

EPIC3-2

CRACKS IN THE CRIMSON CAGE

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING FORGOTTEN*
REALMS EPIC CAMPAIGN ADVENTURE

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Mortal heroes have just foiled a plot to assassinate a god and despoil his realm. The perpetrators' trail leads to Carceri, an astral prison that detains powerful abominations, disobedient angels, and horrors from beyond the known planes. The only way to find out who's behind the attack is for you to give chase into the Red Prison... and risk being trapped for eternity with beings feared even by the gods. A **three-round** *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Carceri for 22nd level characters. This adventure is a direct sequel to *EPIC3-1 The Glorious Hunt*.

This is a three-round adventure. We recommend that you allow a minimum of 12-15 hours of playing time.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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Be sure to keep up with the LFR Community at our campaign website: <http://community.wizards.com/lfr>

PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the D&D 4th Edition core rulebooks. These are the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, or the corresponding D&D Essentials products. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in **bold italics** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information about non-player characters (NPCs) and monsters appears in the full stat-block format with each combat encounter. For non-combat encounters, this information appears in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of a WPN event (see above), complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. Auras are designated with the O symbol, as well as the aura keyword.

A lower-case letter (used only for certain melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure whenever possible.

In support of the golden rule, we offer these guidelines:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and to make decisions about how the group interacts with the world.** This is especially important during non-combat encounters, but you may also need to adjust the combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time with the adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or just ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each player the experience they're after when they play D&D. Everyone at the table should get a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game moving to ensure you finish on time.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played in about 4 hours; be very aware of running long or short, and adjust the pacing accordingly. If that means you need to "call" a combat encounter when it is obvious that the PCs are going to win, then feel free to do so.
- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with the environment.** Players should always know when enemies are bloodied or affected by conditions. Give them clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting frustrated by a lack of information. Encourage immersion in the adventure and give the players "little victories" for figuring out a good choice from your clues.

In summary, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This Epic Campaign adventure is designed for **level 22** player characters (PCs). Players may only play this adventure with characters that have reached 21st level through play in the *Living Forgotten Realms* campaign. To be clear, it is okay to use a character that was started above 1st level following the rules in the *LFR Campaign Guide* and subsequently reached 21st level through the play of LFR adventures. However, the campaign rules limit new characters to a starting level of 11. It is not legal to create a brand-new 21st-level character specifically to participate in the Epic Campaign.

If a character has reached 21st level but is not the correct level for this adventure, which can only happen by playing the Epic Campaign adventures out of order, that player may adjust the level of his or her character accordingly for the duration of this adventure.

Adjusting Level Up: If a character is below the designated level for this adventure (but has reached at least 21st level), increase the character's level to the correct level for this adventure, following the core rules (so the character gains powers, feats, ability score increases, and so forth as normal). The player may not change any of the character's existing magic items, and the character gains no new magic items.

Adjusting Level Down: If a character is above the designated level for this adventure, reduce the character's level by removing all benefits gained from higher levels. The character may not use any of the magic items or Story Awards gained from Epic Campaign adventures designated for levels higher than this adventure. For example, if a player had to skip the level 21 adventure but has already played the level 23 and level 24 adventures, that character may not use any of the magic items gained from those adventures during the lower-level adventure. Anything that happened in the higher-level adventures is temporarily "unwound," as if the character had played the adventures in the correct order.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If the group fails to defeat an encounter (for example, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they fail too many checks during a skill challenge) it doesn't have to mean the end of the adventure. In most

cases, both success and failure should lead to interesting story outcomes. The PCs might miss out on some XP or treasure, but whenever possible, give them a chance to work around their failure and still bring the adventure to a successful conclusion.

CHARACTER DEATH

If a PC dies during the course of the adventure, the player of that character and the rest of the group have two options, provided that they have access to the Raise Dead ritual (either a PC has it and can use it or the characters return to civilization), they have access to the body, and it is possible to return the dead PC to life.

- **Pay for the Raise Dead ritual.** If the group has access to the body and chooses this option, the component cost is usually divided evenly amongst the group (although this is not required, it is generally considered good form to share the costs). The component cost is 500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). If a PC can cast the ritual, then the component cost is the only cost. If the group must locate an NPC to cast the ritual, that NPC charges a fee equal to 20% of the component cost.
- **Use a power that returns dead characters to life.** Certain characters gain powers that allow them to restore life without using the Raise Dead ritual or paying a component cost. For example, the warpriest (a cleric build from *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*) gains the *resurrection* daily utility power at 8th level. NPCs may not be used for this option unless an adventure specifically says so; a player character with the appropriate power must be at the table (assuming he or she isn't the dead character) and all other conditions for using the power must be met. For example, *resurrection* may only be used at the end of an extended rest, and the character must have died within the last 24 hours.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group doesn't have access to the dead character's body, or if they have the body but cannot afford (or are unwilling) to pay for a ritual, the player can choose to return the PC back to life at the end of the adventure, exactly as if the Raise Dead ritual had been used on the dead character. The details of exactly how the character's body made its way back to civilization are up to the player, or this can be left deliberately vague. There is no direct cost for accepting Death Charity, but the character forfeits all non-XP rewards for the adventure (including gold, Story Awards, and the opportunity to select a Treasure). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

Regardless of which option is chosen, any character who dies during an adventure gains 20% less XP from that adventure. In other words, characters that died during the adventure earn 80% of the amount earned by those characters that did not die during the adventure (for example, if the rest of the party earned 500 XP, the characters who died only earn 400 XP).

If a character is killed in the final encounter, but the rest of the party prevails, then the DM may choose to waive the 20% XP penalty if he or she believes that the group as a whole would not have succeeded without the dead character's sacrifice. The 20% penalty also does not apply in the event of a TPK (Total Party Kill), because the DM should reduce the entire group's XP award to reflect the fact that the party as a whole failed to complete some or all of the adventure's objectives.

Sometimes, invoking the Death Charity clause is the only option to return a dead PC to life. For example, if the group suffers a TPK and no friendly NPCs know where to find them, then it's unlikely that their bodies can be recovered. The DM is the final arbiter of whether or not a dead character's body can be recovered. Remember, the Death Charity clause is always an option, no matter what happened to the PC. Returning from the dead (by whatever means) is optional and up to the player, but the decision must be made at the table and recorded on the character's Adventure Log. Any character that chooses not to return from the dead is permanently retired from play.

Mounts are not characters. These rules do not apply if a mount is killed during an adventure. To resurrect a dead mount, the owner must pay 20% of the mount's market price at the end of the adventure in which the mount died.

MILESTONES

Whether the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they generally reach a milestone after every second encounter following the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Some encounters do not count toward a milestone, usually because they are pure role-playing encounters or do not pose a meaningful challenge to the party. If an encounter is not intended to count toward a milestone, it will say so. In particular, you should not deny the players a milestone just because they are having an easy time with the combat encounters. After each encounter, inform the players whether that encounter counted toward the next milestone. Reaching a milestone gives each PC another action point and affects some magic item powers.

LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't automatically resolved by the end of the adventure, such as the death penalty or the later stages of a disease.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life, that character usually suffers a death penalty. For example, a character brought back by the Raise Dead ritual or a warpriest's resurrection power suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until he or she has reached three milestones. The player should record the character's death on his or her Adventure Log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, the death penalty ends.

Sometimes the death penalty is paid by a character other than the character that was returned to life. For example, if a sentinel uses the restore life power, there is a cost of four healing surges. These healing surges cannot be regained until the PCs who spent the surges (which cannot include the character who was returned to life) have reached three milestones or taken three extended rests. The character(s) who spent the surges track this on their individual Adventure Logs. As each character crosses the appropriate threshold, the death penalty ends for that character, regardless of whether it is still active on other characters.

Diseases: A disease lasts until it is cured or it reaches its final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of an adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cured or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

Other Lasting Effects: Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Effects that last for a well-defined period of time (those that end after a certain number of days or extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified, such as by a Story Award). Effects that use a benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's Adventure Log and tracked across adventures.

It is always the player's responsibility to inform his or her DM at the beginning of an adventure if the character is suffering from a lasting effect.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In addition to the information provided herein, you might find it helpful to refer to Chapter 3, pages 104-107 of *The Plane Above: Secrets of the Astral Sea*.

CARCERI

Carceri, the Red Prison, is an astral dominion built by the gods of both good and evil to incarcerate those whom they consider too dangerous to roam free. More importantly, it also seals in Agathys, the spawning ground for abominations created during the Dawn War. The deities that joined together to establish Carceri as an eternal prison signed the Carceri Compact, swearing not to interfere with the abominations or the prisoners of the other deities.

Corellon however, dissented, and sacrificed a portion of his realm by opening it to the violent birth and loathsome rampages of the abominations, an act that has been incorporated into Arvandor's lifestyle as the Glorious Hunt. Corellon arranged for abominations that managed to escape Carceri to appear within Arvandor through a metaphysical funnel rather than be free to threaten the mortal realms.

The dominion consists of six marshy isles that constantly shift location, with Agathys always farthest from the entrance.

EPIC 3~1 SUMMARY

In *EPIC3-1 The Glorious Hunt*, groups of adventurers traveled to Arvandor and joined the Glorious Hunt. The flow of abominations from Carceri to Arvandor had increased dramatically, and many of the abominations appearing in Arvandor were tainted with a virulent poison capable of corrupting mortals and immortals alike. Arvandor had become so overwhelmed by these incursions that many of them spread beyond Arvandor into Faerûn itself.

Fearing that these incursions were too much for his *ruesti*, the exalted of Arvandor, to handle, Corellon sent for aid from the fey kingdoms of Faerûn. Through their heroics, the adventurers cleansed Corellon and his *ruesti* of the poison that threatened their very existence and destroyed the abominations that carried it.

After their victory, Corellon asked the adventurers to accept a quest to travel into Carceri. The First of the Seldarine asked the PCs to discover the source of the poisonous abominations and put a stop to it. However, Corellon warned that this would be an incredibly risky mission, because once the PCs enter the Red Prison, even Corellon might not be able to do anything to help them get back out.

NEW PLOTS REVEALED

Through means yet unknown, Lolth has taken control over the metaphysical funnel that links Carceri's isle of Agathys to Arvandor. Understanding that a direct assault upon Arvandor would prove to be fruitless, she employed Sinmaker, an enigmatic apothecary currently detained in Carceri, to craft a poison powerful enough to bring certain death to Corellon and his *ruesti*, offering Sinmaker his freedom in return. Her plan to increase the flow of abominations into Arvandor and infuse them with Sinmaker's virulent poison was working perfectly until the PCs interceded.

Her plan foiled, Lolth retreated back to the Demonweb, leaving a number of powerful servants stationed within Agathys to maintain control over the funnel. Perhaps unsurprisingly given her nature, Lolth did not hold up her end of the bargain with Sinmaker before departing; the apothecary remains trapped on the prison plane. When the PCs arrive in Carceri, Lolth's servants maintain a tenuous hold over Corellon's funnel while Sinmaker plots his revenge against the Spider Queen... and his escape.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

This is an excursion-style adventure designed to follow the story begun by its prequel, *EPIC3-1 The Glorious Hunt*. The adventure features planar travel and fantastic locales. It is your responsibility to bring the epic nature of this adventure to the forefront and help the players understand that their characters' actions matter now more than ever.

At its core, this is a "prison break" adventure. Of course, some of the prisoners are here because they deserve to be here, while others are guilty of no crime other than offending the wrong deity (or divine servant). The players should feel the need to choose which prisoners they are willing to work with in order to accomplish their mission. Give them every opportunity to interact with the inhabitants of Carceri and decide whom to bargain with, whom to fight, and whom to avoid.

This adventure features new types of traps and skill challenges that the players may have never encountered. Be sure to communicate well with the players and explain these new game mechanics to keep things moving. This adventure also features a great deal of content and players may not yet be used to playing at the Epic tier. Be sure to read Appendix 2 carefully before beginning the adventure so that you're familiar with Carceri's unique planar features, its altitude limit in particular.

Encounters 1A through 5B are not entirely linear – the players have some choices around which encounters they face, and the Skill Challenge which begins in Encounter 1B runs throughout these encounters. Refer to Appendix 3 for a flowchart of which encounters and skill challenge scenes to run and in which order depending on decisions made by the players.

This adventure should run in 12 – 15 hours of play time. Many of the maps are large and detailed, so drawing, printing, or preparing them in advance is advised. Be sure to save 1.5 – 2 hours for the final encounter and conclusion. Pay special attention to underlined sections – they are underlined for a reason!

A number of previous adventures may have an impact in this adventure. Before beginning the adventure, find out which PCs have played *EPIC3-1 The Glorious Hunt*. PCs that participated in *EPIC3-1* should be more familiar with the storyline. In addition, refer to Player Handout 4 and determine which PCs have the story awards from the adventures listed in the handout. Do not explain why you're asking or distribute the handout to the players yet. This information becomes relevant in Encounters 11 and 12.

The adventure begins with the PCs standing before the adamantine gates of Carceri. Those who accepted Corellon's request are here on a mission to save his realm; those who did not are presumably here for their own reasons. After convincing the marut guards to grant them entry, the PCs navigate the isles of Carceri, facing its many dangers on their journey to Agathys, the sixth and final isle. On the isle of Cathrys the PCs meet Sinmaker, an enigmatic apothecary who offers his services in return for the PCs helping him escape Carceri.

Upon reaching Agathys, the PCs are ordered to turn back by a group of angel and marut guardians. Following the PCs' inevitable refusal, the guardians attack. During the battle, a number of abominations join the fray. After defeating the abominations, the PCs are permitted to enter Agathys. They fight through endless waves of abominations as they seek out Corellon's funnel. Within the very heart of Agathys, the PCs encounter an elite party of Lolthites that have taken control over the funnel. The PCs must destroy the wards that keep the abominations at bay to defeat them and release Lolth's control over the funnel.

With Lolth's wards destroyed and nothing stemming the tide of abominations, the PCs flee towards the secret portal through which the Lolthites had planned to escape with an abomination of immense power on their heels. Their path takes them through a cell block containing six beings who may prove to be useful in their escape. The PCs must decide whether to

rescue any of the prisoners and risk being slowed down, or to leave the prisoners to die.

Finally, the PCs reach the portal chamber. The ancient portal requires numerous repairs before it can function, and the PCs scatter to make the necessary repairs while fighting off waves of abominations. Upon escaping, the PCs find themselves within the Demonweb, where their next adventure will begin...

TOTAL PARTY KILLS (TPK)

Although rare, TPKs happen from time to time. In most cases, the party fails the adventure when every PC is killed in an encounter. However, given the length of this adventure, a TPK can spoil everyone's fun, especially when the players have set aside twelve hours to play and are killed after two. Use your discretion in determining ways for the party to recover from a TPK.

Sinmaker can be a useful tool in this regard. Sinmaker desires nothing more than to escape Carceri, and the PCs are his ticket out. Should the PCs perish, Sinmaker can use his alchemical knowledge to replicate the Speak with Dead ritual and contact fallen PCs. He offers to resurrect them in return for freeing him. Note that Sinmaker's method of resurrection does not confer the benefit of an extended rest, but still inflicts the standard death penalty. Resource management is part of this adventure's challenge. As always, make decisions that are necessary and appropriate for your players.

Gods Aren't Perfect

Deities, although very powerful, are not omniscient and their power has limits. Throughout this adventure and future adventures in the Epic campaign, the characters interact with the deities of Faerûn in a variety of ways. In some cases, the characters may come to the aid of a deity. Later, they stand against the schemes of another deity. Over the course of this adventure, it is important to convey the fact that the gods, like mortals, are flawed and need to be helped or opposed when the time comes. Always remember that the characters are the heroes and they have a special place in this world, one that even the gods cannot deny.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

Hooks for this adventure may vary for each PC, depending on whether or not they played *EPIC3-1 The Glorious Hunt*. For each PC that played *EPIC3-1*, refer to the "Continued from *EPIC3-1*" section below. For each PC that did not play *EPIC3-1*, choose one of the additional adventure hooks outlined in the "Additional Hooks" section, or create your own. Before selecting additional hooks, spend some time with the players and

get to know their characters so that you can select or create an appropriate hook. If you have the luxury of contacting your players prior to playing, gather this information in advance so that you are not forced to come up with an appropriate adventure hook on the spot.

CONTINUED FROM EPIC3~1

The moongate casts a red glow over the clearing, uprooted trees and overturned earth serving as a visceral reminder of your battles not one day ago.

Corellon, patron of the fey and ruler of Arvandor, stands before you with a grim expression. “The Tarterian Depths of Carceri, known to many as the Red Prison, were not originally built to serve their present function. Ages ago, after the Dawn War, we sought to contain the incessant spawning of abominations that we had created but could not stop. Carceri was the solution. Of Carceri’s six isles, only Agathys spawns these terrors; some of them are powerful enough to kill the gods themselves.

“Deep within Agathys I constructed a planar funnel: a powerful portal that transports any abominations that manage to escape Agathys here to Arvandor so that we may keep the other planes safe from their wanton destruction.

“You must discover who has seized control of the funnel and drive them back before Arvandor is destroyed.”

Corellon provides additional important information that is separated out below. This information is critical for the players to know - be sure to present it all to them while role-playing this conversation with Corellon.

- Normally, a journey across all of Carceri might take days or even weeks, but Corellon fears that Arvandor might only have hours before it is overrun. The abominations continue to attack, and the *ruesti* need much more time to recover from their recent losses.
- Corellon offers the PCs a vessel infused with his power - a small twisted white branch, glowing with pale green light. He informs the PCs that if they concentrate upon it, it will always point the way to Agathys. Without its direction, the enchantments upon Carceri might lead the PCs astray.
- Corellon informs the PCs that a powerful enchantment on Carceri requires any who seek Agathys to traverse the five islands that precede Agathys before they can reach it. Due to the

nature of the plane, the islands might appear in any order, but Agathys can never be gained by those who have not first discovered the other five islands.

- Most of Carceri is an endless, swampy ocean, within which the six islands float. If the PCs place the white branch within the water and speak Corellon’s name, it will become a craft capable of carrying them with divine swiftness to the next isle in their path. By speaking Corellon’s name again, the PCs can return the branch to its original form (so they never have to leave it behind).
- Corellon warns the PCs that the vessel remains imbued with his power for only as long as Arvandor can hold out - which could only be a few hours. Should the vessel lose its enchantment before the PCs reach Agathys, they could become lost for days or even weeks and all hope would be lost.
- Corellon reminds the PCs that they embark on a journey from which they may never return. Although he has more power in Carceri than the other gods, he cannot promise anything if the PCs should they fail to find a way out.

Corellon provides sages to answer any additional questions that the PCs may have about Carceri. He must leave to attend to the defense of Arvandor, and cannot stand around waiting for the PCs to think of questions. Use the information found in Appendix 1 to answer any questions.

TIME LIMITS AND EXTENDED RESTS

The adventure begins immediately after the PCs have taken an extended rest. They should not be able to take an extended rest during this adventure, since they must wait 12 hours before they can begin another. This includes rituals that expedite extended rests, such as the Fantastic Recuperation ritual. Furthermore, it should be clear to the players that they are under time pressure and do not have time to tarry. Should the players ever attempt to take the time for an extended rest or a ritual with a particularly long casting time, remind them that their time is precious and wasting time may cause them to fail their mission.

For each hour spent doing anything but continuing with the adventure (casting rituals, taking excessive numbers of short rests, taking extended rests, etc.), relay the following to the players. Note that the PCs really only run the risk of wasting time before reaching Agathys - once on Agathys, the PCs simply do not have the option to spend additional time. This is cumulative;

if the PCs waste 1 hour after each of four different encounters, they will have wasted a total of 4 hours and will not be able to complete their mission.

- **1 hour** - Corellon sends a message to the PCs that the battle on Arvandor is starting to turn for the worse, urging them to hurry.
- **2 hours** - Corellon sends another message to the PCs that *ruesti* are dying, again urging them to press forward
- **3 hours** - Corellon's gift begins to lose its enchantment, leading the PCs astray. Each PC suffers 2 "Fatigue" points (as described in Encounter 1B).
- **4+ hours** - The enchantment on Corellon's gift ends and the PCs are stuck in Carceri for days or even weeks, failing their mission. Feel free to continue the adventure, but the drow in Encounter 9 are now gone, and the portal in Encounter 12 is permanently closed. Do everything in your ability to dissuade the players from reaching this point, as it will surely ruin the adventure for them.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

While this adventure is meant to be played as a sequel to *EPIC3-1*, some or all of the PCs might not have played that adventure. For PCs that did not play *EPIC3-1*, select one or more of the following adventure hooks, or feel free to improvise your own.

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

The character is a close friend or adventuring companion of one of the PCs that completed *EPIC3-1*. As such, the character has been summoned to Arvandor by Corellon himself (at the other PC's request) to join the quest. At least one PC in the party must have played *EPIC3-1* in order for this to be a meaningful hook for the players.

REALITY RIP

The character is sucked through a hole in the fabric of the cosmos, a gap of nothingness that is created when magic goes awry. The character awakens at Carceri's adamantine gates, unaware of where he might be or how he got there.

If using this hook, be careful about how the character is welcomed into the party and debriefed - create interesting role-playing opportunities but avoid alienating any of the players.

RESEARCH REVEALED

The character's extensive research on recent disruptions in the fabric between Faerûn and the outer planes that may threaten all existence has led him to Carceri. The character has arranged for transportation on a suicidal mission into Carceri - one from which he may never return - to find answers and a solution.

HOLY QUEST

The character is a faithful devotee of Corellon, another fey deity, or a deity concerned with the tampering in Carceri. As such, the character has been sent or summoned to Arvandor by his deity to undertake this quest.

THE ADAMANTINE GATES

Whether stepping through the moongate on Arvandor or traveling to Carceri via other means, the PCs find themselves on a demiplane created by Moradin that leads to Carceri.

After a dizzying journey, you find yourself on the rocky shores of an island. Behind you, an expanse of swampy water stretches as far as the eye can see. Immense gates of adamantine stand before you, welded into a wall that seems to continue endlessly to either side.

Two astral beings clad in golden armor stand guard at the gates; their grayish-purple skin and chiseled features grant them the appearance of having been carved from the adamantine wall itself.

This demiplane was created by Moradin as a symbolic entrance to Carceri. While the gods can imprison beings within Carceri without sending them through this demiplane, any who voluntarily enter Carceri find themselves here with one last chance to turn back.

The gates are guarded by a pair of maruts, astral beings of inflexible order and uncompromising law. Maruts and various angels serve as guards and enforcers throughout Carceri, but for different reasons. Angels guard Carceri because they have been ordered to do so by the patron deities they serve. Maruts, however, guard Carceri to preserve order and enforce the Carceri compact - in addition to the prohibition on gods from interfering with one another's prisoners, nothing may be permitted to break in or out of Carceri.

The PCs must convince the maruts that stand guard here to grant them entry into Carceri. There are no mechanics for doing so - this is purely a role-playing encounter.

The following list provides some information on maruts and their motivations. Feel free to use this information to make the interaction more interesting.

- Maruts were created eons ago by the gods to serve as impartial mediators. By their nature, they have no desires. Their purpose is to preserve order and the rule of law.
- Maruts have no need for sustenance and scant need for rest.
- Some maruts hire themselves out as guards, police, and enforcers, but do so only to further causes that are in line with their own legalistic and bureaucratic tendencies. Some will accept any employer, while others serve only great powers such as gods, devils, or exarchs.
- To a marut, the fairness or reasonability of a contract or an agreement matters little; only the letter of the agreement itself is sacrosanct.
- The maruts aren't all of a single mind, and they are not machines. They often have differences of opinion on how best to enforce the rule of law or preserve order.
- These particular maruts do not know what dangers the PCs may face within Carceri, but warn the PCs to stay away from Agathys, or they will meet a swift death. They do not know the order in which the isles of Carceri appear, as the prison's layout is constantly changing.
- As epic PCs, the PCs have likely angered any number of evil gods. The evil gods in turn might have warned the maruts that the PCs were "persons of interest" who might attempt prison breaks of good-aligned prisoners.
- The maruts stress that any PC entering the Red Prison will never return to any family or friends outside of Carceri.
- The maruts do not believe the PCs capable of escaping Carceri, but do think they might be of use in killing escaped abominations or establishing better defenses on the islands, so ultimately are willing to let the PCs pass as long as they accept their fate.

The PCs should not get stuck here, burn a lot of time trying to figure out how to "get past the guards," or launch into combat. If the players are not of a mind to reason with the maruts, feel free to either improvise a quick skill challenge that does not grant a milestone, or skip the interaction entirely and have the maruts simply permit the PCs to enter.

When the PCs gain entry, the maruts open the gates, revealing a yawning red portal. Proceed to Encounter 1A when the PCs step through the portal.

ENCOUNTER 1A: WELCOME TO THE ROCK

COMBAT, EL 22

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps:

3 battlesworn ogre maulers (O)

9 smoke hounds (H)

1 fire giant element handler (F)

The portal deposits the PCs on Orthrys, the most temperate of Carceri's six isles. The bogs of Orthrys tend to be shallow and cold. Channels, dug by river-like currents that run through the marsh, cut into the murky earth beneath the swamps. Orthrys is dominated by King Karsos, an earth titan of near deific power, who rules from his keep known as the Bastion of Lost Hope.

The portal deposits you in the midst of a vast swamp. Streams of murky water run across the ground in narrow channels, connecting the various bogs that dot the landscape. A massive earthen keep looms in the distance. Swarms of stinging insects assail you immediately upon your arrival.

After a brief period of adjustment, it becomes evident that the majority of your companions are no longer beside you.

PORTAL RANDOMNESS

Due to the random nature of the entry portal, the PCs do not all appear in the same place. Depending on the number of PCs in the party, they may be split up between two, three, or even four starting locations. This is meant to create a unique challenge mechanic for the first combat encounter.

- If there are 4 PCs in the party, they appear split up between start area 1 and start area 2.
- If there are 5 PCs in the party, they appear split up between start area 1, start area 2, and start area 3.
- If there are 6 PCs in the party, they appear split up between start area 1, start area 2, start area 3, and start area 4.
- No more than **two** PCs may appear in a given start area.
- The way in which you determine which PCs appear in which start area is up to you, but should be suitably random (consider Charisma

checks, d20 rolls, or simply having the players count off).

Immediately upon their arrival, the PCs are beset by a giant hunting party searching for treasure and slaves to bring back to the Bastion of Lost Hope for their master.

Allow the players to place their miniatures on the map, ensuring that they are appropriately divided amongst the different start areas. Once the PCs are on the map, read the following and then place the monsters on the map.

A chorus of nearby howls reveals the stinging insects to be the least of your concerns. A hunting party of ogres emerges from the thick foliage, each ogre controlling three massive hounds on leather leashes. The hounds snap their teeth and growl in your direction, smoke trailing from their nostrils. A fire giant stands in their midst. He issues a command: "More slaves for King Karsos!" The ogres release the leashes from their grasp and the hounds surge forward.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Dense Trees: Squares containing dense green trees require 3 squares of movement to enter. They are 20 feet (4 squares) high and block line of sight.

Rubble/Fallen Tree: Additional difficult terrain is as indicated on the map.

Small Trees: The three small trees are blocking terrain for creatures of size Medium or smaller, and difficult terrain for creatures of size Large or larger.

Walls: The walls of the various ruins in this area are 10 feet (2 squares) high and are blocking terrain. They may be climbed with a DC 20 Athletics check. Note that although the ruins appear to be stone, they are in fact packed earth and mud - no rock or stone can be found on Orthrys.

Water: Squares containing swamp water are too deep for Medium or smaller creatures to wade through. They must swim or jump across. Large and Huge creatures may simply wade across, treating the water as difficult terrain.

Ceiling: The area is open to the sky but remember the altitude limits of Carceri (Appendix 2).

TACTICS

The smoke hounds charge the nearest targets and try to establish grabs before using *tongue of smoke* to drag their prey back to their masters (the ogres). The ogres attack targets grabbed by their hounds in order to gain combat advantage, using *brutal hammer* whenever possible and *roar of destruction* when they can target multiple foes.

They throw boulders at flying PCs if unable to find a suitable melee target, and use *harsh command* when they have a minor or move action to spare to direct one of the hounds to attack. Both the ogres and the hounds focus on the PCs in their general area, preferring to keep the PCs separated from their allies.

The fire giant alternates between using *fire bolt* and *earthen spikes* at range. It uses *searing wind* to position its enemies to its advantage or to slide pesky flying PCs within reach of the ogres and hounds, and uses *fire shroud* on any ogre engaged in melee with multiple opponents.

The ogres and hounds fight to the death, but the fire giant tries to flee or surrender when you deem it appropriate - he'd rather return from the hunt empty-handed than perish. If the PCs allow the giant to return to the Bastion of Lost Hope, they find the challenges of escaping the isle to be more difficult in the next encounter.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove an ogre mauler and the three smoke hounds it controls.

Six PCs: Add another ogre mauler and three smoke hounds under its control.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After the PCs defeat the giants, proceed to Encounter 1B.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

The PCs can recover a *brimstone cloak* +5 from the fire giant element handler. (If the giant is trying to surrender and the PCs allow him to parley, he offers to trade this item for his freedom.)

ENCOUNTER 1A: "WELCOME TO THE ROCK" STATISTICS

Battlesworn Ogre Mauler	Level 22 Brute
Large humanoid (giant)	XP 4,150
HP 255; Bloodied 127	Initiative +16
AC 34, Fortitude 34, Reflex 32, Will 30	Perception +14
Speed 8	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Maul (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d10 + 16 damage.	
r Boulder (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10/20 (one creature); +27 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 16 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
m Brutal Hammer (weapon) • Recharge 6	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d10 + 9 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of its next turn.	
Afterside: The target is dazed (save ends).	
Harsh Command • At-Will 1/Round	
A smoke hound ally within 10 squares makes an <i>unyielding bite</i> or <i>tongue of smoke</i> attack as a free action.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
C Roar of Destruction (thunder) • Encounter	
Trigger: The ogre mauler hits with a melee attack.	
Attack (Free Action): Close burst 5 (enemies); +23 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 4d8 + 11 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.	
Str 27 (+19)	Dex 20 (+16)
Con 25 (+18)	Int 6 (+9)
Wis 16 (+14)	Cha 8 (+10)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common, Giant	
Equipment: boulder x6, maul	

Note: Updated damage expressions, added *harsh command* power and modified javelin attack to boulder that knocks prone.

Smoke Hound	Level 22 Minion
Medium elemental beast (air, fire)	XP 692
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	Initiative +21
AC 36, Fortitude 34, Reflex 36, Will 30	Perception +20
Immune poison; Resist 30 fire	low-light vision
Speed 8	
TRAITS	
Unshakable Grasp	
A creature grabbed by the smoke hound grants combat advantage until the grab ends.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Unyielding Bite (fire, poison) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +25 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 16 fire and poison damage, and the target is grabbed. The hound cannot make bite attacks while it has a creature grabbed.	
Sustain Minor: The smoke hound sustains the grab, and the target takes 20 fire damage.	
M Tongue of Smoke • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the smoke hound); +25 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The smoke hound moves half its speed and moves the target with it.	
Str 22 (+17)	Dex 26 (+19)
Con 21 (+16)	Int 5 (+8)
Wis 18 (+15)	Cha 11 (+11)
Alignment unaligned	Languages understands Giant

Note: Updated damage expressions.

ENCOUNTER 1A: “WELCOME TO THE ROCK” STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

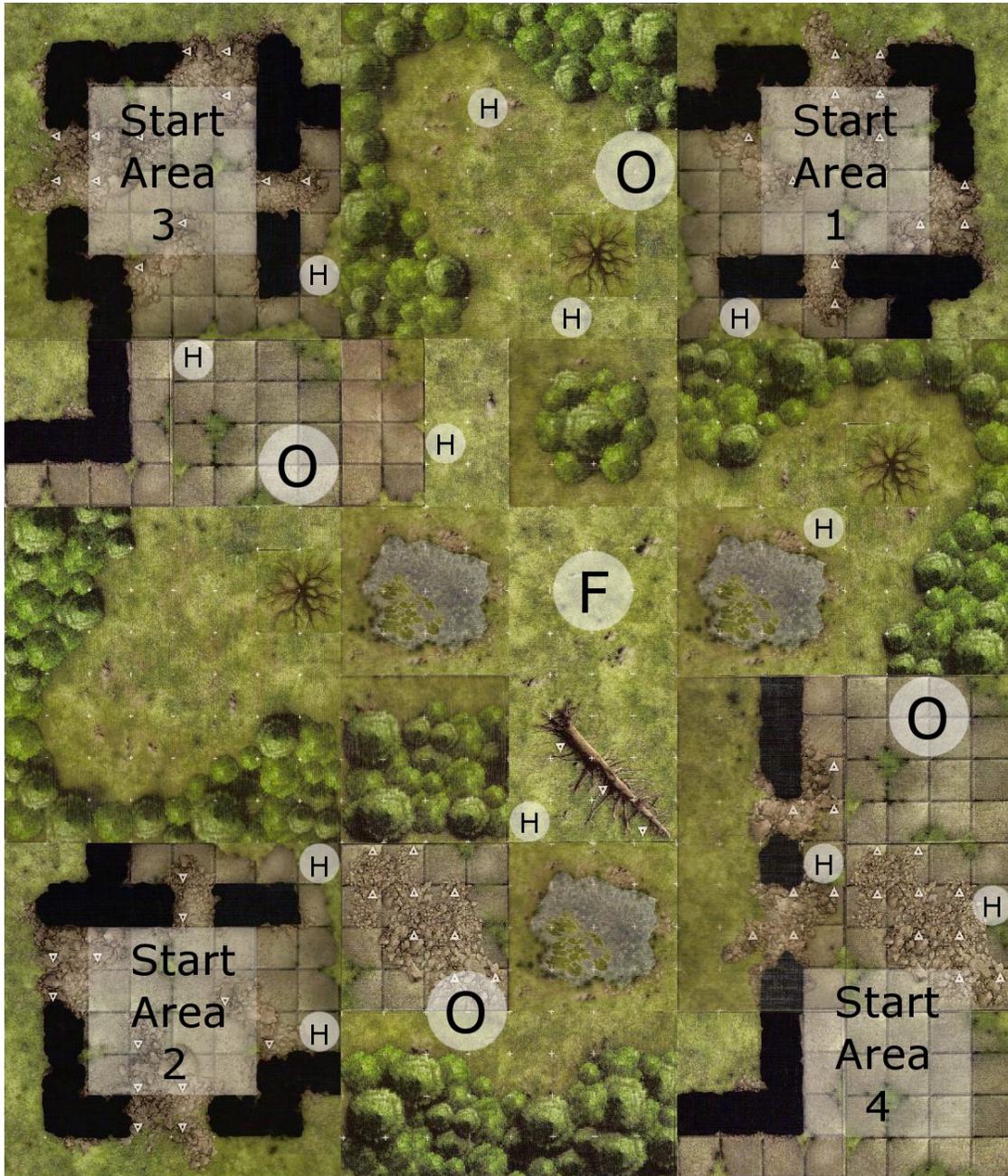
Fire Giant Element Handler		Level 23 Controller
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant)		XP 5,100
HP 208; Bloodied 104		Initiative +19
AC 37, Fortitude 35, Reflex 34, Will 35		Perception +20
Resist 20 fire		
Speed 7		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Fiery Quarterstaff (fire, weapon) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage plus 2d8 fire damage.		
r Fire Bolt (fire) • At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +27 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 4d6 + 17 fire damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the fire giant's next turn.		
C Boiling Wave • At-Will		
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in blast); +25 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares.		
A Earthen Spikes • Recharge 6		
Attack: Area burst 1 within 20 (creatures in burst); +25 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 4d10 + 10 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
MINOR ACTIONS		
R Searing Wind • At-Will 1/round		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +27 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: The fire giant slides the target 4 squares.		
Fire Shroud (fire) • Recharge 6		
Effect: One ally within 10 squares of the fire giant gains resist 15 to all damage until the end of the fire giant's next turn. In addition, any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to the shrouded ally while the fire shroud is in effect takes 20 fire damage.		
Skills Arcana +23, Bluff +24, Insight +22, Intimidate +24		
Str 22 (+17)	Dex 18 (+15)	Wis 18 (+15)
Con 24 (+18)	Int 18 (+15)	Cha 19 (+15)
Alignment evil		
Languages Common, Giant		
Equipment quarterstaff		

Note: Updated damage expressions.

