, the creature takes half damage on a hit, and no damage on a miss.
- ◆ Leaping beyond the pit into the far side of the corridor cuts off a character from the affects of the kinetic arches trap.

Floor Cavity: The hole in the floor is described under the void extrusion trap stat block.

History on the Walls: See page 17 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

Other Features: The various sarcophagi, statues, and alcoves are described in **Encounter R8: Sarcophagi Chamber** (see page 50).

ENCOUNTER R10: HALL OF JUDGMENT

Encounter Level 23 (27,150 XP)

SETUP

- 1 beholder death emperor (B)
- 2 stone golems (G)

This encounter takes place in Location 16 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

The beholder rises and attacks only when a creature moves to a square adjacent to the excavation, or if a creature moves within 3 squares of the eastern exit.

When the adventurers look into the chamber, read:

Relief sculptures cover the walls and ceiling. Free-standing stone sculptures of armored warriors stand in three corners. The statues' eyes glow so fiercely they dimly illuminate the chamber. To the east, a passage lined with alcoves is obscured by a rolling cloud of mist. A massive excavation lies in the chamber's center.

If the adventurers move to enter the chamber and have fifty percent or more of their total daily powers and healing surges, read:

The Raven Queen's voice echoes in your mind like a distant memory. "Recall that I promised you a favor before your end?" her voice rings out. "Then heed me now. Your end is at hand, if you enter this place unprepared."

If the adventurers rouse the death emperor, read:

Maniacal laughter accompanies the appearance of a large, free-floating sphere from the central excavation. The wide orb is dominated by a central eye and mouth. Ten smaller eyes on stalks sprout from the orb. The entire creature is rotting and mold-encrusted. Gaping wounds expose portions of its gruesome interior. All its eyes are milky with death. Simultaneously, two of the stone statues shudder, animate, and move toward you.

TACTICS

The beholder emerges from the excavation and prefers to float above it so that melee characters must move next to the pit to attack it (where they are subject to falling into the pit).

The death emperor uses its central eye to slow nimble PCs and to strip resilient ones of necrotic resistance. When it uses eye rays, it gauges a target's weaknesses and attacks with the ray most likely to harm that target. It also uses *killing look* at each opportunity, focusing on one opponent. If the characters flee in either direction (back the way they came, or east through the mist), the beholder follows, laughing maniacally all the while. Don't forget to take advantage of its aura at the start of each character's turn.

If the adventurers attempt to speak with the beholder, it boasts of its service to the Ashen Covenant, and the great power Elder Arantham has given to it. Conversation doesn't make it break off combat, however.

The stone golems focus on PCs that are not in melee with the death emperor, especially characters standing back using ranged attacks. If possible, they use *golem rampage* to smash through as many opponents as possible, and in doing so, block easy escape for PCs already in the chamber. If either golem comes close to 0 hit points, it attempts to leave at least one square between itself and the death emperor, so as not to catch the emperor in the *death burst* of its destruction.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light. The eyes of the statues (two of which are stone golems) glow fiercely.

Eastern Exit: The fog-shrouded corridor leading to Location 17 is a trap (see **Encounter R11: Reliquary Test** on page 56). In this encounter, the mist just blocks line of sight.

Excavation: The sides of the hole in the center of the chamber are not sturdy. Any creature that ends its turn in a square adjacent to the hole is subject to an attack: +25 vs Reflex. Targets struck must make a saving throw or fall 20 feet to the uneven floor of the hole, taking 2d10 damage (DC 29 Athletics check to climb out of the crumbling cavity).

History on the Walls: See page 17 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

Statues: Two of these are golems; the one in the north-eastern corner is an actual statue carved of onyx. The gems inset into the eyes of each are worth 2,000 gp each; there are 6 gems in all.

DEATH EMPEROR

A beholder death emperor is a more powerful version of the beholder death tyrant that first appeared in *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*. A character knows the following information with a successful Dungeoneering or Religion check:

DC 24: Death tyrant and death emperor beholders are animated corpses of eye tyrants. Necromancer cults sometimes hunt and kill eye tyrants specifically for the purpose of animating them. Undead beholders retain many of the powers they had in life. Death emperors are more powerful versions of death tyrants.

DC 29: Undead beholders are more akin to a lich than a zombie. They retain full mobility and reason, and gain the use of fell rays. In death, these creatures gain the ability to strip necrotic resistance from foes, giving their deadly eye rays free reign to wither flesh.

Beholder Death Emperor (B) **Level 22 Solo Artillery**
 Large aberrant magical beast (undead) XP 20,750

Initiative +19 **Senses** Perception +20; all-around vision, darkvision

Eyes of the Beholder aura 5; the beholder death emperor uses one random *eye ray* as a free action against any enemy within the aura at the start of that enemy's turn.

HP 832; **Bloodied** 416
AC 34; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 36, **Will** 37
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 20 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 20 radiant
Saving Throws +5
Speed fly 5 (hover)
Action Points 2

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
 +29 vs. AC; 3d4 + 12 damage.

↷ **Central Eye** (minor; at-will)
 Ranged 20; +27 vs. Will; the target is slowed and loses necrotic resistance until the end of the beholder death emperor's next turn.

↷ **Eye Ray** (standard; at-will) ♦ see text
 The beholder death emperor uses up to two different *eye ray* powers (chosen from the list below). Each ray must target a different creature, and using *eye ray* does not provoke opportunity attacks.

1–Withering Ray (Necrotic): Ranged 10; +27 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends).

3–Confusion Ray (Psychic): Ranged 10; +27 vs. Will; 2d8 + 11 psychic damage, and the target slides 5 squares and is dazed (save ends).

4–Grave Ray (Necrotic): Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 11 necrotic damage.

5–Fear Ray (Fear, Psychic): Ranged 10; +27 vs. Will; 2d8 + 8 psychic damage, and the target immediately moves its speed away from the beholder death emperor. The target avoids hazardous terrain and difficult terrain if possible.

6–Burning Ray (Fire): Ranged 10; +29 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 fire damage, and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

7–Decaying Ray (Acid): Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 11 acid damage, and ongoing 15 acid damage (save ends).

8–Entombing Ray: Ranged 10; +30 vs. Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target is petrified (no save).

9–Death Ray (Necrotic): Ranged 10; +27 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and if the target is bloodied it is dazed (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is dazed and weakened (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target dies.

10–Reanimating Ray (Necrotic): Ranged 10; +27 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 8 necrotic damage. If the target is reduced to 0 hit points or fewer, the target rises as a horde ghoul (*Monster Manual* page 118) under the beholder death emperor's control at the end of its next turn.

⚡ **Killing Look** (immediate reaction, when an enemy within 10 squares of the beholder death emperor fails a saving throw against ongoing damage) ♦ **Gaze, Necrotic**
 Close burst 10; targets the triggering creature; +27 vs. Will; the target loses 2 healing surges.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 12 (+12) **Dex** 26 (+19) **Wis** 19 (+15)
Con 24 (+18) **Int** 22 (+17) **Cha** 28 (+20)

2 Stone Golems (G) **Level 17 Elite Soldier**
 Large natural animate (construct) XP 3,200 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision

HP 336; **Bloodied** 168; see also *death burst*
AC 33; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24

Immune disease, poison, sleep

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6; can't shift

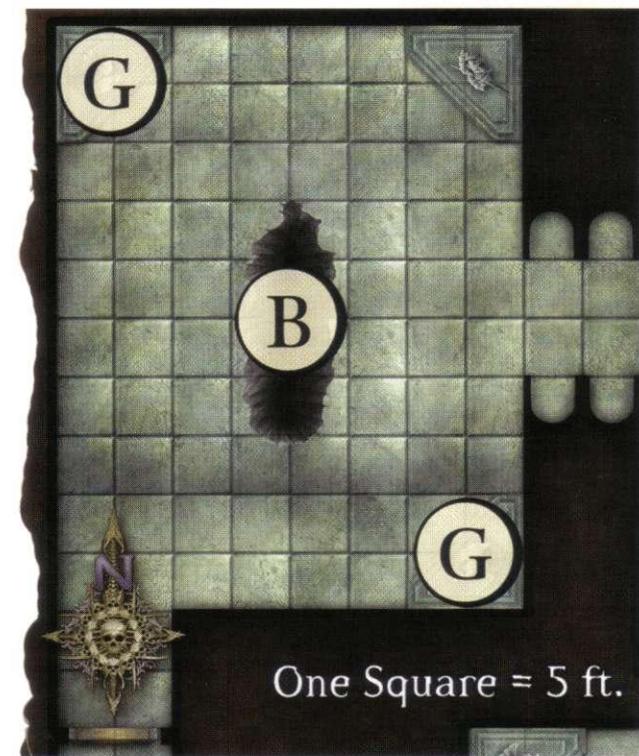
Action Points 1
 ⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
 Reach 2; +23 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and dazed (save ends).

⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
 The stone golem makes two slam attacks.

⊕ **Golem Rampage** (standard; recharge ⓧ; ⓧ)
 The stone golem moves up to its speed plus 2 and can move through enemies' spaces, provoking opportunity attacks as normal. When it enters a creature's space (ally or enemy), the golem makes a slam attack against that creature. The creature remains in its space, and the golem must leave the space after it attacks. The golem must end its rampage in an unoccupied space.