ENCOUNTER 1A: "WELCOME TO THE ROCK" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Sinister Woods x3



REACHING AGATHYS

The PCs' journey to Agathys is represented by a sequence of encounters, some of which are parts of a single large skill challenge. See the flowchart in Appendix 3 for a visual representation of the ways that the various encounters might be combined.

Each scene of the skill challenge is presented separately, and the scenes are broken up amongst encounters 1B, 2A, 3A, 4A, and 5A. The individual skill challenge scenes do not contribute towards a milestone, but the PCs do achieve a milestone after they complete the final scene and reach Encounter 6.

SKILL CHALLENGE: REACHING AGATHYS

Goal: The PCs must survive the dangers of the isles of Carceri as they journey to Agathys.

Complexity: 2 (special, see below)

Primary Skills: Varies with each scene

Victory: The PCs reach Agathys with minimal loss of resources.

Defeat: Each failure results in penalties or the loss of resources for the PCs.

The PCs cannot fail this skill challenge. Instead, each failure represents the taxing nature of the difficult journey to reach Agathys. The Fatigue point mechanic (see below) plays an important role in this process.

This skill challenge is designed to be open-ended. Each scene represents a particular goal that the PCs meet or a challenge they must overcome. Encourage and reward creativity and expenditure of resources, such as utility and item powers, even awarding automatic success in rare circumstances, but remember that reaching Agathys should be a difficult and taxing journey.

While each scene is different, some scenes feature group skill checks and other scenes feature checks that are individual for each PC. If a PC wants to use a skill that's not listed in a particular scene and you think it's applicable, use your discretion. Note that the limited choices for usable skills in each scene are intentional – PCs will not always be in their comfort zone when fighting for survival. Throughout the skill challenge, convey to the players that they are in a harsh and unforgiving environment that requires a variety of skills to overcome.

Throughout the course of the skill challenge, the PCs have the chance to engage in combat with some of the denizens of Carceri. These combats occur on Minethys, in Encounter 3B, Colothys, in Encounter 4B, and Porphatys, in Encounter 5B. The skill challenge

Encounters 3A, 4A, and 5A respectively “lead in” to these combats.

Although each encounter is presented as an option, the PCs are expected to engage in two of the three. Thus, if they have already skipped one, they may not avoid any battles that remain.

FATIGUE AND DESPERATION

Carceri is a trying and dangerous plane and the PCs have few chances to truly rest. Failure in many scenes of this skill challenge can result in PCs becoming battered, bruised, diseased, and exhausted. Rather than using the repetitive mechanic of draining healing surges, this adventure grants the PCs the choice of how they cope with the dangers through a new system. Failing a check in the skill challenge generally results in acquiring a Fatigue point.

- PCs suffer a cumulative -5 penalty to Initiative checks and to their healing surge value for each Fatigue point they are carrying.
- Any PC with 4 or more Fatigue points is also slowed and weakened.
- A PC may remove one Fatigue point or avoid gaining one by expending a healing surge, daily utility power, or daily attack power, or by spending an action point. Each PC also removes one Fatigue point during a short rest, but this is limited to one per resting sequence (i.e. if the PCs choose to take four consecutive short rests, they still only lose 1 Fatigue point each).
- A Remove Affliction ritual accompanied by a DC 27 Heal check removes a single Fatigue point from the character targeted by the ritual. Be aware of the amount of time such a ritual requires.
- Characters that die and return from the dead have zero Fatigue points when they return, no matter how many they had when they died.

Mounts are also subject to the effects of Carceri, but to keep things simple, rather than assigning them Fatigue points, mounts simply lose a healing surge for each Fatigue point they would otherwise accrue.

GROUP SKILL CHECKS

When a scene calls for a group skill check, each PC makes his or her own individual check (choosing individually from the list of available skills). The group as a whole succeeds if at least half of the PCs are successful on their checks, and fails otherwise.

ENCOUNTER 1B: BASTION OF LOST HOPE

SKILL CHALLENGE

The PCs are on Orthrys, not far from the Bastion of Lost Hope and its harbor. They must now leave the island without running afoul of King Karsos and his army of giants.

The earthen fortress in the distance appears to overlook the sea. A small number of giant-sized vessels float in the harbor a few miles away. Guard posts and patrols of giants and elementals of all types dot the surround areas.

If the PCs allowed the fire giant to surrender or took any of the ogres prisoner, these creatures will suggest that the PCs present themselves to King Karsos at the Bastion of Lost Hope. The PCs might also choose to journey toward their fortress of their own accord, or to sneak or talk their way past the guards near the citadel and reach the water beyond. The PCs might attempt to avoid the citadel and its harbor entirely, but doing so would require several miles of additional travel and/or crossing patrols of giants. Let the PCs choose their own path, using the guidelines below to adjudicate as you see fit.

The giants of the island are not individually threatening and the PCs may speak to and/or destroy some of them as part of role-playing their way across the island. When the PCs get closer to the Bastion of Lost Hope, read:

Closer to the fortress, you notice that its stones are oddly shaped. Stone giant bones and elemental limbs are its bricks, their blood its mortar, and the tops of the walls are crowned in stone skulls and faces.

SCENE 1 – KING KARSOS (GROUP CHECK)

If they wish to speak to King Karsos, the PCs are quickly escorted into the Bastion of Lost Hope. A goliath servant will offer to announce the PCs with any ranks or titles they choose, as well as translate for those who do not speak Giant or Primordial.

King Karsos is a powerful earth titan who has amassed enough power to rival that of primordials and deities alike.

The titans and giants of King Karsos’s court fall silent at your entrance, though whether this is from respect or fear is hard to tell. From an immense throne of giant

skulls, King Karsos looks down at you with an amused grin. Precious gems glitter amongst his stone teeth.

“Welcome to the realm of King Karsos! I hear that you fight well for ones so small.” His booming laugh causes the ground to shake, as if the entire fortress is connected to his movements.

- King Karsos seeks praise and any news of the rise or downfall of other titans, primordials, and especially deities. If the PCs have personally defeated any major titans, primordials, or angered a god, he finds that amusing and congratulates them.
- He knows of the other islands and the key NPCs on them. Use Appendix 1 as needed for your answers. He quickly grows irate if excessively questioned. In particular, he suggests that the PCs would do well to wring the neck of Neferkhaba, the so-called Pharaoh of Payratheon. Karsos considers Minethys a sewer, and undead beneath contempt, but Neferkhaba has claimed equivalence in power with the titan and this offends Karsos mightily.
- If the PCs spared any of his minions, Karsos does not thank them directly, but does offer drinks and additional advice – good servants are so difficult to find these days.
- King Karsos knows nothing of what is happening on Agathys or on Arvandor, though he thinks the PCs should kill any guards they run into. **“Crush any angel you meet and maybe we’ll all get out someday [laughs].”**
- King Karsos has no interest in fighting the PCs. Should combat seem inevitable, he stamps his foot in annoyance, and the PCs are literally flung out of his throne room, walls sliding out of their way, then resealing behind them.

The PCs must make a group check using Bluff, Diplomacy, and/or Intimidate. Each PC may choose whichever skill they prefer. If the PCs fail, the negotiations turn sour and King Karsos gives the PCs a “head start” before ordering his giants to hunt them down before they reach the harbor.

Bluff / Diplomacy DC 27 (group check)

If the PCs spared any of his servants, the DC is reduced to 20. If successful, King Karsos wishes the PCs well and offers them an escort to the water so that they can continue their mission with all haste.

Intimidate DC 36 (group check)

King Karsos is not easily impressed by threats or bluster. They have already proven their point by defeating his servants. That said, if anyone does succeed at an Intimidate check, he acknowledges the insane bravery of the group and wishes them well on someone else's island.

SCENE 2 – BYPASSING THE CITADEL (GROUP CHECK)

If the PCs do not wish to meet with King Karsos, they can attempt to sneak past the various guards and patrols to get to the harbor, or they can intimidate or bluff their way past the guards. If the PCs completed Scene 1, skip this scene and proceed to Encounter 2A.

Bluff / Stealth DC 27 (group check)

If any giants or ogres survived the first combat, an additional success is required for the group to succeed, as the guards have been warned of the PCs. Success allows the PCs to safely reach the harbor.

Intimidate DC 27 (group check)

If any giants or ogres survived the first combat, the DC is reduced to 20, as the guards have been warned of the PCs' prowess. Success allows the PCs to safely reach the harbor.

If the PCs fail the group check in either scene (more failed skill checks than successful skill checks), or if they simply attempt to fight their way through, they are attacked by patrols and are harassed sufficiently that they each suffer a Fatigue point.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs reach the harbor, they can activate Corellon's gift. Placing the branch into the ocean and speaking the god's name causes it to unfold into a small but seaworthy vessel. Corellon's craft safely avoids all manner of aquatic hazards and monsters and deposits the PCs on the shores of Cathrys. Proceed to Encounter 2A.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 2A: CORRODING DOOM

SKILL CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

Having escaped Othrys, the PCs must survive the brutal conditions of the jungle-like isle of Cathrys.

Corellon's craft clips through the waves with amazing speed, easily avoiding numerous tentacled creatures that prowl the waters of Carceri. The mists ahead grow thin as your boat bears down on a swampy jungle isle that must surely be Cathrys. A vast array of cypress trees, peculiar fronds, and clinging vines rise higher than the eye can follow, while strange creatures scurry amongst the thick vegetation.

An assortment of devils and fallen angels make their home on Cathrys. They largely try to avoid the more powerful PCs, but feel free to improvise should the PCs look for role-playing opportunities. Sinmaker is mentioned as a useful person to meet in such a case.

The PCs eventually need to cross the island, at which point they are exposed to a variety of poisonous plants and acidic hazards, as well as a dreadful humidity that slowly attempts to devour their flesh.

SCENE 3 – VENOMOUS MIASMA (INDIVIDUAL CHECKS)

Avoiding the isle's more poisonous plants and acidic waters proves to be difficult as you cross the jungle island. Despite the chill in the air, you soon find yourself sweating in misery due to the island's unnaturally intense humidity.

The PCs are constantly exposed to the venomous miasma indigenous to Cathrys along their journey. Each PC must succeed at a DC 36 Nature check to avoid any exposure. For PCs that fail, continue with the following:

It is not long into your journey before every scratch seems to fester. The merest touch of a plant corrodes your skin. Breathing induces a searing pain in your throat and lungs.

The PCs' exposure to the miasma puts them at risk of contracting a rare disease called Corroding Doom. Each PC must make an Endurance check to resist contracting the disease. The DC depends on the result of the PCs' Nature check made just before. If one or more PCs succeeded at the DC 36 Nature check, their quick assistance provides a +2 bonus to their companions' Endurance checks, but no more.

Nature Check Result	Endurance DC
19 or lower	36
20 - 26	27
27 - 35	20
36 or higher	No exposure to disease

CORRODING DOOM

The corrosive mist of Cathrys eats away at internal organs and flesh alike until nothing remains of its victim.

Stage	Effect
0	Cured
1	Target regains one of its lost healing surges. The target loses this healing surge again if its condition worsens.
2 (initial)	The target loses two healing surges until cured.
3	Each time the target becomes bloodied, it takes ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends). If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target melts, dying horribly.
4	At the moment of the failed Endurance check and each time the target takes damage, the character takes ongoing 30 acid damage (save ends). If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, it melts, dying horribly.

Victims start at stage 2 of the disease. It progresses quickly. After completing each island after Cathrys (after Encounters 3, 4, and 5), each character suffering from corroding doom makes an Endurance check. One ally may make a Heal check to tend to the target.

- **DC 26 or lower:** The stage of the disease increases (worsens) by one step.
- **DC 27 - 35:** No change
- **DC 36 or higher:** The stage of the disease decreases (improves) by one step.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After determining which PCs contract Corroding Doom, proceed to Encounter 2B. Be sure to do this before the PCs take steps to cure themselves of the disease, as Sinmaker's ability to provide a cure makes for an additional bargaining point.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 2B: ENTER SINMAKER

ROLEPLAYING / INVESTIGATION

Sinmaker, fiendish proprietor of The Apothecary of Sin

Sinmaker has been watching the PCs since their arrival on Cathrys. Impressed with their survival instincts and vast assortment of magical gear, he sees them as potential pawns to facilitate his escape from Carceri and approaches the group:

A skiff poled by a hooded figure makes its way through the mists of the swamp toward your group. From a safe distance, the figure raises one of its hands in a gesture of parley.

Give the PCs a chance to respond. Provided that they do not respond with threats of violence, continue:

As the small craft draws near, its pilot's ebon skin and curling horns become plainly visible. The creature looks you over with glowing green eyes from beneath the hood of a heavy cloak caked with decaying vegetation. "Welcome to Carceri, mortals. I am called Sinmaker. I am an apothecary, and I wish to make you a business proposition."

Role-play Sinmaker as genuinely helpful and elusively honest. His primary goal is to earn the PCs' trust bit by bit in order to get far enough to assure his escape. See Appendix 4 for an overview of how Sinmaker can be used throughout the adventure. Note that this adventure is scaled such that groups that decline Sinmaker's offer outright face an extreme challenge. The dangers of Carceri are such that one must often make an unlikely alliance in order to survive. Sinmaker poses no threat to the PCs in any way, and even though they may not believe that at first (or ever), it is your job to keep him present throughout their travels, making his offers look more and more tempting as the PCs' resources dwindle.

The PCs can learn the following with successful knowledge checks:

Arcana

- **DC 20:** Sinmaker appears to be some sort of devil or demon - it is unclear which. Perhaps he is a little of both, if such a thing is even possible.
- **DC 27:** The Apothecary of Sin on the island of Cathrys in Carceri is known for its rare and unique alchemical concoctions.

- **DC 36:** Stories amongst wizards speak of a demonic alchemist in Carceri that can craft elixirs and concoctions never before seen on Faerûn.

History

- **DC 20:** Legends speak of Sinmaker as an enigmatic alchemist who runs the Apothecary of Sin on the isle of Cathrys in Carceri.
- **DC 27:** Sinmaker once served Asmodeus as an alchemist before being sent to Carceri. Since then, Sinmaker takes no sides, instead offering his services for the good or ill of all clients equally.
- **DC 36:** His potions can quickly resurrect even the long dead, while the gods and demon lords alike fear his mastery of acid and poison.

Religion

- **DC 27:** Sinmaker appears to have once been a devil, corrupted by the Abyss into something else entirely - perhaps he is now a unique hybrid of devil and demon.
- **DC 36:** Sinmaker was once hired to battle an aspect of Amaunator and somehow managed to prevent the aspect from disincorporating at battle's end. Try as they might, the gods could not convince him to part with his secret. Sinmaker remains imprisoned on Carceri until the gods determine how best to use him.

Sinmaker wishes to speak with the PCs. Use the list below to facilitate the conversation:

- Sinmaker is an apothecary and has a shop on the island.
- Carceri is a very dangerous place. Often, unlikely alliances are formed for survival - particularly when each side can benefit.
- He was away from his shop to gather ingredients when he spotted the PCs. If the quantity of magical items the PCs carry is any indication of their prowess, he believes this to be a rare opportunity.
- Sinmaker wishes to accompany the PCs in their travels. On the next island, Minethys, is a rare flower that can only be found in the lost city of Payratheon. The flower is called the Deathfont Willow, and he believes he could make powerful restoratives with it.
- If they balk at the idea of retrieving the Deathfont Willow or later require incentive to let him continue traveling with them, he'd alternatively be interested in a plant that grows on Colothys, called the Fruit of Life.

- Sinmaker does not try to directly deceive the PCs in any way, truthfully stating that he and the PCs can be of use to one another, leading to a profitable exchange of information and services.
- If asked about his intentions, he again makes it clear that he means the PCs no harm - but smiles and says that of course, he would be lying if he didn't hope to make his escape from Carceri with the PCs.
- If asked how to escape the Red Prison, Sinmaker laughs, admitting that if he knew how to escape, he wouldn't be here now.
- If the PCs accuse him of crafting the poison in EPIC3-1, he uses their interest in the poison to sell his further services, promising later information. ***"In the hypothetical situation that a customer came to me desiring a most particular poison, I would not ask its intended use, only name my price. Should you wish to know more, I am willing to come to some sort of arrangement."***
- If the PCs attack or threaten to attack Sinmaker, he warns PCs: ***"Be wary, I have prepared for this contingency. Harm me, and my poisons will cripple you for days or slay you outright should you turn out to be weaker than I expected."*** Should he actually be attacked, refer to his statistics in Appendix 4. If given a chance to act, he escapes the PCs with ease. Whether he escapes or is forced to disincorporate, he returns in Encounter 6 to try again.
- Only if pressed about the poison, he says: ***"I was hired recently here in Carceri to craft a poison capable of slaying a deity. In return, I was promised freedom. It appears I have been betrayed, so now I turn to you. My vengeance in this matter will assist you to rectify the evil that has been done. I will say no more here, but can tell all when we reach Agathys."***
- If at any point the PCs make it clear that they are not interested in doing business with Sinmaker, he politely wishes them well and pilots his skiff back into the mists. He plans to follow them nonetheless and expects that once the PCs experience some of the challenges of Carceri, they may be more receptive to his offer at a later time.
- Sinmaker can cast an Endure Primordial Elements ritual to protect the PCs from Carceri's harsh environments.
- He can heal PCs during combat. He remains invisible and hiding during combat, but once per encounter he can allow one target to spend a healing surge and heal their surge value plus 20 additional hit points.
- He knows much of Carceri and can provide valuable knowledge along the way.
- Sinmaker can craft and sell the PCs any of the following consumable items while he travels with them:
 - *potion of regeneration* (level 19; 4,200 gp)
 - *antivenom* (level 21; 9,000 gp)
 - *astral mead* (Level 23; 17,000 gp)
 - *potion of recovery* (level 25; 25,000 gp)
 - *acidic fire* (level 25; 25,000 gp)
 - *spotted toadstool venom* (level 25; 25,000 gp)
- If later provided with the Deathfont Willow or a seed from the Fruit of Life, he can craft a number of extremely powerful elixirs that renew themselves every day (a wondrous item). He offers this as a gift for each of the PCs.
- Sinmaker can resurrect any dead PCs during a short rest. He will only do this if the target character has signed his contract before dying, of course.
- He promises even greater assistance once they have reached Agathys, hinting at his ability to restore lost healing surges and daily powers in a place where an extended rest is impossible.

However, his assistance has a catch. Sinmaker requires each PC that benefits from any of his tempting offerings to sign a harmless mutual release contract. Sinmaker produces a parchment containing the contract. Show Player Handout 1 to the players and read the following:

"This standard contract simply states that you cannot escape Carceri unless you take me with you. I assure you, there is no fine print. It's a small price to pay for my valuable assistance and assurance of our mutual survival. You must simply speak your agreement and your true name shall appear in one of the spaces below."

The contract functions exactly as Sinmaker has described. If a PC speaks his agreement to the contract (in any language) that PC's true name appears on the contract and that character is considered bound to it. The contract's effects are described in Encounter 12.

Sinmaker offers all of the following as enticement for the PCs to take him along:

- Sinmaker can immediately cure PCs that have contracted Corroding Doom.

If none of the PCs agree to sign the contract, Sinmaker follows the group for the remainder of the adventure, trying to entice them to sign, one by one. If one or two stubborn PCs insist on preventing anyone in the party from signing the contract, Sinmaker selects individual PCs that may need his assistance in particular and urges them to sign the contract in secret, using telepathic effects or other forms of communication as necessary.

For additional fun, have the player of each PC that signed the contract sign their PC's name on Player Handout 1.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Whether or not the PCs accept Sinmaker's offer, continue with Encounter 3A.

Whether the PCs allow him to travel with them or not, Sinmaker directs the PCs to a dock on the far side of the isle from which they can best reach Minethys.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

If the PCs accept Sinmaker's offer, they may purchase any of the items listed in his offer.

ENCOUNTER 3A: THE LOST CITY

SKILL CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

On Minethys, the PCs must either deal with a vicious storm and mudslide, or take shelter in the undead-filled lost city of Payratheon.

In stark contrast to the jungles of Cathrys, the isle of Minethys is a wasteland consisting of a deep layer of clinging mud that is extraordinarily difficult to cross. Entire hills and even cliffs rise and fall, occasionally collapsing into mudslides that fill the swampy basins of the island.

If the PCs are seeking Payratheon, they may wish to make a History check:

- **DC 20:** The City of Payratheon once stood upon the isle of Minethys, hurled there by one of the gods when the populace somehow enraged that deity. Today the city is long buried beneath dozens of feet of clinging mud. On occasion, the winds and shifting mudslides reveal portions of Payratheon for several hours before the place is once again entombed.
- **DC 27:** The Pharaoh of Payratheon kept a sapling of the “World Tree” growing on top of his temple. Supposedly, he corrupted the tree with the power to control death, angering the gods and leading the city to its fate.

If the PCs are traveling with Sinmaker, he will mention that he is familiar with Payratheon and lead the way with purpose. Otherwise, they stumble randomly upon:

An odd monument of worked stone juts out of the mud in the valley below. Faded and largely indecipherable runes run along its sides.

Examination reveals the stone to be the base of an ancient monument. While they examine it, the ghost of a man named Perym appears to greet the PCs:

“Once, this statue was viewed by many champions like yourselves,” A distinguished but strangely accented voice says as a translucent image of a man appears. The ghost is that of an old man wearing ethereal, ornamented robes and gesturing with a bejeweled rod. He looks more carefully at you. “Well, perhaps not quite like you. Payratheon may not have met its fate were you there to protect it.”

If asked of the statue or himself:

EPIC3-2 Cracks in the Crimson Cage

- Perym was Pharaoh of Payratheon for nearly two decades. He was overthrown by Neferkhaba, who angered the gods and led the city to ruin. Perym has been a restless spirit ever since.
- Perym believes that Payratheon deserved its fate, and more besides. He urges the PCs to destroy its evil Pharaoh and his undead warriors, hoping that this will set his spirit and the spirits of Payratheon’s people free.
- Perym was a good man, and will attempt to be helpful. He knows only of this island, but can help direct or lead the PCs to Payratheon.
- Perym knows Sinmaker; in fact, it was Perym who told Sinmaker of the Deathfont Willow. If the PCs do not travel with Sinmaker, Perym mentions there is a priceless flower in Payratheon that a friendly healer on Cathrys (Sinmaker) would pay well for. If the PCs are surprised that Perym would work with Sinmaker, he laughs, and points out that Sinmaker is truly a lesser evil in Carceri; a shopkeeper and learned man who works in medicines. That is worthy of respect, even if it is true that he also works in poisons.

When the PCs are ready to continue:

The wind stirs, lifting bits of dried mud and dirt from the ground. Tornadoes of grit form in the distance. The land lurches and heaves in a tremendous, rumbling mudslide. For miles, the mud ripples outward like a tsunami.

If the PCs were not intentionally searching for Payratheon, the ruined city is revealed in the opening left by the mud. Its walls provide shelter from the storm, but no doubt hold other dangers. If they were heading for Payratheon, they reach it just in time.

If the PCs brave the storm, continue with Scene 4 below and then proceed directly to Encounter 4A. If the PCs proceed into Payratheon, continue with Scene 5, followed by Encounter 3B.

SCENE 4 – BRAVING THE STORM (INDIVIDUAL CHECKS)

The wind begins to howl, and the mud and dirt are rapidly turning into gravel capable of flaying flesh from bone. The ground shakes ominously with the sound of crashing mud.

If the PCs do not head into Payratheon, the storm likely catches up to them. They must move quickly to avoid serious injury, and deal with the mud tsunami returning afterwards.

Determine which PCs are flying and which are not. Flying PCs will have a more difficult time in the storm, but are more likely get through the mudslide unscathed.

The PCs must each find a way to react to the sandstorm and take cover. Any PC carrying a heavy shield gains a +4 bonus to his or her check. Any PC carrying a light shield gains a +2 bonus. Any PC that was flying when the sandstorm began suffers a -4 penalty.

Remember that mounts are also subjected to these effects - if the PC fails his check, so does that character's mount. PCs may take cover behind their mounts to gain a +4 bonus to their checks. However, if used in such a way, the mount automatically fails its check.

Acrobatics / Athletics DC 27 (individual checks)

The PC is able to sprint out of the storm just in time.

Nature DC 27 (individual checks)

The PC is able to predict the storm's path enough to get to a safe spot just in time.

Failure results in a Fatigue point and forces any flying PC to land, exposing them to the next hazard.

You made it through the storm safely, but Minethys isn't finished with you yet. A colossal wave of thick mud forty feet high crashes toward your group like a tidal wave.

Any PC still flying automatically succeeds on this check; the flight ceiling makes dodging the mud trickier than one would hope, but at the last second they crest over the wave before it slams down.

PCs who can fly, but weren't flying during the storm or failed their check during the storm can try to fly up to escape it, but not in time to avoid making a check.

Dungeoneering / Perception DC 27 (individual checks)

The PC quickly locates shelter and avoids the deadlier effects of the mud.

Endurance DC 36 (individual checks)

The PC moves for no force of creation, no matter how many tons it weighs. Any PC that wields a heavy shield or can resist 1 or more squares of forced movement gains a +5 bonus to this check. PCs that can resist 5 or more squares of forced movement instead gain a +10 bonus.

Failure results in a Fatigue point.

SCENE 5 - THE LOST CITY (GROUP CHECK)

The PCs find themselves in Payratheon, a city occupied entirely by ghouls, and must find their way back to the surface of Minethys. Along the way, they might find the rare Deathfont Willow that Sinmaker mentioned.

A layer of mud clings to the buildings of the sprawling city of Payratheon. Thousands of bones jut from beneath the mud. Rib bones, femurs, and other jagged bits stick out of the mound, but you don't notice any skulls. The streets and buildings, where not covered in muck, appear to be paved or plastered in a smooth white stone. A ziggurat looms in the city's center, reaching to the isle's surface above the towering walls of mud. All but one of its sides have fallen into ruin.

Ghouls wander the streets of the city as though carrying on some semblance of the lives they once lived. However, by the look of those nearby, the scent of living flesh has caught their notice...

The highest point in the city is the Pharaoh's ziggurat in the city center, reaching nearly to the surface. The PCs can surmise that if they ascend the ziggurat, they might be able to escape the burying mud. Shortly after the mudslide, the city begins to be buried once again. At some point during this scene, read the following to remind the PCs that they have precious little time to escape before they are buried beneath hundreds of feet of mud:

The walls of mud that hold the city open to Carceri's dismal sky weep with sludge, which rolls down into the city streets. Before long, Payratheon will once again be buried, leaving all those within entombed.

PCs can use any of the skills in this list to avoid notice by the ghouls. Remember that this is a group check, and individual failures are not penalized here. Each PC can choose the skill that he or she prefers. The group succeeds if at least half of the PCs succeed on their individual checks, and fails otherwise.

- **History DC 27** - The PC recalls information about Payratheon and traces a safe path to the ziggurat. History checks reveal that the ziggurat in the center of the city was the home of the Pharaoh and his priests.
- **Intimidate DC 27** - The PC manages to stare down a pack of ghouls for long enough to get by.
- **Perception DC 27** - The PC finds a safe path through the city's many alleys and abandoned buildings.

- **Religion DC 27** - The PC uses his knowledge of ghouls to stay clear of where they might be gathered.
- **Stealth DC 27** - The PC finds enough cover to move through the city undetected.

Success in the group check results in the PCs safely and discretely reaching the ziggurat (the central point of the city). Failure results in skirmishes with ghouls, which gain each PC a Fatigue point. Additionally, a pack of ghouls follow the PCs to the ziggurat (which has an impact in Encounter 3B).

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs entered Payratheon, proceed to encounter 3B. If the PCs did not go into Payratheon, proceed to encounter 4A.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 3B: THE ZIGGURAT

COMBAT, EL 23

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

Neferkhaba, ancient brown dragon (level 23) (D)

3 abyssal ghoulish warriors (level 21) (W)

6 abyssal ghoulish hungerers (level 22) (C)

The PCs have reached Neferkhaba's ziggurat in Payratheon and seek to ascend to the top in order to escape the waves of mud that threaten to bury the city. If heeding Sinmaker's request, they also seek the Deathfont Willow that grows at the top of the Ziggurat.

The ziggurat looms ahead, carved entirely of the same white stone from which the streets and buildings are paved and plastered. Ghouls clad in ancient armor patrol its four levels. Narrow steps stretch from the city streets to the ziggurat's pinnacle, where a sickly tree with drooping branches sprouts from the stone.

Tremendous waves of mud slam into the sides of the ziggurat as the city is once again buried beneath the muck. You have precious little time to reach the top of the ziggurat before suffering the same fate.

Roll initiative. The ghouls on the ziggurat have spotted the PCs and attack as they try to ascend. Neferkhaba does not appear on the map initially. However, on his initiative, he uses his burrow speed to emerge from the ziggurat and joins the combat, moving to a space of your choosing. If the majority of the party has not yet acted when his first turn comes up, he delays to see what the party does. Read the following when Neferkhaba emerges:

A storm of swirling sand seeps through the cracks in the Ziggurat and coalesces into the form of an immense brown dragon, its face withered and scales nearly hanging from its bones. The creature issues a roar of challenge as the swirling sands howl around its form.

If the PCs failed Scene 3B of the skill challenge in the previous encounter, an additional abyssal ghoulish soldier and three abyssal ghoulish hungerers appear on the map near the PCs. These ghouls hunted the PCs to the ziggurat.

RISEING MUD

Each round, the level of mud covering the city rises as waves of mud slam into the ziggurat. This is described in detail under the Payratheon Mudslides hazard. In short, at the end of the first round, the level of mud reaches the first level of the ziggurat, and at the end of each round thereafter, the level of mud reaches the next level. To best represent this on the map, remove the dungeon tiles or map sections that correspond to sections buried beneath the mud (stairs and tiles that represent the levels). Point out that every section of map beneath the remaining tiles is considered "deep mud." If you're not using dungeon tiles, feel free to come up with another method by which to show mud covering up each section.

Thus, at the end of the 5th round, everything but the very top level of the ziggurat is considered deep mud. Once the mud reaches the top level, it remains there for the duration of the combat. This is shown on the map as well for clarity.

See Appendix 5 for a sample ziggurat to better visualize the map in this encounter. Show the picture to the players if necessary.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Deathfont Willow: The Deathfont Willow is represented by the tree tile at the top of the map. It must be uprooted from the ground (its roots reach deep into the ground beneath the mud) with a standard action.

Any character carrying the Deathfont Willow gains vulnerable 10 necrotic, but gains the ability to make saving throws against all effects that a save can end at the start of his turn instead of at the end of his turn. A character who already has the ability to save at the start of his turn instead gains a +2 bonus on saves.

Deep Mud: Moving through deep mud requires a DC 27 Athletics check to "swim." Deep mud is considered difficult terrain for swimmers. A creature that leaves the mud is slowed by the clinging sludge (save ends).

Creatures within the deep mud suffer additional risks from the Payratheon mudslides hazard, described in the hazard's stat block.

Creatures that end their turns in the deep mud take 20 necrotic damage and must succeed at a saving throw to avoid being buried. Being buried in the deep mud results in the following:

- The creature is immobilized until escape.
- The creature has line of sight only to adjacent squares and vice versa.
- The creature is at risk of drowning (and Endurance checks are made at a -4 penalty).

- Escape attempts require a DC 27 Athletics or Acrobatics check. Allies may facilitate an escape by succeeding at an Athletics check when in an adjacent square.

Creatures with earth walk are immune to the effects of the deep mud, treating it simply as difficult terrain, but are still subject to the necrotic damage.

Ziggurat Levels: Each level of the ziggurat is 20 feet (4 squares) higher than the lower level. The unusually smooth stone walls of the ziggurat require a DC 25 Athletics check to climb. Remember that a wall 20 feet (4 squares) high divides each level from the next, and PCs must climb to reach the steps unless they are at the edge of a given level.

Stairs: The narrow steps that lead to the top of the ziggurat are normal terrain.

Ceiling: The area is open to the sky but remember the altitude limits of Carceri (Appendix 2).

TACTICS

The ghouls crave living flesh above all else, and focus on attacking immobilized PCs in preference to other targets.

The warriors use *ghoulish bite* whenever possible, and otherwise focus on melee attacks or *bone sword flurry* attacks when in melee with multiple foes. If they themselves are immobilized or cannot reach an opponent, they'll use *penumbra of doom*.

Neferkhaba emerges from the Ziggurat on his initiative (or delays if most of the party has not yet acted), and fights deviously to keep the PCs from reaching the top of the ziggurat. He activates *rising sands* on his first turn before revealing himself, and uses his breath weapon at the first opportunity. He delights in using his aura or claw attacks to slide opponents down the sides of the ziggurat or into the mud. He commands his ghoulish warriors to defend him when necessary. Neferkhaba is familiar with powers that open short-distance teleportation circles and gateways, such as *arcane gate*. Should any PC create such a gateway to make their ascent easier, Neferkhaba will block the gateway, or command one of his ghoulish warriors to do so if they act before he does.

All of the creatures in this encounter fight to the death. If Neferkhaba is killed and the Deathfont Willow is removed, any remaining ghouls die instantly, no longer animated by the foul presence of their Pharaoh.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

- Four PCs:** Remove an abyssal ghoulish warrior.

- Six PCs:** Add an abyssal ghoulish warrior.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have defeated Neferkhaba and retrieved the Deathfont Willow, read the following and proceed to Encounter 4A.

With Neferkhaba dead and the Deathfont Willow removed, the remaining undead of the city collapse into piles of sand. Waves of mud continue to slam into the ziggurat, heralding a tsunami of mud that looks likely to finish burying the city and you along with it.

Perym's glowing spirit appears before you. He raises his hands and a globe of light surrounds the ziggurat, holding the mud at bay. "Thank you, champions. You have corrected an age-long injustice. With Neferkhaba's evil undone, my spirit can finally rest. But first, I must repay the favor." He hands you a small, jagged purple crystal and waves his hand. The mud sweeps aside to form a path for you to ascend to the surface.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

The PCs find a number of +5 *necrosward weapons* on the abyssal ghoulish warriors which they can recover if they have time. Perym gives the PCs a *solitaire (violet)* as a token of his gratitude.

ENCOUNTER 3B: "THE ZIGGURAT" STATISTICS

Abyssal Ghoul Warrior		Level 22 Soldier
Medium elemental humanoid (undead)		XP 4,150
HP 206; Bloodied 103		Initiative +22
AC 38, Fortitude 35, Reflex 34, Will 33		Perception +17
Speed 8 (earth walk), climb 8		darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Bone Sword (necrotic, weapon) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +27 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d8 + 12 damage (crit 5d10 necrotic + 44), and the target takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends).		
M Ghoulish Bite • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one immobilized, stunned, or unconscious creature); +27 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d12 + 17 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).		
R Penumbra of Doom • Encounter		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +27 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: The target is weakened until the end of the ghoul's next turn and the ghoul's allies deal 3d6 extra damage on all attacks until the end of the creature's next turn (6 damage if the ally is a minion).		
C Bone Sword Flurry (weapon) • Recharge 5-6		
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in burst); +25 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d8 + 12 damage (crit 5d10 necrotic + 44), and the target is immobilized (save ends). Creatures suffer a -2 penalty to saving throws against this effect.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
C Necroshard Weapon (necrotic) • Encounter		
Trigger: The abyssal ghoul warrior hits with a weapon attack.		
Effect (Free Action): The target takes an extra 3d8 necrotic damage and is weakened until the end of the warrior's next turn.		
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 20 (+16)
Con 22 (+17)	Int 21 (+16)	Cha 22 (+17)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common		
Equipment +5 necroshard bone sword, bone armor		

Note: Ghoul Warrior (E1 Death's Reach) with updated damage expressions and +5 necroshard weapon. Orcus Blood Cultist theme.

Neferkhaba		Level 23 Elite Controller
Huge magical beast (dragon)		XP 10,200
HP 438; Bloodied 219		Initiative +20
AC 39, Fortitude 37, Reflex 38, Will 37		Perception +18
Speed 10 (earth walk), burrow 10, fly 10 (hover)		darkvision
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1		tremorsense 20
TRAITS		
O Swirling Sand • Aura 1		
The dragon slides any enemy that ends its turn in the aura 3 squares.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Bite • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d8 + 17 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the dragon's next turn.		
M Claw • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d8 + 20 damage, and the dragon slides the target 4 squares.		
M Double Attack • At-Will		
Effect: The dragon uses bite and claw, or uses claw twice.		
C Breath Weapon • Encounter		
Attack: Close blast 10 (enemies in blast); +26 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 3d10 + 12 damage, and the target is immobilized and takes a -5 penalty to Fortitude (save ends both).		
Miss: Half damage. The target is immobilized and takes a -5 penalty to Fortitude until the end of Neferkhaba's next turn.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
Rising Sands • Recharge at the start of any turn when swirling sands is aura 1		
Effect: The swirling sands aura expands to aura 3. At the start of the dragon's next turn, swirling sands expands to aura 5. At the start of its following turn, the dragon makes the following attack:		
Attack (No Action): Close burst 5 (enemies in burst); +26 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 4d8 + 17 damage, and the target falls unconscious (save ends).		
Effect: The swirling sands aura reverts back to its original state and size (aura 1).		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
M Sand Spray • Recharge when first bloodied		
Trigger: Neferkhaba takes damage from an enemy's attack		
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close blast 5 (enemies in blast); +26 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 3d8 + 10 damage, the target is blinded (save ends).		
Bloodied Breath • Encounter		
Trigger: Neferkhaba becomes bloodied		
Effect (Free Action): Neferkhaba's recharges its breath weapon and uses it immediately.		
Loyal Subjects • At-Will		
Trigger: Neferkhaba starts its turn dazed, dominated, immobilized, stunned, or unconscious		
Effect (No Action): Neferkhaba transfers one of the triggering conditions to an ally within 20 squares.		
Str 24 (+18)	Dex 28 (+20)	Wis 25 (+18)
Con 27 (+19)	Int 25 (+18)	Cha 22 (+17)
Alignment evil		Languages Common, Draconic

Note: Ancient Blizzard Dragon (MM3) with updated damage expressions, reflavored to sand instead of snow, and slightly enhanced.

ENCOUNTER 3B: “THE ZIGGURAT” STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

Payratheon Mudslides	Level 22 Hazard
Hazard	XP 4,150
<i>Waves of mud crash into the ziggurat with tremendous force.</i>	
<p>Trap: Mud flows down into Payratheon as the city is slowly buried and massive waves of mud crash into the ziggurat, attacking any character in the area.</p> <p>The waves are typically 30 feet high, due to the force with which they're generated and the distance they travel before crashing into the encounter area. As such, flying PCs in the area are just as at risk.</p>	
Perception	
<p>Characters can see the mud flowing down into the city and waves slamming into the ziggurat. No Perception check is necessary to identify the trap.</p>	
Trigger	
<p>This trap activates when combat begins and acts at the end of the round on every round. A wave of mud slams into ziggurat, targeting every creature standing within 2 levels of the deep mud.</p> <p>A wave of mud first makes a bury attack against any creature currently in a square of deep mud in the affected area. Then, it makes a drag attack against any other creatures in the affected area. Thus, no creature can be attacked twice in a single round.</p> <p>In addition, the mud level rises, enveloping the bottom level of the ziggurat. Each round, the lowest level of the ziggurat is buried beneath deep mud. Any creature that was standing in the area remains in the same square, but is automatically considered to have entered deep mud.</p>	
Bury Attack (creatures in deep mud)	
<p><i>Attack:</i> All creatures in deep mud in target area; +26 vs. Fortitude</p> <p><i>Hit:</i> 2d12 + 16 damage, and the target must immediately make a saving throw to avoid being buried (see Features of the Area above).</p>	
Drag Attack (creatures adjacent to deep mud)	
<p><i>Attack:</i> All creatures outside of deep mud in target area; +26 vs. Reflex</p> <p><i>Hit:</i> 2d12 + 16 damage, and target is knocked prone and pulled 4 squares towards the bottom of the ziggurat. If this would force a creature into deep mud, the creature gains a -4 penalty to its saving throw to avoid falling in. If a creature enters deep mud as a result of this movement, the forced movement ends.</p>	
Countermeasures	
<p>Creatures with earth walk are immune to the attacks of the mudslides and treat deep mud as difficult terrain rather than hazardous terrain.</p>	

Note: Custom hazard. Based loosely on natural terrain of Carceri (*Plane Above*).

Abyssal Ghoul Hungerer	Level 22 Minion Soldier	
Medium elemental humanoid (undead)	XP 692	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	Initiative +21	
AC 36, Fortitude 35, Reflex 36, Will 34	Perception +17	
Speed 8 (earth walk), climb 8	darkvision	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Unyielding Bite • At-Will		
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +27 vs. AC		
<i>Hit:</i> 15 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
C Dead Blood (Necrotic) • Encounter		
<i>Trigger:</i> The ghoul drops to 0 hit points.		
<i>Effect (No Action):</i> Close burst 1 (creatures in burst); each target takes 15 necrotic damage.		
R Rotting Strike (Necrotic) • Encounter		
<i>Trigger:</i> The ghoul hits a creature with a melee basic attack.		
<i>Effect (Free Action):</i> The creature gains ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends).		
Str 27 (+19)	Dex 26 (+19)	Wis 18 (+15)
Con 24 (+18)	Int 20 (+16)	Cha 14 (+13)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal		

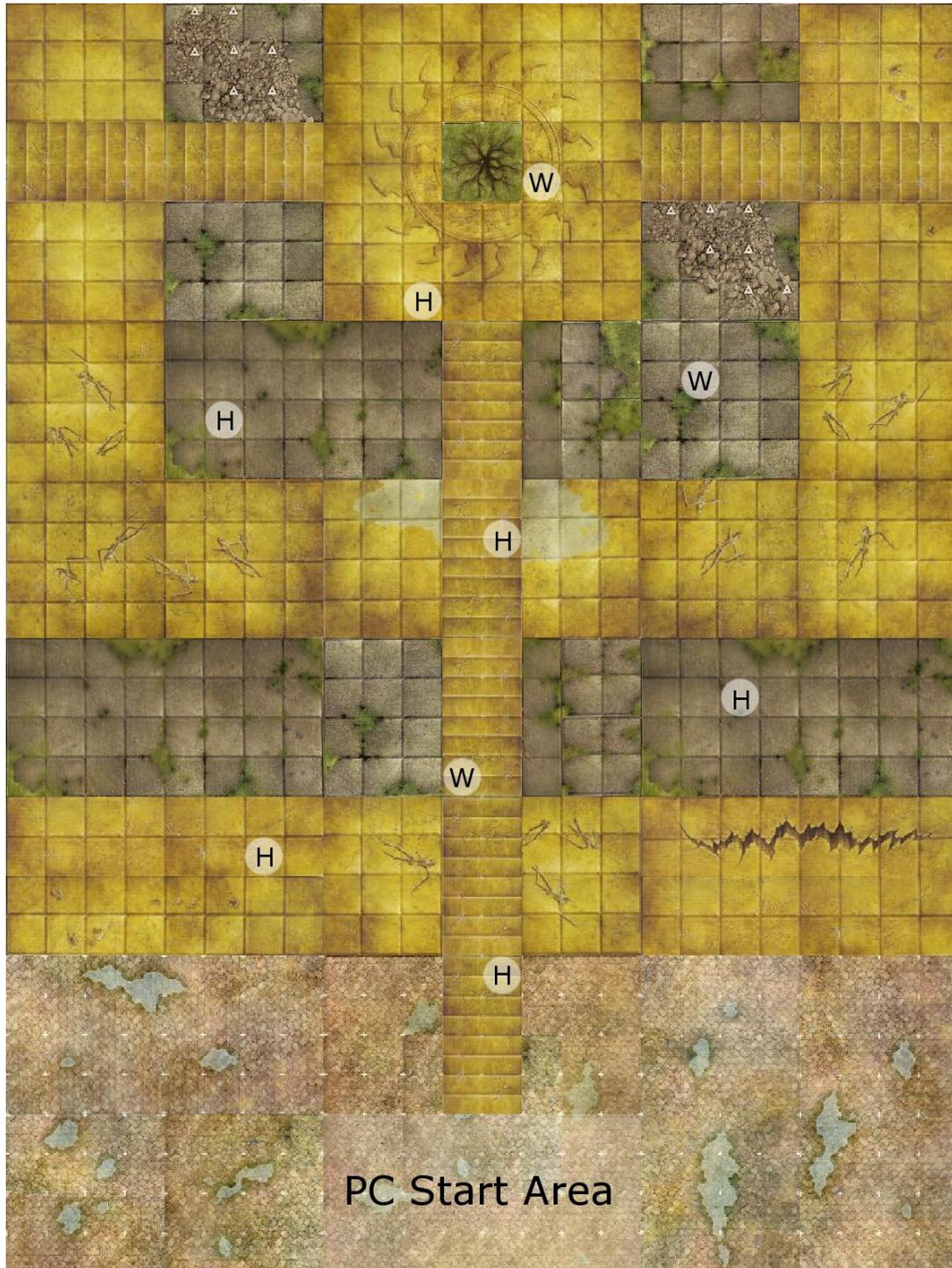
Note: Necrotic resistance and *dead blood* damage scaled for higher level. Orcus Blood Cultist theme.

ENCOUNTER 3B: "THE ZIGGURAT" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Dire Tombs x3 (plus extra for stairs), Sinister Woods x3, DTMS - The City x2

Note: almost any sets can be used here - as long as the levels are differentiated



ENCOUNTER 4A: BLOOD AND VINES

SKILL CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

The PCs reach Colothys and are presented with the choice to visit the Court of Blood by a friendly satyr. If they choose not to, they must navigate the wilds of Colothys and deal with its animate, poisonous plant life on their own. After crossing much of the island, they come to the deadly Garden of Malice, where a massive hivemind of plants attempts to kill them.

Colothys is an island of many hills and valleys, covered in a mass of alien vegetation. The trees stir and rustle upon your arrival, like the sounds of animals fleeing a hunter's approach. The island, however, appears to be devoid of animal life.

PCs can recall some information about Colothys with History or Religion checks.

- **DC 20:** Much of Colothys is covered in animate predatory plants. Every branch and vine might try to grab and devour you, or spray deadly poison or mind-altering pollen.
- **DC 27:** The central wood of the isle's deadly foliage resembles a corrupted Feywild grove. The Court of Blood - one of several factions of fey and mortal souls that vie for control of Colothys - frequently gathers within.
- **DC 36:** Some scholars have speculated that the plants of Colothys represent a single enormous organism that spreads across the bulk of the isle. Theories differ as to whether such a creature would be an escaped abomination, exiled here by the gods for safety, or a natural evolution of Carceri.

Very shortly after the PCs land, they are approached by an envoy of the Court of Blood, a satyr captain named Dabmibel:

Sounds of a flute's melodious harmony drift from the marsh ahead. The music ceases for a moment and a cheerful voice calls out from the thicket, "Hail and well met, travelers. Welcome to Colothys, island resort of the Court of Blood. Might I emerge with a relative lack of being killed?"

Assuming the PCs agree:

A satyr walks out. He is dressed in worn battle leathers, with a curved signal horn on one hip and

sturdy battleaxe on the other. His hands are open and spread before him.

Captain Dabmibel, male satyr bard

- The satyr appears amiable. He begins by greeting the PCs, and earnestly attempts to recruit any fey into the Court of Blood; even drow. He warns the PCs that to survive the Court of Blood, they must be as quick and precise with their wits as they would be with their blades elsewhere.
- He tells the PCs that they could avoid many of the dangers of the island if they present their case to the Queen and convince her to help them.
- If he learns the PCs are bound for Agathys, he laughs and warns that even if they get past the guards, what's beyond will only make their death all the more gruesome.
- He has a soft spot for attractive women and will try to convince any female PCs that he can find them a safer, less suicidal, place to spend their days here.
- If asked how he was imprisoned, he smiles and says that he loved one goddess too many.
- Dabmibel is intended to provide some comic relief and highlight a good individual trapped in Carceri. Use a more serious fey if your group would not enjoy such an NPC.

The PCs can choose to face the dangers of misspeaking in the fey court (Scene 6), or deal with the poisonous devouring plants (Scene 7). Once the PCs choose their path, move on to the appropriate scene.

SCENE 6 - THE COURT OF BLOOD (GROUP CHECK)

The wildlife is more cultured and tended as you enter the lands of the Court of Blood. A tremendous amount of effort has been taken to liken the area to the Feywild.

Dabmibel leads you to a large clearing and announces your arrival. Throngs of fey of all kinds buzz at the appearance of strangers. The Queen, a bralani eladrin, is seated upon a throne of whirling air.

She does not rise when you enter, but nods and says in a soft, but detached voice, "It's always wonderful to have such illustrious guests at my humble court."

Queen Erinday, female bralani eladrin

- The queen is formal and precise and hides her emotions carefully. She uses understatement, double meaning, and suggested sarcasm.
- She appreciates the opportunity to speak with powerful strangers and rewards skill with words.

- She does not care about any islands other than her own, though she discusses the plants of Colothys at length - pointing out that they have a mind of their own and often devour the flesh of her subjects.
- She would like to manipulate the PCs into fighting the devourer in the Garden of Malice. She can do this by simply setting their feet on the right path, appealing to them for assistance against this dangerous monster, and/or offering the assistance of the Court in navigating the island and noting its valuable life-giving fruit.

It requires quick wit and an agile tongue to survive long in the Court of Blood. Each PC should make both an Insight check and either a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check. The sum of these two check results is the character's overall result.

- Each fey PC may add +5 to his total.
- Any PC that mentioned and showed proof of saving Corellon and Arvandor (such as by having Corellon's Boon, or an empowered *Faervian*) may add +5 to his total
- If none of the PCs responded to her greeting with compliments to the Queen and/or her court, each PC must subtract 5 from their total.

Success requires a combined total between the two checks of 54 or better. If the group as a whole succeeds, then the Queen offers them passage through a nearby fairy ring, taking them most of the way across the island.

If the PCs fail, the Queen thanks them for their visit and suggests that they continue their journey in all haste. They are escorted to a path across the island, but they all gain a Fatigue point fighting the plants along the way. Skip Scene 7 and proceed to Scene 8.

SCENE 7 - BRAVING COLOTHYS (GROUP CHECKS)

Poisonous fields, and a multitude of grasping, lashing, thorny vines makes travel through Colothys perilous.

The PCs must make a group Nature or Perception check (each PC may choose the skill they prefer) to make it through relatively unscathed.

Nature / Perception DC 27 (group check)

All PCs must make either a Nature or Perception check, as they hack their way through the animated jungle of Colothys. Each PC who fails the check must make an additional check, after the group check resolves. Every PC who gets a 36 or higher on the group check may negate one of those failures.

If the party fails the group check, the entire party gains a Fatigue point.

Acrobatics / Athletics DC 27 (individual)

Any PC who failed the previous Nature or Perception check runs afoul of the local plant life at some point, and must escape the clutches of grabbing vegetation before they are poisoned or crushed. Each PC that fails this check gains a Fatigue point.

SCENE 8 - GARDEN OF MALICE

The constant harassment of the isle's dangerous vegetation seems to have ceased. A thin sapling sprouts from the road ahead, a single, beautiful fruit hanging low from its lone branch. The fist-sized fruit is vibrant green with crimson veins, perfect, and deliciously ripe.

The PCs may make a Nature check to assess the fruit and the situation.

DC 20: The fruit is clearly magical.

DC 27: That is the Fruit of Life, a plant of myth. No one knows how they are grown or obtained, but a single bite is said to be more fulfilling than a feast, heal all wounds, and shield against powers of death magic. Its seeds alone might be worth a fortune.

DC 36: The plants all around are moving subtly, as if in preparation of your approach. The rare and valuable fruit is potentially being used as bait.

The animate plants of Colothys have set a trap for the PCs. This may seem obvious to some players, but they're plants - what else should they expect? The PCs must at this point choose whether to take the bait and fall into the trap, proceeding to the combat in Encounter 4B, or skip it, proceeding instead to the next island in Encounter 5A.

If the PCs skipped Encounter 3B, then the plants of Colothys spring their trap whether the PCs go after the fruit or not, and the group will simply have a minor advantage for noticing the attempted trap.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs went after the Fruit of Life, proceed to Encounter 4B. If they recognized the dangers of the Garden of Malice and decided to avoid the fight, proceed to Encounter 5A.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4B: GARDEN OF MALICE

COMBAT, EL 23

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps:

- 1 colothys devourer brain (level 23) (B)
- 3 colothys devourer limbs (level 22) (L)
- 6 strangling vines (level 22) (S)
- 1 colothys vine doom

The PCs reach the Garden of Malice where every plant in sight animates to attack them.

Suddenly, every plant and flower in sight bursts with a cloud of pollen that fills the air. The ground rumbles and quakes, and massive vines begin to snake across the ground.

Place all monsters on the map except the devourer brain (which does not emerge until its first turn). The PCs may then place themselves on the map anywhere except the center trees.

Due to their hive mind, the plants in this encounter roll initiative in a different manner. Roll initiative for all creatures, and then rearrange the plants' initiative results so that they act in this order:

- 1) Colothys Devourer Limbs
- 2) Strangling Vines
- 3) Colothys Devourer Brain

The ground underneath bursts as colossal vines and roots fling dirt and rocks aside, rising up in a pillar of vegetation underneath you. In the blink of an eye, the ground smashes upwards fifty feet into the air.

Any flying PC is moved to the ground, taking falling damage, as if they had fallen from their current flying height. All PCs (and mounts and other companions) may then make a DC 27 Acrobatics or Endurance check or be knocked prone. A character can resume flying on his or her next turn (since the ground has moved up, the altitude limit is calculated from the new ground level).

The colothys devourer brain emerges on its initiative. Read the following when it does:

The vines ripple and sway as a gigantic bulbous plant pushes up from the center of the platform. The plant

shakes itself, and the platform shudders from left to right, as if its movements are controlled by this massive creature. A line splits down the middle of the plant, revealing a maw large enough to swallow a dragon whole, lined with row upon row of thorny spikes.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Writhing Plants: Areas of trees on the map are difficult terrain filled with writhing, grasping vegetation. Any creature without forestwalk that enters a square is immediately slowed (save ends). Any creature that ends its turn in this terrain is pulled 2 squares towards the center of the map.

Pollen: The entire encounter area is covered and surrounded by pollen that acts similar to Dimensional Turbulence (DMG2 page 59). Any creature that teleports in this encounter arrives 1d4 squares closer to the center of the map than their intended square. Multiple creatures teleported by the same power must roll separately.

If a creature attempts to teleport out of the encounter entirely, their teleport fails if they do not teleport more than 1d4 squares past the edge of the platform.

Edge: The edge of the map is a 50 foot (10 square) drop to the rest of the island below. Any creature forced off the edge may choose to automatically make its save, as vines work to keep the character around to be eaten.

Any creature willingly leaving the platform must make an Acrobatics or Athletics check (DC 27) or get stopped at the edge by vines. A creature that leaves has effectively left the encounter, but may climb back up with an Athletics check (DC 20).

Rocks: All rocks are difficult terrain.

Ceiling: The area is open to the sky but remember the altitude limits of Carceri (Appendix 2).

TACTICS

The colothys devourer is a single hive mind of plants covering most of the island. The limbs and vines fight fearlessly, but the brain is far more careful.

The limbs begin combat with *grasping lure* (placing the target within 3 squares of the devourer) and try to ensure they grab someone every round, so the brain can command them to *eviscerate* the target.

The strangling vines attempt to remain spread out and grab as many different PCs as possible.

The colothys devourer brain is entirely off-map until its first turn. The effect of *all one plant* should ensure that the brain always has at least one ally to target for *colothys command*.

Once the brain has been bloodied, the entire platform sways, and when the brain is killed, it topples, per the vine doom hazard. It should become apparent to the PCs that the brain is controlling not only the other plants in the encounter, but the platform on which they fight as well.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a colothys devourer limb.

Six PCs: Add a colothys devourer limb.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After the brain has been destroyed and the PCs recover from their fall, they find the vegetation of Colothys far less dangerous and may safely proceed to the next isle, Porphatys. If they flee, they are harried for some distance, but eventually escape.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

The PCs may harvest one *fruit of life*, as well as a pulsing piece of the devourer that functions as an *ioun stone of regeneration*.

ENCOUNTER 4B: "GARDEN OF MALICE" STATISTICS

Colothys Devourer Limb		Level 22 Brute
Large magical beast (plant)		XP 4,150
HP 255; Bloodied 127		Initiative +18
AC 34, Fortitude 35, Reflex 33, Will 32		Perception +19
Immune charm, teleportation		Darkvision
Speed 6 (forestwalk)		
TRAITS		
Threatening Reach		
This creature can make opportunity attacks against any enemy within reach of its melee basic attack.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Eviscerate • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d10 + 16 damage (6d10 + 16 against a creature grabbed by this limb).		
C Weakening Vines • Recharge 6		
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in blast); +25 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 3d8 + 10 psychic damage, the target is weakened (save ends).		
M Grasping Lure • Encounter		
Attack: Melee 10 (one creature); +25 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 4d12 + 20 damage and the target is grabbed (escape ends).		
Effect: The target is pulled 10 squares to an adjacent square.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
m Vines • At-Will		
Requirement: The limb must not have a creature grabbed.		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +25 vs. Reflex		
Hit: The target is grabbed (escape ends).		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Return to the Whole • At-Will		
Trigger: The trapper starts its turn		
Effect (No Action): The limb removes all harmful conditions and is removed from play until the start of its next turn, when it may place itself on any of the tree spaces used for the original limb starting locations.		
Str 28 (+19)	Dex 26 (+18)	Wis 25 (+16)
Con 25 (+17)	Int 18 (+16)	Cha 20 (+17)
Alignment unaligned		Languages -

Note: Thoon Hulk (MM3) with *psychic explosion* replaced by *return to the whole*. Daze effects replaced with weaken to avoid frustration. Demogorgon Blood Cultist Theme.

Colothys Devourer Brain		Level 23 Elite Controller
Gargantuan magical beast (plant)		XP 10,200
HP 434; Bloodied 217		Initiative +21
AC 37, Fortitude 35, Reflex 34, Will 36		Perception +17
Speed 0		Darkvision
Immune charm, teleportation, forced movement;		
Resist 10 fire, 10 poison		
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1		
TRAITS		
All One Plant		
At the start of the brain's turn, one colothys devourer limb that was previously destroyed is restored to 1 hit point. That plant re-enters initiative immediately after the brain's turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Bite • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d12 + 12 damage, and the target slides 3 squares.		
Effect: Any marking effects on the brain end.		
M Vine Frenzy • Recharge 5-6		
Attack: Melee 3 (one or two creatures); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d10 + 18 damage, and the target is pulled into the brain's space.		
C Baffling Pollen (charm, psychic) • Encounter		
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in blast); +25 vs. Will		
Hit: 3d8 + 10 psychic damage, the target is dominated until the end of the brain's next turn.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
R Thorn Spray (poison) • Encounter		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d12 + 12 damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 poison damage and a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).		
Colothys Command • At-Will 1/round		
Effect: Close burst 10 (one ally in the burst).		
The target can shift up to 3 squares and make a basic attack as a free action.		
Str 28 (+19)	Dex 26 (+18)	Wis 25 (+16)
Con 25 (+17)	Int 18 (+16)	Cha 20 (+17)
Alignment unaligned		Languages understands elven

Note: Duergar Underlord (MV) reflavored into an immobile master plant. Increased range on *thorn spray* to account for decreased mobility. Demogorgon Blood Cultist Theme.

ENCOUNTER 4B: "GARDEN OF MALICE" STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

Colothys Vine Doom	Level 22 Hazard
Hazard	XP 4,150
<i>The entire battlefield is an animate mass of vines with deadly intent.</i>	
Trap: A platform of living vines lifts up 50 feet from the ground, controlled by an immense malevolent plant eager to prevent its prey from escaping.	
Perception	
The vines are immediately visible, no skill check is necessary to perceive them.	
Additional Skills: Nature	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ DC 27: The mass of vines appears to be a single animate plant that's keeping the platform of vines held aloft. The plants are most likely controlled by a single hive mind. 	
Trigger	
This hazard activates at the start of combat and uses the attacks listed below as follows:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ At the end of each round, the hazard uses the <i>feed the host</i> attack. ◆ When the brain becomes bloodied, the hazard uses the <i>staggering sway</i> attack as an immediate reaction. ◆ When the brain is reduced to 0 hit points, the hazard uses the <i>toppling death</i> attack as an immediate reaction. 	
Feed the Host (end of round)	
<i>Effect:</i> Each grabbed PC takes 15 damage and the colothys devourer brain may make a basic attack against a creature within its reach as a free action.	
<i>Effect:</i> Place 3 strangling vines on the map that act on the same initiative as the remaining strangling vines.	
Staggering Sway (when the devourer brain is first bloodied)	
<i>Attack:</i> Close burst 15 (non-plant creatures in burst); +25 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d12 + 18 damage, and the target is knocked prone and dazed until the end of its next turn.	
Toppling Death (when the devourer brain is reduced to 0 hp)	
<i>Effect:</i> All creatures fall 50 feet, taking falling damage as normal. All plants in the encounter die and the encounter ends.	
Countermeasures	
The hazard ends only when the PCs defeat the devourer brain.	

Note: Custom hazard.

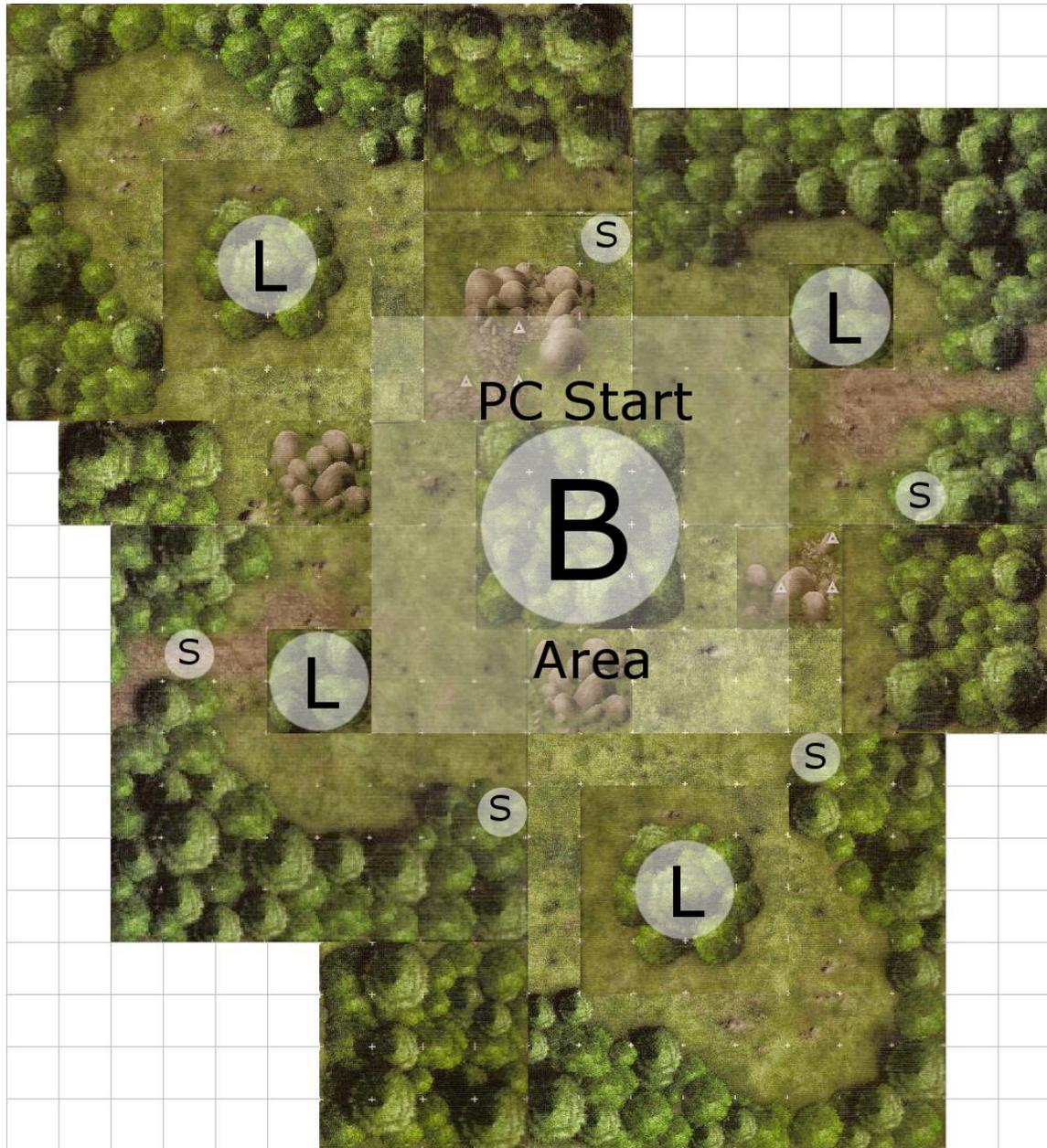
Strangling Vine	Level 22 Minion Soldier
Medium fey magical beast (plant)	XP 533
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	Initiative +20
AC 37, Fortitude 35, Reflex 34, Will 34	Perception +16
Speed 8 (forestwalk), climb 8	Darkvision
TRAITS	
○ Lashing Vines • Aura 1	
Any enemy that enters the aura or starts its turn in the aura takes 6 damage.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Strangling Vine • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +27 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 15 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes ongoing 10 damage until the grab ends.	
Str 30 (+20)	Dex 26 (+18)
Con 28 (+19)	Int 22 (+16)
Wis 24 (+17)	Cha 27 (+19)
Alignment unaligned	Languages -

Note: Blood Fiend Martyr (E1), simplified. Demogorgon Cultist theme.

ENCOUNTER 4B: "GARDEN OF MALICE" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Sinister Woods x2



ENCOUNTER 5A: FROZEN PORPHATYS

SKILL CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

The PCs must deal with supernatural frost that attempts to cover their craft and every extremity, then avoid being caught in an acidic blizzard. Along the way, they are visited by a potentially annoying quasit.

The temperature drops precipitously as you get closer to Porphatys. Your craft nimbly dodges ice floes surrounding the isle. Black clouds in the distance threaten a storm unlike any on Faerûn.

One of the coldest isles, Porphatys is dominated by swamps that are fed by thick flurries of black caustic snow. Although Porphatys closely resembles the swampy reaches of the other islands, a few large portions amid the shallower bogs are so deep that they are practically lakes, or even tiny inland seas.

The acidic snowfall invariably wears down immobile structures. Thus, many of the isle's prisoners dwell on large rafts and barges, slowly poling their way through the marshy reaches and taking shelter against the most severe of the snowfalls.

SCENE 9 - BLACK FROST (INDIVIDUAL CHECKS)

Porphatys is supernaturally frigid; a cold matched only by Auril's realm. Keeping the creeping frost from covering your ship and yourselves requires constant work. Even strong magical protections can only do so much to stave off the cold, and anyone without such protections would be in grim shape indeed.

Every PC (and mount, if applicable) must make an Endurance check:

Endurance DC 36 (individual for each PC)

If the PCs have the benefits of Endure Primordial Elements, they gain a +10 bonus to this check. If Sinmaker is with the party, he would have ensured the ritual was performed before this point. Each PC adds his cold resistance, if any, as a bonus to this check.

Every PC who failed gains a Fatigue point. If any PC who failed has Corroding Doom, the disease automatically advances one stage due to the shock to the system, unless a different PC can make a DC 36 Heal check to prevent the disease from advancing.

VISIT FROM A QUASIT (ROLEPLAYING SCENE)

As the PCs work their way through a gap between two icebergs, an invisible quasit attempts to hop onto their craft and speak with them. This interaction is intended for flavor and role-playing.

As your vessel passes through a gap between two large chunks of ice, a faint shimmer in the air and tiny sound of impact heralds the arrival of a visitor.

Having failed to sneak aboard, a quasit becomes visible on the railing. It quickly babbles, "Don't hurt me, big bosses! I am Gero, helpful guide and good servant."

If the PCs wish to destroy or evict the quasit at any point, they can do so effortlessly.