⚡ **Death Burst** (when reduced to 0 hit points)
 The stone golem explodes in a burst of jagged stones. Close burst 1; +23 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage, and the space it occupied is difficult terrain until cleared.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 7 (+6) **Wis** 8 (+7)
Con 24 (+15) **Int** 3 (+4) **Cha** 3 (+4)



ENCOUNTER R11: RELIQUARY TEST

Encounter Level 21 (20,400 XP)

SETUP

- 1 altar of compassion trap (A)
- 1 mists of storm trap (M)
- 1 acid pit trap (P)
- 1 endless fall trap (F)

This encounter takes place in Location 17 on the Reliquary map (see *Adventure Book One*, page 15).

The traps here can be avoided by characters who solve the challenge puzzle located on the eastern altar (as Elder Arantham and his senior servants did when they initially reached this chamber).

When adventurers enter the chamber, read:

Relief sculptures cover the walls and ceiling of this chamber. The alcove-lined passage from which you just emerged is obscured by a rolling cloud of mist. To the south, a black cavity gapes in the floor. To the north, a chiseled pit steams with green vapor. A grand altar looms at the chamber's eastern end, over which hangs a roughly eaglelike sculpture. Two approximately human-sized hand-prints are carved on the altar's top. On the altar's face Supernal hieroglyphics spell out a message. "Place thy hands upon me if you seek Timesus."

If a PC can read Supernal, the message says:

"Place your hands if you seek Timesus."

If a PC places his or her hands in the carved palm prints on the altar, the riddle begins.

Once the riddle begins, a voice in Supernal calls out:

*Formless, I can move even gods to action.
Soundless, my fervor can inspire grand rhetoric.
Colorless, in my absence atrocities gather and fester.
Breathless, victims of those who ignore me echo to the sky.
Not all care to receive me, but those who do wield salvation.*

SKILL CHALLENGE FOR RIDDLE

If your players are not keen on answering riddles, allow their characters to attempt to answer the riddle as a skill challenge using the Arcana (DC 29), History (DC 29), Nature (DC 29), Religion (DC 24), and Streetwise (DC 24) skills. Make the challenge complexity level 1, and give them the answer if they get 4 successes before 3 failures. If they fail the skill challenge, the altar of compassion trap activates.

Altar of Compassion (A)

Level 23 Blaster

Trap

XP 5,100

The eaglelike wings of the altar flap, and a wave of force blasts out in all directions.

Trap: When it attacks, the altar erupts with kinetic energy that pushes living creatures toward the other traps.

Perception

◆ DC 24: The faintest shimmer in the air marks the area as dangerous.

Additional Skill: Arcana

◆ DC 29: The character recognizes the area as a field similar to the glow around the arches in Location 14 (see **Encounter R9: Sentinel Trap** on page 52).

Initiative: +10

Trigger

When a creature puts its hands on the altar but gives the incorrect answer, fails to answer, or removes its hands before answering, the trap activates and rolls initiative.

Attack

Standard Action **Close blast 3**

Targets: Each creature in blast

Attack: +26 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d12 + 9 damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares toward one of the other traps in this area.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares toward one of the other traps in this area.

Countermeasures

- ◆ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 29 Thievery check (a failed check activates the trap). An additional DC 29 Thievery check is required to cause the altar to rise, revealing the passage down to the vault level.
- ◆ A character can correctly answer the riddle, which deactivates the trap and moves the altar up to reveal the passage down.

Acid Pit (P)

Level 23 Obstacle

Trap

XP 5,100

Acid fills this deep basin, burning all that falls within it.

Trap: The acid attacks any creature in a trap square.

Perception

No check is necessary to notice the depression filled with acid.

Trigger

When a creature enters or starts its turn in a trapped square, the trap attacks.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Melee**

Targets: Each creature in a trapped square

Attack: +28 vs. AC

Hit: 3d10 + 5 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 acid damage (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Countermeasures

- ◆ A creature can make a saving throw to avoid being pushed into the acid pit trap by the altar of compassion attack. Unfortunately, the sides of the acid pit are slick and all such saving throws take a -2 penalty.

Endless Fall (F)
Trap**Level 23 Obstacle**
XP 5,100*Creatures that fall into this pit blink out of existence.***Trap:** The forces of this pocket dimension pummel a character each round until he or she escapes.**Perception**

No check is needed to see that this pit seems to descend indefinitely.

Additional Skill: Arcana◆ **DC 29:** The character recognizes that teleport magic is at play in this pit.**Trigger**

When a creature enters or starts its turn in a pit square (or the pocket dimension to which the trap sends its victims), the trap attacks.

Attack**Opportunity Action** **Melee****Targets:** Each creature in a trapped square or in the pocket dimension**Attack:** +26 vs. Reflex**Hit:** 3d12 + 6 force damage. If in a trapped square, the target is also transported to a null space bounded by impenetrable black force.**Miss:** Half damage.**Countermeasures**

◆ A character in the pocket dimension can make a DC 24 Intelligence or Wisdom check at the end of its turn. If successful, the character appears next to the edge of the cavity.

Mist of Storm (M)

Trap

Level 23 Obstacle

XP 5,100

*The mist-filled hallway begins to sizzle with the fury of a storm.***Trap:** Once the altar of compassion is activated, lightning strikes begin arcing across this hallway.**Perception**

No check is needed to see that this area is filled with mist.

Additional Skill: Arcana◆ **DC 29:** The character recognizes that the area might prove particularly conducive to electrical discharges.**Trigger**

When a creature enters or starts its turn in a trapped square, the trap attacks.

Attack**Opportunity Action** **Melee****Targets:** Each creature in a trapped square**Attack:** +26 vs. Fortitude**Hit:** 3d10 + 6 lightning damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).**Miss:** Half damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

RIDDLE ANSWER

Compassion moved the gods to step in and save the world from the primordials, and compassion (or a similar concept, such as pity or sympathy) is the riddle's answer.

If the riddle is answered successfully (it must be spoken aloud in Supernal), the altar recedes into the ceiling (see "Features of the Area" for information).

If an answer is provided that doesn't solve the riddle, or if the character removes his or her hands from the altar, the altar trap activates and attacks.

TACTICS

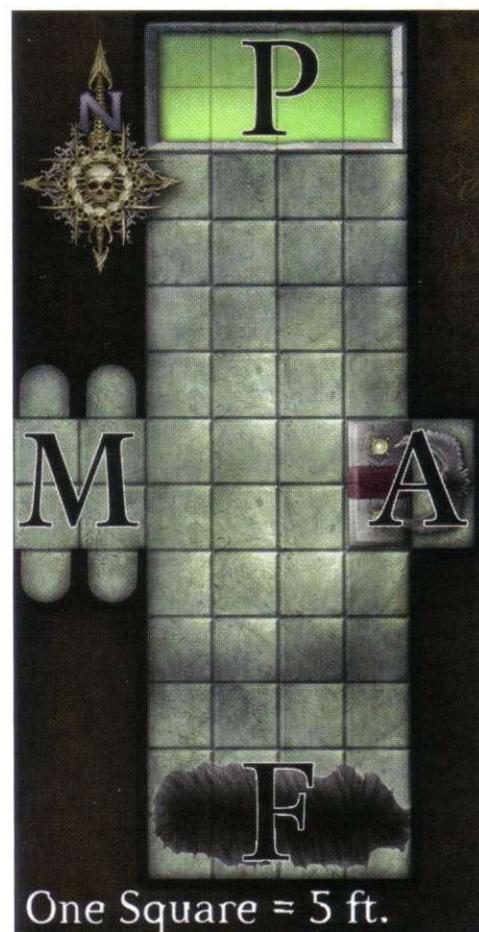
The altar of compassion trap continues to attack every round any creature remains in its blast area. If all creatures leave the area and let it settle for five minutes, it becomes inactive again. A character can also rush in, put hands to the palm prints on the altar, and attempt to provide the correct answer to the riddle. Providing the correct answer also deactivates the trap.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. Two points of light on the altar blaze with celestial brilliance.**Altar of Compassion:** Unless the adventurers examine the area around the altar (DC 29 Perception check to realize that something might be beneath it), the altar gives every indication of being the terminus of the chamber. In addition to serving as a trap, this altar blocks access to a floor shaft that descends 100 feet down to Location 18. The shaft is smooth (DC 29 Athletics check to climb).

From beneath, the altar slides up and out of the way with a touch.

When the adventurers solve the riddle, the altar ascends into a space in the ceiling, revealing a shaft in the floor that leads down to the vault level and Location 18.

History on the Walls: See page 17 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

ENCOUNTER R12: DIVINE MEMORIAL

Encounter Level 25 (35,700 XP)

SETUP

- 2 chuul juggernauts (C)
- 1 blackstar annihilator (A)
- 1 blackstar knight (B)
- 4 blackstar pawns (P)

A 5-foot-high raised dais (with steps) lies directly beneath the shaft that descends from Location 17. The monsters (as well as the large statues and their remnants) are visible when the adventurers enter the chamber.

Use the poster map when running this encounter.

Elder Arantham has managed to corrupt a couple of the reliquary's most fearsome guardians to his own purposes—two chuul from the Dream Pool (Location 9). Likewise, the members of the blackstar host situated here are also turned to Elder Arantham's cause.

When adventurers enter the chamber, show the players the "View of the Memorial" illustration on page 31 of *Adventure Book One*, then, read:

Relief sculptures cover the walls and ceiling of this chamber. A dais directly below the access shaft in the ceiling is carved with images of flying angels. Heavy stone pillars arch up and over this chamber like granite ribs. Two rows of statues march down the center of the chamber. Two of the statues are smashed, and stony pieces litter the floor. The four that remain whole gleam as if with internal light. They depict humanoid creatures of such astounding beauty and grace, they can only be divine entities, though none seem familiar.