Gero, quasit con-man

- Gero hopes to obtain anything of value, and offers anything it thinks it can get away with in exchange for money or goods.
- Gero would particularly like to join such powerful adventurers, and insists on being their guide or servant. In particular, it offers to become the familiar for any arcane character, especially a PC that already has a familiar. **"Gero make a much better familiar, boss. No worries, I take care of this one quick quick."** A character with a familiar may replace the familiar with Gero, and receive the same mechanical benefit as the old familiar (Gero can adopt any familiar's statistics). If the PC acquiesces to this, the quasit gleefully sets to tearing apart the old familiar.
- If any PCs are fatigued by the cold, or suffer Corroding Doom, Gero offers a concoction to help them. **"Gero fine chemist, fix that quick quick. Just five platinum pieces. Bargain."** He has no such thing, but does have a mixture of dirty acidic water and deadly fungus, that would give any PC who drank it a Fatigue point. If any characters accept his offer, he cautions, **"Only drink after eat meal. Then all better."** He then attempts to leave with his money.
- If Sinmaker is with the party, he deems the quasit a useless pest. The quasit in turn warns the party of Sinmaker's evil and backstabbing nature. **"He's a big bad, boss. Ditch him quick quick or he'll get ya."**
- Gero knows very little of other islands. He knows that the "big bad" to avoid around these parts is Rienkov, who runs a gang of "hundreds" of big demons. Gero also knows that a storm is coming that would be death for anyone caught in it, so they should find shelter.

- In general, appropriate skill checks (DC 27) can reveal the quasit's lies and lack of knowledge. If the party does agree to let Gero accompany them, he stops them from drinking his concoction and refunds any money given.

THE ONCOMING STORM (INVESTIGATION SCENE)

Read the following after the PCs' encounter with Gero:

A blizzard of black snow brews quickly on the horizon. Far in the distance, groups of demons flee for their lives from the storm, on ship or wing.

The demon's fear seems odd, until the storm blows closer, and you can hear the bubbling hiss and screams as the acidic snow melts anything caught out in it.

You are keeping well ahead of the storm, until you see a second storm coming from ahead. The slaying storms of Porphatys will surely kill you if you can't swiftly find some shelter.

Any PC who wishes can make a Religion check, to recall information about Porphatys:

Religion DC 27 (not a success or failure)

The storms of Porphatys were crafted by the gods as a line of defense against abominations escaping Agathys, or others reaching the island. The demons are one of the few races able to last even a few seconds without melting or shattering, but even a glabrezu or balor could last no more than a couple of minutes in the deadly storms. The storms dissipate quickly.

The PCs must locate shelter. Unfortunately, the first shelter they find is a cave that already has some demons hiding in it. If the PCs avoided either Encounters 3B or 4B, a fight with the demons is unavoidable. Proceed immediately to Encounter 5B Shelter from the Storm. If the PCs played both Encounter 3B and 4B, then proceed with Scene 10 instead.

SCENE 10 - ACIDIC BLIZZARDS (GROUP CHECK)

If the PCs played both previous combat encounters, they may either find an alternative entrance with Dungeoneering or use Intimidate to convince the demons to share their cave or flee. All PCs must make the same skill check. If you don't face any time pressures, feel free to run Encounter 5B anyway if the PCs prefer; however, note that it is only required that the PCs face two of the combat encounters leading up to Agathys (3B, 4B, and 5B). Be careful of resource drain since the party cannot take an extended rest.

Dungeoneering / Intimidate DC 27 (group check)

If successful, the PCs obtain shelter in a different cave or force the demons out of their cave before the storm harms them.

If the PCs fail the group check, they acquire a Fatigue point due to fighting the demons or being caught briefly in the storm.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs previously avoided either encounter 3B or 4B, they must now proceed to 5B. Otherwise, the PCs escape Porphatys. Proceed to Encounter 6.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 5B: SHELTER FROM THE STORM

COMBAT, EL 23

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 aspect of Baphomet (G)

2 mavawhan reavers (C)

2 jarrlaks (J)

The PCs reach the first island they find with a cave visible from shore that could provide shelter from the storm, only to discover that demons have already claimed it for themselves.

The winds of Porphatys howl as the acidic blizzard bears down on the area. The only sign of visible shelter seems to be a small cave near the shores of a nearby island.

You are not the first to find this shelter, however. Several demons peer out from the cave as your ship bumps against the shores of the frozen island. One shouts in fear, gesturing at you while gibbering in Abyssal. An instant later, a jagged wall of black ice sprouts up from the ground to block the cave entrance. The storm will be on you in seconds and there is no other shelter in sight.

If any PC speaks Abyssal, the demon said:
“Don’t let them in; they’re going to kill us!”

If the PCs do not speak Abyssal, Sinmaker will translate:
Sinmaker laughs, “They seem convinced that good heroes such as we will surely murder them. Shall we confirm their assessment, then? If not, that storm is surely going to murder us.”

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ice Sheets: The area contains sheets of slippery ice. Any creature that runs, charges, or is pushed, pulled, or slid onto the ice must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

A creature subjected to a push, pull, or slide effect that begins on, ends on, or moves through an ice sheet may be moved one additional square.

Water: Any creature that ends its turn in the freezing water takes 15 cold damage. Swimming in the water requires a DC 20 Athletics check.

Acid Blizzard: The blizzard begins off the map in the first round. It covers all outside squares at the end of the first round. Only squares within the cave are safe.

Any creature that starts its turn in the blizzard takes 20 cold and acid damage. Any creature that ends its turn in the blizzard also takes 20 cold and acid damage. Thus, a creature that starts and ends its turn in the blizzard takes the damage twice. Flying creatures move at half speed in the blizzard and if ending their turns in the blizzard, must make a DC 27 Athletics check or fall prone.

Glacial Walls: Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the wall takes 15 cold damage. The wall is 4 squares high, blocks line of sight and line of effect, and can be attacked. Each square of the wall has 20 hit points, resist 15 cold, vulnerable 10 fire, AC 37, Fortitude 35, Reflex 33, and Will 36.

Note that Glacial Wall #2 blocks line of effect to Glacial Wall #1, so no attacks can be made on its squares until some of Wall #2’s squares have been destroyed. If you have a group of 4 PCs, remove Glacial Wall #2. These walls are the results of the jarrlaks’ glacial wall power.

Ceiling: The cave has a 10 foot (2 square) ceiling.

TACTICS

The demons delay until the PCs break through the walls. Note that the PCs cannot see inside the cave initially, so do not place monsters on the battle map until they can be seen. The mavawhan reavers might be out of sight even after the walls are brought down.

The aspect of Baphomet attempts to hold the entrance to the cave, sliding or pushing away anyone that enters, or charging back into the fray if pushed inside.

The mavawhan reavers attempt to slide and teleport anyone who gets into the cave back out, using vicious assault to increase the chances that their attacks hit their targets.

The jarrlaks focus on using *frigid tomb* as much as possible, staying out of melee unless left with no other alternative. Their *glacial wall* powers are already used, but they can use *spell eater* if any zones are created inside the cave to recharge them - preferably after one or more PCs have been pushed or slid back outside.

The demons are truly afraid of the PCs, but do not perfectly understand the concept of negotiation. They seek to let the storm kill the PCs, or at least weaken them enough that they can be intimidated into surrendering. The demons attack in a panic for two rounds, then will be receptive to offers to share the cave, surrender to the PCs, or make the PCs surrender to

them in exchange for a gift, depending on how well the PCs are doing. They do not hold back their attacks while negotiating, and even specifically try to kill a downed PC to appear truly threatening.

If the PCs do not bargain with the demons, the demons try to cause as much actual death as possible, even acting in a suicidal manner to do so. If they're doomed, they'll cause as much pain as possible in the process. Remember - Sinmaker will press the PCs to sign his contract in the following encounter, and the ability to resurrect a fallen ally should make Sinmaker's offer all the more tempting.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a jarrlak along with Glacial Wall #2 (which it would have created).

Six PCs: Add another mavawhan reaver.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the demons surrendered to the PCs, the aspect gives up its +5 *resolute plate* and *horned helm* in disgust. If the PCs surrendered to the demons, they demand any gift of money or magic items totaling 100,000 gp from the PCs to spare their lives.

The PCs need only wait ten minutes in the shelter for the storm to pass, after which point they can continue their journey to Agathys. Proceed to Encounter 6.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

The aspect of Baphomet wears +5 *resolute plate* and carries a *horned helm* that the PCs may claim as their own.

ENCOUNTER 5B: “SHELTER FROM THE STORM” STATISTICS

Aspect of Baphomet	Level 23 Elite Brute
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 10,200
HP 530; Bloodied 265	Initiative +19
AC 37, Fortitude 38, Reflex 36, Will 36	Perception +22
Speed 8 (earth walk)	Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Threatening Horns	
This creature may make opportunity attacks using slashing horns against any enemy within reach 2.	
Baphomet’s Stubbornness	
At the end of its turn, remove the dazed and stunned conditions and end all charm effects.	
Resolute	
When an effect forces the aspect to move, it moves 3 fewer squares.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Greataxe (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +28 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d12 + 20 damage (crit 3d12 + 55).	
M Bloodied Outrage (weapon) • At-Will	
Requirement: The aspect must be bloodied.	
Effect: The aspect makes two basic attacks. If both hit the same target, that target is dazed (save ends).	
MINOR ACTIONS	
M Slashing Horns • At-Will 1/turn	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +28 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 15 damage and slide the target 2 squares.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Brutal Charge • At-Will	
Trigger: The aspect charges a creature	
Attack (Free Action): Melee 2 (one creature); +26 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d12 + 20 damage, and the target slides 2 squares and is knocked prone.	
Bellow (fear, thunder) • Encounter	
Trigger: The aspect is first bloodied	
Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (enemies in burst); +26 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 4d6 + 18 thunder damage, push the target 2 squares, and the target is dazed until the end of the aspect’s next turn.	
Ferocity • At-Will	
Trigger: The aspect drops to 0 hit points	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The aspect makes a bloodied outrage attack or charge attack, and then dies.	
Skills Athletics +24, Intimidate +20, Nature +23	
Str 28 (+20)	Dex 26 (+19) Wis 25 (+18)
Con 25 (+18)	Int 18 (+15) Cha 20 (+16)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Equipment +5 Resolute Plate	

Note: Aspect of Baphomet with updated damage expressions and slight enhancements. Blood Ground removed, +5 *resolute armor* equipped. Demogorgon Blood Cultist theme.

Jarrlak	Level 23 Controller	
Large elemental magical beast (demon)	XP 4,150	
HP 215; Bloodied 107	Initiative +11	
AC 37, Fortitude 35, Reflex 33, Will 36	Perception +23	
Speed 6	darkvision	
Resist 15 cold; Vulnerable 10 fire		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Frost Tusks (cold) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d10 + 9 damage and the target is slowed (save ends).		
C Frigid Tomb (cold) • Recharge 4-6		
Attack: Close blast 5 (one creature in the blast); +26 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 5d8 + 11 cold damage, the target is slowed (save ends).		
First Failed Save: The target is immobilized (save ends).		
Second Failed Save: The target is entombed in ice (save ends). While entombed, the target is immobilized, and the next time it takes damage, it drops to 0 hit points.		
Glacial Wall (Ccold) • Encounter (already used)		
Effect: The jarrlak creates an area wall 8 within 20 squares that lasts until the end of the encounter or until the wall is destroyed. The solid wall of ice can be up to 4 squares high. The wall blocks line of sight and line of effect, and it can be attacked. Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the wall takes 15 cold damage. The wall has the jarrlak’s defenses, and each square of the wall has 20 hit points. The wall has resist 15 cold and vulnerable 10 fire.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
Spell Eater (psychic) • Recharge 6		
Attack: Close blast 5 (one zone in blast); +26 vs. Will of the zone’s creator		
Hit: The zone is destroyed, and this creature recharges a power of its choice.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Numbing Frost • Encounter		
Trigger: The jarrlak is first bloodied.		
Effect (Free Action): Each enemy within 5 squares of the jarrlak gains vulnerable 15 cold (save ends).		
Skills Arcana +21		
Str 22 (+17)	Dex 11 (+11)	Wis 24 (+18)
Con 23 (+17)	Int 20 (+16)	Cha 17 (+14)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common		

Note: Jarrlak with *spell eater* power added. The *glacial wall* power has already been used when combat starts, but the jarrlak may recharge it with *spell eater*.

ENCOUNTER 5B: “SHELTER FROM THE STORM” STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

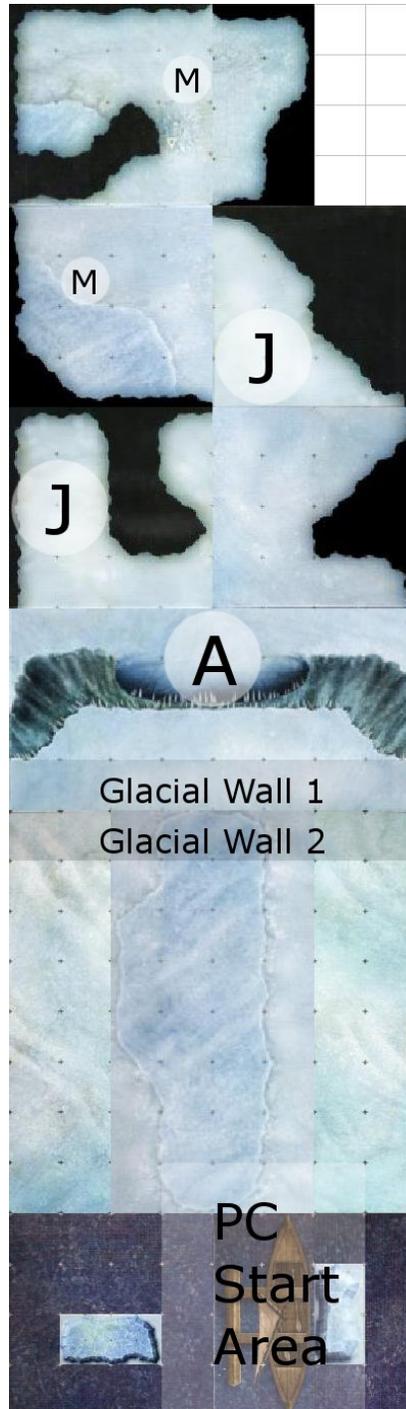
Mavawhan Reaver	Level 23 Controller
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 5,100
HP 215; Bloodied 107	Initiative +14
AC 37, Fortitude 35, Reflex 34, Will 36	Perception +20
Resist 10 cold	darkvision
Speed fly 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claws (cold, poison) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +28 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d10 + 15 cold and poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
r Frigid Bolt (cold) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10 (one creature); +26 vs. Fortitude	
<i>Hit:</i> 4d10 + 10 cold damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the mavawhan's next turn.	
R Frozen Portal (cold, necrotic, teleportation) • Recharge 6	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10 (one creature); +26 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 5d10 + 12 cold and necrotic damage, and the target teleports 10 squares to an unoccupied space of the mavawhan's choosing (and in its line of sight).	
C Icy Blast • Encounter	
<i>Attack:</i> Close burst 4 (enemies in the burst); +26 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d10 + 15 cold damage, and the target slides 4 squares.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Vicious Assault • Encounter	
<i>Effect:</i> The next attack this creature makes before the end of its next turn is made against the lowest of the target's defenses.	
Skills Athletics +20, Bluff +21, Intimidate +21, Stealth +19	
Str 19 (+15)	Dex 16 (+14) Wis 19 (+15)
Con 23 (+17)	Int 17 (+14) Cha 20 (+16)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	

Note: Green Slaad (*Dungeon* 179) reflavored into mavawhan. Spawn slaad replaced by vicious assault power.

ENCOUNTER 5B: SHELTER FROM THE STORM MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Caverns of Icewind Dale x1, Desert of Athas x1 (water and boat)



ENCOUNTER 6: DOING BUSINESS

ROLEPLAYING / INVESTIGATION

Sinmaker, fiendish proprietor of The Apothecary of Sin

As the PCs prepare to embark for Agathys, Sinmaker addresses the group in an attempt to further secure his escape from Carceri. If every PC has already “signed” his contract in Encounter 2B, then skip to the section where he offers additional aid to the group. If at least one member of the party has not yet signed the contract, he makes an effort to get the remaining PCs to sign.

If Sinmaker is traveling with the PCs, read or paraphrase the following:

Sinmaker addresses your group: “I have kept my end of our bargain. But the dangers are even more perilous on the road ahead. Agathys is the prison for the most dangerous of all those beings incarcerated in Carceri. Perhaps we can be of more use to one another?”

If Sinmaker is not traveling with the PCs, read or paraphrase the following:

As you reach the edge of Porphatys, Sinmaker’s skiff appears through the mists, and he once again addresses your group. “You have done very well thus far, adventurers. However, Agathys is the prison for the most dangerous of all those beings incarcerated in Carceri. Perhaps you can place our superficial differences aside and we can make a mutually beneficial arrangement?”

Sinmaker wishes only to speak with the PCs. Use the list below to facilitate the conversation.

- Sinmaker wants the PCs to promise to take him with them when they escape Carceri.
- Sinmaker can help the PCs regain some of their resources before they enter Agathys.
- Entering Agathys with the PCs is a death sentence for Sinmaker should he not escape with them, and he lets them know it.

If at any point, all of the PCs make it clear that they will not do business with Sinmaker, he graciously excuses himself, planning to follow the PCs from a safe distance. Make it clear to the PCs that the remainder of the adventure will be more difficult without Sinmaker’s help. If the PCs threaten Sinmaker, he reminds them that he is well prepared and the PCs would be crippled severely if they attack him. Refer to his stat block in Appendix 4 if necessary.

If the PCs agree to take Sinmaker with them, he again produces the contract from his robes. Refer back to Encounter 2B for details on the contract, and Player Handout 1 for the actual contract.

SINMAKER’S OFFER

For any PCs that signed the contract, Sinmaker offers to concoct a powerful draught of life that reinvigorates those who drink it, restoring 6 healing surges and 3 daily utility or attack powers. If some members of the party signed the contract and others didn’t, he only crafts and supplies the draught for those that did. The draught loses its potency after 5 minutes, and Sinmaker is quite certain that he will not have a chance to craft more once the group steps foot on Agathys. Thus, this is each PC’s only chance to regain lost resources.

In addition, if the PCs gave him the Deathfont Willow (Encounter 3B) or a seed from the Fruit of Life (Encounter 4B) he also offers to craft a powerful elixir that replenishes itself each day. The elixir would assist their own healing and could even be used to raise a dead ally. Sinmaker offers a *flask of sin* to each PC that signed the contract. Statistics can be found in the New Rules section of the adventure. It is a Rare item that may have additional uses in later adventures.

If any PCs end up desperately in need of healing that does not require expenditure of a healing surge, Sinmaker is now willing to offer this power in order to help secure contract signatures, or if the PCs seem in danger of failing to escape.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs do not accept Sinmaker’s offer, he wishes them well, offers them a *sending stone* in case they change their minds, and retreats back into the mists of Carceri. He then continues to follow the PCs from a distance into Agathys.

This marks the halfway point of the adventure if you’d like to take a break, or if you are playing the adventure in two 6-hour slots as opposed to one 12-hour slot. Given the intensity of the second half of the adventure, it is recommended that you take a short break before continuing. Proceed to Encounter 7 when everyone is ready.

MILESTONE

The PCs have concluded the “Reaching Agathys” skill challenge. This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

Some PCs may have been given a *flask of sin* by Sinmaker. What they do with the item is up to them.

ENCOUNTER 7: GUARDIANS OF AGATHYS

COMBAT, EL 23

SETUP

This encounter begins with the following creatures:

- 2 angels of retrieval (A)
- 2 marut castigators (C)
- 2 marut prosecutors (P)

After two rounds, the following additional creatures join the combat, and the maruts and angels leave:

- 2 half-void nullifiers (Level 22) (H)
- 2 void nexus nullifiers (Level 23) (V)
- 2 abomination bloodswarms (B)

The PCs reach the rocky cliffs of Agathys. As soon as they climb up onto the island, angel and marut jailors appear to challenge them. After two rounds of combat, abominations see their chance for escape and attack. Any remaining angels and maruts propose an alliance against their true enemy, the abominations.

Cliffs of frost-covered black rock rise from the swamp. Mists shroud Agathys, concealing its horrors from view, but roars, screeches, and the thunderous explosions of distant battles emanate from beyond. The lowest section of cliffs hangs forty feet above the water's surface.

The cliffs are 40 feet up (8 squares) and require a DC 20 Athletics check to climb. While the PCs should have no issue climbing up initially, it might be useful for the players to know what resources each PC has available in case someone falls off during the combat or tries to stay in the boat. Remember the flight restrictions of Carceri, and that characters cannot take 10 on skill checks during combat.

Agathys is terribly cold, even more frozen than Porphatys, as if the gods tried to slow the birth of abominations by surrounding them with perpetual ice. Judging from the scene before you, the cold has had little effect. Countless bones are scattered amongst the snow and slush, and more are clearly visible beneath the ice; abominations and guardians have died in this very place for millennia. Heavy mists obscure vision, but it certainly sounds as though danger can't be far off.

Allow the PCs to place themselves in the start area. Any PC that chooses not to scale the cliffs before the combat

suffers a disadvantage, as there is no line of sight from the bottom of the cliffs into the combat area.

Maruts materialize before you, wielding swords that crackle with lightning. A marut wearing flowing robes raises his hand and intones, "You have transgressed the boundaries set by your betters. Your presence is a threat to the safety of the planes and your lives are forfeit."

Two angels soar out of the mist. One gestures with a blade of brilliant red light and shouts to the other, "Nimantiel, these fools think themselves heroes. By the black hand of Bane, let us scatter them and return to our fight against the abominations."

The one called Nimantiel sighs, "You do not hide well your eagerness for bloodshed, Cavonnus. This is an unfortunate distraction, no matter the outcome."

Place the maruts and angels on the map, and allow the PCs to adjust their starting location if they wish. The PCs can use Religion checks to identify the guardians:

- **DC 20:** Nimantiel appears to follow Ilmater, judging from marks and scars on his body, particularly his hands. Cavonnus obviously belongs to Bane. Servants of Bane rarely, if ever, work with servants of Ilmater, as the two gods despise each other.
- **DC 27:** All of the gods, except those of Arvandor, provide guardians to serve on Carceri. These immortals, and even some devils provided by Asmodeus, are sworn to its defense at all costs, and may not allow interference by any being, mortal or otherwise.

Bargaining with the guardians is initially impossible; Cavonnus is eager for a fight and the maruts are clearly intractable. Carceri knows not of good or evil, only of necessity, and the PCs cannot be allowed to interfere with its defense. Nimantiel feels it is wasteful to fight the heroes while the abominations are so dangerous, but his duty is still clear. Do not give the PCs too much time to make a case.

Any PC that attempts to make peace during the fight, may make a single Diplomacy check at DC 27 as a minor action. On a success, Nimantiel attempts to exclude that PC from his attacks, as long as it does not excessively hinder him. If all PCs succeed at this check, he only uses *isolating displacement* attacks.

Each PC may also make a single Intimidate check at DC 27 as a minor action; this does not frighten the guardians, but it impresses Cavonnus enough that he attempts to avoid attacking that PC until last, as long as doing so does not excessively hinder him. If all PCs

succeed at this check, then Cavonnus has no one to “save for last” and attacks normally.

At the end of the second round of combat, abominations surge forward to attack:

Distorted humanoids that bear a striking resemblance to the maruts burst out of the mist. Purple energy swirls within their chests, stretching and warping their skin. One appears to be feeding the dismembered remains of a marut into the void within its chest. Another surveys your battle and sneers. It points at you and says, “Destroy.” In response, a massive shape that drips blood and viscera composed of the remains of dozens of abominations, maruts, and angels, lurches forward to attack.

Depending on who is left alive, the maruts and angels immediately seek to work together with the PCs against the abominations, offering to let them continue into Agathys if they defeat the abominations that have arrived. With initiative paused, give the PCs a chance to quickly respond. If they agree:

The maruts speak in unison. “By the Carceri Compact, you are commanded to destroy these abominations. Should you survive, then the gods have shown invalid our preceding verdict.”

The remaining guardians each utter a single word in a language both familiar and unknowable. A pulse of divine power ripples outward as the word whisks them away to fight elsewhere. As the ripple passes over you, glowing runes appear briefly on your hands and foreheads and you feel empowered in your own fight against the abominations.

The PCs gain the following cumulative benefits based on the number of guardians that were conscious and able to act:

- **1+:** All bloodied PCs regain hit points as if they had spent a healing surge.
- **2+:** All PCs regain hit points as if they had spent a healing surge.
- **3+:** All PCs regain an expended healing surge.
- **4+:** All PCs recover one of their expended encounter attack powers (player’s choice).
- **5+:** All PCs regain a second expended healing surge.
- If the PCs do not agree to the Compact, they receive none of the above benefits.

The abominations roll initiative and take their turns normally in the third round of combat. Place the

abominations so they are fairly spread out, anywhere within 3 squares of the map edge, and at least 3 squares from any PC. If necessary, have one bloodswarm rise up from the slush. All angels and maruts are removed from the battle.

If he is still alive, Cavonnus is impressed with the PCs’ prowess and leaves behind a pair of *gauntlets of the blood war*. If he was already killed, the PCs can recover them from his corpse.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ice Shards: All squares containing ice shards are difficult terrain. Any creature that moves through or is forced through such a square takes 15 damage. This damage may only be taken once per turn.

A creature that is knocked prone or chooses to go prone in a square containing ice shards also takes 15 damage.

Ice Sheets: The area contains sheets of slippery ice. Any creature that runs, charges, or is pushed, pulled, or slid onto the ice must make an Acrobatics check DC 20 or fall prone.

A creature subjected to a push, pull, or slide effect that begins on, ends on, or moves through an ice sheet may be moved one additional square.

Freezing Slush and Bones: The dark water where the ice has broken through is filled with freezing slush and the restless bones of abominations. Any creature that enters the terrain takes 15 cold and necrotic damage and gains ongoing 15 cold and necrotic damage and is slowed (save ends both, no save can be made while in the freezing slush).

If a living non-abomination creature ends its turn in the slush, or flying just above the slush, grasping bones stir beneath the surface and attempt to pull the creature down; the creature must make a saving throw or fall prone.

Ceiling: The area is open to the sky but remember the altitude limits of Carceri, and that these limits do not apply to the angels.

TACTICS

The angels begin the combat flying and select their targets for *hunt the guilty* before using *clear the way* to scatter the PCs, preferably sliding them into any of the icy terrain areas. They then close in to use *isolating displacement* on melee PCs, particularly defenders. Bring the religious biases of the two different angels to the forefront in their tactics and how they select their targets to add flavor to the encounter.

The maruts work together to focus on ranged PCs if possible. The prosecutors use *dictum* to immobilize them

and *sigil of indictment* to make opponents vulnerable, while the castigators open with *thunderbolt strike* to attack.

The half-void nullifiers use *half-cosmic rip* to reposition enemies to help their allies, and move into a central area to provide further support. The void nexus nullifiers remain near enemies taking ongoing damage, to get the most out of their *flaring fist*.

The abomination bloodswarms use *blood tendrils* to herd their enemies together, using move actions or charging to better rend as many as possible. This is particularly effective for moving PCs into the freezing slush and bones. The bloodswarms prefer forcing a PC to take actions which cause it pain or damage another PC, so will not use merely punitive actions like dropping a weapon or item, or using up a consumable.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a marut prosecutor and an abomination bloodswarm.

Six PCs: Add a void nexus nullifier. Give each of the angels and marut castigators an action point.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat the abominations, they can quickly catch their breath and take a short rest before moving further inland. Now that the PCs are on Agathys, they must constantly remain on the move or they will surely perish. Relate the dangers of the island to the players by beginning Encounter 8 immediately after 5 minutes have passed. For the remainder of the adventure, the PCs do not have more than 5 minutes for short rests between encounters due to the constant threats they face. Proceed to Encounter 8 when ready.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

Cavonnus leaves behind a pair of *gauntlets of the blood war* for the party and the PCs find a *staff of portals* +5 on one of the nullifiers.

ENCOUNTER 7: “GUARDIANS OF AGATHYS” STATISTICS

Marut Castigator	Level 21 Skirmisher
Medium immortal humanoid	XP 3,200
HP 196; Bloodied 98	Initiative +19
AC 35, Fortitude 33, Reflex 34, Will 33	Perception +21
Immune sleep; Resist 10 thunder	truesight 10
Speed 8, fly 4 (hover), teleport 4	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Double Sword (lightning, weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +26 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 16 damage. The marut castigator can choose to have the attack deal lightning damage.	
M Double Attack • Recharge 4-6	
Effect: The marut castigator makes two double sword attacks.	
M Punisher's Lash (lightning) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +24 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 16 lightning damage, and the target is slowed and cannot teleport until the end of the castigator's next turn.	
M Thunderbolt Strike (teleportation, tThunder) • Recharge when both attacks of double attack hit	
The marut castigator teleports 4 squares and makes a double sword attack that deals 3d8 extra thunder damage.	
Skills	
Acrobatics +22	
Str 22 (+16)	Dex 25 (+17)
Con 20 (+15)	Int 14 (+12)
	Wis 22 (+16)
	Cha 15 (+12)
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Supernal
Equipment double sword	

Note: Updated damage expressions.

Marut Prosecutor	Level 21 Controller
Medium immortal humanoid	XP 3,200
HP 197; Bloodied 98	Initiative +13
AC 35, Fortitude 32, Reflex 33, Will 33	Perception +21
Immune sleep; Resist 10 thunder	truesight 10
Speed 8, fly 4 (hover), teleport 4	
TRAITS	
Justice Restrained	
A slowed, immobilized, or restrained creature takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against a marut prosecutor.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Slam (thunder) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +26 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 15 damage plus 1d8 thunder damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
C Biting Testimony (psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Close burst 10 (one enemy); +24 vs. Will	
Hit: 4d6 + 15 psychic damage and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks (save ends).	
MINOR ACTIONS	
C Sigil of Indictment (psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Close burst 10 (one enemy); +24 vs. Will	
Hit: Until the end of the marut prosecutor's next turn, the target grants combat advantage and the prosecutor and its allies deal 10 extra psychic damage against the creature.	
Sustain Minor: The effect persists.	
Special: This power may only affect one creature at a time.	
R Dictum • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +24 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target is immobilized (save ends).	
Skills	
Insight +21, Intimidate +22	
Str 18 (+14)	Dex 16 (+13)
Con 21 (+15)	Int 23 (+16)
	Wis 23 (+16)
	Cha 24 (+17)
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Supernal

Note: Updated damage expressions.

ENCOUNTER 7: “GUARDIANS OF AGATHYS” STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

Angel of Retrieval	Level 22 Artillery
Large immortal humanoid (angel)	XP 4,150
HP 162; Bloodied 81	Initiative +20
AC 34, Fortitude 33, Reflex 35, Will 33	Perception +22
Immune fear; Resist 15 radiant	blindsight 10
Speed 8, fly 12 (hover), teleport 5	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Short Sword (radiant, weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 16 radiant damage.	
r Angelic Bow (radiant, weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature); +29 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 16 radiant damage, and each enemy adjacent to the target takes 10 radiant damage.	
M Isolating Displacement (radiant, teleportation) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +25 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d6 + 16 radiant damage and the angel of retrieval teleports the target 5 squares. The angel then teleports to a square adjacent to the target.	
Miss: The angel teleports 5 squares.	
Special: The angel can choose to deal no damage with this attack.	
A Clear the Way (Radiant) • Recharge 6	
Attack: Area burst 3 within 10 (creatures in burst); +25 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d10 + 16 radiant damage and the target slides 3 squares.	
Miss: Half damage, and the target slides 1 square.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Hunt the Guilty • Encounter	
Effect: The angel of the retrieval chooses one enemy within 10 squares of it. Until the end of the encounter, the angel's attacks deal 1d10 extra damage against that creature.	
Skills Arcana +22, Intimidate +29	
Str 22 (+17)	Dex 28 (+20) Wis 23 (+17)
Con 24 (+18)	Int 23 (+17) Cha 24 (+18)
Alignment Unaligned Languages Supernal	
Equipment: longbow, plate armor, short sword	

Note: Updated damage expressions.

Abomination Bloodswarm	Level 23 Skirmisher
Huge elemental magical beast (swarm)	XP 5,100
HP 216; Bloodied 108	Initiative +22
AC 37, Fortitude 35, Reflex 35, Will 32	Perception +15
Resist 20 radiant, half damage from melee and ranged attacks;	
Vulnerable 10 against close and area attacks;	
Speed 8, fly 4 (hover)	
TRAITS	
Seething Mass • Aura 2	
Each enemy that begins its turn in the aura takes 20 damage and gains ongoing 10 damage (save ends).	
Swarm	
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and enemies can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Rendng Fangs • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +26 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d10 + 20 damage, and ongoing 15 damage (save ends).	
M Blood Tendril (charm) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +26 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d10 + 20 damage, ongoing 15 damage, and at the start of the target's turn, roll 1d6 to determine whether the bloodswarm chooses the target's move action (1-3) or the target's standard action (4-6) (save ends both). The abomination bloodswarm may only choose at-will actions.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Abominable Flow • At-Will	
Effect: The bloodswarm shifts 4 squares.	
Skills Stealth +25	
Str 16 (+14)	Dex 29 (+20) Wis 19 (+15)
Con 24 (+18)	Int 4 (+8) Cha 12 (+12)
Alignment Unaligned	Languages understands Supernal

Note: Re-flavored Coflizu (*Dragon* 369), with updated damage expressions and a restriction on *blood tendril* to at-will actions.

ENCOUNTER 7: “GUARDIANS OF AGATHYS” STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

Half-Void Nullifier		Level 22 Soldier
Large immortal humanoid		XP 4,150
HP 212; Bloodied 106		Initiative +19
AC 38, Fortitude 35, Reflex 36, Will 34		Perception +17
Immune sleep; Resist 10 thunder;		Truesight 10
Vulnerable if a nullifier takes 30 radiant damage from a single attack, its aura ends until the nullifier reactivates it as a minor action.		
Speed 8, fly 4 (hover), teleport 4		
TRAITS		
Void Feedback • Aura 5		
When an enemy within the aura hits the nullifier, one ally within the aura can, as a free action, make a saving throw or gain 5 temporary hit points (the ally's choice).		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Void Fist (teleportation) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d10 + 14 damage and an ally within 5 squares of the nullifier can teleport to any square adjacent to the target as a free action.		
C Half-Cosmic Rip (psychic, teleportation) • Recharge 5-6		
Attack: Close burst 3 (creatures in burst); +25 vs. Will		
Hit: 3d10 + 14 psychic damage and the target teleports 5 squares.		
Str 22 (+17)	Dex 23 (+17)	Wis 18 (+15)
Con 28 (+20)	Int 16 (+14)	Cha 23 (+17)
Alignment Evil		Languages Primordial, Supernal

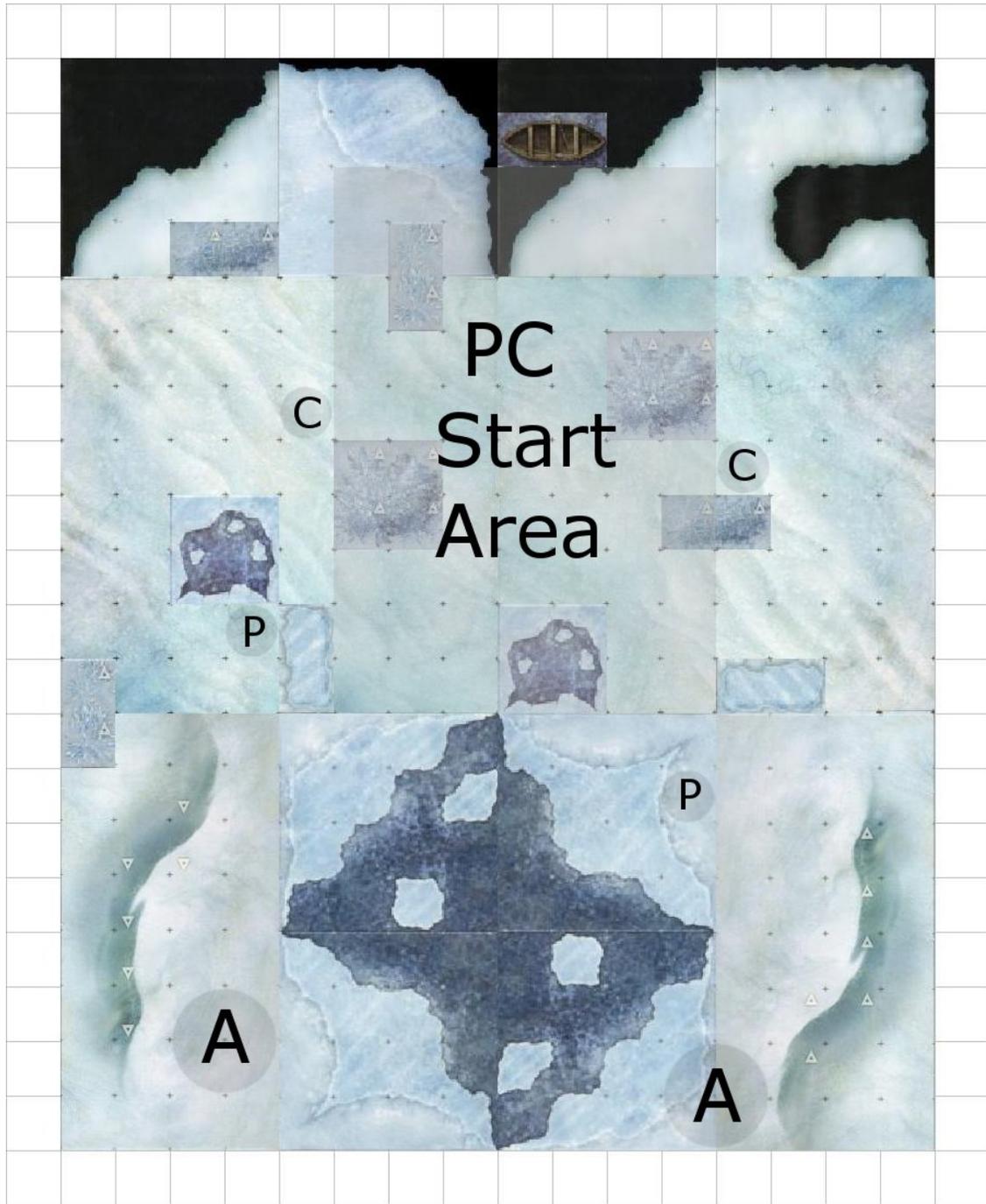
Note: Updated damage expressions.

Void Nexus Nullifier		Level 23 Brute
Large immortal humanoid		XP 5,100
HP 262; Bloodied 131		Initiative +18
AC 35, Fortitude 35, Reflex 34, Will 34		Perception +14
Immune sleep; Resist 10 thunder;		Truesight 10
Speed 8, fly 4 (hover), teleport 4		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Disheartening Fist • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d10 + 17 damage, any creature within 3 squares of the void nexus nullifier has its temporary hit points reduced to 0.		
m Flaring Fist • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d10 + 17 damage, and any enemy within 3 squares of the nullifier that is taking ongoing damage takes that damage.		
m Nexus Fist • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d10 + 17 damage, and all effects that a save can end on creatures within 3 squares of the nullifier end.		
M Hasty Fist • Recharge 6		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +28 vs. AC		
Hit: 5d10 + 17 damage, and the nullifier shifts 2 squares and makes a melee basic attack.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Dispelling Presence • At-Will		
Trigger: The nullifier enters a zone.		
Effect: If the zone was created by a creature of 23 rd level or lower, that zone and all of its effects end.		
Str 30 (+21)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 16 (+14)
Con 22 (+17)	Int 14 (+13)	Cha 25 (+18)
Alignment Evil		Languages Primordial, Supernal

Note: Updated damage expressions.

ENCOUNTER 7: "GUARDIANS OF AGATHYS" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED
Caverns of Icewind Dale x2



ENCOUNTER 8: SURVIVING AGATHYS

SKILL CHALLENGE, LEVEL 22

After their battle with the guardians of Agathys and the abominations, the PCs have little time to leave the scene and begin their search for Corellon's funnel in the isle's depths.

SKILL CHALLENGE: SURVIVING AGATHYS

Goal: The PCs avoid and/or overcome the hordes of abominations on the island as they search for Corellon's metaphysical funnel.

Complexity: 2 (special)

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Dungeoneering, Endurance, Nature, Perception, Religion, Stealth

Victory: The PCs reach the funnel chamber which is guarded by Lolthites and warded from abominations.

Defeat: Each failure results in damage taken during the PCs' journey. If they accrue enough failures, they may perish before reaching the chamber.

The PCs cannot fail this skill challenge. Instead, each scene has a failure line detailing the penalty for failing the group check required for that scene. Each scene also contains waves of abominations attacking the PCs. Thus, in each scene, the PCs must not only complete the task at hand, but must fend off waves of bloodthirsty abominations while they do so. Typically, the PCs use their move action(s) to use any skills necessary to contribute to the skill challenge, and use their minor and standard actions for fighting off abominations and healing or helping one another.

The combat portions of this skill challenge are handled in abstract - there is no movement to track, no range determinations, and no battle map. However, it is recommended that you use miniatures or tokens to keep track of the number of abominations remaining at the end of each scene and to liven up the encounter.

At the end of each scene, move on to the next scene regardless of whether or not the PCs succeeded at the skill check(s) in that scene.

If a PC wants to use a skill that's not listed and you think it's applicable, use the hard DC for the check. Throughout the skill challenge, relate to the players that they are in one of the most dangerous locations in all creation, a place where any misstep may see them destroyed.

UNENDING ABOMINATIONS

Abominations lurk in every shadow and come hunting after every sound you make. For every one you fell, two newly created monstrosities spawn nearby, ready to tear you limb from limb.

Making a stand to fight is impossible; you would be utterly overwhelmed. Staying on the move and making quick, crippling attacks or shows of strength proves to be the best strategy while you seek Corellon's metaphysical funnel deep in the heart of this nightmarish island.

This encounter is designed as a hybrid abstract combat and skill challenge, and is meant to have a "Resident Evil" feel to it. Rather than single rounds of combat, this encounter represents an unending skirmish with dozens of abominations that stretches across hours of exploration. Give Player Handout 2 to the players so that they can familiarize themselves with its mechanics.

During each scene of the skill challenge, abominations appear to threaten the PCs. The PCs may act in any order they wish (assume they can ready and delay as desired). As normal, PCs receive a standard, move, and minor action for each scene. Skill checks that contribute towards the skill challenge require a move action each. PCs may use their other actions for any attacks or powers as they see fit. If the PCs already have enough successes for their group check for the scene, remaining PCs may use their move actions to attempt skill checks to drive off abominations instead. If the PCs have driven off all of the abominations, remaining PCs may use their standard actions to make additional checks to contribute to the goal of the scene.

At the end of each scene, each PC takes 5 damage times the number of abominations remaining, which represents the outcomes of their abstract skirmishes and attacks they were unable to prevent. Encourage the PCs to use encounter or daily powers and action points if needed, as they may not be used to thinking of these powers as being available during a skill challenge.

An hour passes between each scene. This hour is still one of constant trial and hardship. Because of this, the PCs are unable to rest unless a scene specifically says otherwise, though they may use second wind or use any other healing powers between scenes. Due to the time that elapses, all sustainable or encounter-long powers end after 5 minutes. Be clear to players that these powers' benefits do not carry over from scene to scene before they use them.

NUMBER OF ABOMINATIONS

The number of abominations present in each scene is determined by the following:

- **Party Size:** The starting number of abominations for each scene is equal to the number of characters in the party (4, 5, or 6) times 2 (for a total of 8, 10, or 12).
- **Scaling:** Increase the number of abominations during Scene 2 by +2 if there are 4 PCs, or by +3 if there are 5 or 6 PCs. Increase the total again by the same amount in Scene 3.

DEFEATING ABOMINATIONS

Any abomination is defeated by one of the following:

- **Damage:** When dealt 15 or more damage from an attack or any other effect.
- **Forced Movement:** When subjected to a push or slide effect of 5 squares or more.
- **Conditions:** When immobilized, restrained, stunned, dominated, or otherwise prevented from moving or acting. The dazed and grabbed conditions are insufficient for this purpose.
- **Skills:** A PC may make a skill check as a move action to drive off a single abomination. Athletics, Endurance, or Intimidate against DC 27 all work for this purpose. A PC that succeeds at a DC 36 check instead removes two abominations.

DETERMINING TARGETS

The following list describes the number of abominations that can be targeted with a given attack or power:

- **Melee/Ranged:** Melee and ranged attacks affect their normal number of targets. PCs cannot target more than two abominations with melee attacks unless they can move in between attacks.
- **Burst:** Burst 1 attacks target 2 abominations. Burst 2, Burst 3, and Burst 4 attacks target 3 abominations. Burst 5 or larger attacks target 4 abominations.
- **Blast:** Blast attacks of size 4 or less target 2 abominations. Blast 5 or greater attacks target 3 abominations.
- **Zone:** Zones that contain 3 or fewer squares target 1 abomination. Zones that contain 4 - 9 squares target 2 abominations. Zones that contain 10 or more squares target 3 abominations.
- **Defenses:** For purposes of attacks, all abominations in this skill challenge have AC 36 and all other defenses 34.
- **Keywords:** Abominations come in many types. For the purposes of this encounter, treat them as immortal humanoids.

OTHER DETERMINATIONS

- Abominations never provoke opportunity attacks or move or start adjacent to the PCs.
- Abominations make no attack or damage rolls and include every PC in their automatic damage, so marks, the weakened condition, and attack penalties have no effect.
- Abilities that trigger off of bloodying or reducing an enemy to 0 hp are not applicable.
- Because of the vast battlefield, it is impossible to create barriers that abominations cannot circumvent, though you may use your discretion in reducing the number of abominations in a given scene as a result of particularly clever tactics.
- Use your judgment based on these guidelines to deal with powers and effects that don't seem to fit any of these categories. As a general rule of thumb, rule in the PCs' favor for encounter and daily powers, and against them for at-will powers.

SCENE 1 – FINDING THE PATH (GROUP CHECK)

Flurries of black snow and thick mist obscure your path. Somewhere in the caverns of this island lies the metaphysical funnel that Corellon constructed to protect the world. It will take all of your skill to find what you seek before Agathys devours you.

The PCs must make a group check to quickly find their way closer to the funnel. They may each use any of the following skills:

Arcana (DC 27)

The PC detects powerful magic radiating from magical workings close to the center of the island.

Dungeoneering (DC 27)

The PC identifies cracks and tunnels running through Agathys, allowing the group to move safely inland.

Nature (DC 27)

The PC can avoid the most dangerous terrain and notices patterns in the movement and hunting of the abominations.

Perception (DC 27)

The PC spots lurking abominations and sections of unsafe ice. Tracks of abominations exhibiting poison can be followed.

Religion (DC 27)

The PC knows that the gods did their greatest work from the heart of Agathys. The PC can also detect the gods'

touch from the spawning pools and magic governing the funnel to Arvandor.

Success: the PCs determine a safer path that brings them closer to the tampering, while avoiding becoming lost or running into too many abominations.

Failure: Each PC takes 40 cold damage from the island's many pitfalls and cold-tainted inhabitants. If under the effects of the Endure Primordial Elements ritual, they take only 20 cold damage.

SCENE 2 – EVEN THEIR SHADOWS (GROUP CHECK)

The caverns of Agathys appear even more unnatural than the surface. The mist around you thickens and soon it is difficult to keep each other in sight. Every sound you make produces a perverted echo, as if something hears the sound and mimics it back.

Tendrils of mist coalesce around your shadows, giving them substance. The mist seems attracted to the noise you make, and is not quick moving, but as your shadows gain substance every step and breath grows more difficult.

Parasitic abominations are attaching themselves to the PCs, draining their life force. These parasites cannot easily be attacked or stopped while still in the mist.

Acrobatics / Endurance / Stealth DC 27 (group check)

The PCs may attempt to avoid the tendrils of mist, endure their draining attacks, or hide from them. If the group check is successful, they can help each other through without taking damage.

Invisibility powers are particularly effective at avoiding this threat, so any PC that is made invisible for this scene automatically succeeds.

Failure: The PCs take too long to escape, and every PC takes 40 necrotic damage as mist and shadows drain their life force.

SCENE 3 – HUNDRED-HANDED ONE (GROUP CHECK)

Waves of magic spill out from an unnatural entrance. Its walls and floor are coated in thick ooze.

Hands reach out of the ooze like a drowning man's last grasp. Dozens, no, a hundred clawed hands, like a tremendous worm formed of tearing claws, surge and slash across the path down to the tunnel.

The PCs are faced with a hundred-handed one, an immense war machine unleashed by the gods to tear across the cosmos shredding everything in its path. While the PCs may be able to defeat it in battle with great difficulty, they cannot hope to survive against it and the abominations that chase them in conjunction with the trials that undoubtedly lay ahead.

History / Religion / Insight DC 27 (group check)

The PC is able to determine the hundred-handed one's movements through intuition, tactical acumen, or knowledge of prior battles.

Acrobatics DC 36 (group check)

Dodging all of the hundred-handed one's attacks is extremely difficult, but not impossible. The PC deftly maneuvers himself past the slashing claws.

Teleportation powers are particularly effective at avoiding this threat, so any PC that teleports at least 7 squares in this scene automatically succeeds.

Success: If the PCs succeed at the group check, they can help each other through without taking additional damage.

Failure: Every PC takes 40 damage from the hundred-handed one's slashing claws.

SCENE 4 – LOLTH'S WARDS (GROUP CHECK)

Your descent continues down dark and icy passages, ending at a semitransparent but solid barrier of magical force, cutting you off from a large ritual chamber beyond. Behind you, the abominations that had been so relentless seem to have halted and turned back, as though even they are afraid of what lies ahead.

The chamber is covered with glowing runes inscribed in the pattern of webs. A captivating drow stands in the center, channeling waves of magic into a veritable vortex of venom. Several crucibles around the room flare with molten residuum, feeding energy into her ritual. A column of force surrounds her.

Drow arcanists casually assist the ritual as a huge demonic spider scuttles along webs strewn between columns in the room, staring at you with its many eyes.

There are no abominations to face in this scene. Place the monsters from Encounter 9 upon the map. The magic barrier blocks the northern edge of the map, so the PCs are not yet on the map. The PCs are not attacked by abominations in this scene. The PCs may

make skill checks to examine the ritual chamber, or identify their enemies.

Arcana

- **DC 20** - The magic barrier blocks any sort of physical passage or teleportation. It might be temporarily bypassed with a combination of magic power and physical prowess. The runes around the chamber are ancient and clearly not the work of the drow, but there are several sections of runes whose energy has been recently altered. If these alterations were removed, and the crucibles of residuum disabled, the ritual would be disrupted.
- **DC 27** - The drow leader is channeling powerful magic combined with some sort of venom. The other drow and the spiders in the chamber are layered in powerful magic drawn from the runes and crucibles in the chamber.
- **DC 36** - The drow in the center radiates nearly deific power. She is not only altering the spawning of the abominations, but also meddling with Corellon's funnel to send more abominations to Arvandor. The ritual surrounds her in an impenetrable barrier of magic. It will be impossible to harm her until the ritual is disrupted.

Religion

- **DC 20** - The drow in the chamber are clearly chosen of Lolth, and the spider(s) are native to the Demonweb.
- **DC 27** - The woman in the center is Tyranoth, an exarch of Lolth. She has been gifted with a measure of Lolth's divine spark, which explains her ability to channel the magic you see before you.

In order to break through the barrier of magical force and enter the ritual chamber, the PCs must succeed on a group check. Of the skills used, at least one must be magical in nature to weaken the wards, and the other physical in nature to force them open.

Within a few seconds of breaking through the barrier, it will snap back into place. Make it clear to the PCs that they must enter the room together, or anyone left behind will have to try and break through the barrier again, or wait for their friends to disrupt the ritual. As the PCs examine the room and prepare to break down the barrier, they receive the benefits of a short rest.

Arcana / Nature / Religion (DC 27)

A PC channels magical energy of any kind into the barrier, weakening it momentarily.

Athletics / Thievery (DC 27)

A PC slams into the barrier or causes a small gap to temporarily widen.

As the PCs make their checks, feel free to taunt them with the drow in the chamber who await their arrival. The drow are arrogant, certain that Lolth's protections will be sufficient for them to make short work of the adventurers.

Success in the group check means the PCs have brought down the barrier.

If the PCs fail this group check, they bring down the barrier but each character takes 30 force damage from a backlash of energy (this damage is applied after the short rest).

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

As soon as the PCs complete the skill challenge, proceed to Encounter 9 without interruption, which picks up where this skill challenge leaves off. This means that if the PCs failed the group check in Scene 4, they begin combat having sustained 30 damage.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 9: LOLTH'S WARDS

COMBAT, EL 23

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

Tyranoth, Exarch of Lolth (T)

2 chosen drow venom mages (D)

2 demonweb spiders (S)

This encounter is a seamless continuation of the skill challenge in Encounter 8. Once the PCs bring down the barrier, they can quickly rush into the PC Start Area. Roll initiative and begin combat. Anyone who wishes may actually start or move out of the PC Start Area, but at the end of the first round the magic barrier closes off the room again and persists until after the ritual is disrupted.

As you burst into the chamber, the drow arcanists look at the drow in the center, "Tyranoth, we'll make short work of these intruders."

Tyranoth raises an eyebrow, but does not stop her work. "Save one or two for sacrifices," she says casually as she continues her ritual.

Ensure that the PCs quickly understand the mechanics of the wards. It is impossible for them to succeed without disabling them.

SKILL CHALLENGE: DISRUPT THE RITUAL

Goal: Disrupt the Ritual.

Complexity: 2 (6 successes)

Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Endurance, Nature, Religion, Thievery

Other Skills: Insight, Perception

Victory: The impregnable wall of force around Tyranoth shatters and her control of the vortex of venom is lost.

The PCs cannot fail this skill challenge. Instead, their opponents gain an advantage and Tyranoth cannot be harmed until the challenge is completed. This skill challenge gives the PCs the option to attempt each skill quickly at a higher DC, or take a careful and measured approach at the standard DC. Each skill has a DC followed by an action type in parentheses that indicates the combination of DC and action type.

RUNE CIRCLES

The four rune circles may be deactivated by anyone standing in them channeling magic into them:

It is likely that anyone standing on the runes could channel magic to attempt to deflect or overload them.

Arcana / Nature / Religion DC 27 (standard action) or **36** (minor action)

While standing on any space of a rune circle, a PC may deactivate that circle with a successful Arcana, Nature, or Religion check.

Insight / Thievery DC 27 (minor action)

As a minor action, a character within 3 squares of a magic circle may identify patterns in the runes, granting all PCs a +2 bonus to any checks to disarm that particular rune for the rest of the encounter.

CRUCIBLES

The four crucibles may be disabled by anyone adjacent to or on top of them:

A solid core of residuum burns within each adamantine crucible, fueling the ritual. Someone will need to brave the magical energy and force the residuum out.

Athletics / Thievery DC 27 (standard action) or **36** (minor action)

If adjacent to or on top of a crucible, a PC may attempt to dislodge the burning residuum core. A character on top of the crucible gains a +5 bonus to this check.

With a successful check, the residuum core deals 20 force damage in a burst 1 around the crucible and then goes out. If the PC succeeded by 5 or more, he may choose any space within 3 squares to have this burst occur.

Arcana / Perception DC 27 (minor action)

As a minor action, an adjacent character may determine the easiest method to get to the burning core, granting all PCs a +2 bonus to any checks to disarm that crucible for the rest of the encounter.

A crucible may be destroyed by damage. If it is specifically targeted and takes 80 points of damage, it is destroyed and the residuum explodes for 20 force damage in a burst 1 around the crucible. This damage does not have to come from a single attack, and all damage dealt is cumulative. These objects' defenses are all 36 for these purposes.

THE RITUAL'S EFFECTS

Until the PCs complete the skill challenge, Tyranoth and her allies benefit from the following:

- The spider(s) and drow mage(s) gain a bonus to all damage rolls equal to the total number of active runes and crucibles (maximum +8).
- The spider(s) and drow mage(s) gain a bonus to all saving throws equal to the total number of active runes and crucibles.
- At the end of each round, the spider(s) and drow mage(s) heal a number of hit points equal to 10 times the total number of active runes and crucibles (maximum 80). Further, they do not die until reduced to negative bloodied hit points. Remember that anyone healed while at negative hit points is healed from 0. For downed opponents, this effect should manifest similarly to the *troll healing* ability of trolls.
- Tyranoth is immune to all damage and effects (described in Features of the Area section).

Each success sends tiny cracks through the column of force. When the PCs obtain the final success, any enemies already at 0 hp or lower immediately die. Read the following and add the Uncontrolled Vortex hazard to the combat. It will act until Tyranoth has been slain or has voluntarily ended the effect:

The wards around the drow exarch shatter and explode. Staggering, she loses control over the vortex of poison. A howling storm of magical energy and poison rages through the chamber.

She screams, "Imbeciles! You have disrupted years of work! When I present you to Lolth, she will feed on you for centuries."

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The entire area is brightly lit by magical light.

Crucibles: These squares are blocking terrain and 5 feet (1 square) high. Any creature that enters or starts its turn inside a crucible takes 20 force damage.

Rune Circles: Any creature that starts its turn in an active rune circle space may make a saving throw against any effect that can be ended by a successful save. Any creature that fails a saving throw while in a rune circle (including the granted save) takes 20 force damage from the surging magic. This damage may not be taken more than once per turn.

Web: The web squares indicate thick webbing that reaches to the ceiling. They are difficult terrain that cannot be jumped or flown over. Any creature without

spider climb that enters or starts its turn in a web square is slowed (save ends). A save cannot be attempted against this effect while in a web square.

Poison: Any creature that enters or starts its turn in a green poison square loses all resistance to poison for the encounter and gains vulnerability 10 poison (save ends).

Vortex: Until the ritual is disrupted, a wall of force in the center blocks line of effect for all creatures except Tyranoth. Any attempt to teleport inside or affect Tyranoth in any way is impossible. Once the ritual has been disrupted, see the uncontrolled vortex hazard.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 20 feet (4 squares) high.

TACTICS

Until the PCs begin to disrupt the ritual or prove otherwise, Tyranoth ignores the PCs and does not participate in the combat. If the party has been having an easier time with the adventure thus far, she may have been warned of their approach by Lolth and instead acts immediately on her first turn. Once angered, Tyranoth uses *bow before me*, and then uses her attacks to slow or restrain as many different characters as possible to stop them from meddling with the wards.

One spider attempts to *web grab* PCs out of the corridor and keep them rooted in place. The other spider attempts to *web grab* PCs into the poison, and away from the nearby runes or crucibles.

The venom mages work together to apply ongoing poison effects before using *venom burst*. They save *Lolth's curse* to remove poison resistance from an enemy until it is obvious that they don't need to.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove the spider on the left. Each crucible and rune has an identical counterpart (indicated by color on the map). Each successful check disables not only the rune or crucible the PC is working on, but also causes the identically colored rune or crucible to sputter and go out.

Five PCs: When the PCs disable their 3rd rune, the 4th rune is also disabled. When the PCs disable their 3rd crucible, the 4th crucible is also disabled.

Six PCs: Add an additional venom mage.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The servants of Lolth are fanatics and fight to the death. Tyranoth is supremely arrogant and does not easily surrender. If forced to do so in some fashion and the

ritual is disrupted, she attempts to manipulate the PCs into escaping with her back to the Demonweb so that she may have her revenge.

Once Tyranoth is slain, Sinmaker enters the chamber. Proceed to Encounter 10 immediately.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

Tyranoth wields a +5 *skinsplitter scourge* and a +5 *cloak of aranea*. The chamber contains residuum worth 175,000 gp per PC that Tyranoth was using to fuel the ritual. The PCs should also find Tyranoth's journal and a number of planar keystones, which are critical in the following encounter.

ENCOUNTER 9: “LOLTH’S WARDS” STATISTICS

Demonweb Spider	Level 22 Soldier
Huge elemental beast (demon, spider)	XP 4,150
HP 207; Bloodied 103	Initiative +19
AC 38, Fortitude 36, Reflex 34, Will 30	Perception +11
Immune poison	Darkvision
Speed 8, climb 8 (spider climb)	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Slashing Leg • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 3 (one creature); +27 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 4d8 + 12 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the spider’s next turn.	
M Venomous Slash • Encounter	
The spider makes a basic attack against the target. If the attack hits, the target gains ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends). If the target is already suffering from ongoing poison damage, the ongoing damage increases by 10.	
C Web Grab • Recharge when first bloodied	
<i>Attack:</i> Close burst 3 (enemies in burst); +25 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> The spider pulls the target 3 squares to a square adjacent to the spider and makes a basic attack against the target.	
C Venom Spray (poison) • Encounter	
<i>Attack:</i> Close burst 5 (enemies in burst); +25 vs. Fortitude	
<i>Hit:</i> 4d8 + 12 poison damage.	
<i>Effect:</i> The target is marked until the end of the spider’s next turn.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Sudden Leap • Recharge when first bloodied	
<i>Effect:</i> The spider shifts 8 squares and can jump as high as 4 squares during this shift.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
m Swift Bite • At-Will	
<i>Trigger:</i> A creature marked by the spider shifts or makes an attack that does not include the spider.	
<i>Attack (Opportunity Action):</i> Melee 2 (triggering creature); +27 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d8 + 12 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Poison Blood (poison) • At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> This creature must be bloodied	
<i>Trigger:</i> The spider is damaged by a melee attack.	
<i>Effect (Free Action):</i> The triggering enemy takes 10 poison damage.	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 23 (+17)
Con 23 (+17)	Int 12 (+12)
	Wis 10 (+11)
	Cha 8 (+10)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal

Note: Haures (*Demonomicon*) reflavored as spider with variable resistance replaced. Lolth’s Chosen theme.

Chosen Drow Venom Mage	Level 22 Artillery
Medium fey humanoid	XP 4,150
HP 152; Bloodied 76	Initiative +19
AC 36, Fortitude 32, Reflex 34, Will 33	Perception +17
Immune poison	Darkvision
Speed 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Staff (poison, weapon) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +27 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d8 + 16 damage and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).	
r Poison Bolt (poison) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 20 (one creature); +27 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d8 + 16 poison and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).	
C Venom Burst (poison) • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> Close burst 20 (one creature taking ongoing poison damage). The target takes 10 poison damage, and the drow makes the following attack centered on the target.	
<i>Attack:</i> Area burst 1 within 20 (creatures in burst); +27 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d8 + 10 poison damage and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).	
R Lolth’s Curse (poison) • Recharge when first bloodied	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10 (one creature); +27 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d10 + 20 poison damage and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends). The target cannot benefit from poison resistance until the end of the encounter.	
<i>Miss:</i> Half damage and ongoing 10 poison (save ends).	
MINOR ACTIONS	
C Cloud of Darkness (zone) • Encounter	
<i>Effect:</i> Close burst 1; The burst creates a zone of darkness that lasts until the end of this creature’s next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for any creature except the drow venom mage. All other creatures are blinded while within the zone.	
Str 16 (+13)	Dex 20 (+15)
Con 14 (+12)	Int 13 (+11)
	Wis 15 (+12)
	Cha 12 (+11)
Alignment evil	Languages Common, Abyssal, Elven
Equipment quarterstaff	

Note: Efreet Cinderlord (MV) reflavored as drow. Chosen of Lolth theme.

ENCOUNTER 9: LOLTH'S WARDS STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

Tyranoth, Exarch of Lolth	Level 23 Elite Controller
Medium immortal humanoid	XP 4,150
HP 424; Bloodied 212	Initiative +19
AC 39, Fortitude 35, Reflex 37, Will 39	Perception +15
Speed 7	Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
Immune all (see <i>Disrupt the Ritual</i>), poison	
TRAITS	
o Spider Queen's Blessing • Aura 5	
Enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Scourge (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +28 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 17 damage, and the target loses any immunity or resistance to poison until the end of the encounter.	
r Poison Bolt (poison) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +26 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d6 + 17 poison damage, ongoing 10 poison and the target is slowed (save ends both).	
Double Attack • At-Will	
Tyranoth makes two <i>scourge</i> and/or <i>poison bolt</i> attacks.	
A Lolth's Tangle (necrotic, poison, zone) • Recharge 6	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in burst); +26 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d8 + 12 poison and necrotic damage and the target is restrained (save ends).	
Effect: The burst creates a zone of spectral webs until the end of the encounter. The zone is difficult terrain. Any enemy that starts its turn in the zone takes 15 necrotic damage.	
C Bow Before Me! (charm, poison, psychic) • Encounter	
Attack: Close burst 10 (enemies in burst); +26 vs. Will	
Hit: 4d8 + 12 psychic damage and the target is knocked prone. The target takes ongoing 10 poison damage and cannot stand up from prone (save ends both).	
MINOR ACTIONS	
R Darkfire • Encounter	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +26 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment until the end of this creature's next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Lolth's Protection • Encounter	
Trigger: Tyranoth is first bloodied	
Effect: All harmful conditions are removed from Tyranoth and she becomes immune to all damage and effects until the end of her next turn.	
Skills Arcana +23, Bluff +25, Insight +20, Religion +23, Stealth +22	
Str 15 (+13)	Dex 22 (+17) Wis 18 (+15)
Con 20 (+16)	Int 24 (+18) Cha 26 (+19)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common, Abyssal, Elven	
Equipment: +5 Skinsplitter Scourge, +5 Cloak of Aranea	

Note: Lolestra, exarch of Lolth (RotG) with updated damage expressions, slightly enhanced. Chosen of Lolth theme.

Tyranoth gains the following additional abilities from her *skinsplitter scourge* and her *cloak of aranea*:

MINOR ACTIONS
Skinsplitter • Encounter
Effect: Tyranoth's next <i>scourge</i> attack that hits grants the enemy vulnerable 15 to ongoing damage (save ends).
TRIGGERED ACTIONS
C Cloak of Aranea (poison) • Encounter
Trigger: Tyranoth is hit by a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The attacker takes 2d10 poison damage and ongoing 20 poison damage (save ends). The attacker also takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against poison effects until the end of the encounter.

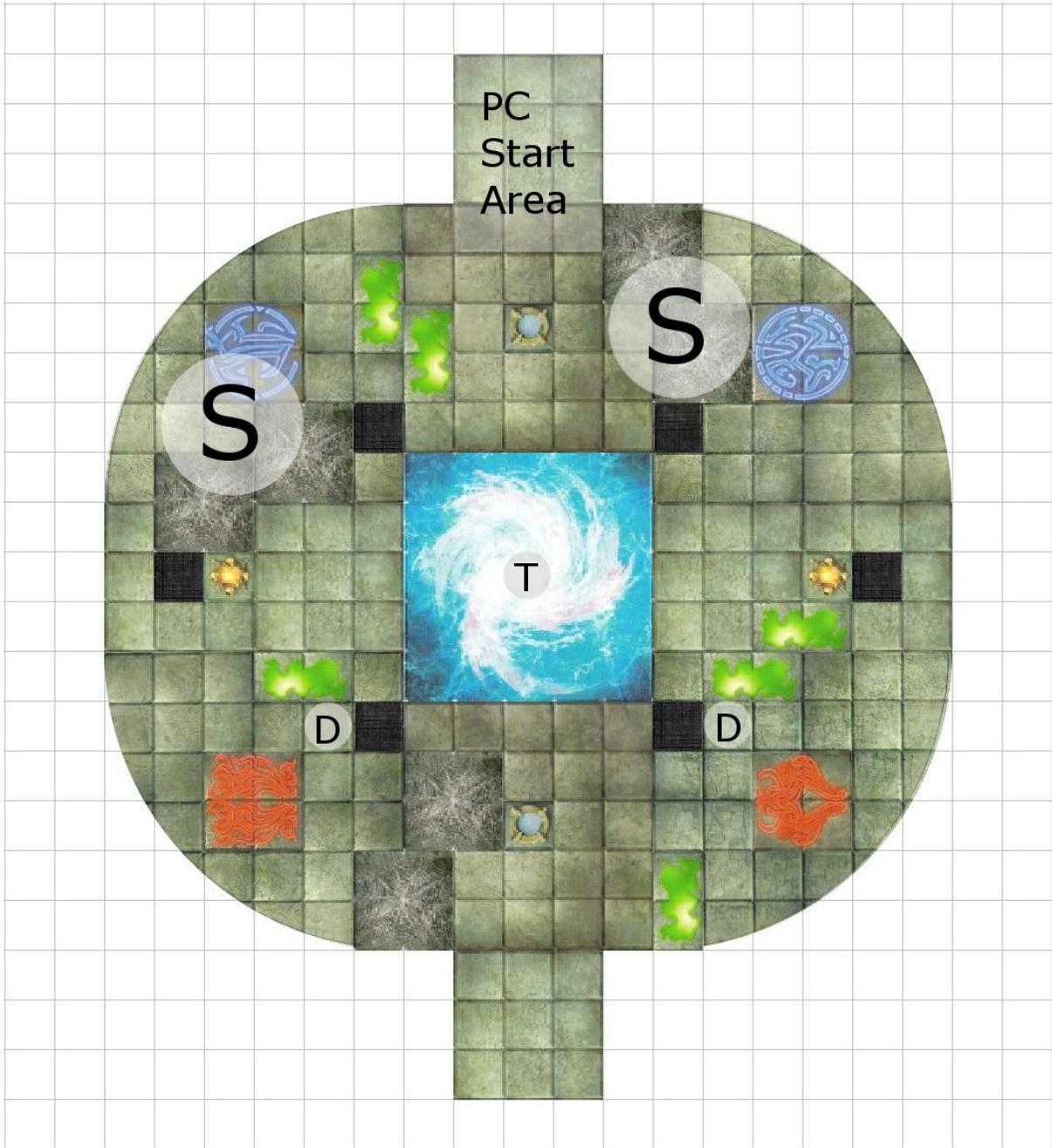
Uncontrolled Vortex	Level 22 Hazard
Hazard	XP 4,150
The vortex of poison picks up and hurls all near to it.	
Trap: The uncontrolled vortex occupies the 5x5 area in the center of the room. Creatures may freely move through it.	
Perception	
The uncontrolled vortex is immediately visible, no skill check is necessary to perceive it.	
Additional Skills: Arcana	
♦ DC 27: The character realizes that the vortex will rage until Tyranoth dismisses it or dies.	
Trigger	
This hazard activates when the <i>disrupt the ritual</i> skill challenge is completed. It uses <i>untimely explosion</i> as an immediate reaction when the final rune circle or crucible is destroyed and is placed into initiative immediately before the acting character's turn. On its initiative, it makes a <i>raging vortex</i> attack, targeting the two PCs closest to the center of the chamber.	
The hazard's attacks include every square in the chamber.	
Untimely Explosion (poison)	
Effect: Tyranoth is pushed 4 squares. Every creature in the chamber cannot benefit from poison resistance and gains vulnerable 10 poison until the end of the encounter.	
Attack: Close burst 10 (creatures in burst); +25 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d8 + 10 poison damage, and the target is pulled 3 squares toward the center of the chamber and takes ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).	
Raging Vortex (poison)	
Attack: Close burst 10 (two creatures in burst); +25 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 4d8 + 13 poison damage, and the target is pulled 3 squares towards the center of the chamber and takes ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends). A creature hit by this attack that is currently within the vortex is also dazed until the end of its next turn.	
Countermeasures	
As a minor action, a creature can brace itself against the vortex by making an Acrobatics, Arcana, or Insight check DC 27. With a success, the creature takes half damage from the hazard and cannot be pulled by it until the start of the creature's next turn. Because the servants of Lolth are immune to poison, make no attack rolls against them.	