Creatures are also present in the chamber. Two huge crustacean horrors with pincerlike claws skulk around the periphery of the chamber. Also present are two constructs of black stone, one carved in baroque armor, the other a hovering orb of glossy black stone.

4 Blackstar Pawns (P)	Level 23 Minion
Medium elemental animate	XP 1,275 each
Initiative +18	Senses Perception +13; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 37; Fortitude 37, Reflex 36, Will 31	
Resist 15 fire	
Speed 7	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
+26 vs. AC; 12 damage (crit 18 damage).	
⊕ Blackstar Ricochet (immediate reaction, when a blackstar pawn within 5 squares is reduced to 0 hit points; at-will)	
The blackstar pawn shifts 3 squares and collides with an enemy; +24 vs. Fortitude; 8 damage.	
Alignment Evil	Languages —
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)
Con 18 (+15)	Int 3 (+7)
	Wis 14 (+13)
	Cha 3 (+7)

2 Chuul Juggernauts (C)	Level 23 Elite Soldier
Huge aberrant magical beast (aquatic)	XP 10,200 each
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +17; darkvision
Psychic Moan (Psychic) aura 1; a chuul juggernaut exudes a constant hum of psychic energy. Enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to Will defense and gain vulnerable 5 psychic.	
HP 434; Bloodied 217	
AC 39; Fortitude 37, Reflex 31, Will 33	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 7, swim 7	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 3; +30 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage, or 5d8 + 8 damage against an immobilized creature.	
⊕ Double Attack (standard; at-will) ◆ Poison	
The chuul juggernaut makes two claw attacks. If both claw attacks hit a single target, the chuul juggernaut makes a secondary attack against the same target with its tentacles.	
Secondary Attack: +28 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
↘ Psychic Lure (standard; at-will) ◆ Psychic	
Ranged 10; +29 vs. Will; 2d10 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is pulled 5 squares.	
Tentacle Net ◆ Poison	
A creature hit by a chuul juggernaut's opportunity attack is immobilized until the end of the juggernaut's next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Deep Speech
Str 27 (+19)	Dex 19 (+15)
Con 25 (+18)	Int 4 (+8)
	Wis 22 (+17)
	Cha 16 (+14)

Blackstar Annihilator (A)	Level 23 Artillery
Medium elemental animate	XP 5,100
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +23; darkvision
HP 168; Bloodied 84	
AC 35; Fortitude 34, Reflex 36, Will 34	
Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant	
Speed 5, fly 8 (clumsy)	
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)	
+30 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
⊕ Meteor Bolt (standard; at-will)	
Ranged 10; +28 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 8 damage, and the target takes -2 to saving throws and ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).	
Blackstar Fall (standard; encounter)	
The blackstar annihilator can fly 8 squares and enter an enemy's space; +28 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. Miss: The target is pushed 1 square. If the target cannot be pushed, the blackstar annihilator ends its move in an unoccupied square adjacent to the target. Secondary Attack: When it lands, the blackstar annihilator attacks: close burst 3; targets enemies; +26 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 8 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone. The burst area becomes difficult terrain.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Primordial
Str 18 (+15)	Dex 28 (+20)
Con 24 (+18)	Int 8 (+10)
	Wis 24 (+18)
	Cha 7 (+9)

Perception Check

DC 17: The unbroken statues give off a dim illumination, while the smashed statues shed deep shadows.

DC 26: The creatures in the chamber seem less comfortable near the unbroken statues.

DC 31: The dais below the shaft vibrates ever so slightly with unseen power.

TACTICS

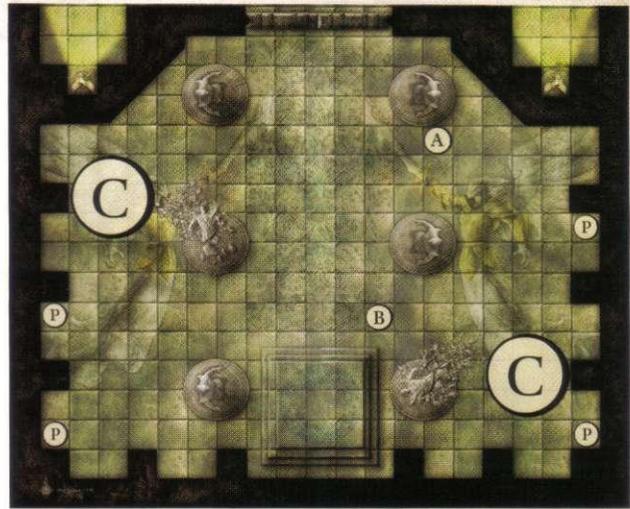
The chuul juggernauts are tall and have reach 3, so they are more than capable of scraping flying PCs off the ceiling if need be. The unholy crustaceans attempt to lure characters close to their pincers and to the blackstar knight. If a chuul manages to immobilize a foe, it spends its action point to make a double attack against the same target.

The blackstar annihilator uses its *blackstar fall* against a controller if possible, and might even use this attack to knock a flying character out of the air. Afterward, it uses its *meteor bolt* power each round against distant targets.

The blackstar knight goes toe-to-toe against the closest defender, using its *deathsword* liberally, and *no escape* whenever a marked foe moves away.

The blackstar pawns begins in the alcoves and aren't necessarily initially seen as threats. They engage the PCs only after a full round of combat has occurred.

Blackstar Knight (B)		Level 23 Soldier
Medium elemental animate		XP 5,100
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +19; darkvision	
HP 212; Bloodied 106		
AC 39; Fortitude 35 Reflex 34, Will 35		
Resist 15 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed 7		
⚔ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ⚔ Weapon		
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blackstar knight's next turn.		
⚔ Deathsword (standard; recharge ☞ ☞) ⚔ Weapon		
Requires greatsword; +28 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage, and if the target is marked by the blackstar knight it takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends)		
⚔ Soldier's Duty (when reduced to 0 hit points)		
The blackstar knight explodes; close burst 2; targets enemies; +24 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 9 damage; marked targets take an additional 1d10 + 9 damage.		
⚔ No Escape (move; at-will) ⚔ Teleportation		
The blackstar knight can teleport 10 squares as long as it ends in a square adjacent to an enemy marked by the blackstar knight.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Primordial	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 26 (+19)
Con 20 (+16)	Int 10 (+11)	Cha 9 (+10)
Equipment greatsword		



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light. The intact statues provide dim light throughout the chamber.

Ceiling: The ceiling in this chamber is 40 feet high.

Double Doors: The designs on the doors show a black meteorite buried under layers of stone and iron. The doors are not locked, but they are heavy (DC 24 Strength check to push open; once open, the doors swing closed again 1 round later unless braced in some manner). If the doors are opened, the welcoming Dragon Breath of Bahamut trap (see page 60) begins the final encounter.

History on the Walls: See page 17 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

Intact Statues: Any undead or elemental that begins its turn adjacent to an intact statue is dazed (save ends).

Raised Dais: If the vibration is noted, a DC 29 Religion check reveals that the dais retains a residue of the divine power from the time of the Dawn War. As a minor action once per round, a creature that knows about the residual power and standing on the dais gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls with the next divine power used.

Smashed Statues: These statues do not block movement but they do count as difficult terrain. In addition, any living creature that begins its turn in the square of a smashed statue or adjacent to a smashed statue receives a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends).

ENCOUNTER R13: RELIQUARY (PART 1)

Encounter Level 18 (10,400 XP)

This chamber is divided into two parts. Setup One describes the portion of the chamber just beyond the double doors. When at least one of the adventurers moves into the other area, Setup Two commences the climax of this final encounter with Elder Arantham and his allies. Use the poster map for both parts of this encounter.



SETUP ONE

- 1 breath of Bahamut trap (B)
- 2 angel of madness hazards (M)
- 2 angel of desolation hazards (D)

When adventurers open the double doors from Location 17, show the players the “View of the Breath of Bahamut” illustration on page 31 of *Adventure Book One*, then, read:

The disembodied head of a gargantuan platinum-hued dragon breaths forth an apocalypse of radiant fire.

The breath of Bahamut trap activates when the adventurers open the door to this chamber.

Breath of Bahamut (B)	Level 19 Blaster
Trap	XP 2,400
<i>The dragon head releases a gout of radiant fire.</i>	
Trap: Once a creature opens the doors and steps through the doorway, the head breaths each round.	
Perception	
◆ DC 27: The character notices that the dragon's eyes flash then grow dim for a moment with each breath it unleashes.	
Initiative: +8	
Trigger	
When the doors in front of the trap open, it makes its first attack as an immediate reaction. Then it attacks each round on its initiative.	
Attack	
Immediate Reaction or Standard Action Close blast 5	
Targets: Each creature in blast	
Attack: +22 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d12 + 5 radiant and fire damage, and ongoing 10 radiant and fire damage (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage, and no ongoing damage.	
Countermeasures	
◆ A character who climbs up the face to the eyes with a DC 22 Athletics check can disable the trap with a DC 27 Thievery check.	

When a PC moves into either side corridor, read:
The sculpture of a faceless angel stands in an alcove, glowing with a faint radiance that projects forward. Another alcove holds the sculpture of a darker angel, which radiates a dimmer, colder light. Where the two emanations meet, turbulence shimmers the air.