Note: Custom hazard.

ENCOUNTER 9: "LOLTH'S WARDS" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Arcane Towers x2, DTMS - The Dungeon x2 (plus extra webs and poison)



ENCOUNTER 10: DARK WEAVINGS

ROLEPLAYING / INVESTIGATION

Sinmaker, fiendish proprietor of The Apothecary of Sin

Once the PCs have defeated the drow, they can learn about the source of the poison and find a way to escape the plane. Sinmaker, either working with the PCs or following them to this point, continues to push for his own chances of escape.

The barriers of force that once blocked this room come crashing down. With the servants of Lolth defeated and the ritual disrupted, the poison throughout the room begins to dissipate. It would seem that you have stopped the flow of poison-tainted abominations into Arvandor.

Although your heroic and self-sacrificing actions have undoubtedly saved Corellon's realm, your imprisonment in this wretched place makes for a dismal celebration.

The PCs should now focus their attention on a means of escape. When the PCs examine the bodies, they notice they are rapidly putrefying. As soon as the Lolthites failed, their organs began to liquefy. Any that were captured or not killed are now dead.

The drow have amongst them three small pieces of crimson adamantine with Lolth's holy symbol etched into their surface. An Arcana check (DC 20) identifies each as a sliver of Carceri's adamantine gates turned into a keystone for a portal from Carceri to the Demonweb. There are three keystones in total.

The PCs also find Tyranoth's journal, written in Abyssal. Give Player Handout 3 to any PCs that can read Abyssal. If no PCs can read Abyssal, Sinmaker can read the journal to them. In this case, paraphrase the information in the handout and do not reveal Sinmaker's involvement in creating the poison.

Be sure to give the players a chance to digest the handout. They should be clear on the following points before you end the encounter:

- The drow planned to repair and use a portal deep in the bowels of Agathys to return to the Demonweb.
- There are prisoners below who can help make repairs to the portal (have the PCs prioritize who they might want to release, if anyone).
- Devils who cannot be reasoned with guard the prisoners.

After reading the handout, the players have a chance to recognize the names of the prisoners mentioned by Tyranoth. Hand out the appropriate sections of Player Handout 4 to the players based on the story awards they have - this should provide additional encouragement for saving particular NPCs.

Give the players time to plan and role-play with Sinmaker. Make sure you note which PCs are carrying a keystone. This is relevant in the final encounter.

SINMAKER

Sinmaker attempts to gain possession of one of the keystones in order to ensure he is not left behind. If the PCs resist and at least one PC has signed the contract, he reminds them about the contract and suggests that there may be repercussions if they stand in the way of his escape. He does not risk open combat with the PCs.

If none of the PCs signed the contract and they refuse to give Sinmaker one of the keystones, he skulks back into the shadows. If Sinmaker is confronted about creating the poison, he replies honestly:

"Naturally I offered my assistance, just as I have offered my help to you. I knew not their intent for the poison, any more than I know of the tremendous good works you will accomplish with my assistance. No price is too great for my freedom from this accursed place."

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The sound of a great stomach growling for sustenance shakes the walls. A massive abomination cloaked in impenetrable darkness spews forth from the corridor, eager to feed.

Sinmaker's terrified voice emanates from a shadowy corner at the far end of the room, "The Hungering Dark has awakened! Our only hope is to flee!" Without further explanation, Sinmaker leaps down the spiral stairwell.

If they don't take the hint, give PCs a chance to interact with the Hungering Dark, but do not allow them to use any significant resources. They should quickly realize that the Hungering Dark is far beyond anything they could hope to defeat. The Dark begins by consuming the bodies of the Lolthites before closing on the PCs. When the PCs take flight, proceed to Encounter 11.

MILESTONE

This encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter (see Encounter 9).

ENCOUNTER II: THE HUNGERING DARK

COMBAT, EL 22

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 Hungering Dark (hazard)

2 storm devils (D)

1 hungry horde (H)

The PCs flee from the Hungering Dark towards the portal chamber in the bowels of the prison. As the adventurers reach the bottom of the spiral stairwell, read or paraphrase:

A corridor in the lowest level of Agathys houses ten locked prison cells. Two ebon winged devils look up from their perches at the far end of the hallway.

The Hungering Dark closes in from behind, shadowy tendrils lashing out as it surges forward. Cries emanate from the prison cells and echo throughout the corridor.

Sinmaker is only interested in fleeing the Hungering Dark. Whether working with the PCs or not, Sinmaker teleports down the hallway and meets up with the PCs in the next encounter. If Sinmaker is with the PCs, he tells them the following before teleporting ahead:

“This prison houses direct agents of the gods imprisoned by their rivals, those deemed too dangerous to be allowed free in Carceri. They have been imprisoned and kept in a weakened state. We must move quickly to avoid being devoured, or be added to the cells here ourselves!”

The PCs’ primary objective is to reach safety at the far end of the hall before being devoured by the Hungering Dark.

Be very mindful of the PC start area on the map and make sure that no PC starts outside of the start area - the placement of the PCs at the beginning of this encounter is particularly strategic with regard to balance.

Do not place the hungry horde on the map at the start of the encounter. When a PC enters a square next to the horde’s starting position, or at the end of the first round, read or paraphrase:

The Hungering Dark roars a thunderous growl. A mass of gnashing mouths and tentacles appears before you, echoing its maker’s growl with its own cries for sustenance!

The horde acts immediately after the active creature’s turn ends and remains in the initiative order thereafter.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Cell Doors/Prisoners: The PCs may wish to free some of the prisoners on their way. It is unlikely that the PCs are able to save them all. In order to save a prisoner, the PCs must perform the following actions:

- **Doors:** PCs within 5 squares of a cell door can see the prisoner within. To bypass the door, an adjacent PC must use Athletics to rip the door off its hinges, Thievery to unlock the door, or deal 50 points of damage or more to bash it down. The check DC is 27 if attempted as a standard action or 36 if attempted as a minor action.
- **Chains:** Glowing collars and chains bind these powerful prisoners to the walls. The prisoners are immune to all powers and effects until the wards are disabled. A PC adjacent to a prisoner can use Arcana or Religion to disarm the wards and release the prisoner, or Thievery to pick the lock. The check DC is 27 if attempted as a standard action or 36 if attempted as a minor action.
- **Prisoners:** The prisoners are in bad shape, broken physically and mentally. An adjacent PC must use Heal (DC 20) or Diplomacy/Intimidate (DC 27) as a minor action to get them moving.

Ceiling: The ceiling of this area is 15 feet (3 squares) high.

TACTICS

The storm devils use *infernal thunderclap* to push PCs into the Hungering Dark or hungry horde and otherwise focus on stopping the PCs at all costs. Although they are afraid of the abominations, they oppose the PCs’ escape to the best of their ability.

Note the *desperate starvation* features of the abominations in this encounter - they are cumulative. If a PC kills 6 minions, he suffers 120 damage at the end of his next turn if he does not regain hit points in some way.

The Hungering Dark advances down the corridor at the end of each round and consumes all in its path. If it moves over a prisoner, that prisoner is instantly destroyed. Note that the Hungering Dark does not harm the hungry horde. Do not consider the devils as eligible targets for *paralyzing fear* attacks unless they

impede the abominations. Use *paralyzing fear* to adjust the difficulty of the encounter as necessary. If the PCs are having an easy time, target the PCs closest to the dark to make them sweat. If the PCs are having a difficult time, target PCs farthest from the dark to give them an easier chance.

Keep the pace of this encounter in high gear. For every 15 minutes of real time that the players use for their turns, advance The Hungering Dark 1 square as a free action. Make it clear to the PCs that the Hungering Dark is not waiting for them to discuss their plans. PCs should feel the pressure as The Hungering Dark closes in on them.

The prisoners are in bad shape. For the purposes of this encounter, once freed and encouraged, they automatically succeed at escaping. Remember that until a prisoner's collar is removed, no powers or effects can move or target that prisoner.

The encounter is designed such that the PCs should not be able to save all of the prisoners. They may need to make some decisions about whom to save and whom to leave behind to be devoured by the Hungering Dark.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: The Hungering Dark only moves 4 squares on its turn.

Six PCs: Add another storm devil. The Hungering Dark moves 6 squares on its turn.

THE PRISONERS

Use the brief descriptions below to guide role-playing in this encounter. Keep in mind that all of the prisoners have been severely tortured and are desperate to escape.

- **Cell 1 - Clovar, Exarch of Tymora:** A thin halfling, starved to skin and bones, sits on the floor flipping a coin.
- **Cell 2 - Artham, Mask of Cyric (changeling):** A beautiful, naked woman lies chained in a corner.
- **Cell 3:** Empty
- **Cell 4 - Razorfang, Claw of Yeenoghu:** A demonic looking gnoll inhabits this cell. Both the gnoll and the cell are covered in deep scratches.
- **Cell 5 - Therus, Patriarch of Oghma:** An elderly, blind human sits chained in this cell.
- **Cell 6 - Demon impersonating an Aspect of Mystra:** A beautiful woman with a seven-pointed star tattooed on her forehead lies on the floor of the cell.
 - Any PCs that have story award **DALE22 Escaped the Haunted Mansion** or a *Passive*

Insight of 36 or higher realize this could not be an Aspect of Mystra.

- If freed of its chains, the creature takes on its true demonic form, attacks, then disappears: Close burst 5; +27 vs. Reflex; Hit: 3d10 + 16 lightning damage and the target is slowed (save ends)
- **Cell 7 - Morne, Painbearer of Ilmater:** A human male with a mutilated body and a yellow rose tattooed on his chest.
 - If Morne is rescued, he sacrifices himself so that others can escape. The Dark does not advance or use *shadow tendrils* at the end of the round in which Morne is rescued. Read the following:

The battered man rises slowly to his feet as his chains fall away. "I thank you, strangers," he says. "I do not know why you have come, but I can sense the greater purpose that you serve. Long have I wondered, but now I see Ilmater's wisdom clearly. He allowed me to remain here so that I would be ready when you arrived. As you sacrifice for us all, so may I sacrifice for you."

Turning toward the hungering darkness, the man calmly raises one hand. Brilliant light erupts from his palm, freezing the creature in place. With a final nod, the Painbearer leaps into the churning maw of the abomination. There is an explosion of divine energy and the thing shrieks, recoiling from the touch of the Crying God.

- **Cell 8 - Karas, Mistress of Pain, Chosen of Loviatar:** A human female covered in tattoos and piercings.
- **Cell 9 - Brugor, Hammer of Moradin:** A very old dwarf with a scraggly beard is chained to the wall. The PCs notice that Brugor is wearing a magic belt.
- **Cell 10:** Empty

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once all of the PCs reach the far end of the hall, they can escape the Hungering Dark. The dying shrieks of any prisoners they did not rescue echo down the halls behind them.

MILESTONE

This encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

If the PCs rescue Brugor, he gives them his *belt of endurance* (level 26) as a token of his gratitude.

ENCOUNTER 11: “THE HUNGERING DARK” STATISTICS

Hungering Dark	Level 22 Elite Hazard
Hazard	XP 8,300
<i>Impenetrable darkness spews forth devouring all in its path.</i>	
Trap: The Hungering Dark surges forward and consumes the soul of any creature within its path. It is ancient evil that cannot be destroyed by any known means. Woe to the Realms should this entity ever escape the confines of Carceri.	
Perception	
The Hungering Dark is immediately visible, no skill check is necessary to perceive it.	
Additional Skills: Arcana	
◆ DC 27: <i>The Annals of the Dawn War, Volume VI</i> speaks of a desperate ritual of the primordials that birthed this terrible entity. The devastation it caused was unthinkable, and it took the efforts of every deity to seal it away in Carceri.	
Trigger	
This hazard activates when combat begins and acts twice per round. Each round, on initiative count 30, it uses its <i>paralyzing fear</i> attack. Also, on initiative count 0, it moves 5 squares toward the nearest living creature, engulfing creatures in its path. At the end of its movement, it uses its <i>shadow tendrils</i> attack.	
Any creature that begins its turn within the Hungering Dark's space (or any square behind the point to which it has advanced) is targeted by the effects of <i>consume soul</i> .	
Creatures inside the Hungering Dark's space do not have line of sight beyond their square but are otherwise unimpaired.	
Shadow Tendrils	
Attack: Close blast 4 (non-abominations in blast); +25 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 6d8 + 16 damage, and the target is pulled 3 squares.	
Effect: If no enemies started their turns in its square this turn, the Hungering Dark spawns three hungering abominations anywhere in the blast area. These abominations act on the same initiative as the hungering horde.	
Paralyzing Fear (Fear)	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one or two enemies); +27 vs. Will	
Hit: 4d8 + 20 psychic damage, and the target is pulled 3 squares and is slowed and cannot teleport (save ends both).	
Consume Soul	
Trigger: A non-abomination creature begins its turn within a square occupied by the hungering dark	
Effect (Opportunity Action): The creature loses half of its remaining healing surges, rounded up. A creature with no healing surges remaining instead takes its bloodied value in damage.	
Countermeasures	
The hungering dark is immune to all damage and effects. It cannot be slowed or stopped in any way. The PCs' only choice is to flee from it.	

Note: Custom hazard.

Storm Devil	Level 23 Artillery
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 5,100
HP 169; Bloodied 84	Initiative +18
AC 37, Fort 33, Reflex 34, Will 33	Perception +17
Resistances 20 fire, 20 lightning, 20 poison	Darkvision
Speed 7, fly 7 (clumsy)	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Trident (Lightning, Weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +28 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 16 damage, and the target slides 3 squares and is dazed (save ends).	
r Lightning Fork (Lightning) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +28 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 16 lightning damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
A Infernal Thunderclap (Lightning, Thunder) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Area burst 2 within 20; +25 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d8 + 16 lightning and thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares from the origin square and dazed until the end of its next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Cyclone • Encounter	
Trigger: The storm devil becomes bloodied.	
Effect (Free Action): The storm devil shifts 3 squares, and any medium or smaller enemy adjacent to the storm devil at the start of the move slides 3 squares and is knocked prone.	
Skills Acrobatics +23, Stealth +25	
Str 20 (+16)	Dex 25 (+18)
Con 25 (+18)	Int 16 (+14)
	Wis 22 (+17)
	Cha 17 (+14)
Alignment Evil	Languages Supernal
Equipment trident	

Note: Updated damage expressions, added prone condition to *lightning fork* and changed ongoing lightning damage to a slide on trident attack.

ENCOUNTER II: THE HUNGERING DARK STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

Hungering Horde		Level 22 Soldier
Huge immortal humanoid (swarm)		XP 4,150
HP 232; Bloodied 116	Initiative +15	
AC 38, Fort 35, Reflex 34, Will 33	Perception +12	
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 10 damage from close and area attacks.		
Speed 8		
TRAITS		
○ Swarm Attack • Aura 1		
The hungering horde makes a melee basic attack as a free action against any enemy that starts its turn within the aura.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Horde of Chewing Teeth • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +25 vs. Will; this attack automatically hits a grabbed target		
Hit: 3d10 + 15 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape ends).		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Desperate Starvation • At-Will		
Trigger: An enemy damages the horde.		
Effect (No Action): If the triggering enemy does not regain hit points before the end of its next turn, it takes 20 psychic damage.		
Hungry Stragglers • At-Will		
Trigger: The horde takes forced movement or is reduced to 0 hit points.		
Effect (No Action): Each square the hungering horde formerly occupied now contains one hungering abomination, which acts just after the horde.		
Str 25 (+18)	Dex 14 (+13)	Wis 12 (+12)
Con 28 (+20)	Int 16 (+14)	Cha 20 (+16)
Alignment Chaotic Evil Languages -		

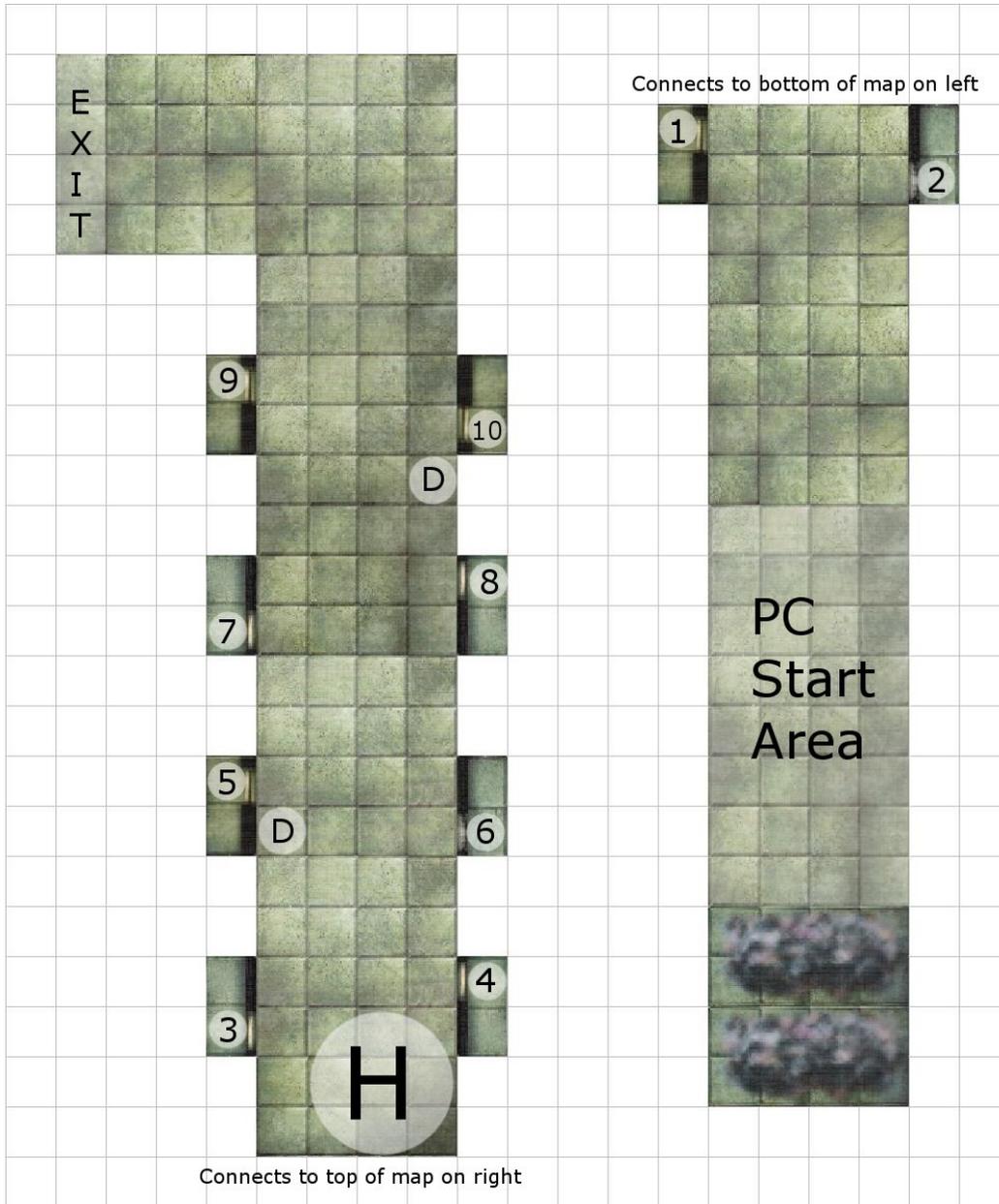
Note: Abyssal ghoul horde (*E1 Death's Reach*), reflavored as horde of hungering abominations, with updated damage expressions.

Hungering Abomination		Level 22 Minion Soldier
Medium immortal humanoid		XP 1,038
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	Initiative +15	
AC 38, Fort 35, Reflex 34, Will 33	Perception +12	
Speed 6		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Grab and Gnaw • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature that the abomination doesn't have grabbed); +25 vs. Will		
Hit: 15 damage, and the target is grabbed.		
Chew • At-Will		
Effect: One creature grabbed by the abomination takes 15 damage.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Desperate Starvation • At-Will		
Trigger: An enemy reduces the abomination to 0 hit points.		
Effect (No Action): If the triggering enemy does not regain hit points before the end of its next turn, it takes 20 psychic damage.		
Str 25 (+18)	Dex 14 (+13)	Wis 12 (+12)
Con 28 (+20)	Int 16 (+14)	Cha 20 (+16)
Alignment Chaotic Evil Languages -		

Note: Reflavored corrupted glutton (*MM3*).

ENCOUNTER 11: "THE HUNGERING DARK" MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED
DTMS - The Dungeon x2



ENCOUNTER 12: INTO THE WEB

COMBAT AND SKILL CHALLENGE, EL 26

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

6 **hungering abominations** (H)

4 **elemental eyes** (choose four types) (E)

1 **living elemental maw** (M)

After putting some distance between themselves and the Hungering Dark, the PCs find the chamber containing the portal described in Tyranoth's journal.

The portal chamber lies partially in ruin and appears to have been untouched for centuries. A thick layer of dust coats the floor, disturbed only where Tyranoth must have walked to investigate.

A partially collapsed stone gateway dominates the center of the chamber. To either side stand immense generators, with a broken control panel directly behind one. An elevated pedestal stands in the far corner of the room

It takes the PCs a few minutes to examine the chamber, during which the PCs benefit from a short rest. Explain the mechanics of the skill challenge, note any successes obtained from prisoners, and allow the PCs to start anywhere on the map as they work on repairs. Other than the automatic successes granted by rescued prisoners (if any), combat begins before any PCs can begin the skill challenge. When you are ready to continue, read:

Your repairs are nearly complete, but you are not the only ones looking for a way out of Carceri. An endless horde of abominations close in from the darkness, streaming from every crack and tunnel to assault you and make their own escape.

The hungering abominations are the same minions of the Hungering Dark from the previous encounter and most likely enter from the stairs. Let the PCs hear the Hungering Dark's roars as if it might arrive any moment. Elemental abominations enter from any map edge.

The elemental abominations are spherical masses of flesh with protruding tentacles. Their appearance is quite similar to that of a beholder.

At the end of the first round, and each round thereafter, additional abominations swarm into the

chamber. Use the following as a guide for which creatures to add each round:

- **Round 1** - 1 elemental eye (any type)
- **Round 2** - 1 elemental eye (any type) and 6 hungering abominations
- **Round 3** - 1 living elemental maw
- **Additional Rounds:** Repeat the cycle

Be sure it is clear to the players that the goal of this encounter is to escape Carceri. There is no end to the abominations of Agathys, so staying to fight is a losing strategy. Once the PCs have all escaped to the Demonweb and sealed the portal, they can finish off any abominations that have escaped (which will fight to the death as is their nature) and conclude the adventure.

This encounter should feel like an overwhelming number of abominations are attacking the PCs, but the characters do need to be able to work on the skill challenge or else they will never escape. Adjust the number of reinforcements as appropriate for your group and try to avoid frustrating the players if they're having a difficult time.

SKILL CHALLENGE: PORTAL ACTIVATION

Goal: Activate the portal and escape Carceri

Complexity: 4 (10 successes, at least one of each type)

Primary Skills: Athletics, Bluff, Endurance, History, Insight, Thievery

Special: The PCs gain one success for each prisoner they rescued in Encounter 9.

Victory: The PCs open a portal to the Demonweb.

Defeat: The PCs cannot escape until they succeed.

To get the portal activated, the PCs must make 10 repairs to the chamber. At least one success must be in each area. Prior to combat, these prisoners (if rescued) helped work on an area and provided an automatic success:

- **Brugor:** 1 Insight success in area 1.
- **Therus:** 1 History success in area 2.
- **Clovar:** 1 Thievery success in area 3.
- **Karas:** 1 Endurance success in area 4.
- **Razorfang:** 1 Athletics success in area 5.
- **Artham:** 1 Bluff success in area 6.

In addition, if Sinmaker has a contract with at least one PC, he can provide one success using Thievery, History, Insight, or Bluff.

The PCs must provide the remaining checks. Up to three successful checks can be made in each area, but all six areas must have at least one success for the portal to open.

The first success for an area requires a DC 27 check as a standard action, or a DC 36 check as a minor action.

Subsequent checks to open or repair the portal require either a DC 20 check as a standard action or a DC 27 check as a minor action.

Area 1 (Rune Circle) - Insight

From within a floating circle of ever-shifting words of creation, the PC must correctly intuit the necessary symbols to activate. A PC with story award **EPIC02 Alphabet Soup** gains a +2 bonus to this check, per the text of the story award.

Area 2 (Pedestal) - History

Ancient pictographs carved into the raised pedestal here provide necessary commands to activate and control the portal. Deciphering them requires close study of the ancient symbols.

Area 3 (Switch) - Thievery

Bits of a smashed control panel lie scattered about this area. A PC can replace some of these parts to get the mechanism working.

Area 4 (Flame Gap) - Endurance

A gap exists where the energy coursing through this room needs to go. The PC bridges the gap with his or her body, enduring long enough to fix the energy flow. To accomplish this, the PC must stand in one of the two squares of the gap in the flowing energy.

If a character fails this check, he or she takes 20 fire and force damage (as though entering the flowing energy), and is forced to let go (and must try again).

Area 5 (Broken Pillars) - Athletics

Large heavy stones with intricate designs have fallen in this area. A creature standing in the difficult terrain can wedge a piece back in with a successful check.

Area 6 (Portal) - Bluff

The portal itself is sentient and communicates telepathically to any who approach it. The PC convinces the entity to drop its wards and allow the opening of a portal out of Carceri. A character must be within 3 squares of the portal to perform this task.

Success: When the PCs have achieved a total of 10 successes, including any successes contributed by rescued prisoners and/or Sinmaker, and have collectively achieved at least one success in each of the six areas, the Portal Hazard activates. (Note that the total number of successes is 8 for 4 PCs and 12 for 6 PCs.)

THE PORTAL

When the portal activates, read or paraphrase the following:

The stone gateway swirls with purple energy as a rift tears through the fabric of the plane. Desperate for freedom, the prisoners you released race through the portal, thanking you as they flee.

If any of the PCs signed Sinmaker's contract, read the following:

Ethereal red chains spring up around you. Although they have no immediate effect, their very appearance is unsettling.

This affects any PCs that signed the contract. The chains have no immediate effect, but the affected PCs find that they cannot pass through the portal until Sinmaker escapes. This effect cannot be dispelled in any way. Even attempts to force the PC through the portal fail.

This is a result of the magic of the contract. Make it clear that Sinmaker is not in control of this effect - having allies that did not sign attack him would do nothing. See the Sinmaker section below for more details.

Moving through the portal is straightforward - a creature must merely enter one of the portal squares and it appears in the Demonweb (see the second map), in a square adjacent to the portal on the other side. This ends the creature's movement. Multiple creatures cannot move through the portal simultaneously. Readied actions and powers that allow multiple creatures to move must be resolved in some sort of order for purposes of destabilizing the portal and its effects.

If any creature moves through the portal without a keystone, the portal destabilizes as explained below. When the prisoners escape through the portal, this happens after the first gets through, revealing the effects to the players. For simplicity, assume that all prisoners succeeded on their saving throws and made it through, surviving the damage taken by doing so.

- A backlash of energy causes the portal to become unstable as some part of the mechanism breaks. Roll 1d6 to randomly determine where an additional success is required, as symbols must be reactivated, commands re-issued, mechanisms re-attuned, energy re-established, and stones replaced. One successful skill check in the affected area is needed to make the portal stable again (although the portal never closes completely once it has been opened, until all

three keystones pass through and the PCs close it).

- The portal can also be re-stabilized from the other side in the Demonweb with Arcana using a DC 27 check as a standard action, or a DC 36 check as a minor action.

Although not advisable, a creature may enter the portal while it is unstable. If someone does:

- The creature rolls a saving throw.
 - On a success, the creature appears in the Demonweb and is dazed until the start of its next turn.
 - On a failure, the creature remains in Carceri. It is teleported 1d10 squares in a random direction and stunned until the start of its next turn.
- Non-minion creatures take 1d10 times 10 (10-100) points of damage, regardless of success or failure of the save. Minions are destroyed.

The keystones are attuned to the portal, so they do not cause it to destabilize. However, when a keystone passes through the portal, the portal flares with energy that a nearby abomination can exploit:

Desperate Escape

Trigger: A keystone passes through the portal.

Effect (No Action): An abomination of your choice rolls a saving throw.

Success: The abomination ends all effects on it and stands from prone if necessary. The abomination slides 8 squares toward the portal. If it reaches the portal, it passes through.

Failure: The abomination moves its speed towards the portal. If it reaches the portal, it passes through.

A creature can move freely back from the Demonweb to Carceri. Creatures subject to forced movement into the portal may make a saving throw to fall prone at the edge of the portal. If a creature is removed from play or sent to another dimension from this chamber in the Demonweb, the creature is returned to Carceri.

Closing the Portal: Once all of the keystones are in the Demonweb, the portal can be closed with a DC 27 Arcana or Intimidate check as a standard action from either side. When the portal is closed, all creatures in Agathys are left behind and removed from play. The PCs must contend only with the abominations that came through the portal. No more reinforcements arrive.

SINMAKER

As promised, Sinmaker desires only to leave. If he is with the party, he hides until he can act:

- Sinmaker delays until the end of the round to assess the situation.

- If the portal is stable, he passes through on his initiative. Otherwise he uses *healing ointment* to heal a PC who signed the contract and readies an action to move through the portal when it stabilizes.
- Once Sinmaker reaches the Demonweb, he is removed from play. He has prepared well for this contingency, and is immediately whisked to safety without taking any action.
- If the PCs attack Sinmaker, use the statistics provided in Appendix 4. Remember that if the PCs manage to bloody him, he discorporates and his *wrathful vapors* power harms all PCs within 10 squares. Any PC that loses more healing surges than he or she has remaining takes their surge value in damage for each surge that the character cannot spend.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Flowing Energy: The fiery portals represent the lines of flowing energy, with the two large braziers representing the generators. Any creature that moves into or starts its turn in one of these squares takes 20 fire and force damage. A creature that steps into the gap (Area 4) can avoid this damage.

Rubble: Squares marked with rubble and rocks count as difficult terrain.

Rune Circle: The rune circle represents the floating symbols of creation (Area 1).

Platform: The platform represents the pedestal with the ancient runes (Area 2).

Lever: The lever represents the control panel (Area 3).

Portal: Until activated, the portal area is blocking terrain. Once activated, a creature that enters any square of the portal appears immediately in the Demonweb (see Demonweb Map).

Edges: The edges of the map extend to tunnels deep beneath Agathys. At the end of each round, place the abomination reinforcements at an edge of your choice. Spread them out to surround the PCs.

Pit: The pit inside the Demonweb is twenty feet (4 squares) deep. It can be climbed with a DC 20 Athletics check.

Ceiling: The ceiling of this chamber is 30 feet (6 squares) high.

TACTICS

The elemental eyes move up to within 6 squares of the portal, and remain at that distance to bombard the PCs. Some use *energy bolts* to place ongoing damage onto as many enemies as possible while others use *energy*

tempest to increase the ongoing damage and add additional keywords. *Waves of tempest* can be used to force enemies out of melee or through an unstable portal.

The living elemental maw tries to catch as many opponents in its *energy vortex* as possible, sending them as far away from the portal as possible. It uses all of the powers at its disposal to accomplish this.

The abominations were created to kill and destroy but are also desperate to escape so that they can wreak havoc elsewhere. If the portal is stable at the start of its turn, an abomination moves through the portal, destabilizing it.

If the PCs are having a difficult time or a few are greatly outnumbered in Carceri, have the abominations attempt to move through the portal while it is unstable.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one elemental eye and decrease the number of successes needed for the skill challenge by 2.

Six PCs: Add one elemental eye and increase the number of successes needed for the skill challenge by 2. Two additional hungering abominations join the combat at the end of Round 2.

TROUBLESHOOTING

One of the primary challenges in this encounter is the keystone mechanic. Once the portal is open, the PCs will quickly notice the de-stabilization effects created when a creature without a keystone passes through. It is important to describe everything that takes place very clearly to the players so that they understand their goals as well as the various mechanics at play.

Due to its endless nature, this encounter can certainly run long. Do your best to provide encouragement for the PCs to get everybody through the portal as quickly as possible so that they can clean up the abominations in the Demonweb and finish the adventure. You can scale the tactics of the abominations to better control the flow of the encounter. If the PCs are flying through the skill challenge and keeping a strong pace, you can have the abominations focus more on escaping themselves so that there's more of a combat on the other side. If the PCs are struggling to escape or in danger of all dying on the other side, you can have the abominations escape to keep the Demonweb battle minimal when the PCs finally do manage to escape.

It is possible for a PC to remain trapped in Agathys at the end of the adventure. This can occur if

one or more PCs signed Sinmaker's contract and Sinmaker was bloodied by the party before those PCs made it through (causing him to disincorporate and preventing the PCs from escaping). This can also occur if the party is overwhelmed and has no choice but to close the portal before everyone makes it through.

In the unlikely event that this occurs, give the PCs 6 rounds to fight off the endless stream of abominations before they are rescued (dead or alive) by Corellon. PCs who must be rescued in this fashion receive Story Award **EPIC07 Left Behind**.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have reached the Demonweb and closed the portal, they are still in danger from the abominations that came through. Fight the battle to a satisfactory and exciting finale then proceed with the Conclusion.

MILESTONE

This encounter concludes the adventure, so it doesn't really matter (but hey, it counts toward a milestone).