2 Angels of Madness (M) **Level 18 Blaster**

Trap XP 2,000 each

*The angel's golden glow begins to eat at your mind!***Trap:** The area before the trap is filled with mentally disruptive psychic energy.**Perception**◆ **DC 13:** A golden shimmer in the air marks the area in front of the statue as potentially dangerous.**Additional Skill: Arcana**◆ **DC 20:** The character recognizes the area as filled with disruptive psychic influence.◆ **DC 25:** The combined radiations of the golden and shadowy light likely has additional unpleasant effects.**Trigger**

When a creature enters or starts its turn within 5 squares of the statue, the trap is triggered and attacks. The affected area visibly brightens with a pulse of golden light.

Attack**Opportunity Action** **Melee****Target:** The triggering creature**Attack:** +21 vs. Fortitude**Hit:** 2d10 + 5 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends).**Miss:** Half damage, and no ongoing damage.**Special**

A creature taking ongoing necrotic damage when it takes damage from this trap loses all resistance to either psychic or necrotic damage. This resistance returns when ongoing damage of neither type is being taken.

2 Angels of Desolation (D) **Level 18 Blaster**

Trap XP 2,000 each

*The angel's dim glow begins to draw out your soul!***Trap:** The area before the trap is filled with soul-harming necrotic energy.**Perception**◆ **DC 13:** A shadowy shimmer in the air marks the area in front of the statue as potentially dangerous.**Additional Skill: Religion**◆ **DC 20:** The character recognizes the area as filled with necrotic energy.◆ **DC 25:** The combined radiations of the golden and shadowy light likely has additional unpleasant effects.**Trigger**

When a creature enters or starts its turn within 3 squares of the statue, the trap is triggered and attacks. The affected area visibly darkens with a pulse of deep shadow.

Attack**Opportunity Action** **Melee****Target:** The triggering creature**Attack:** +21 vs. Will**Hit:** 2d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).**Miss:** Half damage, and no ongoing damage.**Special**

A creature taking ongoing psychic damage when it takes damage from this trap loses all resistance to either psychic or necrotic damage. This resistance returns when no ongoing damage of either type is being taken.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA****Illumination:** Dim light, punctuated by moments of bright light when the dragon head breathes.**Ceiling:** The ceiling in this chamber is 40 feet high.**History on the Walls:** See page 17 in *Adventure Book One* for details.**Side Corridors:** The mix of psychic and necrotic energy pulsating in the side corridors inflict damage onto living creatures in the area. Any living creature that starts its turn in a square in either of the side corridors takes 10 points of psychic and necrotic damage.

ENCOUNTER R13: RELIQUARY (PART 2)

Encounter Level 25 (40,775 XP)

SETUP TWO

Elder Arantham, human cleric huecuva (A)

1 blackstar idol of Timesus (T)

5 blackstar pawns (P)

2 great flameskulls (F)

These enemies enter the encounter when the adventurers arrive from either of the side corridors. All enemies are visible when this part of the encounter begins.

Elder Arantham (A) Level 25 Elite Controller (Leader)

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 14,000

Initiative +15 Senses Perception +18; darkvision

Deathless Fanaticism aura 10; any ally within the aura that is reduced to 0 hit points immediately makes a melee basic attack with a +5 bonus to the attack and damage rolls.

HP 448; Bloodied 224

Regeneration 5 (damage from silver weapons negates Arantham's regeneration until the end of his next turn)

AC 39; Fortitude 37, Reflex 38, Will 40

Immune disease; Resist 15 necrotic

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Unholy Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
+28 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 necrotic damage, ongoing 10 necrotic damage, and when the target of this attack takes ongoing necrotic damage, all adjacent creatures take 5 necrotic damage (save ends both).

↗ **Unholy Glare** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Gaze, Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +28 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 necrotic damage, ongoing 10 necrotic damage, and when the target of this attack takes ongoing necrotic damage, all adjacent creatures take 5 necrotic damage (save ends both).

↖ **Killing in the Name** (standard; at-will)
Close burst 5; up to 3 allies in burst make one basic attack with a +2 bonus to the attack roll. The attack deals an extra 2d6 damage.

Dying for the Cause (immediate interrupt, when Elder Arantham takes damage; encounter)
Requires an adjacent allied minion. The ally is reduced to 0 hit points. Arantham takes no damage from the triggering attack.

Return to Sanctum (standard, while bloodied; encounter) ♦
Teleportation
Elder Arantham teleports himself and one ally within 5 squares of him to a prepared location within 1 mile of him.

Second Wind (standard; encounter)
Arantham spends a healing surge and regains 112 hit points. He gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of his next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common, Primordial

Skills Arcana +21, Diplomacy +20, History +21, Insight +23, Religion +21

Str 17 (+15) Dex 16 (+15) Wis 22 (+18)

Con 16 (+15) Int 19 (+16) Cha 17 (+15)

Equipment: scale armor, +6 holy symbol

When the adventurers can see into this chamber, read:

Relief sculptures cover the walls and ceiling of this chamber. Great incisions in the floor proceed by giant's steps from the west to the east. The lowest level of the excavation contains several creatures concentrated around two large objects. The larger of the two objects is a mass of floating black rock. Smaller creatures, apparently composed of the same stone as the mass but roughly carved to resemble humanoids, swing mining tools. They carve pieces out of the ground, and then carry the pieces to a portal that resembles nothing so much a vertical pool of swirling blood.

Two flaming skulls blazing with green fire flit over the area.

One other creature stands within the pit: a lichlike humanoid wearing fine robes. It looks up and screams, "You're too late!"

TACTICS

Elder Arantham already has what he wants. For him, this conflict shouldn't be a fight to the death. Still, he recognizes the adventurers as a potential threat to Orcus's future plans. Rather than merely leave through the portal when the adventurers arrive, he fights.

As soon as Elder Arantham is bloodied, he uses *return to sanctum* to teleport next to the blood portal, and then he steps through. He keeps his action point handy for just this sort of escape, and he uses it if the adventurers prove to be more capable than he expected.

Meanwhile, Arantham's blackstar and undead allies harry the adventurers as much as they are able with ranged, then close attacks. At least one (and perhaps both) of the flameskulls hovers within 5 squares of Arantham to take advantage of his *killing in the name* power. Whatever the outcome of the battle, proceed to the "Conclusion" when it ends.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. The combination of great flameskulls and glowing portal illuminates the area.

Ceiling: The ceiling in this chamber is 40 feet high.

History on the Walls: See page 17 in *Adventure Book One* for details.

Blood Portal: Living creatures cannot pass. The portal allows only undead or a living creature holding an undead to pass.

The blood portal is focused on two black stones set in the floor (DC 31 Perception check to notice). If both stones are destroyed (DC 26 Strength check to break; AC/Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, 50 hit points), the portal collapses over a span of 10 minutes.

Excavation Steps: The excavation debris is difficult terrain. The map provides the elevation of each step.

Treasure: A DC 26 Perception check reveals an iron chest beneath a pile of debris that contains choice items Arantham gleaned from Death's Reach: 1 level 27 magic item, 1 level 26 magic item, 5,000 pp, 2 potions of recovery, and 4 5,000 gp gems.

5 Blackstar Pawns (P)		Level 23 Minion
Medium elemental animate		XP 1,275 each
Initiative +18	Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 37; Fortitude 37, Reflex 36, Will 31		
Resist 15 fire		
Speed 7		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+26 vs. AC; 12 damage (crit 18 damage).		
⊕ Blackstar Ricochet (immediate reaction, when a blackstar pawn within 5 squares is reduced to 0 hit points; at-will)		
The blackstar pawn shifts 3 squares and collides with an enemy; +24 vs. Fortitude; 8 damage.		
Alignment Evil	Languages –	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 14 (+13)
Con 18 (+15)	Int 3 (+7)	Cha 3 (+7)

Blackstar Idol of Timesus (T)	Level 22 Elite Controller	
Large elemental animate	XP 8,300	
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +21; darkvision	
Blackstar Pulse (Healing) aura 3; enemies that start their turns within the aura take 10 damage, and blackstar host that start their turns within the aura heal 10 hit points.		
HP 420; Bloodied 210		
AC 36; Fortitude 34, Reflex 27, Will 36		
Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 15 radiant		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed fly 8 (hover), teleport 4		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Force Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Force		
+27 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 force damage.		
↘ Mindrip (minor; at-will) ♦ Psychic		
Ranged 10; +26 vs. Will; 1d10 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
↖ Blackstar Nova (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Psychic		
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 4d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. Miss: Half damage, and the target is neither pushed nor knocked prone.		
✱ Mindquake (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️ ☹️) ♦ Psychic		
Area burst 5 within 20; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 4d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
Animate Blackstar (standard; at-will or encounter)		
The idol targets the remains of a fallen blackstar creature and imbues it with energy. As an at-will power, the fallen blackstar rises as a blackstar pawn. If the blackstar idol targets a blackstar pawn as an encounter power, it becomes a blackstar knight.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Primordial	
Str 25 (+18)	Dex 13 (+12)	Wis 30 (+21)
Con 26 (+19)	Int 10 (+11)	Cha 7 (+9)

2 Great Flameskulls (F)	Level 24 Artillery	
Small natural animate (undead)	XP 6,050 each	
Initiative +19	Senses Perception +22; truesight 6	
HP 174; Bloodied 87		
Regeneration 10		
AC 37; Fortitude 34, Reflex 39, Will 37		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 fire, 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed fly 10 (hover)		
⊕ Fiery Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire		
+26 vs. AC; 1d4 damage plus 2d6 fire damage.		
↘ Flame Ray (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire		
Ranged 20; +28 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 fire damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the great flameskull's next turn.		
✱ Firestorm (standard; encounter) ♦ Fire		
Area burst 4 within 20; +27 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 10 fire damage. Miss: Half damage. The firestorm blocks line of sight, deals 10 fire damage to any creature that starts its turn in the area, and disappears at the end of the great flameskull's next turn. The great flameskull can exclude allies from the effect.		
Mage Hand (minor; at-will) ♦ Conjuration		
As the wizard power <i>mage hand</i> (Player's Handbook page 158).		
Illumination		
The great flameskull sheds bright light out to 5 squares, but it can reduce its brightness to dim light out to 2 squares as a free action.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, one other	
Skills Stealth +24		
Str 10 (+12)	Dex 25 (+19)	Wis 21 (+17)
Con 24 (+19)	Int 30 (+22)	Cha 28 (+21)

CONCLUSION

As one of the most powerful servants of Orcus, Elder Arantham managed to penetrate the ancient, secret prison of a powerful primordial. Such was Timesus's power that it blocked the spiritual outflow that Death's Reach once represented, so that mortal souls no longer passed naturally from existence.

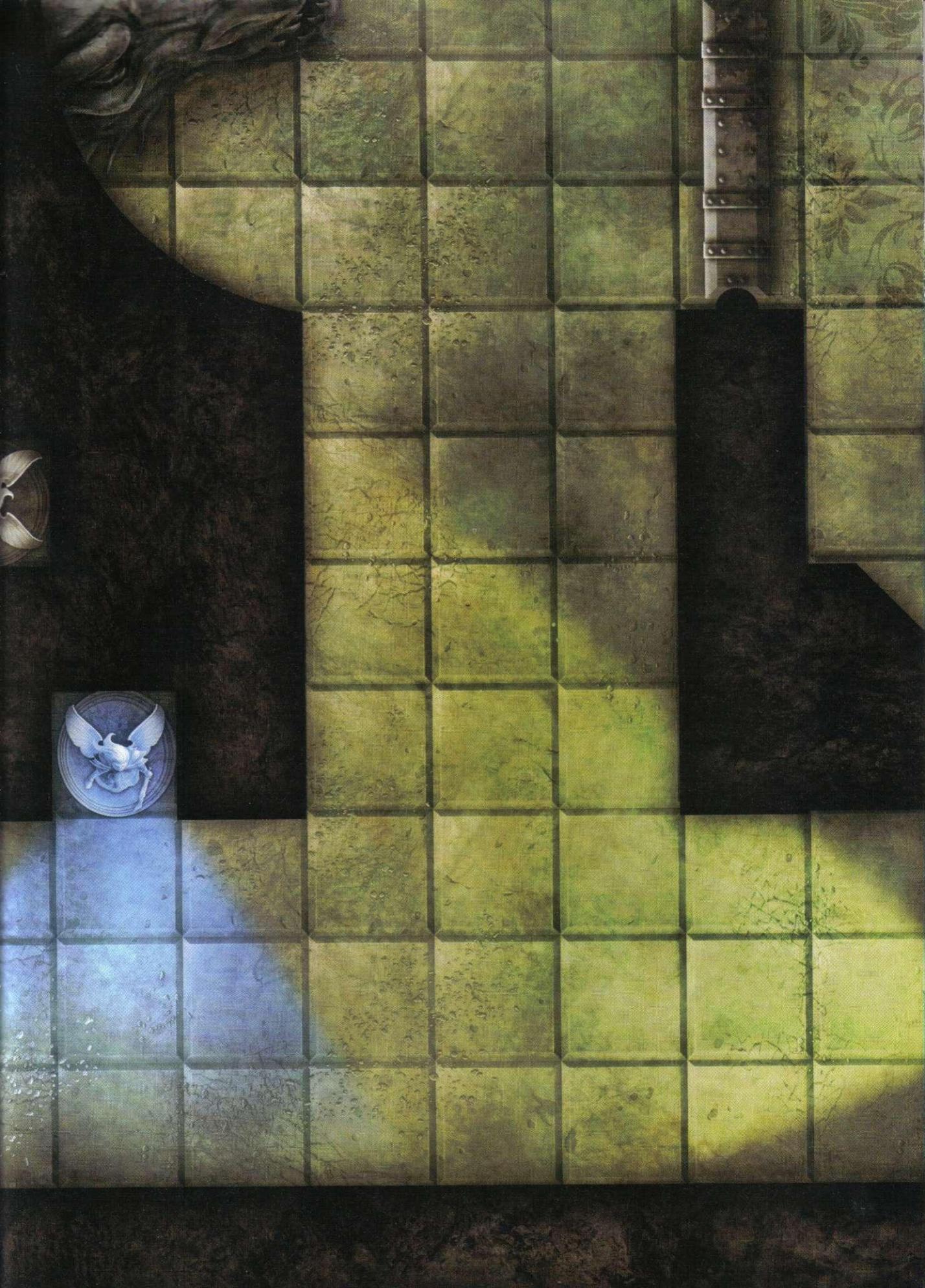
End of the Soulfall: If the PCs chase off Arantham and eradicate the blood portal, they achieve a great good. The portal's mere existence imperiled planar stability. By forcing the passage to remain open, the ancient ban that sealed Death's Reach was compromised. With the eradication of the portal, the soulfall ceases. The Raven Queen's anxiety over the fate of unrecorded souls is soothed. Elder Arantham returns in *E2: Kingdom of Ghouls*.

Timesus Released: Whether Arantham lives or dies, the PCs learn that Timesus is missing. Whatever Orcus plans for the primordial, it probably doesn't bode well for the living.

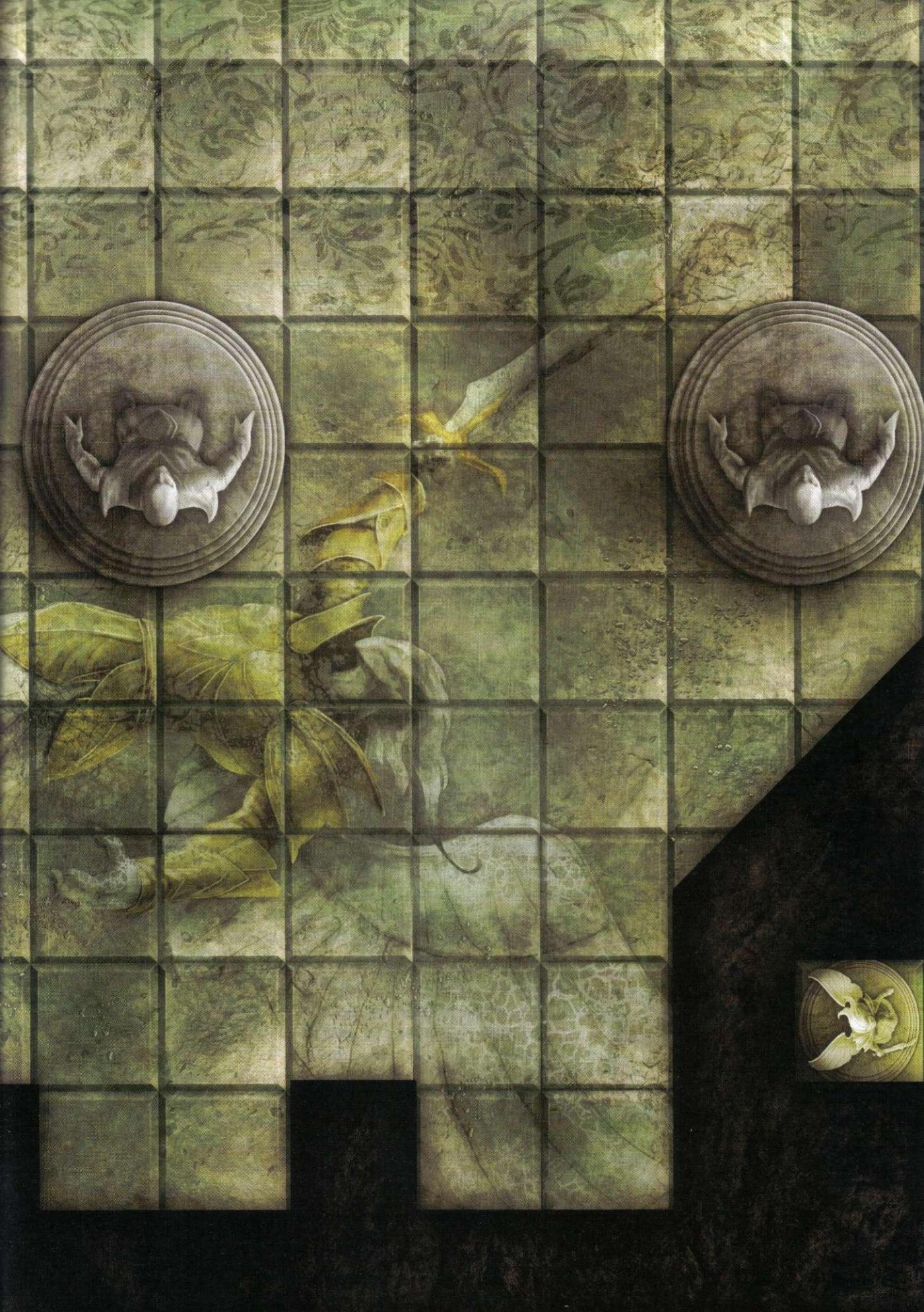
The Seventh Veiled Gate: When the adventurers exit Death's Reach for the final time, they pass through the final gate that ushers them forward on the path to legend. If they do nothing else, they have trod where few mortals will and accomplished deeds that will live forever in the annals of the campaign world.