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 12: “INTO THE WEB” STATISTICS

Living Elemental Maw		Level 24 Elite Controller
Huge immortal beast (blind, ooze)		XP 4,150
HP 456; Bloodied 228		Initiative +19
AC 38, Fortitude 38, Reflex 39, Will 37		Perception +16
Resist 20 acid, 20 lightning		blindsight
Speed fly 8 (hover), teleport 6		
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1		
TRAITS		
○ Unstable Energy • Aura 3 Each enemy that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 20 acid and lightning damage. The aura is considered difficult terrain.		
Energy Vortex The maw can pull creatures into its space with its attacks. A creature that enters the maw's space takes 20 acid and lightning damage, is teleported 20 squares to a space of the maw's choosing, and slowed (save ends).		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Astral Tentacle • At-Will <i>Attack:</i> Melee 3 (one or two creatures); +27 vs. Fortitude <i>Hit:</i> 3d10 + 18 damage, and the target is pulled 2 squares and knocked prone.		
r Arc Lightning (lightning) • At-Will <i>Attack:</i> Ranged 20 (one or two creatures); +27 vs. Reflex <i>Hit:</i> 4d6 + 18 lightning damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the living elemental maw's next turn.		
C Elemental Maw (acid, lightning, teleportation) • Recharge 5-6 <i>Attack:</i> Close burst 3 (creatures in burst); +27 vs. Reflex <i>Hit:</i> 6d6 + 15 acid and lightning damage, and the creature is pulled 2 squares.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Bloodied Maw • Encounter <i>Trigger:</i> The living elemental maw is bloodied <i>Effect (No Action):</i> Elemental maw recharges and the living elemental maw uses it immediately.		
Str 24 (+19)	Dex 26 (+20)	Wis 21 (+17)
Con 28 (+21)	Int 6 (+10)	Cha 13 (+13)
Alignment unaligned		Languages -

Note: New living spell (*Dungeon 175*) using *elemental maw* (wizard 25 daily) and *astral claw* (wizard 23 encounter).

Elemental Eye		Level 20 Artillery
Large elemental magical beast		XP 2,800
HP 147; Bloodied 73		Initiative +17
AC 34, Fort 30, Reflex 35, Will 34		Perception +13
Resist 30 to associated energy type; see <i>elemental type</i>		
Speed teleport 6, fly 8 (hover)		
TRAITS		
Elemental Type Elemental eyes spawn in several varieties. Choose one energy type below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fire: Change the word “energy” to “fire” throughout. All attacks target Reflex. ◆ Cold: Change the word “energy” to “cold” throughout. All attacks target Reflex. ◆ Necrotic: Change the word “energy” to “necrotic” throughout. All attacks target Fortitude. ◆ Force: Change the word “energy” to “force” throughout. All attacks target Fortitude. ◆ Psychic: Change the word “energy” to “psychic” throughout. All attacks target Will. ◆ Radiant: Change the word “energy” to “radiant” throughout. All attacks target Will. 		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Energy Touch (energy) • At-Will <i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. [defense] <i>Hit:</i> 4d6 + 8 [energy] damage and ongoing 10 [energy] damage (save ends).		
r Energy Bolts (energy) • At-Will <i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10 (one or two creatures); +25 vs. [defense] <i>Hit:</i> 4d6 + 8 energy damage and ongoing 10 [energy] damage (save ends). If the target is already taking ongoing damage, that ongoing damage gains the [energy] keyword instead of the target gaining a new ongoing damage.		
C Waves of Energy (energy, zone) • Recharge when first bloodied <i>Attack:</i> Close burst 3 (creatures in burst); +23 vs. [defense] <i>Hit:</i> 4d6 + 8 [energy] damage and the target is pushed 3 squares. <i>Effect:</i> The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the eye's next turn. The zone is lightly obscured, and any creature that enters the zone or ends its turn there take 10 [energy] damage.		
A Energy Tempest (energy) • Recharge 5-6 <i>Effect:</i> The eye makes the following attack three times, and each burst must have an area of effect that doesn't share any squares with the attack's other bursts. <i>Attack:</i> Area burst 1 in 10 (creatures in burst); +25 vs. [defense] <i>Hit:</i> 4d6 + 8 [energy] damage and if the target has ongoing damage, the ongoing damage increased by 10 and gains a new keyword.		
Str 29 (+18)	Dex 22 (+16)	Wis 19 (+15)
Con 21 (+17)	Int 6 (+14)	Cha 20 (+16)
Alignment chaotic evil		Languages -

Note: Conflagration Orb reflavored as abomination created by the primordials in imitation of beholders with updated damage expressions.

ENCOUNTER 12: “INTO THE WEB” STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

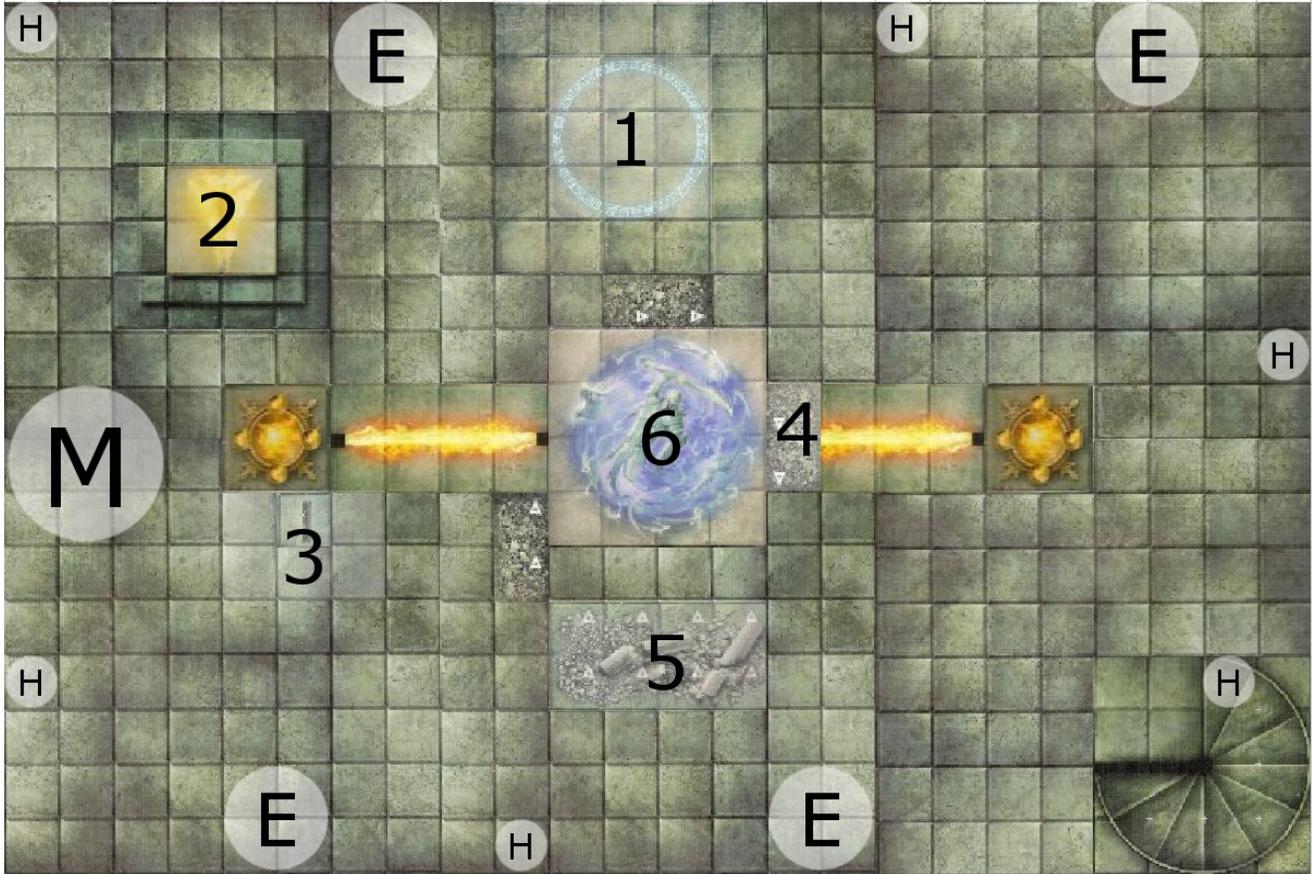
Hungering Abomination	22 Minion Soldier
Medium immortal humanoid	XP 692
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	Initiative +15
AC 38, Fort 35, Reflex 34, Will 33	Perception +12
Speed 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Grab and Gnaw • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature that the abomination doesn't have grabbed); +25 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> 15 damage, and the target is grabbed.	
Chew • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> One creature grabbed by the abomination takes 15 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Desperate Starvation	
<i>Trigger:</i> An enemy reduces the abomination to 0 hit points.	
<i>Effect (No Action):</i> If the triggering enemy does not regain hit points before the end of its next turn, it takes 20 psychic damage.	
Str 25 (+18)	Dex 14 (+13) Wis 12 (+12)
Con 28 (+20)	Int 16 (+14) Cha 20 (+16)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages -

Note: Reflavored corrupted glutton (MM3).

ENCOUNTER 12: "INTO THE WEB" MAP (AGATHYS)

TILE SETS NEEDED

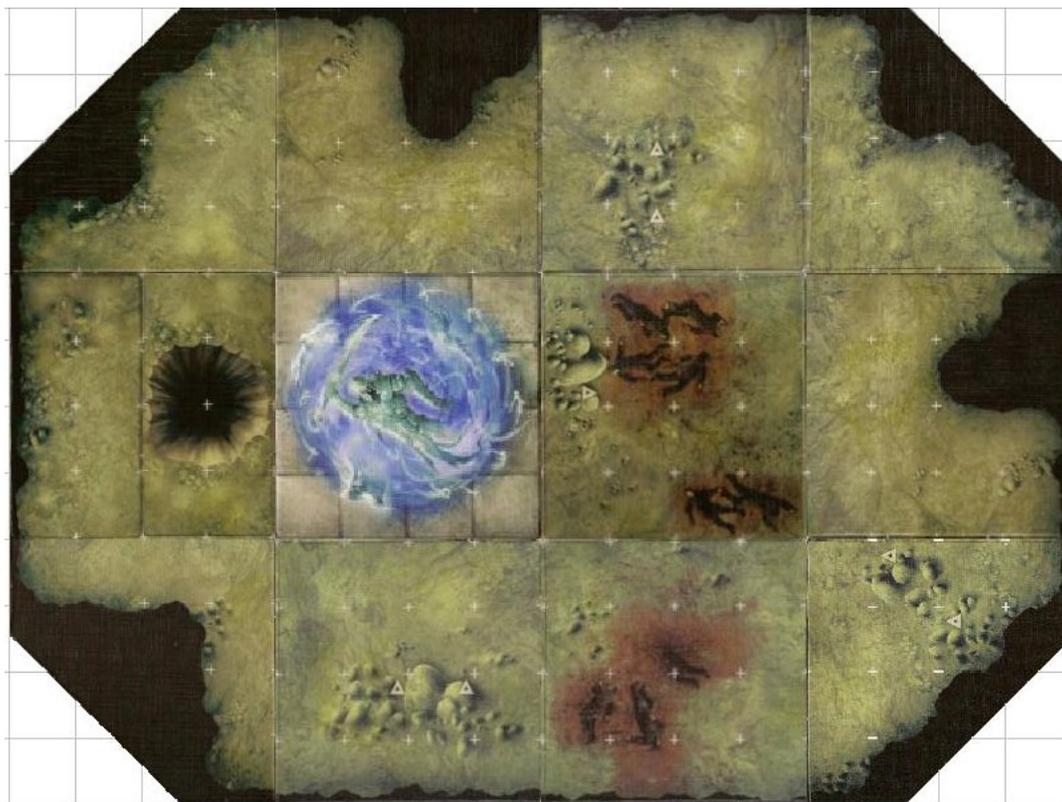
DTMS - The Dungeon x2, Fane of the Forgotten Gods x1 (portal and flames)



ENCOUNTER 12: "INTO THE WEB" MAP (DEMONWEB)

TILE SETS NEEDED

Caves of Carnage x1, Fane of the Forgotten Gods x1 (portal)



CONCLUSION

The last abomination falls, bringing a welcome respite from the constant dangers of Agathys. The chamber in which you have arrived is composed entirely of thick, calcified webbing - harder than packed earth but softer than stone - and the webbing forms tunnels that extend into darkness on either side.

Corellon's familiar voice suddenly manifests within your minds. "Heroes, you never cease to amaze me. Arvandor is now safe, and what's more, you've managed the unthinkable in escaping from the Red Prison. The bards' songs have more truth in them than some may believe - you adventurers truly are capable of almost anything.

"As a reward for your heroism, the vaults of my palace, Nath Seldarie, are once again at your disposal."

Each PC may select any Common or Uncommon weapon, armor, or neck slot item of level 25 or lower from any player source as treasure in addition to the treasures found earlier in the adventure.

- All PCs receive **EPIC04 Temptation of Sin** and should mark the appropriate information depending on how much (or how little) they used Sinmaker's services.
- All PCs receive **EPIC05 Rescued Prisoners of Carceri** and should record which prisoners they rescued, if any.
- PCs that escaped Carceri (that weren't left behind in Encounter 12) receive **EPIC06 Escaped the Inescapable**. Their daring, unaided escape has impressed Tymora. Although she does not contact the PCs, she bestows her boon upon any willing to accept it. If the PCs rescued Clovar, her loyal servant, she bestows an even greater boon upon those PCs (as indicated on the award).
- PCs that were left behind in Encounter 12 find themselves standing with the rest of the party. Corellon has risked facing the ire of the other gods by interfering in Carceri and rescuing these PCs himself. These PCs receive **EPIC07 Left Behind**. If any of these PCs have **EPIC01**, they lose that Story Award, as Corellon decides that his debt the PC has now been paid (including the loss of his divine boon).
- Any PC that took Gero as a familiar gains **EPIC08 Can I Keep Him?** A character that wants to take him as a familiar in the future may also choose to gain **EPIC08** but must take the Arcane Familiar feat before he or she can retain the quasit's services. **Only one PC can gain this award.**

- If Sinmaker escaped Carceri and the PCs dealt fairly with him, he offers one of his personal flasks to those characters who signed his contract. This is a Rare item, the flask of sin. Choosing this item requires one of the character's Treasure selections for the adventure. Those who accept the flask gain Story Award **EPIC09**.

When the players are ready, Corellon briefs them on the current situation and asks for their aid in dealing with Lolth's machinations. Be sure that you have everyone's attention, as the following read-aloud text sets the scene for the next adventure in the series.

"Lolth's attack on my realm comes as no surprise. However, the fact that Lolth has somehow learned the secret behind my funnel in Carceri and how to manipulate it is troubling. Once a member of the Seldarine, she is one of the few deities not bound by the Carceri Compact.

"I have one more favor to ask of you. Seek out Lolth, my former lover, as my personal emissaries. Learn how she came by this knowledge and see to it that she relents. Be very careful, my friends. You are in the Demonweb now - Lolth's domain. Many heroes have perished here. Do not expect a warm welcome."

As Corellon's voice fades, a violent tremor reverberates throughout the chamber and the tunnels beyond, nearly bringing you to your knees...

The story continues in EPIC3-3 The Tangled Skein of Destiny.

From a meta-game perspective, the PCs receive the benefits of an extended rest between adventures, and can deal with any lasting effects (such as death) through a combination of their own resources and Corellon's divine power. (The PCs need to pay the component cost if they require a Raise Dead ritual, but Corellon can provide the spellcaster at no charge and causes the ritual to be completed in an instant, rather than hours.)

The PCs cannot return to the world, as they would have no easy way to return to this point in the Demonweb. Likewise, the First of the Seldarine cannot risk sending a major force of his own exarchs or angels to the PCs' current location, as this would surely tip Lolth off that her plan has been undone, ruining any surprise element that the PCs might currently have. However, Corellon is able to send items to the PCs across the planes, ensuring that they are able to get their Treasure selections and complete other tasks that would normally be possible between adventures.

REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn XP, gold, access to Treasures, and Story Awards. All totals listed here are per PC.

EXPERIENCE POINTS AND GOLD

In the Epic Campaign, characters do not need to track XP. All characters reach level 23 upon completing this adventure (regardless of whether they died during the adventure or not).

Base Gold per PC

175,000 gp

(Encounter 9: 175,000 gp)

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces (the “Base Gold” listed above) as well as the option to select from a list of Treasures. A Treasure may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or something else of value. Each player makes one and only one selection for their character; multiple players may choose the same Treasure. Some of the listed Treasures may not be available if the PCs did not complete the objective specified in the adventure to unlock that Treasure.

If a character buys or sells gear during the adventure (or pays for services, such as NPC ritual casting) add or subtract the amount from the base gold. If a player selects a Treasure that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character’s base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character to spend more gold than he or she earns during an adventure, but characters may not spend gold that they do not have. For details on selling items, see the *Living Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist’s weapon +1* is listed as a Treasure, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist’s dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC’s adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

Certain Treasures have a minimum adventure level listed. That Treasure is not available if the group played below the minimum adventure level. However, those who played at a higher adventure level can always choose from the lower-level options.

An asterisk next to a magic item means that it is an item that appears in the **New Rules** section.

THREE ROUNDS, TWO TREASURES

The Living Forgotten Realms Epic Campaign consists of 10 three-round adventures, each of which covers a single level of the Epic tier of play. To keep the PCs’ rewards in line with the campaign’s expected advancement rate, after completing this adventure the PCs have the opportunity to select TWO of the listed Treasures (including More Gold).

We settled on two Treasures (instead of three) because characters are really not expected to find three magic items per level, even at the Epic tier. We have structured the Base Gold and More Gold awards such that a character who chooses More Gold as both of his or her Treasures still ends up with enough cash to buy a level 22 magic item at market price (although why someone would want to do that is hard to imagine).

All the PCs are considered to be 23rd level at the time they are making their Treasure selections from this adventure, so they can choose any of the listed items. A character who wishes to find two magic items for his or her two Treasures must have two available found-item slots (don’t forget about the new slot that is unlocked for reaching 23rd level).

To be clear, a character who chooses More Gold twice receives no other Treasures. That character would earn 150,000 gp in addition to the Base Gold award, for a grand total of 325,000 gold pieces gained from this adventure.

EACH PC SELECTS TWO OF THE FOLLOWING:

Treasure A: *brimstone cloak* +5* (level 25; MoP)

Found in Encounter 1A

Treasure B: *necroshard weapon* +5* (level 25; Dungeon 176)

Found in Encounter 3B

Treasure C: *solitaire (violet)** (level 26; AV)

Found in Encounter 3B

Treasure D: *ioun stone of regeneration** (level 25; AV)

Found in Encounter 4B

Treasure E: *horned helm** (level 26; AV)

Found in Encounter 5B

Treasure F: *flask of sin** (level 25; custom)

Rare item; Found in Encounter 6, only available to PCs that signed Sinmaker’s contract. PCs who choose this

item as one of their Treasures also gain **EPIC09** (which includes the game statistics for the flask).

Treasure G: *staff of portals +5** (level 25; MoP)
Found in Encounter 7

Treasure H: *gauntlets of the blood war** (level 25; MoP)
Found in Encounter 7

Treasure I: *belt of endurance** (level 26; AV)
Found in Encounter 11, only if the PCs rescued Brugor

Treasure J: *Avandra's [Tymora's] Boon of Escape** (level 23; DMG2) (Replace Avandra with Tymora)
Found in the Conclusion, only available to PCs that received **EPIC06**. If the PCs also rescued Tymora's servant Clovar (as indicated by EPIC05) then they get the level 28 version of the boon instead of the level 25 version when they choose this Treasure.

Treasure K: Any Uncommon armor, weapon, implement, or neck slot item of level 25 or lower from a player resource
Found in the Conclusion

Treasure L: Any Uncommon permanent magic item (regardless of item slot) of level 23 or lower from a player resource
Found in the Conclusion

Treasure M: Any Common permanent magic item (regardless of item slot) of level 25 or lower from a player resource
Found in the Conclusion

Treasure X (Consumable plus Gold): A character may choose to find a *fruit of life* (Level 25; DSCS) plus 50,000 (fifty thousand) gold pieces instead of another Treasure. The player should write the consumable gained on his or her Adventure Log. Consumables obtained in this fashion do not take up found-item slots.
Note: This option is only available if the PCs completed Encounter 4B and recovered the fruit.

Treasure Y (More Gold): A character may choose to receive coin, astral diamonds, or other valuables worth 75,000 (seventy-five thousand) gold pieces (in addition to the Base Gold amount) instead of another Treasure.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their Story Awards. The PCs may earn any or all of the Story Awards in this adventure for which they meet the criteria.

EPIC04 Temptation of Sin

While traveling through the prison plane of Carceri, you were tempted to receive aid from Sinmaker the Apothecary. Sinmaker and his mysterious concoctions may return in a future Epic Campaign adventure.

For each of the following events, check the box if that event happened to you during the adventure.

- You signed Sinmaker's contract
- You consumed the *draught of life* that Sinmaker offered when you reached Agathys
- You used the *flask of sin* during the adventure, or chose it as one of your Treasures

EPIC05 Rescued Prisoners of Carceri

While escaping Carceri, you had an opportunity to rescue several prisoners. Check the box next to the name of any prisoner that you released from his or her cell and who later escaped from Carceri with you:

- Artham, Mask of Cyric
- Brugor, Hammer of Moradin
- Clovar, Coinspinner of Tymora
- Karas, Mistress of Pain, Chosen of Loviatar
- Razorfang, the Claw of Yeenoghu
- Therus, Patriarch of Oghma

EPIC06 Escaped the Inescapable

You managed to escape the inescapable Red Prison, created by the gods themselves to hold abominations that even they dare not face. The secrets you learned will serve you well when faced with any lesser form of magical imprisonment or planar banishment.

You gain the following unique consumable power, which you may active one time only. When you use the power, void this Story Award.

Escape the Inescapable (Consumable)

Trigger: You would be affected by any power or effect that would remove you from play, send you to another plane, seal you in a pocket dimension, or otherwise imprison you against your will.
Effect (No Action): You are not affected by the triggering effect.
Special: This power only applies to other creatures' activated powers or equivalent environmental effects. It cannot be used to evade forcible imprisonment by physical means (such as you being knocked unconscious, dragged off, and locked in a cell).

(EPIC06 text continued)

In addition, your daring feat has impressed Tymora, goddess of luck. You may choose *Tymora's boon of escape* (level 23) as one of your Treasures from this adventure. If you rescued Clovar (as indicated by EPIC05), you gain the level 28 version of the boon instead.

EPIC07 Left Behind

You were left behind when the rest of your companions escaped Carceri, or your entire group was wiped out without ever finding a way to leave the Red Prison. Fortunately for you, the First of the Seldarine has more authority in Carceri than most of the other gods. Corellon has seen fit to exercise his divine power and draw you back into the world.

Even Corellon must go to great lengths to release a prisoner from the Tarterian Depths. Such an exercise of power by a greater god on behalf of a mortal is nearly unprecedented, and does come at a price.

If Corellon previously considered himself in your debt, that debt has now been repaid in full. If you have Story Award **EPIC01 Corellon's Eternal Gratitude**, void it.

If you have ever received *Corellon's boon of arcane might* (whether from EPIC3-1 or any other adventure), the divine boon immediately disappears.

If you did not previously have Corellon's favor or his divine boon, then you now owe a debt to Corellon, which he will almost certainly demand you repay at some point in the future. If you do not wish to accept this debt, you may decline to be rescued by Corellon, in which case you remain imprisoned in Carceri and are removed from play (this effectively retires the character, but the choice is yours).

EPIC08 Can I Keep Him?

During your adventures in Carceri, you made the acquaintance of Gero, a quasit. How and why Gero ended up in Carceri is a mystery, but his extensive experience as an arcane familiar suggests that he may have accompanied a previous master who was incarcerated in the Red Prison.

At any rate, by choosing this Story Award, you gain the right to make Gero your familiar. If you had an existing familiar, Gero has already killed that hapless creature and assumed its place at your side. If you do not currently have a familiar, you may make Gero your familiar when you gain the Arcane Familiar feat.

Gero has the ability to take on the aspect of any other familiar that you would find useful. He isn't quite able to explain how he does this, but it seems to involve killing and eating a familiar of the appropriate type, and Gero's evidently been doing that for quite a long time, because his repertoire (and his appetite) is vast.

At the time Gero becomes your familiar, you may choose any campaign-legal familiar from a player resource. Gero's game statistics are identical to that kind of familiar (although he retains his quasit form). Changing his aspect is arduous, but whenever you gain a level, you may order Gero to "retrain" into a different kind of familiar.

Gero is a unique creature; if you find yourself at a table with another PC who also has Gero as a familiar, only one of you has the "real" Gero. The other has one of his many twin brothers (Nero and Zero). It's up to the players to decide who has the real Gero (he may have a role to play in a future Epic Campaign adventure).

EPIC09 Flask of Sin

As a result of your dealings with the enigmatic Sinmaker, you have gained this Rare magic item. The *flask of sin* counts against your limit of one Rare item per tier, and as one of your found magic items.

(See the New Rules section for game statistics, which are also printed on the Story Award.)

EVENT SUMMARY

The results of this adventure will have an impact on the future development of the Epic Campaign!

If you run this adventure at home, or at a public event where the event organizer is not going to enter the survey data, please fill out the online survey. If you are at a convention, we recommend that each DM fill out the form on paper and deliver the filled in form to the Senior DM or Event Organizer, who can then answer the survey online.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LFREPIC0302>

The survey period closes on 01 September 2011. The adventure remains playable after that date, but Event Summary results will be tabulated at the end of the survey period and that will be the official result for the campaign as a whole.

If played at a convention, what slot:

Table Number:

DM's Name:

Question 1. How many PCs signed Sinmaker's contract? (0 - 6): _____

Question 2. Did Sinmaker escape from Carceri?

- a. Yes, the PCs allowed him to accompany them, and he escaped through the portal.
- b. Yes, he managed to sneak through the portal even though the PCs did not ally with him.
- c. No, he did not make it through the portal.

Question 3. Which of the following prisoners did the PCs rescue from the Red Prison?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artham, Mask of Cyric | <input type="checkbox"/> Karas, Mistress of Pain, Chosen of Loviatar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brugor, Hammer of Moradin | <input type="checkbox"/> Razorfang, the Claw of Yeenoghu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clovar, Coinspinner of Tymora | <input type="checkbox"/> Therus, Patriarch of Oghma |

Question 4. Did any of the PCs accept the quasit Gero as his or her new familiar?

- a. No
- b. Yes

If yes, what kind of familiar did the PC have previously? _____

Question 5. Did the PCs kill Neferkhaba, the usurper Pharaoh (in Encounter 3B)?

- a. No
- b. Yes

Question 6. How many total PC deaths were there during the adventure? (If the same character died, came back, and died again, count that as two deaths.) _____

Questions 7-8. How do the DM and the players rate this adventure?

DM's Rating:

- a. 1 star (worst possible rating)
- b. 2 stars (below expectations)
- c. 3 stars (met expectations / average)
- d. 4 stars (above expectations)
- e. 5 stars (exceeded expectations / best rating)

Players' Rating:

- a. 1 star (worst possible rating)
- b. 2 stars (below expectations)
- c. 3 stars (met expectations / average)
- d. 4 stars (above expectations)
- e. 5 stars (exceeded expectations / best rating)

NEW RULES

Acidic Fire Level 25 Uncommon

Green flames burn and spread boiling acid in all directions.

Alchemical Item 25,000 gp

Power (Consumable): Standard action. Make an attack: Area burst 1 within 10; +28 vs. Reflex; 3d6 fire damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

Reference: Eberron Player's Guide, page(s) 99.

Amulet of Aranea Level 25 Uncommon

Your ability to ward off poison increases while wearing this spider-shaped talisman.

Item Slot: Neck 625,000 gp

Enhancement: +5 Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: Gain resist 15 poison.

Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. Use this power when you are hit by a melee attack. The attacker takes 2d10 poison damage and ongoing 20 poison (save ends). The attacker also takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against poison effects until the end of the encounter.

Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page(s) 148.

Antivenom Level 21 Uncommon

This thick tonic can help counter the effects of most poisons.

Alchemical Item 9,000 gp

Power (Consumable): Minor action. Gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against poisons from a source of 30th level or lower. This effect lasts until the end of the encounter or for the next 5 minutes.

Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page(s) 25.

Astral Mead Level 23 Uncommon

This sweet sparkling beverage infuses and restores the body.

Other Consumable 17,000 gp

Power (Consumable): Standard action. You drink the flask of astral mead. For the next 12 hours, you gain a +2 power bonus on Endurance checks and regain an extra 2 hit points whenever you spend a healing surge.

Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page(s) 191.

Belt of Endurance Level 26 Uncommon

Stitched from the hides of various animals, this belt gives you a beastly endurance.

Item Slot: Waist 1,125,000 gp

Property: Gain a +6 item bonus to Endurance checks.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power before you make a Endurance check. Treat that check as though you rolled a natural 20.

Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page(s) 164.

Brimstone Cloak Level 25 Uncommon

This cloak smells faintly of sulfur and helps resist both fire and poison.

Item Slot: Neck 625,000 gp

Enhancement: +5 Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: Gain resist 15 fire and resist 15 poison.

Power (Daily ♦ Fire): Immediate Reaction. Use this power when you are hit by a melee attack. The attacker takes ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

Reference: Manual of the Planes, page(s) 157.

Fruit of Life Level 25 Uncommon

Vibrant green and veined in crimson, this fist-sized fruit subtly vibrates with barely contained life force.

Other Consumable 25,000 gp

Power (Consumable ♦ Healing): Minor action. You spend a healing surge and regain 15 additional hit points. Until you take an extended rest, you gain resist 15 necrotic and do not need to eat or drink.

Reference: Dark Sun Campaign Setting, page(s) 129.

Gauntlets of the Blood War Level 26 Uncommon

These gauntlets are perpetually stained with blood and were originally crafted by elementals to help slay immortals.

Item Slot: Hands 1,125,000 gp

Property: You gain a +5 item bonus to damage rolls against creatures that have the immortal origin.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit a creature with the immortal origin. The creature takes ongoing 15 damage (save ends).

Reference: Manual of the Planes, page(s) 156.

The Skinsplitter Level 25 Uncommon

Used by the disciplinarians of drow academies, this wicked weapon symbolizes cruelty.

Weapon: Scourge 625,000 gp

Enhancement: +5 attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +5d6 ongoing damage

Power (Encounter): Minor action. When you hit an enemy with this weapon, that enemy gains vulnerable 15 ongoing (save ends).

Reference: Dragon Magazine, page(s) 390.

NEW RULES (CONTINUED)

Iron Stone of Regeneration Level 25 Uncommon
This tiny red ovoid orbits your head.
Item Slot: Head 625,000 gp
Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Minor action. Gain regeneration 10 while you are bloodied until the end of the encounter.
Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page(s) 143

Necroshard Weapon Level 25 Uncommon
This large black gem can be placed in the hilt of a melee weapon imbuing the weapon with necrotic power.
Weapon: any melee 625,000 gp
Enhancement: +5 attack rolls and damage rolls.
Critical: +5d10 necrotic damage
Property: Weapon attacks made with the weapon against living creatures gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls vs. Fortitude
Power (Daily ♦ Necrotic): Free action. Use this power when you hit with the weapon. The target takes an extra 3d8 necrotic damage and is weakened until the end of your next turn.
Reference: Dungeon Magazine 176, page(s) 37

Potion of Recovery Level 25 Common
This mighty potion uses your own stamina to restore your hit points and to help you shrug off harm.
Potion 25,000 gp
Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Drink the potion and spend a healing surge. Instead of the hit points you would normally regain, you regain 50 hit points and make a saving throw against each effect on you that a save can end.
Reference: Heroes of the Fallen Lands, page(s) 352.

Potion of Regeneration Level 19 Uncommon
If you are sufficiently wounded after having quaffed this russet, copper-scented potion, you heal quickly.
Potion 4,200 gp
Power (Consumable): Minor action. Drink this potion and spend a healing surge. You do not gain hit points as normal. Instead, gain regeneration 10 until the end of the encounter. If you aren't bloodied at the start of your turn while this power is in effect, you don't regain any hit points and the regeneration is suppressed until the start of your next turn.
Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page(s) 188

Resolute Armor Level 23 Uncommon
This sturdy looking armor is covered with granite slabs fused with pulsing crystals.
Armor: Plate 425,000 gp
Property: When an effect forces you to move, you move 3 fewer squares.
Reference: Dragon Magazine 380, page(s) 70

Solitaire (Violet) Level 26 Uncommon
This jagged purple crystal lets you follow up on a successful attack.
Wondrous Item 1,125,000 gp
Power (Daily): Free action. Use this power when you score a critical hit on your turn. Gain 1 action point, which you must spend before the end of your turn.
Special: You cannot use more than one solitaire in an encounter.
Reference: Adventurer's Vault, page(s) 178.

Spotted Toadstool Venom Level 25 Uncommon
This green-gray poison paste robs its victims of strength.
Alchemical Item 25,000 gp
Power (Consumable): Standard Action. Apply the spotted toadstool venom to your weapon or to one piece of ammunition. Make a secondary attack against the next target you hit with the coated weapon or ammunition: +28 vs. Fortitude; the target is weakened until the end of your next turn.
Reference: Eberron Player's Guide, page(s) 102.

Staff of Portals Level 24 Uncommon
Topping this black staff is a crystal sphere that enhances your powers of teleportation.
Implement: Staff 525,000 gp
Enhancement: +5 attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +5d6 damage
Property: On a critical hit you teleport the target 5 squares.
Power (Daily ♦ Teleportation): Free Action. Use this power after you use a power that has the teleportation keyword. You and all allies within 2 squares of you can teleport 5 squares.
Reference: Manual of the Planes, page(s) 156.

NEW RULES (CONTINUED)

Tymora's Boon of Escape Level 23 Uncommon
Gambits that rely on luck and crushing blows against oppressors draw boons from Tymora. Individuals blessed by her are impossible to corner.

Divine Boon (cannot be sold)

Property: If you start your turn with two or more enemies adjacent to you, you can shift 4 squares as a move action.

Power (Daily ♦ Teleportation): Move Action. Teleport 6 squares.

Level 28: Teleport 7 squares.

Reference: Dungeon Master's Guide 2, page(s) 140.

Endure Primordial Elements

Flames lick you, or lightning crackles around you, but you pay these threats no mind.

Component Cost: 4300 gp

Market Price: 12000 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

Level: 17

Category: Exploration

Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 24 hours

You designate up to eight ritual participants, including yourself, who ignore penalties and Endurance checks associated with the extreme weather and environments of the Elemental Chaos. An affected creature and its equipment ignore ill effects from extreme temperatures and other ambient threats. Creatures' attacks, terrain features, and traps or hazards are still potential dangers. In areas where you would normally have to make Endurance checks every 8 hours while under the effect of Endure Elements, you need not make any checks while under the effect of Endure Primordial Elements.

Flask of Sin Level 25 Rare

This oddly shaped flask produces a glowing purple elixir when your need is greatest. Each day, the elixir is distilled from your own life energy, or that of your companions.

Wondrous Item 1,125,000 gp

Property: After you finish an extended rest, you and your allies can store healing surges in the flask. (NPCs, mounts, and other support characters are not eligible targets.) The flask fills with a glowing purple elixir as surges are added to it. The visible "water level" of the elixir roughly indicates how many surges the flask contains. Up to seven different creatures can store surges in the flask in this way.