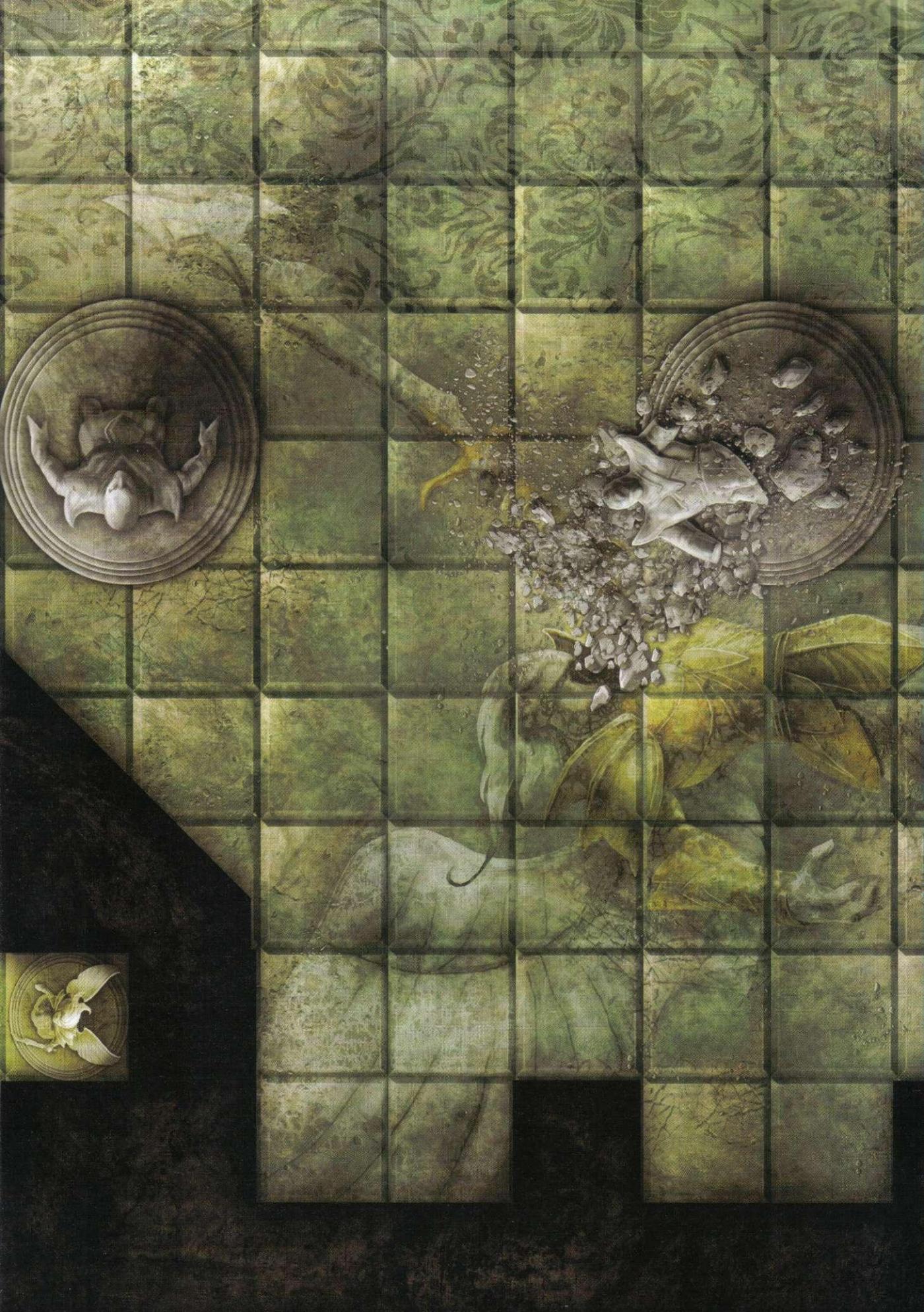




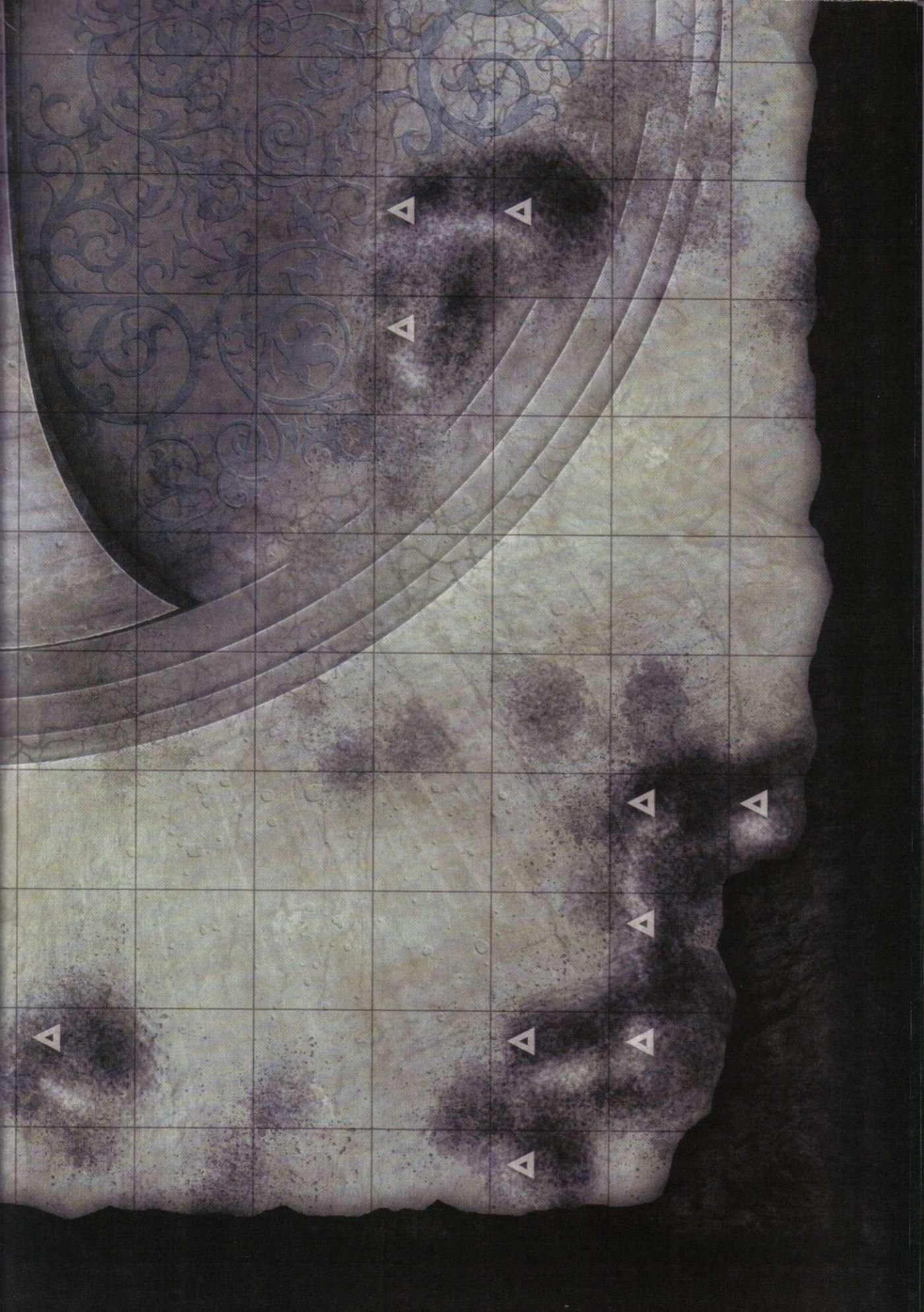




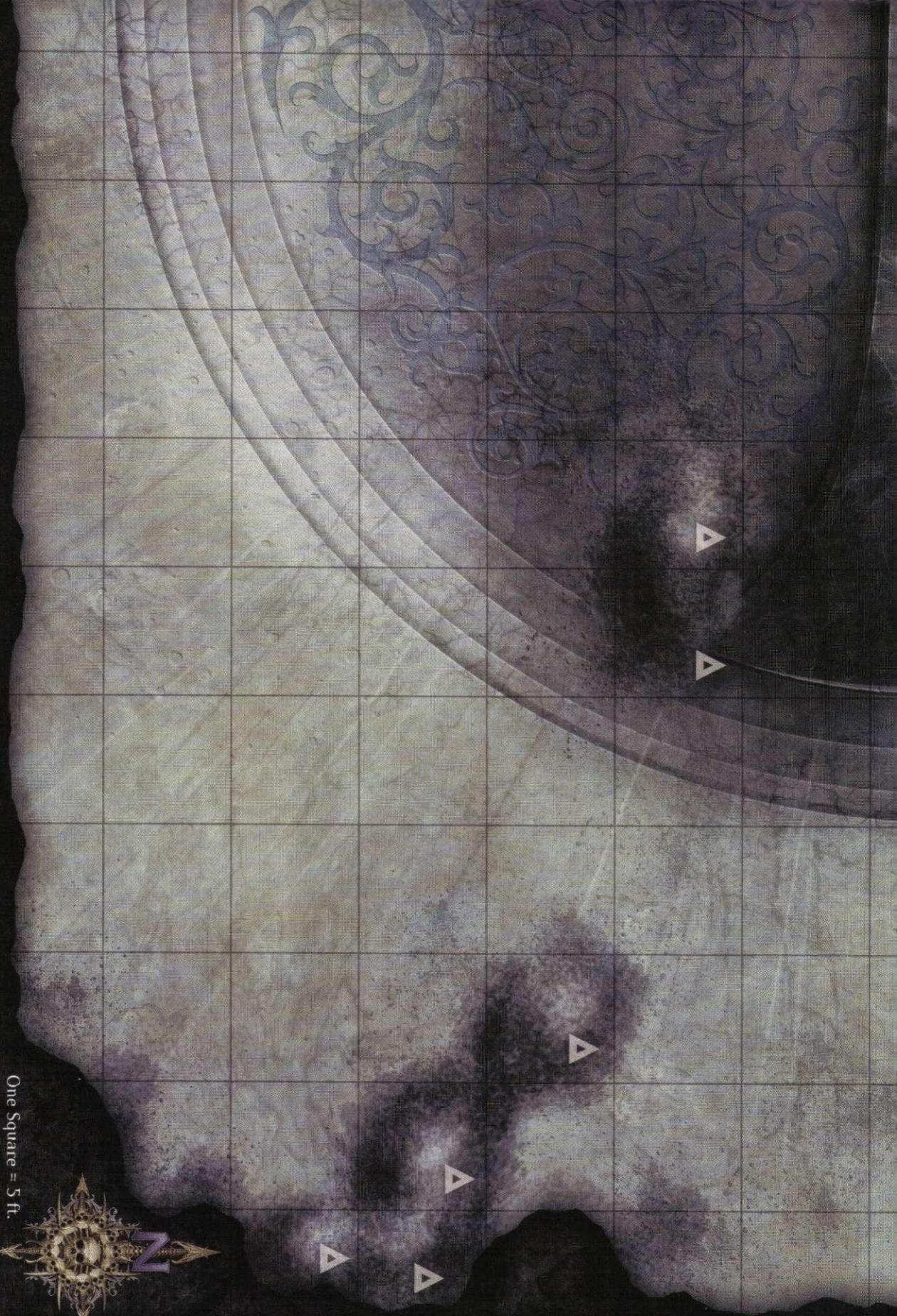






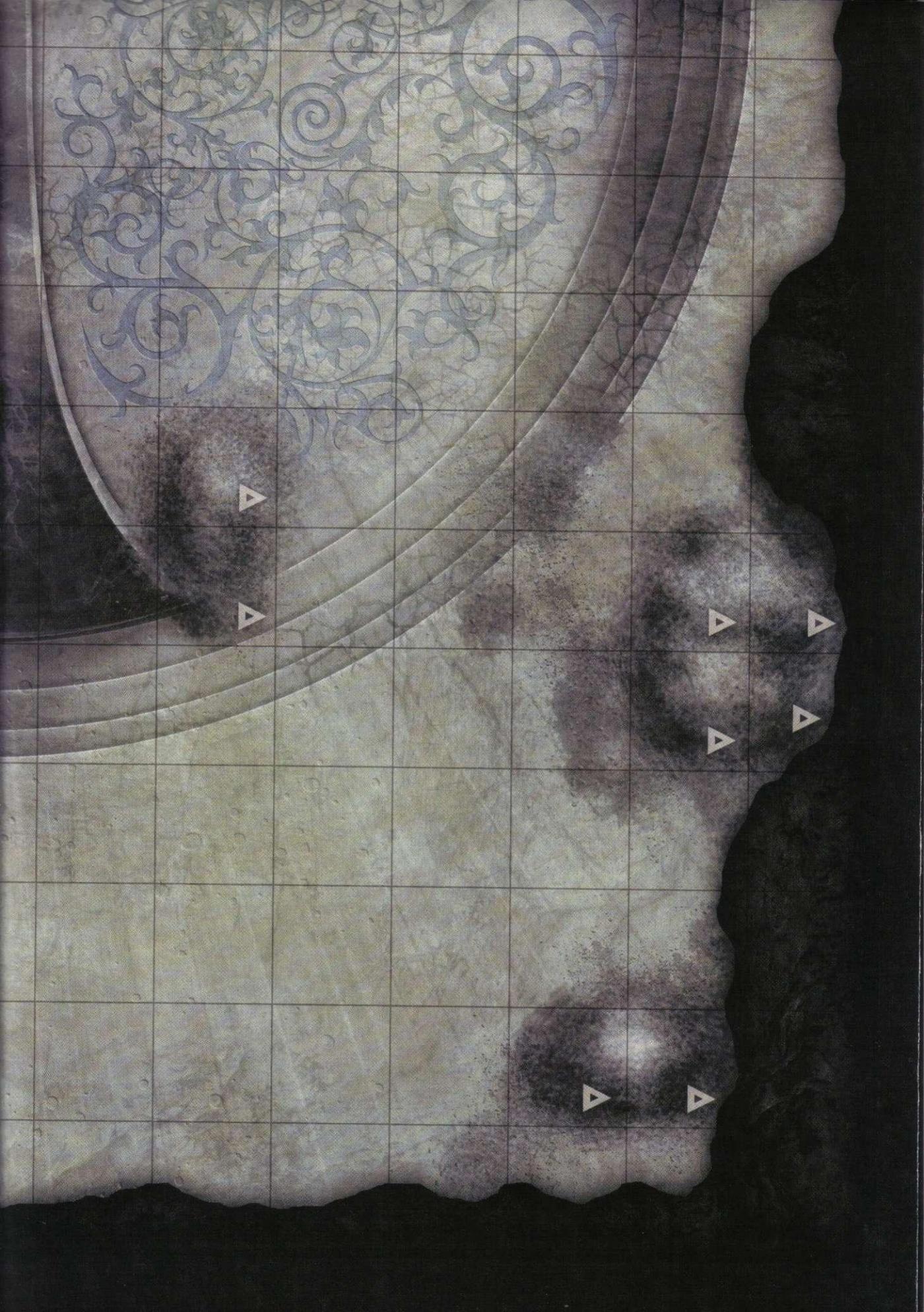






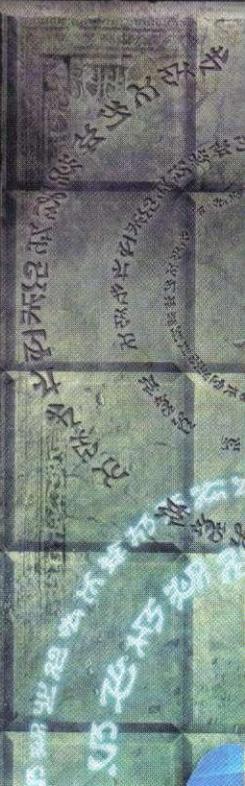
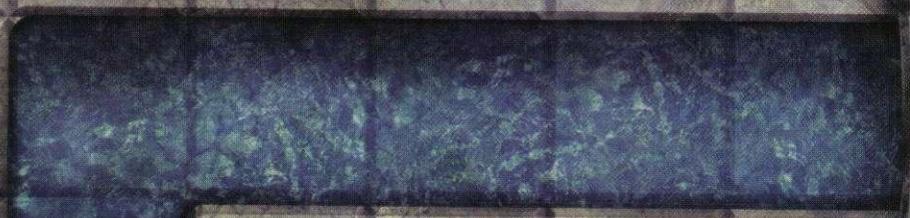
One Square = 5 ft.