Each creature can store a maximum of two surges, and any creature that stores surges in the flask takes a -2 penalty to death saving throws until his or her next extended rest. Once a creature has chosen to store surges in the flask, those surges cannot be regained by any means until the creature takes an extended rest. The flask consumes all remaining surges during any extended rest, causing the elixir to disappear, so it must be refilled with new surges each day.

Property: If a creature has at least one of its healing surges stored within the flask, that portion of its life essence is enough to permit the Raise Dead ritual to work even in the absence of any other part of that creature.

Power (Special ♦ Healing): During a short rest, any creature (even one that does not have any surges stored in the flask) can drink from the *flask of sin*. When drinking from the flask, a creature may consume any number of the surges stored in the flask. For each surge consumed, the creature regains hit points equal to its own surge value (not the surge value of the creature who put the surge into the flask). This can be done even if the creature drinking from the flask does not have any healing surges remaining. To be clear, the flask cannot be used to restore lost healing surges. When someone drinks from the flask, they regain hit points by consuming the surges that are stored within, rather than by spending their own surges. No power or effect (such as Healer's Lore) can increase the number of hit points a creature heals when drinking from the flask, unless that power or effect specifically increases the creature's healing surge value.

Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Minor Action. *Target:* A creature adjacent to you that is bloodied, dying, or that died during this encounter. *Activation:* You pour the purple elixir down the target creature's throat. This consumes 2 of the stored healing surges. If there are not enough surges remaining in the flask, the power fails. *Effect:* The target regains enough hit points to bring its current hit point total to its bloodied value. If the target is dead, it revives, then regains the hit points, and is considered not to have failed any death saving throws during this encounter.

Reference: This is a custom LFR item, a modified version of the *bloodcrystal raven skull* published in E1 *Death's Reach*.

APPENDIX 1: CARCERI

SOURCE: *PLANE ABOVE: SECRETS OF THE ASTRAL SEA* BY ROB HEINSOO © 2010 WOTC

CARCERI

Astral Realm; Population unknown

Carceri is an archipelago of six marshy isles, ranging from miles to leagues across and strewn beneath a starless sky. Prisoners of the deities languish here, including disobedient angels, demons, primordial servants, exalted of rival deities, abominations, and horrors from beyond the known planes. Most of the gods use Carceri to one extent or another. One of the few laws that even the most evil and chaotic deities have little choice but to obey is the Carceri Compact: *No deity shall interfere with the prisoners of any other.* Ironically, that law is harder on good deities, and on Torm in particular, who disagrees with what the evil deities consider justice, than on evil gods, but the Carceri Compact binds them all.

However, there is another reason for Carceri's existence: Not even the deities can always control what they create. On the isle known as Agathys, several deities assembled early during the Dawn War. They shaped bodies both organic and mechanical; twisted the stuff of the Astral Sea, so spirits that would have become angels entered those bodies instead; and bestowed upon them the unending need to kill. Thus were born the first abominations - living weapons carved from the divine order. Twisted Agathys birthed one abomination after another.

It wasn't until the war ended that the deities discovered they couldn't change it back. The astral pocket had been twisted too long by energy that had become too powerful to be stopped. Bizarrely, the end of the Dawn War seemed to change the rules by which Agathys operated: Abominations that had previously been created by the primordials to slay the deities now spewed from Agathys alongside the deities' original creations.

The deities set about ensuring that these horrors could not escape. Moradin forged the adamantine wall that surrounds Carceri; the other deities joined to weave the divine enchantments that prevent escape. By confining their most potent enemies inside Carceri, the deities not only removed threats to themselves, but also stemmed the tide of the abominations - for the prisoners within can hope to survive only by banding together to battle those abominations and killing at least a few at a time.

THE ISLES OF CARCERI

The Red Prison consists of six separate marshy isles. They occasionally shift position, as though they are merely floating on the bottomless swampy waters, rather than anchored. No matter how they shift, the isle of Agathys is always farthest from the adamantine gates.

The sky above Carceri is the dull blue-gray of dusk, without a single star. What light exists shines up from below, filtering through the marshy waters without any obvious source. This illumination is dim at best, with a crimson tint that gives the swamp waters the look of diluted blood.

Although the general climate of the Red Prison is constant, the islands are substantially different from one another - not merely in environment, but in inhabitation. Carceri serves as a prison for thousands of entities, with the stronger dominating the weaker and even forming personal fiefdoms.

As a side effect of the strong magic that inhibits the creation of new abominations, no one on Carceri can create new life, breed, or bear offspring. Carceri will never be a full society, since it renews only by having prisoners added as other prisoners die off.

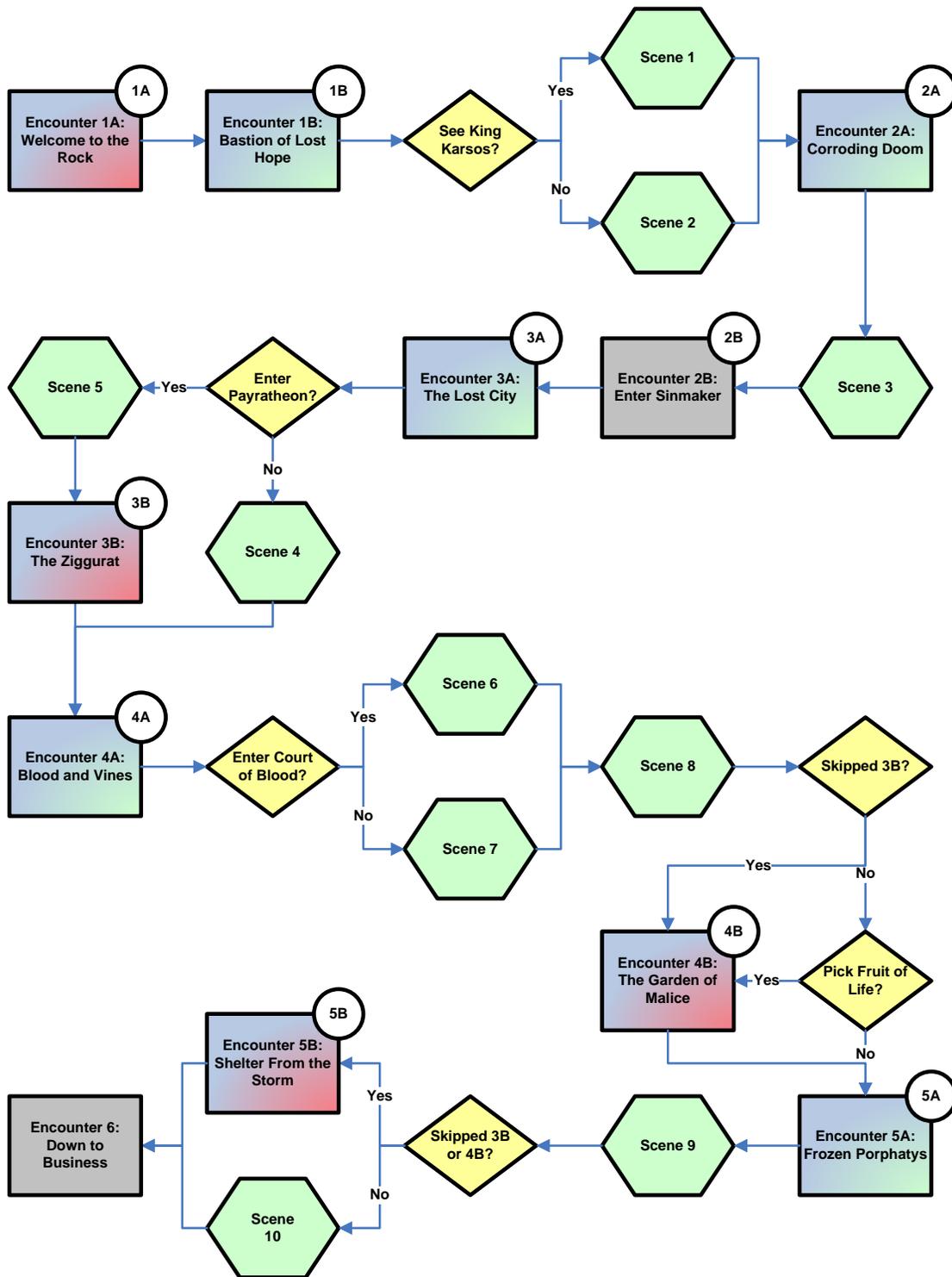
APPENDIX 2: PLANAR FEATURES OF CARCERI

TERRAIN LIMITATIONS

Certain terrain limitations exist within the dominion of Carceri, no matter the location.

- **Flight:** Divine magic prevents creatures within Carceri (except for guards posted by the deities, such as the angels in Encounter 7) from flying higher than 6 squares, whether via magic or natural ability. This manifests as an altitude limit of 6 for all prisoners of Carceri, including the PCs. A creature falls at the end of its turn if it is flying higher than 6 squares.
- **Portals:** Several portals throughout the cosmos send creatures to Carceri, but none are known to provide an exit.
- **Scrying:** Creatures within Carceri can be observed by magic used outside the dominion, though only divine power can see into Agathys. Scrying magic used within the dominion, whether to see something inside Carceri or outside it, automatically fails.
- **Teleportation:** Teleportation effects are limited to the isle on which they originate. Thus, creatures within Carceri can teleport to other locations on the isle they occupy, but not to other isles or beyond the dominion. This also means that any power that removes a creature from play, opens a dimensional space, or sends a creature to another plane automatically fails. **Examples** of this include:
 - The daily power of a *voidcrystal weapon*
 - The daily power of a *githyanki silver weapon*
 - The level 9 cleric power: *dismissal*
 - The level 16 sorcerer power: *avatars of chaos*
 - The level 20 arcane wayfarer power: *terrifying journey*
 - Any other power with similar effects, at the discretion of the DM

APPENDIX 3: REACHING AGATHYS (ADVENTURE FLOWCHART)



KEY

- Skill Challenge Encounter
- Skill Challenge Scene
- Combat Encounter
- Decision Point

APPENDIX 4: SINMAKER THE APOTHECARY

Sinmaker is a unique demon (or devil, it's not entirely clear) who lives on the isle of Cathrys in Carceri. He runs the Apothecary of Sin where he sells poisons, potions, and other balms and concoctions to any willing customer. A core theme in this adventure is the temptation to deal with the devil; sometimes, unlikely alliances are necessary to achieve a greater goal. The encounters in this adventure have been designed to be particularly challenging in order to sufficiently tempt the PCs to deal with a clearly evil entity. As Sinmaker has no hostile or deceitful attitude towards the PCs, be sure to make his offers genuinely enticing. Ideally, the PCs should feel uncomfortable dealing with a demon, but strongly tempted to do so.

Recent History: Sinmaker recently made a deal with Lolth. In return for a crafting a poison capable of killing a god, Lolth offered Sinmaker his freedom. Time has passed, and Sinmaker doubted whether Lolth would hold up her end of the bargain (correctly so, as Lolth has recently left Carceri). He now looks to the PCs as another possibility to escape Carceri. He has correctly inferred why they have come to Carceri and thus, does not reveal anything about his dealings with Lolth unless forced.

If any PCs that played *EPIC3-1* ask him about the poison they encountered on Arvandor, he attempts to mitigate his own culpability. Sinmaker is meticulous to tell only truths, avoiding topics he does not wish to explore. The DC for any Insight checks to discern anything more than he says is DC 41.

Aiding the PCs: Sinmaker gives you the opportunity to help the PCs as much or as little as you feel appropriate. If you present the adventure in a challenging way, PCs should at least feel tempted to seek his aid.

- Sinmaker can cast *Endure Primordial Elements* to protect the PCs on their journey.
- Sinmaker can resurrect any number of PCs during a short rest.
- Sinmaker can provide a *draught of life* that restores 6 healing surges and 3 daily utility and attack powers during Encounter 6 only.
- Sinmaker can gift a *Flask of Sin* to the PCs if they recover the Deathfont Willow from Minethys or the Fruit of Life from Colothys.
- Once per encounter, Sinmaker can use a *healing ointment* power. If necessary, he spends his own surges as described in the power if it will get a PC to sign the contract.

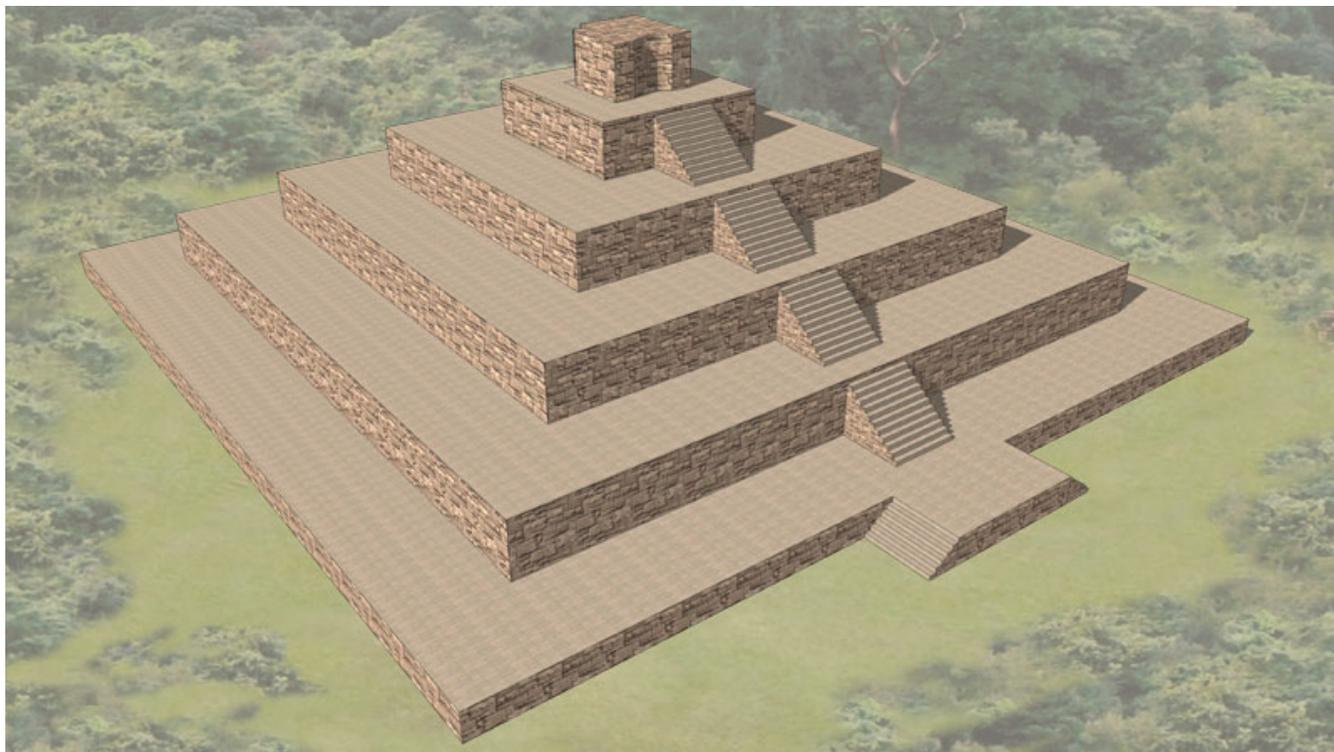
Additional Aid: You can use Sinmaker to help PCs to the extent that they need help. Since they will be reluctant to deal with him, keep the pressure high to tempt them to ask for help. Remember: Sinmaker is not one to give something for nothing. However, once at least one PC has a contract with Sinmaker, he wants the PCs to succeed – his escape rests on theirs.

Troubleshooting: Some PCs might try to kill Sinmaker and take his resources. Sinmaker uses exotic ingredients from Carceri, and never completes a mixture until he needs it or at the time of sale. Epic PCs could probably figure out how to combine his reagents, but it would require weeks of study. Although the true extent of Sinmaker's ability is unknown, use the following statistics if necessary:

Sinmaker	Level 26 Elite Lurker
Medium immortal humanoid (demon, devil)	XP -
HP 372; Bloodied 186	Initiative +25
AC 42, Fortitude 39, Reflex 42, Will 40	Perception +23
Speed 8, teleport 8	darkvision
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
Immune charm, poison, sleep	
TRAITS	
Dark Blessing	
Sinmaker is invisible until the end of his first turn of an encounter.	
Implacable	
Sinmaker may make a saving throw against one daze, immobilize, slow, stun, or unconscious condition at the start of his turn, even if it does not normally allow a save.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Infuriating Elusiveness (Teleportation) • Recharge 4-6	
Sinmaker becomes invisible and then teleports up to 20 squares. The invisibility lasts until the start of Sinmaker's next turn.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Healing Ointment (Healing) • Encounter	
Effect: Sinmaker or an adjacent creature may spend a healing surge and regain 20 additional hit points. Sinmaker may spend one of his own healing surges in place of the target. (He has 3 surges per day.)	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Shield of Deception • At-Will	
Trigger: Sinmaker is hit by an attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): An enemy within 10 squares becomes the target of the triggering attack. If the attack was an area attack, Sinmaker's space is excluded from the attack's area.	
Wrathful Vapors (Poison) • Encounter	
Trigger: Sinmaker becomes bloodied.	
Effect (Free Action): Sinmaker discorporates and all enemies within 10 squares lose 5 healing surges.	
Skills Arcana +24, Bluff +31, Insight +28, Nature +28, Stealth +26	
Str 16 (+16)	Dex 26 (+21) Wis 20 (+23)
Con 24 (+20)	Int 22 (+19) Cha 26 (+21)
Alignment evil	Languages all, telepathy 20
Equipment various herbs and components	

APPENDIX 5: SAMPLE ZIGGURAT

The image below depicts a typical ziggurat. This should help both you and the players visualize the map in Encounter 3B to help streamline the combat. Note that unlike the ziggurat shown here, all sections of Neferkhaba's Ziggurat other than the section shown in the map have fallen into ruin.



PLAYER HANDOUT 1: SINMAKER'S CONTRACT

All undersigned parties do hereby agree to assist each other in escaping Carceri to the best of their ability.

***Sinmaker** further agrees to use his arts to heal the undersigned and aid them in their mutual escape and shall not attack or hinder the undersigned in any way.*

_____, _____,
_____, _____,
_____, _____

further agree(s) not to exit Carceri without Sinmaker, and shall not attack or hinder Sinmaker in any way.

These agreements shall become null and void upon the passage of one (1) hour after all signatories have exited Carceri.

PLAYER HANDOUT 2: UNENDING ABOMINATIONS

Use the guidelines below to understand the mechanics of this unique encounter.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- This encounter is designed as a hybrid abstract combat and skill challenge. Rather than single rounds of combat, this encounter represents an unending skirmish with dozens of abominations that stretches across hours of exploration.
- During each scene of the skill challenge, abominations attack. You may act in any order you wish to work towards completing the scene and/or fighting off abominations.
- You receive a standard, move, and minor action for each scene. Skill checks that contribute towards the skill challenge require a move action each. You may use your other actions for any attacks or powers as you see fit.

DEFEATING ABOMINATIONS

Any abomination is defeated by one of the following:

- **Damage:** When dealt 15 or more damage from an attack or any other effect.
- **Forced Movement:** When subjected to a push or slide effect of 5 squares or more.
- **Conditions:** When immobilized, restrained, stunned, dominated, or otherwise prevented from moving or acting. The dazed and grabbed conditions are insufficient for this purpose.
- **Skills:** An Athletics, Endurance, or Intimidate check made against DC 27 as a move action will drive off a single abomination. Beating this DC by a significant amount may drive off more than one.

DETERMINING TARGETS

The following list describes the number of abominations that can be targeted with a given attack or power:

- **Melee/Ranged:** Melee and ranged attacks target their normal number of targets. PCs cannot target more than two abominations with melee attacks unless they can move in between attacks.
- **Burst:** Burst 1 attacks target 2 abominations. Burst 2, 3, or 4 attacks target 3 abominations. Burst 5 or larger attacks target 4 abominations.
- **Blast:** Blast attacks of size 4 or smaller target 2 abominations. Blast 5 or greater attacks target 3 abominations.
- **Zone:** Zones that contain 3 or fewer squares target 1 abomination. Zones that contain 4 - 9 squares target 2 abominations. Zones that contain 10 or more squares target 3 abominations.
- **Defenses:** For purposes of attacks, all abominations in this skill challenge have AC 36 and all other defenses 34.
- **Keywords:** Abominations come in many types. For the purposes of this encounter, treat them as immortal humanoids.

PLAYER HANDOUT 3: TYRANOTH'S JOURNAL

The journal is written in Abyssal by a careful hand.

...Arriving in Carceri, we met the strange demon that struck the bargain with Lolth. It calls itself Sinmaker. The fool must be truly desperate to strike such a bargain with the Queen of Deceit. Still, the apothecary's poison should do what he claims. A marvelous concoction; pity we must leave him here to rot – I could make use of his skills.

...The ritual is complete. Abominations will be funneled into Arvandor with increasing frequency and the poison has proven efficient. Soon, Corellon will be no more, and we can activate the portal to the Demonweb deep below this chamber and return home.

...I examined the portal chamber. We had not anticipated the significant number of repairs required for the gateway to reopen. We've collected most of the supplies we'll need. Once we leave the safety of this chamber, we will need to move quickly to repair the gateway and activate the portal before the denizens of this prison overwhelm us.

...To prepare the chamber, we will need to make the following adjustments:

- Someone will need to observe symbols of the Words of Creation and intuit how they are used.
- Various ancient carvings on a pedestal appear to contain instructions for activating and controlling the portal.
- Some small but critical sections of the control panel are broken. The repairs will require superior skill with intricate mechanisms.
- The gateway's stonework is very old – several particularly heavy pieces have fallen to the floor. They will need to be wedged into place to repair the gateway.
- The control panel controls the flow of energy into the portal from two generators. A break in the circuit has created a gap in the energy flow. The gap must be bridged by a living being or the portal cannot open. This will prove to be painful. Most of our slaves could not possibly survive the experience.
- The gateway has an obvious sentience. The entity touched my mind, indicating it cannot allow portals out of Carceri. Someone will need to convince it otherwise.
- When all three keystones have passed through the portal, it can be sealed from the other side.

...Devils guard some of the most dangerous prisoners below. In their tortured state, it is likely they will assist us in return for their freedom. Notes on their usefulness:

- Clovar, Aspect of Tymora; female halfling; skilled with her hands; irredeemably good; suitable for sacrifice
- Therus, Patriarch of Oghima; blind elderly human; prattles on; useless
- Brugor, Hammer of Moradin; elderly dwarf; very wise; helped craft Moradin's adamantine gates; question thoroughly
- Razorfang, Claw of Yeenoghu; demonic gnom; very strong; use as ally or abandon
- Meera, Aspect of Mystra; babbles about the power of the Weave; quite possibly mad
- Morne, Painbearer of Illmater; mutilated human; resistant to torture
- Karas, Mistress of Pain; tattooed human; very tough; easily recruited
- Artham, Mask of Cyric; changeling; charismatic but deceitful

...The guards cannot be reasoned with. When the time comes, we will destroy them, take the prisoners, and use them to help us escape this wretched place.

PLAYER HANDOUT 4: DIVINE GRATITUDE

Some of the names mentioned in the journal may spark a memory for the PCs. If a PC has the appropriate story award, cut out and give them the appropriate handout below. All effects last until the PC takes an extended rest.

<p>Adventure: <i>CORE1-1 Inheritance</i></p> <p>Story Award: CORE01 Tymora's Coin</p> <p>Background: You remember the name Clovar from the Tymoran Scriptures you found. Surely aiding Tymora again by rescuing Clovar will bring you good fortune.</p> <p>Boon: If Clovar safely escapes his cell, you may roll two dice whenever you make a saving throw and use the higher result. This lasts until you take an extended rest.</p>	<p>Adventure: <i>EAST1-1 These Hallowed Halls</i></p> <p>Story Award: EAST02 Blessing of the All-Father</p> <p>Background: The tome you recovered in Earheart mentioned Brugor. Surely Moradin will favor his release.</p> <p>Boon: If Brugor safely escapes his cell, you heal double the normal amount when you use second wind. This lasts until you take an extended rest.</p>
<p>Adventure: <i>IMPI1-3 Lost Souls</i></p> <p>Story Award: IMPI06 Blessed by Ilmater</p> <p>Background: When you sacrificed yourself, part of your destiny became tied to Ilmater.</p> <p>Boon: When Morne safely escapes his cell, you gain the ability to transfer one of your healing surges to an adjacent ally as a minor action at will (1/round). This ability ends when you take an extended rest.</p>	<p>Adventure: <i>WEEK1-1 Weekend in the Realms</i></p> <p>Story Award: WEEK06 Heroes of the Haunted Halls</p> <p>Background: You have experience with portals that lead to other planes.</p> <p>Boon: Gain a +2 bonus to all rolls when interacting with portals. This lasts until you take an extended rest.</p>
<p>Adventure: <i>DALE2-2 Agony</i></p> <p>Background: If the PC became a member of "The Way of the Lash" and took Loviatar's Boon, even if it has since expired, they recognize one of Loviatar's Chosen.</p> <p>Boon: When Karas escapes her cell, pain no longer harms you. You gain resist 5 all until you take an extended rest.</p>	<p>Adventure: <i>CORE1-9 Ages Best Forgotten</i></p> <p>Story Award: CORE17 Brand of the Golden Scroll</p> <p>Background: The marks on your hands glow and form the name Therus.</p> <p>Boon: If Therus safely escapes his cell, you gain a +3 bonus to all skill checks. This effect lasts until you take an extended rest.</p>
<p>Adventure: <i>DRAG1-6 Night of Fallen Petals</i></p> <p>Story Award: DRAG14 A Reading by Yi Amahl</p> <p>Background: You remember the name Artham from your reading.</p> <p>Boon: If Artham safely escapes his cell, you gain a +5 bonus to damage rolls against creatures you have combat advantage against until you take an extended rest.</p>	<p>Adventure: <i>ADCP2-1 The Paladin's Plague</i></p> <p>Story Award: ADCP03 Mark of Yeenoghu</p> <p>Background: The mark on your forehead burns. Yeenoghu demands repayment for the protection he gave you in the plagueland.</p> <p>Curse: You suffer a -2 penalty to all defenses.</p> <p>Boon: If Razorfang escapes his cell, the curse ends and you gain a +5 bonus to damage rolls against bloodied enemies.</p> <p>Both effects end when you take an extended rest.</p>

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

(character name)

HAS RECEIVED STORY AWARDS FROM:

EPIC3~2 CRACKS IN THE CRIMSON CAGE

EPIC04 Temptation of Sin

While traveling through the prison plane of Carceri, you were tempted to receive aid from Sinmaker the Apothecary. Sinmaker and his mysterious concoctions may return in a future Epic Campaign adventure.

For each of the following, check the box if that event happened to you during the adventure.

- You signed Sinmaker's contract
- You consumed the *draught of life* that Sinmaker offered when you reached Agathys
- You used the *flask of sin* during the adventure, or chose it as one of your Treasures

EPIC05 Rescued Prisoners of Carceri

While escaping Carceri, you had an opportunity to rescue several prisoners. Check the box next to the name of any prisoner that you released from his or her cell and who later escaped from Carceri with you:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artham, Mask of Cyric | <input type="checkbox"/> Karas, Mistress of Pain, Chosen of Loviatar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brugor, Hammer of Moradin | <input type="checkbox"/> Razorfang, the Claw of Yeenoghu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clovar, Coinspinner of Tymora | <input type="checkbox"/> Therus, Patriarch of Oghma |

EPIC06 Escaped the Inescapable

You managed to escape the inescapable Red Prison, created by the gods themselves to hold abominations that even they dare not face. The secrets you learned will serve you well when faced with any lesser form of magical imprisonment or planar banishment. You gain the following unique consumable power, which you may active one time only. When you use the power, void this Story Award.

Escape the Inescapable (Consumable)

Trigger: You would be affected by any power or effect that would remove you from play, send you to another plane, seal you in a pocket dimension, trap your soul, or otherwise magically imprison you against your will.

Effect (No Action): You are not affected by the triggering effect.

Special: This power only applies to other creatures' activated powers or equivalent environmental effects. It cannot be used to evade forcible imprisonment by conventional means (such as you being locked in an actual prison cell). The DM determines whether a given situation qualifies for this power.

Your daring exploits have attracted the attention and favor of Tymora, Goddess of Luck. You may choose her divine *boon of escape* (level 23) as one of your Treasures from this adventure. If you also rescued Clovar (see EPIC05) then you instead gain the level 28 version. Taking the boon requires you to spend a found-item slot, but it lasts until you have fulfilled your Epic Destiny (in other words, it does not expire until you have completed the entire Epic Campaign).

Tymora's Boon of Escape

Level 23 Uncommon

Individuals blessed by the Goddess of Luck are impossible to corner.

Divine Boon

Property: If you start your turn with two or more enemies adjacent to you, you can shift 4 squares as a move action.

Power (Daily ♦ Teleportation): Move Action. Teleport 6 squares.

Level 28: Teleport 7 squares.

Reference: *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*, page 140 (the original version is Avandra's, converted to Tymora for LFR).

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

(character name)

WAS TRAPPED WITHIN THE RED PRISON OF CARCERI DURING:

EPIC3~2 CRACKS IN THE CRIMSON CAGE

EPIC07 Left Behind

You were unable to follow when the rest of your companions escaped Carceri, or your entire group was wiped out without ever finding a way to leave the Red Prison. Fortunately for you, the First of the Seldarine has more authority in Carceri than most of the other gods. Corellon has seen fit to exercise his divine power and draw you back into the world.

Even Corellon must go to great lengths to release a prisoner from the Tarterian Depths. Such an exercise of power by a greater god on behalf of a mortal is nearly unprecedented, and does come at a price.

If Corellon previously considered himself in your debt, that debt has now been repaid in full. If you have Story Award **EPIC01 Corellon's Eternal Gratitude**, void it.

If you have ever received *Corellon's boon of arcane might* (whether from EPIC3-1 or any other adventure), the divine boon immediately disappears.

If you did not previously have Corellon's favor or his divine boon, then you now owe a debt to Corellon, which he will almost certainly demand you repay at some point in the future. If you do not wish to accept this debt, you may decline to be rescued by Corellon, in which case you remain imprisoned in Carceri and are removed from play (this effectively retires the character, but the choice is yours).

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

(character name)

ACQUIRED THE SERVICES OF A UNIQUE FAMILIAR DURING:

EPIC3~2 CRACKS IN THE CRIMSON CAGE

EPIC08 Can I Keep Him?

During your adventures in Carceri, you made the acquaintance of Gero, a quasit. How and why Gero ended up in Carceri is a mystery, but his extensive experience as an arcane familiar suggests that he may have accompanied a previous master who was incarcerated in the Red Prison.

At any rate, by choosing this Story Award, you gain the right to make Gero your familiar. If you had an existing familiar, Gero has already killed that hapless creature and assumed its place at your side. If you do not currently have a familiar, you may make Gero your familiar when you gain the Arcane Familiar feat.

Gero has the ability to take on the aspect of any other familiar that you would find useful. He isn't quite able to explain how he does this, but it seems to involve killing and eating a familiar of the appropriate type, and Gero's evidently been doing that for quite a long time, because his repertoire (and his appetite) is vast.

At the time Gero becomes your familiar, you may choose any campaign-legal familiar from a player resource. Gero's game statistics are identical to that kind of familiar (although he retains his quasit form). Changing his aspect is arduous, but whenever you gain a level, you may order Gero to "retrain" into a different kind of familiar.

Gero is a unique creature; if you find yourself at a table with another PC who also has Gero as a familiar, only one of you has the "real" Gero. The other has one of his many twin brothers (Nero and Zero). It's up to the players to decide who has the real Gero (he may have a role to play in a future Epic Campaign adventure).

In the blank space on the bottom of this certificate, write the type of familiar that Gero is currently impersonating, along with his game statistics.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

(character name)

HAS RECEIVED A LEGENDARY RARE ITEM FROM:
EPIC3~2 CRACKS IN THE CRIMSON CAGE

EPIC09 Flask of Sin

As a result of your dealings with the enigmatic Sinmaker, the apothecary has chosen to gift you with one of his personal magic items. The *flask of sin* counts against your limit of one Rare item per tier, and as one of your found magic items.

Flask of Sin

Level 25 Rare

This oddly shaped flask produces a glowing purple elixir when your need is greatest. Each day, the elixir is distilled from your own life energy, or that of your companions.

Wondrous Item (market value 1,125,000 gp, but this item cannot be sold)

Property: After you finish an extended rest, you and your allies can store healing surges in the flask. (NPCs, mounts, and other support characters are not eligible targets.) The flask fills with a glowing purple elixir as surges are added to it. The visible “water level” of the elixir roughly indicates how many surges the flask contains.

Up to seven different creatures can store surges in the flask at the beginning of a day. Each creature can store a maximum of two surges, and any creature that stores surges in the flask takes a -2 penalty to death saving throws until his or her next extended rest. Once a creature has chosen to store surges in the flask, those surges cannot be regained by any means until the creature takes an extended rest. The flask consumes all remaining surges during any extended rest, causing the elixir to disappear, so it must be refilled with new surges each day.

Property: If a creature has at least one of its healing surges stored within the flask, that portion of its life essence is enough to permit the Raise Dead ritual to work even in the absence of any other part of that creature.

Power (Special ♦ Healing): During a short rest, any creature (even one that does not have any surges stored in the flask) can drink from the *flask of sin*. When drinking from the flask, a creature may consume any number of the surges stored in the flask. For each surge consumed, the creature regains hit points equal to its own surge value (not the surge value of the creature who put the surge into the flask). This can be done even if the creature drinking from the flask does not have any healing surges remaining.

To be clear, the flask cannot be used to restore lost healing surges. When someone drinks from the flask, they regain hit points by consuming the surges that are stored within, rather than by spending their own surges. No power or effect (such as Healer’s Lore) can increase the number of hit points a creature heals when drinking from the flask, unless that power or effect specifically increases the creature’s healing surge value.

Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Minor Action. *Target:* A creature adjacent to you that is bloodied, dying, or that died during this encounter. *Activation:* You pour the purple elixir down the target creature’s throat. This consumes 2 of the stored healing surges. If there are not enough surges remaining in the flask, the power fails. *Effect:* The target regains enough hit points to bring its current hit point total to its bloodied value. If the target is dead, it revives, then regains the hit points, and is considered not to have failed any death saving throws during this encounter.

Reference: This is a custom LFR item, inspired by the *bloodcrystal raven skull* published in E1 *Death’s Reach*

Event Name: _____ Event Code: _____
(This number was given to the organizer when the event was scheduled)

Adventure Title: _____ Session Number: _____
(For administrative use only)

Date of Play: / /
Month Day Year

Start Time: :
Hour Minute

Give hour in military time standard (p.m. hours = hour +12). Don't record the exact minute the adventure played. Instead list the closest 30-minute interval the game was scheduled to start at (30 or 00).

A legal table has no less than four players, and no more than six players.

Player Name	WIN/DCI Number
1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
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6	<input type="text"/>

DUNGEON MASTER

DM Name: _____

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Event Name: _____ Event Code: _____
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DM Name: _____

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