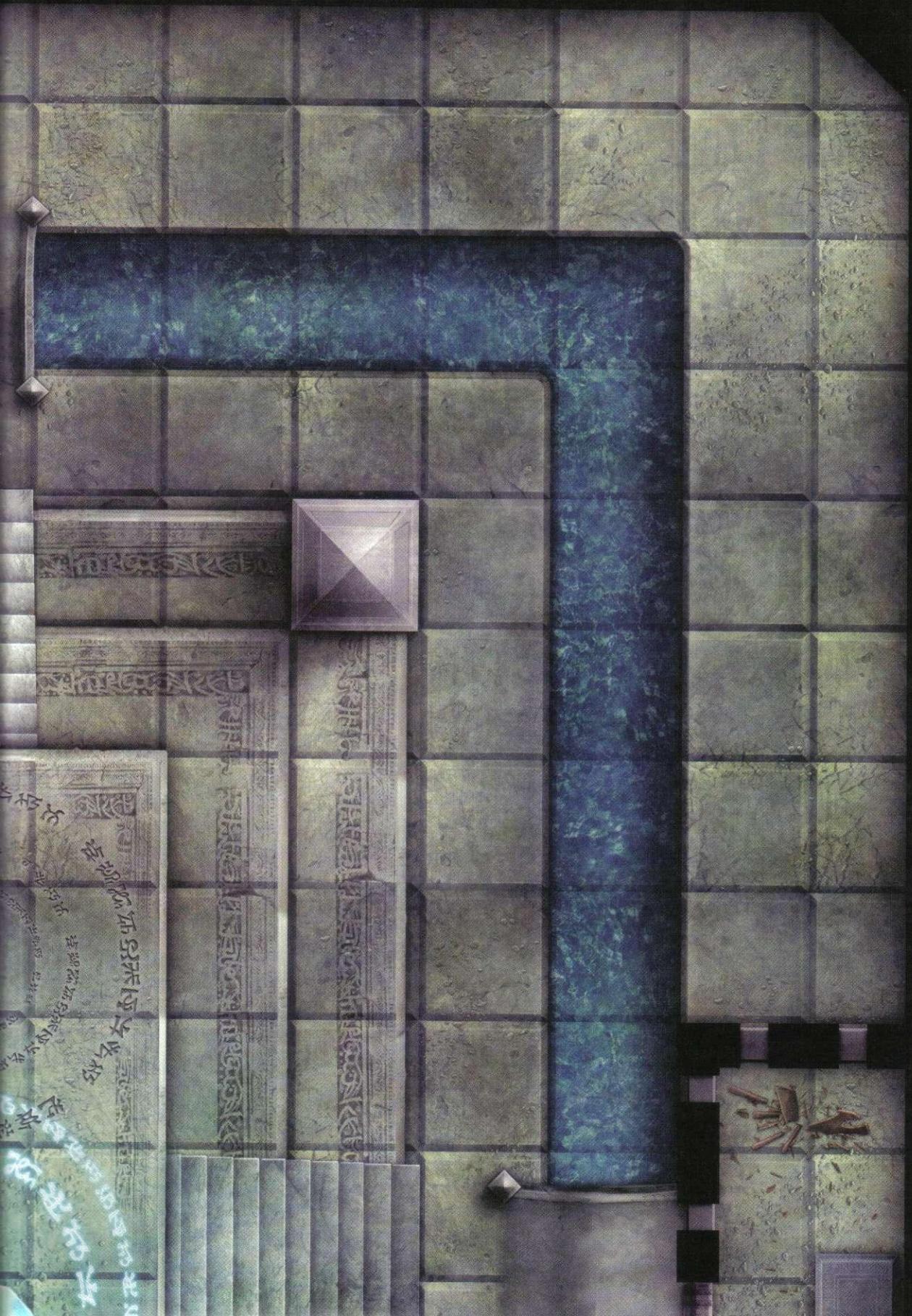


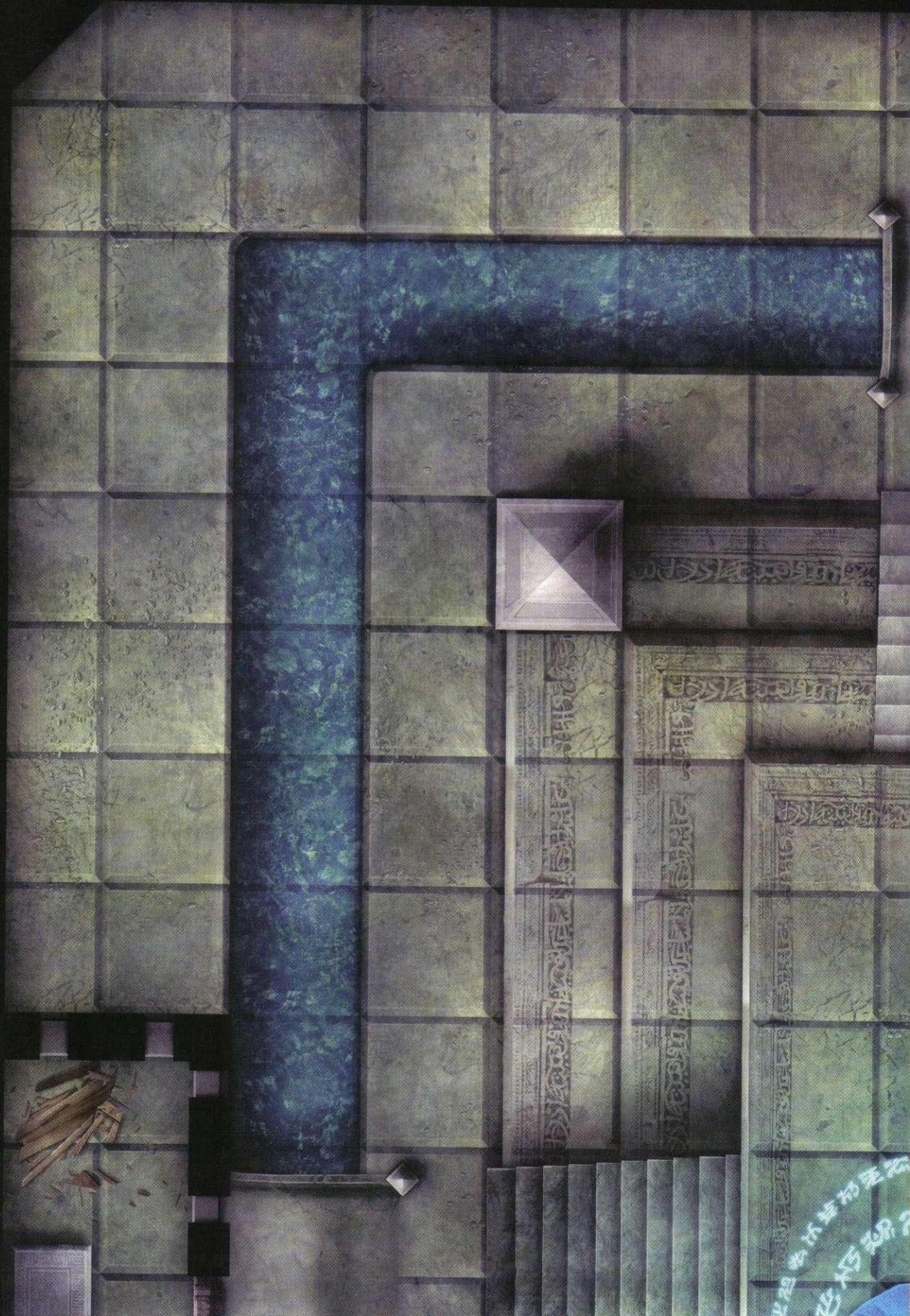


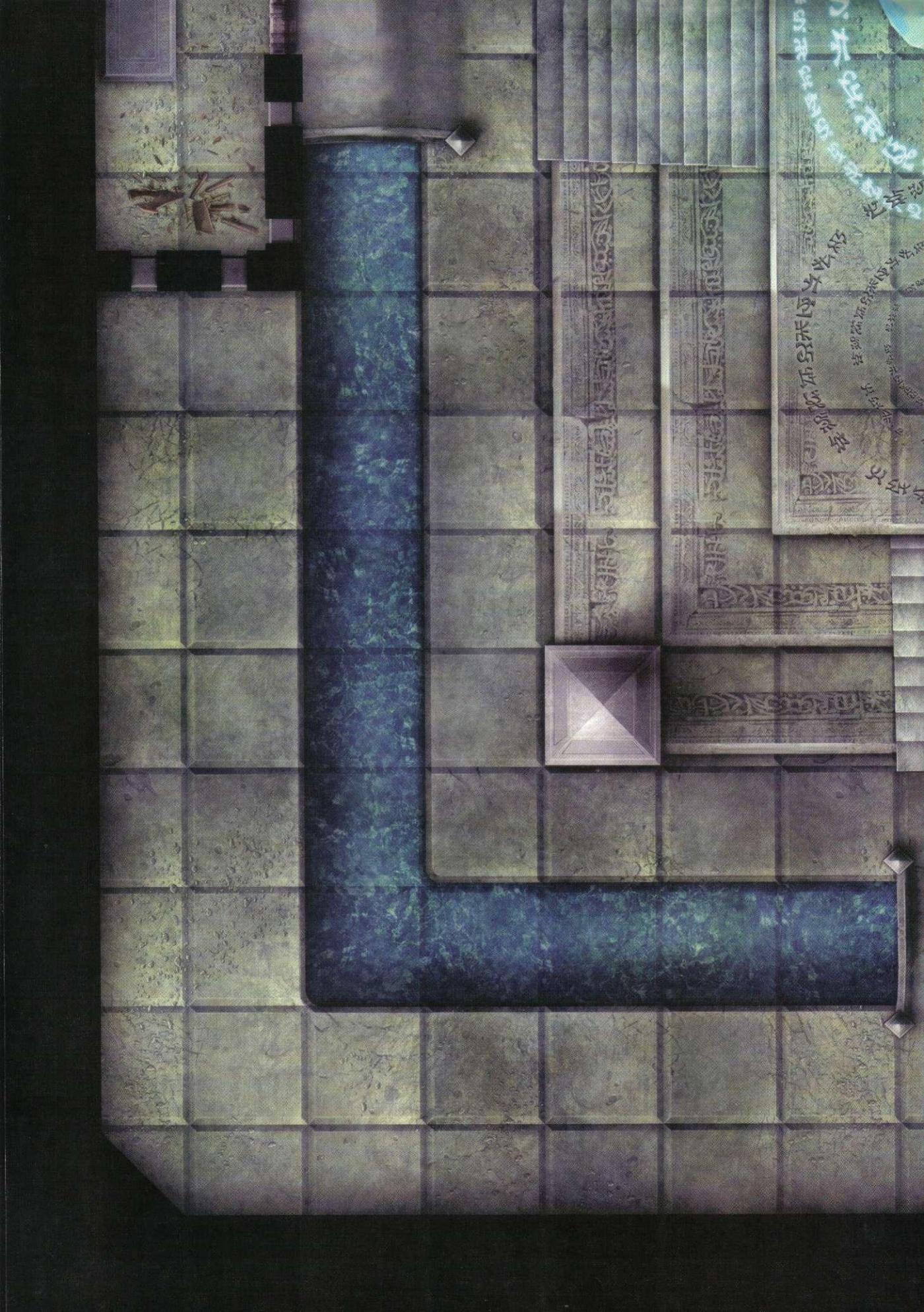


One Square = 5 ft.









STEP BEYOND THE EDGE OF OBLIVION

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